

## Note of the Netherlands Government concerning the European army (August 1951)

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## Note of the Netherlands Government concerning the European army (August 1951)

In consequence of the resolution of the NAT Council at the Conference which was held last year at Brussels on December 18th, the Occupying Powers in Germany have discussed the problem of the participation of Germany in the Western Defence on the basis of the Council Resolution. The Netherlands Government took note of the summary reports to the Council Deputies about the progress of these discussions, which seem to have been concluded by now.

At the same meeting the Council took note of the French Governments' intention to call a conference of the countries (including the German Federal Republic) which may wish to participate in an European Army, and requested the Deputies to keep themselves informed as fully as possible of the progress of the conference, and in due course to consider the recommendation made at this conference from the point of view of Nato requirements. The council also authorised the Deputies to continue their study of the Netherlands suggestions discussed in that meeting.

The French Government have convened a Conference for the purpose of investigating the practicability of the creation of an European Army, in which the German forces would have to be incorporated. The Netherlands Government represented at this conference by observers have followed closely the discussions and have made a careful study of the Interim Report, submitted by the participating Delegations.

As it seems imperative that an early decision about the question of German rearmament should be taken, the Netherlands Government feel that, in view of the afore mentioned resolution of the Council, they should follow up their earlier suggestions by a statement of their present views.

One of the main obstacles in the way of the realisation of the German contribution to the Western defence has proved to be the understandable apprehension felt in the countries of Western Europe about the possible consequences of German rearmament. On account of the strong public opinion in France on this subject, it is understood that it would not be politically feasible for the French Government to agree to the rearmament of Germany without the prior establishment of suitable guarantees against the resurrection of an independent German army. Apparently it is the idea of the French Government that such guarantees could be found by creating a European Army consisting of the integrated national forces of the European countries including Germany.

The Netherlands Government are of the opinion that the public reactions should indeed be considered as a political fact of which due account has to be taken. There is, however, ample reason for doubt if the bond to be created by a European Army would be strong enough to prevent Germany, if so willing, to withdraw its forces and reconstitute a national army within comparatively short time. In the opinion of the Netherlands Government the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation remains the best safeguard against aggression and more safety should therefore be sought in the first place by strengthening the link between the members of this organisation, thereby increasing its power and efficiency.

Apparently the French Government are of the opinion that in addition to the safeguards sought in the purely military integration of the forces, the proposed solution would mean a further step towards the integration of Europe, thereby helping to bind Germany to the Western World.

As evidenced by their activities in the OEEC and the Council of Europe and their participation in the Schuman treaty the Netherlands have always wholeheartedly supported the movement towards European Integration. At the same time, the Netherlands Government have constantly adhered to the postulate that every new step in this direction should before all be realistic and justified under the existing circumstances.

It is certainly to be deplored that the progress up to now has been slower than would have been possible under more favourable world conditions. But any attempt to force an acceleration, without really solving any of the existing problems, would be dangerous.

The raising of hopes, which could not materialize, would eventually cause great damage to the European

cause.

In this connection it may be recalled that in the first period of the activities of the Council of Europe ambitious plans were initiated which, when they failed to be realised for the very reason of their premature character, contributed to a feeling of frustration in the European public.

It is by now clear enough that the reaching of the present targets under the Medium Term Defence plan, apart from additional measures necessary to fill the gap between those requirements and the actual availabilities, will prove to be a hard task for all the members of NATO. Furthermore the defence effort in the next year will have to be considerably accelerated in view of the necessity of having as many troops readily available as possible in September 1952 to cope with the situation which might arise as a consequence of German rearmament. Under these circumstances it is clear that any increase of the difficulties resulting from far reaching new initiatives, which would not directly contribute to strengthening of the defence, and the dilatory effect of unnecessary reorganisations could very well prove to be disastrous.

It is for this reason that the Netherlands Government can only agree to the proposed integration in so far as it does not go beyond the limits of what is necessary, useful and realisable under the present circumstances.

The best way to reach the goal seems to take wherever possible practical measures, which, if they prove to work well, should be followed by further developments of the same principle if circumstances permit.

Certainly, the envisaged uniformity in the organisation, instruction and training will be a real advantage as it simplifies the mutual relations and the contacts with the NATO military agencies while the homogeneity in actual warfare would naturally be an asset. Moreover, incorporation of the German forces in an integrated European Defence Organisation would help to meet the political difficulties and as such is to be considered as a practical means to pave the way for the participation of Germany in the Western Defence. For these reasons the Netherlands Government are prepared to support the idea of linking the European armies together, although on a basis different from that proposed during the Paris Conference.

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In this connection the Netherlands Government wish to draw particular attention to three points in the Interim Report of the Paris Conference. These points concern the unified administration of the European Army, the common budget and the common armament programme. The solutions envisaged in the Paris Conference appear to be incompatible with the postulates already stated. They are impracticable and call for a complicated machinery, which could have but dilatory effect.

A. The extensive task entrusted to the High Authority in the French proposals as elaborated in the Paris Conference, would necessitate the setting up of a large staff. It is to be feared that the states concerned in this critical period of the building up of the forces, will not be in a position to make available all the necessary personnel in addition to the experts already put at the disposal of NATO and SHAPE.

It should be realized that during the first, years the activity of the High Authority would rather enlarge than diminish the work of the existing staffs. These staffs will not only have to transfer some of their own personnel but at the same time have to collect the necessary information for enabling the High Authority to execute his task. Furthermore duplications and overlappings are bound to occur.

For these reasons it would seem imperative to limit, at least for the time being, the responsibilities of the High Authority to such harmonisation of the organisation, tactical procedures and technical measures as is strictly necessary to ensure the effective cooperation of national contingents in a balanced and integrated force .

B. A complete common budget appears to be unnecessary as the level of the defence budget of the countries concerned is practically determined by the commitments in the general NATO planning. Therefore it seems that common financing could very well be restricted to the expenditure connected with special international

objects in the same way as is practiced in the NATO. To give the European Defence Organisation the power to establish a budget only of expenses, without transferring the responsibility for finding the means to cover these expenses is certainly not a logical construction. The consequence would be that the national Governments would find themselves before the unacceptable situation that a large percentage of the national expenses would be fixed by an outside authority; it is evident that especially under the present circumstances, even a minor change in the expenditure would upset the whole intricate pattern of economic and social measures. Such a construction would encounter constitutional objections and in any case meet with the resistance of the national Parliaments.

C. The suggestion of giving the task of the integration and expansion of the Defence production to the Organisation would in the view of the Netherlands Government be an impracticable arrangement. It could not possibly be expected that an effective solution for the problem of the alarming deficiencies which, according to the latest statements of the Defence Production Coordinator Mr. Herod must be anticipated in the equipment required under the Medium Term Defence Plan could be found within the small circle of the members of the European Organisation. It is therefore, in the opinion of the Netherlands Government far more preferable to leave these problems to the proper NATO agencies in which a study of these questions is already under way.

Both the common budget and the common armament programme would appear to be incompatible with the present stage of Europe integration in the economic and financial fields. This is especially apparent in the difficulties, which are bound to arise with regard to the balances of payment. Moreover they might seriously hamper the development of NATO activities.

The Netherlands Government feel that the essential purposes and objectives of the French proposals could be more appropriately realised by the creation of an European Defence Organisation along the following lines:

1). The armed forces allocated or to be allocated to SHAPE by the States, participating in the European Defence Organisation, shall be grouped in an integrated European Force in accordance with principles to be laid down in a Protocol annexed to the Treaty establishing the European Defence Organisation. The principles will provide for integration above division level.

Integration into a European Force will not affect SHAPE control over those forces as provided for in NATO Document DC/23/2.

Subject to the functions and powers of the European Defence Organisation as outlined under 4 infra, the administration and maintenance of the national contingents in the European Force will remain under control of the competent national authorities.

2). As organs of the European Defence Organisation will be established: a Council of Ministers and an Executive Board.

The Council of Ministers will consist of representatives of Governments of the participating States. The members of the Executive Board will be nominated unanimously by the Governments of member states; their responsibilities will have an exclusively supranational character and accordingly they shall not seek or receive instructions from any Government.

The Executive Board will act in cooperation with and under the general guidance of the Council of Ministers and will follow the directives of SHAPE in matters falling within the general competence of the latter.

Members of the Executive Board can be discharged by the Council of Ministers.

3). Suitable provisions will have to be made with regard to the settlement of disputes concerning the interpretation and application of the Treaty.

4). With regard to the armed forces of the European Defence Organisation the Executive Board will have the following functions and powers:

- a. Observe the recruiting of the European forces by the participating states and, within the limits to be defined by the Treaty, address recommendations to the member states where appropriate;
- b. provide for instruction of the European forces according to common doctrines and methods;
- e. establish and manage Common European Defence Schools for the training of officers and specialists;
- d. promote arrangements for the use of grounds for the common training of European forces;
- e. proceed to the necessary inspections;
- f. determine the dislocation of the European forces subject to the directives of SHAPE;
- g. upon request of a participating state, promote arrangements between two or more members for mutual assistance in the execution of the decisions of NATO organs;
- h. prepare for submission to the Council of Ministers plans concerning external aid to be requested for the establishment and maintenance of common units, services and facilities and European Schools;
- i). subject to a unanimous decision of the Council of Ministers to that effect, administer common European Force units, services and facilities;
- j). subject to a unanimous decision of the Council of Ministers to that effect, coordinate, through recommendations, the execution by member states of the decisions of NATO organs, within the framework of the general directives of those organs and subject to such guidance and procedures as the Council of Ministers may determine.

5) In the execution of the functions as outlined above and according to such procedures as will be defined in the Treaty the Executive Board will draw up:

- General regulations harmonizing the essential points of national rules and orders concerning the organisation, tactical procedures and technical methods, and ensure their application through recommendations;
- Measures for the external uniformity of the European Force;
- wherever appropriate, additional provisions concerning the status of the European forces, taking into account the Agreement regarding the status of NAT forces;
- provisions concerning the organisation, administration, tactical procedures and technical methods of the common European Force Schools, units, services, and facilities as are placed under the Executive Board according to section 4, par. c. and i, above;
- A program for progressive unification of the instruction and training.

6). The budget of the European Defence Organisation will be prepared by the Executive Board and established by unanimous vote of the Council of Ministers. It will only contain the administrative expenses (including those incurred with regard to the common European Force Schools), the administration and maintenance of national contingents integrated into the European Force remaining under the control of the participating states.

The expenditure relative to the establishment, administration and maintenance of common European units, services and facilities will be subject to those separate arrangements between the participating states which provide for their institution.

7). In view of the fact that in every respect the European Defence Organisation will function within the framework of NATO, the validity of the Treaty establishing this organisation will be dependent upon the continued existence of the NATO.

8). It may be repeated that the above constitutes a more general outline of the proposed European Defence Organisation as advocated by the Netherlands Government., This proposal partly differs from the findings of the Paris conference as laid down in its interim report of July 24th, partly concerns matters on which the Paris Conference has not been able to reach a common view. The elaboration of the proposal would entail consequential amendments on several less important points on which it would seem that a provisional result has been reached at the Paris Conference.

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It will be noticed that the European Defence Organisation as outlined above is based on the postulate of keeping the machinery as simple as possible in order to ensure the utmost efficiency and to avoid duplications.

The Netherlands Government believe it to be essential for the present to limit the efforts to the establishment of the simplest possible structure. Once a European Force on these lines having proved successful and provided the general circumstances are favourable, they are prepared to consider a more comprehensive scheme.

Finally it will be clear that the Netherlands proposal by stressing the integration of the European Defence Organisation in NATO intends to strengthen the support of the European powers to the security of the Atlantic Community.