

## British memorandum on the union and consolidation of Western Europe (19 February 1948)

**Caption:** This British memorandum, dated 19 February 1948, outlines to the Luxembourg Government the logic behind the Franco-British proposals regarding the establishment of a Western Union, based on the model of the Dunkirk Treaty of 4 March 1947.

**Source:** Archives nationales du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Luxembourg. <http://anlux.lu/>, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 1732-1999. Affaires Etrangères (1944-1975). Traités - Politiques. Traité entre la Belgique, la France, le Luxembourg, les Pays-Bas et le Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord pour régler leur collaboration en matières économique, sociale et culturelle, et leur légitime défense collective, signé à Bruxelles, AE 11450.

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[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/british\\_memorandum\\_on\\_the\\_union\\_and\\_consolidation\\_of\\_western\\_europe\\_19\\_february\\_1948-en-4be696aa-a5d1-4fec-bf91-2a5d0f3c580a.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/british_memorandum_on_the_union_and_consolidation_of_western_europe_19_february_1948-en-4be696aa-a5d1-4fec-bf91-2a5d0f3c580a.html)

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## Memorandum (19 February 1948)

Mr. Bevin is anxious that Monsieur Bech should receive the following observations of his on the annexed draft treaty on the Dunkirk model between the United Kingdom and Luxemburg.

Mr. McNeil's report on his conversations at Brussels and Sir George Rendel's reports on the views of the Luxembourg Governments have now been carefully considered by His Majesty's Government. While they recognise the force of many of the points advanced by the Benelux Governments, they consider that the grounds on which the British and French Governments originally proposed that the Dunkirk Treaty should be used as a model require some further explanation.

Mr. Bevin desires to make it clear that he is merely requesting that the draft in question should be taken as a basis of discussion, since he is most anxious to have the comments of the Benelux Governments and to take their views fully into account in drawing up the Treaty. There is no intention on the part of the British and French Governments to impose their views on the Benelux Governments or to treat with them otherwise than on a basis of complete equality. At the same time, since Mr. Bevin appreciates the Benelux objections to a Treaty on the Dunkirk model, he wishes them to know the main reason for which he originally favoured the proposal. In his recent speech in the House of Commons, he made it clear that the aggressive attitude of the Soviet Union presented Western Europe with a difficult problem, but that the main objective behind the conception of a Western Union was not to divide Europe irretrievably but rather, by political and economic consolidation of the West, to create a situation which would permit of an eventual accommodation with Eastern Europe. Hence it is necessary to act with foresight now. Mr. Bevin has on various occasions told the Soviet Government that the arrangements of His Majesty's Government with Western Europe are not aimed against Russia, and he thinks it important that there should be some reference to Germany in the Treaty if unnecessary provocation to Russia is to be avoided.

In the light of the observations of the Benelux Governments Mr. Bevin is now making a careful study of the American Rio Agreement and of possible collective pacts under Article 51 or Article 52 of the Charter. It must however be recognised that premature conclusion of a collective pact may involve the five Governments in the risk that the Americans may regard it as so satisfactory a solution of the Western security problem that they may feel absolved from any need to participate in the eventual defence of Western Europe. From this point of view, there would seem to be a strong case for delaying discussion of a collective Treaty until the five Governments can carry the Americans with them, and for concentrating meantime on a series of bi-lateral Treaties, provided that they are regarded as a first step. In this connection Mr. Bevin considers that it may be useful to make one comment on the idea of a pact purely based on Article 52 of the Charter. He fears that such a pact would be unlikely to prove satisfactory in practice. There is of course nothing in the Charter to prevent such a pact; but enforcement of the action under it would be governed by Article 53 of the Charter, and except in the case of measures to be taken against ex-enemy states could only be taken with the authorisation of the Security Council, where it would be subject to a Russian veto.

All these are considerations which Mr. Bevin wishes to discuss with the Benelux Governments. Since the whole world expects rapid action he feels that the delays and misunderstandings which might be caused by an attempt to handle this complicated question through British and French diplomatic channels in the three different capitals must at all costs be avoided. Mr. Bevin accordingly proposes that, as the next step, examination of the draft treaty which accompanies this memorandum and of any counter draft which may be forwarded by the three Benelux Governments, together with consideration of the wider issues involved in a Western Union, shall be concentrated in the capitals of one of the latter, to be chosen by them. In full accord with Monsieur Bidault, he is ready, as soon as exchanges of view have reached a stage which makes it evident that it would be opportune and useful to do so, to go to any of the three capitals with Monsieur Bidault in order to discuss with the Benelux Foreign Ministers the whole question of the Western Union project. Mr. Bevin regards it of the highest importance that discussions should not, even at this preliminary stage, resolve into a mere examination of defence problems, important though these are. In his view, the whole project of a Western Union should be lifted at once on to a higher plane which will enable a thorough examination to be made of the economic problems, including those relating to overseas territories, as well as

to the spiritual and cultural problems, the solution of which is essential to the success of the whole plan.

**Draft of a treaty of alliance and mutual assistance between His Majesty in respect of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess of Luxemburg**

His Majesty The King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, and

H.R.H. The Grand Duchess of Luxemburg

Desiring to confirm in a Treaty of Alliance the cordial friendship and close association of interests between the United Kingdom and Luxemburg;

Convinced that the conclusion of such a Treaty will facilitate the settlement in a spirit of mutual understanding of all questions arising between the two countries;

Resolved to co-operate closely with one another as well as with the other United Nations in preserving peace and resisting aggression, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and in particular with Articles 49, 51, 52, 53 and 107 thereof;

Determined to collaborate in measures of mutual assistance in the event of any renewal of German aggression;

Having regard to the Treaties of Alliance and Mutual Assistance concluded in respect of the U.K. with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the French Republic;

Intending to strengthen the economic relations between the two countries to their mutual advantage and in the interests of general prosperity;

Have decided to conclude a Treaty with these objects and have appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:-

His Majesty The King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas:

For the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, [name and titles of British representative]

H.R.H. The Grand Duchess of Luxemburg:-

For the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, [name and titles of Luxemburg representative]

who, having communicated their Full Powers, found in good and due form, have agreed as follows:-

**Article I**

Without prejudice to any arrangements that may be made, under any Treaty concluded between the Powers having responsibility for action in relation to Germany under Article 107 of the Charter of the United Nations, for the purpose of preventing any infringements by Germany of her obligations with regard to disarmament and demilitarisation and generally if ensuring that Germany shall not again become a menace to peace, the High Contracting Parties will, in the event of any threat to the security of either of them arising from the adoption by Germany of a policy of aggression or from action by Germany designed to facilitate such a policy, take, after consulting with each other and where appropriate with the Powers having responsibility for action in relation to Germany, such agreed action (which so long as the said Article 107 remains operative shall be action under that Article) as is best calculated to put an end to this threat.

**Article II**

Should either of the High Contracting Parties become again involved in hostilities with Germany,  
either in consequence of an armed attack, within the meaning of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, by Germany against that Party,  
or as a result of agreed action taken against Germany under Article I of this Treaty,  
or as a result of enforcement action taken against Germany by the United Nations Security Council,  
the other High Contracting Party will at once give the High Contracting Party so involved in hostilities all the military and other support and assistance in his power.

### **Article III**

In the event of either High Contracting party being prejudiced by the failure of Germany to fulfil any obligation of an economic character imposed on her as a result of the Instrument of Surrender or arising out of any subsequent settlement, the High Contracting parties will consult with each other and where appropriate with the powers having responsibility for action in relation to Germany, with a view to taking agreed action to deal with the situation.

### **Article IV**

Bearing in mind the interests of the other members of the United Nations, the High Contracting Parties will by constant consultation on matters affecting their economic relations with each other take all possible steps to promote the prosperity and economic security of both countries and thus enable each of them to contribute more effectively to the economic and social objectives of the United Nations.

### **Article V**

(1) Nothing in the present Treaty shall be interpreted as derogating in any way from the obligations devolving upon the High Contracting Parties from the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations or from any special agreements concluded in virtue of Article 43 of the Charter.

(2) Neither of the High Contracting Parties will conclude any alliance or take part in any coalition directed against the other High Contracting Party; nor will they enter into any obligation inconsistent with the provisions of the present Treaty.

### **Article VI**

(1) The present Treaty is subject to ratification and the instruments of ratification will be exchanged in London as soon as possible.

(2) It will come into force immediately on the exchange of the instruments of ratification and will remain in force for a period of fifty years.

(3) Unless either of the High Contracting Parties gives to the other notice in writing to terminate it at least one year before the expiration of this period, it will remain in force without any specified time limit, subject to the right of either of the High Contracting Parties to terminate it by giving to the other in writing a year's notice of his intention to do so.

In witness whereof the above-mentioned Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty and affixed thereto their seals.

Done In

in duplicate in English and French, both texts being equally authentic.