

Dispatch from Gaston Palewski to Antoine Pinay (Paris, 7 July 1955)

Caption: On 7 July 1955, Gaston Palewski, Minister attached to the Presidency of the French Council of Ministers with responsibility for issues concerning nuclear energy, sends a dispatch to Antoine Pinay, French Foreign Minister, in which he defines the tasks of the European Nuclear Energy Agency (ENEA) that he sincerely hopes will be established.

Source: Ministère des Affaires étrangères ; Commission de Publication des DDF (sous la dir.). Documents diplomatiques français. Volume II: 1955, 1er juillet-31décembre. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1988. 1027 p. p. 33-34.

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Last updated: 06/07/2016



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Yesterday's Select Committee meeting did not reach any definite conclusions about the Government's position on the issues to be discussed at the Brussels Conference.

In the circumstances, it may be helpful to outline my own view on atomic energy.

1. The creation of a European Atomic Energy Agency seems to me to be highly desirable, and I very much hope that our delegation will be able to draft specific proposals to that end when the time comes. The rules governing the operation of the Agency should be flexible enough to allow the participation of all European countries that have already undertaken significant work in the field of atomic energy or intend to do so in the coming years.

2. In my view, the Agency's activities should cover three areas:

a. First, the Agency should promote information exchange and cooperation in the field of nuclear research, where necessary by the joint funding of specific research facilities or experimental reactors;

b. Second, it should promote the creation of joint industrial facilities for the manufacture, in the most economical conditions possible, of certain products requiring large capital investment. This could apply to the separation of uranium isotopes and the production of heavy water. Within the Agency, these activities could be conducted by a smaller number of Member States under bilateral or multilateral agreements.

c. Finally, the Agency should ensure that the various Member States are supplied with sufficient quantities of uranium ore at the lowest price possible — which implies unrestricted access to ore deposits in the Overseas Territories, especially the Belgian Congo. I am aware that you have made our position on this last point clear to Mr Spaak, and I hope that a relaxation of the recent agreement between Belgium and the United States will improve the situation.

Of course, the various points that I have mentioned call for in-depth studies, on the basis of which we shall be able to put forward detailed proposals in due course. I nevertheless wanted to let you know at this stage the direction in which I think we should be heading so as to give our delegation to the Brussels Conference some general guidelines. I have asked those in charge of our Atomic Energy Commission to approach the Brussels talks in this light, while, at the same time, stressing my concern to safeguard our national programmes in areas other than the joint activities mentioned above. This last point is essential for the preservation of our independence in the field of atomic energy; it means, in my view, that the agency that we envisage must not, in the immediate future or in the longer term — by concentrating financial resources previously devoted by Member States to their own atomic programmes — tend to deprive the French Government of the means needed to develop, at national level, the work already done in that area.