

Letter from Jean Le Roy to Antoine Pinay (Moscow, 17 May 1955)

Caption: On 17 May 1955, Jean Le Roy, French chargé d'affaires in Moscow, informs Antoine Pinay, French Foreign Minister, of the reactions in the countries of Eastern Europe to the signature three days earlier of the Warsaw Pact.

Source: Ministère des Affaires étrangères; Commission de publication des DDF (sous la dir.). Documents diplomatiques français. Volume I: 1955, 1er janvier-30 juin. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1987. 849 p. p. 660-661.

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/letter_from_jean_le_roy_to_antoine_pinay_moscow_17_may_1955-en-c7439316-4b81-4204-97ff-e77bb0077fcf.html



Last updated: 06/07/2016

Letter from Jean Le Roy to Antoine Pinay (Moscow, 17 May 1955)

T. Nos 1547 to 1553

Moscow, 17 May 1955, 3 p.m.
(Received: 6.05 p.m.)

The Mutual Assistance Treaty that was signed on 14 May in Warsaw by the eight governments belonging to the 'Peace Camp' was acclaimed in Moscow as the exact opposite of the 'aggressive' North Atlantic Treaty.

It is all the more interesting to note the extent to which that Treaty's authors based their work closely on the Atlantic Treaty. They copied the main provisions: the commitment to mutual assistance, a policy-making Council, referred to here as the Consultative Committee, the creation of a unified command structure. They went even further than this, and a summary reading of the two texts reveals the very close parallels. If Articles 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the new Treaty are compared with Articles 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the Atlantic Treaty, a very close resemblance can be found. Sometimes, the terminology is so similar that one could be forgiven for believing that the first of the two treaties is merely a bargain basement copy of the second.

The difference between the Atlantic system in its present form and the system set up in Warsaw relates particularly to Germany. The Pankow Government is party to the Treaty, but the document creating a unified command structure states that 'the issue of German participation will be considered later.' Moreover, when the Treaty was being signed (and his statement was picked up by Soviet commentators), Grotewohl stated that 'a united Germany would not be subject to the commitments entered into by one or other part of Germany prior to reunification.' This is the position of principle that Western ministers, albeit after some hesitation, had clearly established last year in Berlin. By adopting it and, through the absence of German military involvement, remaining to some extent consistent with it, the Soviets and their allies are clearly leaving the door open for future negotiations. It therefore appears that, for Moscow, neither the ratification of the Paris agreements nor the signing of the Warsaw Pact should prevent possible talks on Germany.

The other issue to which the Treaty of 14 May refers directly, but which is absent from the Atlantic Treaty, is that of disarmament and security. Those parts should no doubt be seen as stylistic points. By allowing for the Treaty of the Eight to lapse as soon as a system of European security is put in place, the Soviets clearly intend to request the simultaneous dissolution of the Atlantic Treaty.

According to *Pravda*, the Treaty of 14 May constitutes a 'historic act'. It looks like a half-hearted copy of the Atlantic Treaty. It was signed because it had been said in Moscow, five months ago and on other occasions, that it had to be signed. The deed was done, but swiftly, in under three days, in a sombre, almost apathetic, mood. President Bulganin's speech concentrated much more on the issue of disarmament than on the setting up of the new bloc ¹ and was quite different from Mr Molotov's violent outbursts last December at the Moscow Conference. Times have changed, and the sparks thrown off then have been dampened.

1. That speech of 11 May stated that the Soviet Government, 'committed to the Leninist principles of the coexistence of different social systems' was ready to cooperate in reuniting Germany, despite the ratification of the Paris Agreements. He maintained the Russian proposal of 10 May on disarmament (see below, No 267 and memo) and claimed to be ready to study 'closely' the note also received on 10 May from Western governments proposing a conference of the Heads of Government of the four major powers (see above, No 269a). The speech made it clear that Moscow had considered this proposal in a positive light.