

Statement by John Foster Dulles on the rejection of the EDC by the French Parliament (31 August 1954)

Caption: On 31 August 1954, John Foster Dulles, US Secretary of State, comments on the French National Assembly's rejection of the Treaty establishing the European Defence Community (EDC) and calls for the continued restoration of sovereignty to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

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The French rejection of the European Defense Community is a saddening event. France thus turns away from her own historic proposal made nearly four years ago. That proposal sought a unification of the military strength of Continental Europe into its single European army so as to end the era of recurrent European wars, the last two of which became world wars.

The French action does not change certain basic and stubborn facts:

- (a) the effective defense of Continental Europe calls for a substantial military contribution from the Germans; yet all, including the Germans themselves, would avoid national re-armament in a form which could be misused by resurgent militarism;
- (b) Germany cannot be subjected indefinitely to neutrality or otherwise be discriminated against in terms of her sovereignty including the inherent right of individual and collective self-defense. Limitations on German sovereignty to be permanently acceptable must be shared by others as part of a collective international order;
- (c) The prevention of war between neighboring nations which have a long record of fighting cannot be dependably achieved merely by national promises or threats, but only by merging certain functions of their government into supranational institutions.

To deal with these facts was the lofty purpose of EDC. Four of the six prospective members of EDC had ratified that treaty—Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. A fifth, Italy, was on the point of ratifying it. The U.K. and the U.S. had made far-reaching commitments of association with EDC. France thus disassociates herself not only from her own proposal but from her prospective partners who had stood united at the recent Brussels Conference.

The U.S. post-war policies beginning in 1946 were framed on the assumption that Western Europe would at long last develop a unity which would make it immune from war as between its members and defensible against aggression from without. The imperative need for that unity was recognized by the leading statesmen of all the free nations of Europe. The U.S. joined the North Atlantic Treaty defensive alliance with the Western European countries. We assisted these countries to recover from the weakening of World War II. Both on the economic and military side we made massive contributions. We stationed the equivalent of 6 divisions in Europe. We furthermore made our leading military figures available to assume high positions in the military organization designed to defend Western Europe.

The French negative action, without the provision of any alternative, obviously imposes on the United States the obligation to reappraise its foreign policies, particularly those in relation to Europe. The need for such a review can scarcely be questioned since the North Atlantic Council of Ministers has itself twice declared with unanimity that the EDC was of paramount importance to the European defense it planned. Furthermore, such review is required by conditions which the Congress attached this year and last year to authorizations and appropriations for military contributions to Europe.

The Western nations now owe it to the Federal Republic of Germany to do quickly all that lies in their power to restore sovereignty to that Republic and to enable it to contribute to international peace and security. The existing Treaty to restore sovereignty is by its terms contingent upon the coming into force of EDC. It would be unconscionable if the failure to realize EDC through no fault of Germany's should now be used as an excuse for penalizing Germany. The Federal German Republic should take its place as a free and equal member of the society of nations. That was the purport of the resolution which the United States Senate adopted unanimously last July, and the United States will act accordingly.

The United States stands ready to support the many in Western Europe who despite their valiant efforts are left in grave anxiety. We need not feel that the European idea is dead merely because, in one of the six countries, a present majority seems against one of its manifestations. There is still much on which to build

and those foundations should not be shaken by any abrupt or any ill-considered action of our own.

It is a tragedy that in one country nationalism, abetted by Communism, has asserted itself so as to endanger the whole of Europe. That tragedy would be compounded if the United States was thereby led to conclude that it must turn to a course of narrow nationalism. It is a matter of elementary prudence that the United States should review its dispositions and planning in the light of the new situation now created. We are fortunately so situated that we do not need to identify ourselves with what to us seem self-defeating policies. We have flexibility to adjust our own policies to take account of developments elsewhere. In doing so, we shall be governed by the realization that we cannot in isolation find safety for ourselves.

When the NATO Ministerial Council came to adjourn last April to meet next December, I pointed out that if the EDC failed of realization that would create an emergency situation which would call for a special meeting of that Council. That condition has arisen, and the United States believes that there should promptly be a special meeting of the NATO Ministerial Council, as well as early consultations with Chancellor Adenauer. We shall move accordingly.