

Report of a luncheon held at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (25 June 1956)

Caption: On 25 June 1956, Maurice Faure, French State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Head of the French Delegation to the Intergovernmental Conference on the Common Market and Euratom, invites various French civil and military experts to a luncheon held at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs during which he outlines the French diplomatic strategy with regard to the military aspects of nuclear energy in Europe.

Source: Ministère des Affaires étrangères; Commission de publication des DDF (sous la dir.). Documents diplomatiques français. Volume I: 1956, 1er janvier-30 juin. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1988. 1109 p. p. 1051-1053.

Copyright: (c) Translation CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/report_of_a_luncheon_held_at_the_french_ministry_of_foreign_affairs_25_june_1956-en-ba3fd3ca-d8a2-4d9c-ad63-07bbe08ca096.html

Last updated: 06/07/2016



Note from the Private Office of the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Report of the luncheon held on Monday, 25 June 1956

The following key figures attended the luncheon on 25 June: Mr Maurice Faure, Mr Marjolin, Professor Vedel, General Lavaud, Colonel Buchalet, Mr Renoud and Mr Noël.

The purpose of the meeting was to hold an exchange of views on the letter sent by the Minister for National Defence to President Pineau concerning the military use of nuclear energy. Colonel Buchalet put forward the following reasons for the U-turn in the position of the Minister for National Defence.

1. There is some apprehension in the military that Euratom will, in future, adopt the same draconian terms as those enshrined in the Franco-American nuclear agreement and in the draft statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency, thereby preventing the Member States from recovering, after a certain period of time, their freedom in the military sphere.

2. The events in Algeria have thrown into disarray the Atlantic units, which were previously stationed in Germany. The reconstitution of a French military force on the Continent makes it absolutely essential that *immediate* decisions be taken on the atomic weaponry of these units that will have to be rebuilt.

In a word, National Defence is worried that the theoretical decision-making freedom of the Euratom Member States may, in fact, be compromised, once the moratorium has elapsed, by a web of diplomatic and technical provisions.

In support of their views, Mr Maurice Faure and Professor Vedel made the following points to the representatives of National Defence:

(a) Euratom, far from submitting its members to the diktats of the United States and the International Atomic Energy Agency, would actually enable them to negotiate with these nuclear partners on an equal footing. In this instance, European cooperation would be a prerequisite for greater national independence.

(b) Obviously, the possibility for the Member States to recover their freedom in the military field, after a certain period of time, must not under any circumstances be merely theoretical. It must be tangible. The provisions of the future treaty will contain all the necessary guarantees in that respect.

One of the tangible guarantees that National Defence wants is the establishment of a plan that would lead with absolute certainty to the implementation of a military programme after five years.

In that connection, Mr Maurice Faure and Professor Vedel pointed out that a distinction must be drawn between the freedom that the treaty grants France in military matters, on the one hand, and the way that France makes use of that freedom, on the other.

The State Secretary emphasised that National Defence would not be in a position to demand immediate financial guarantees in exchange for agreeing to Euratom. Moreover, the matter of financial guarantees falls within the exclusive competence of the Parliament and the Government, so any such demand would be inadmissible.

It emerged at the close of the luncheon that an agreement, subject to this latter aspect of the issue, could be reached around the following points:

(a) a moratorium on the *manufacture* of nuclear weapons for a period of three or four years;

(b) the unilateral recovery of freedom in military matters after this period has elapsed;

(c) thirdly, no diplomatic or technical barriers should prevent France from availing itself of that freedom.