

Note by Jean Monnet in the French position at the Brussels Conference on nuclear energy (26 July 1955)

Caption: On 26 July 1955, Jean Monnet, former President of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the future founder and President of the Action Committee for a United States of Europe (ACUSE), drafts a memorandum which sets out the position that the French Delegation adopted on nuclear energy during the negotiations of the Intergovernmental Conference established by the Messina Conference.

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The French position at the Brussels Conference on nuclear energy

The Messina Resolution signed by the six Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which constitutes the Charter of the Brussels Conference, is particularly explicit when it comes to atomic energy:

1. 'Before long, the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes will open up prospects of a new industrial revolution far beyond anything achieved during the past hundred years.

The six signatory states consider that it is essential to examine ways and means for creating a common organisation which would have the responsibility and the facilities for ensuring the peaceful development of nuclear energy, taking into consideration the special arrangements made by certain governments with third parties.

These facilities should include:

(a) a common fund to be financed by contributions from each of the participating countries, which will enable the financing of plants and of research now in progress or still to be undertaken;

(b) free and sufficient access to raw materials and free exchange of knowledge and technicians, by-products and specialised equipment;

(c) the making available, without discrimination, of the findings and the granting of financial aid for their utilisation;

(d) cooperation with non-member countries.'

2. The memorandum submitted by the French delegation to the Brussels Conference contradicts the Messina Resolution by making the following declaration:

'National nuclear programmes will continue to be the responsibility of governments, with particular regard to the industrial production of energy. As for research, including the development of prototype reactors, the Agency will have the role of coordinating national programmes and will be responsible for establishing supplementary programmes.'

On the other hand, the memorandum is in complete agreement with the public position adopted by Gaston Palewski, who says,

'We must safeguard the autonomy of the national programmes.'

3. It is for the government to determine whether the French delegation to Brussels will have a mandate, in the field of nuclear energy, to promote, in both letter and spirit, the implementation of the Messina Resolution or to defend the position whereby, in the field of research, the common organisation will have the role of coordinating national programmes and establishing supplementary programmes.

This second position is contrary not only to the position adopted in Messina by the Minister for Foreign Affairs but also to the position of principle adopted, as far as Europe is concerned, by the government when it was formed.

It will also have the very serious disadvantage of adding to the burdens on our budget, because our participation in the funding of a European organisation of a supplementary nature would be added to the cost of our national

programme.

4. The creation of an organisation of a truly European nature in an area as important as that of nuclear energy must be regarded as an essential step in the continuing organisation of Europe.

It is hardly surprising that it should encounter some resistance, given the provisional advantage that we in Western Europe possess, the value of what we have accomplished and our natural desire to maintain the progress that we have achieved. However, we need to understand that this advantage is a precarious one and would very soon disappear if Germany, with American help, were to commit itself to a national programme for the implementation of which it would have at its disposal industrial resources more powerful than ours.

It would, therefore, be a mistake to fear that, in a European organisation, we would merely be giving without receiving anything in return. Our temporary technical advantage, an illusory advantage since Germany has not yet appeared on the scene, would be best used by ensuring that our scientists and technicians have a lasting influence in a rapidly established European organisation, while at the same time we would find in that organisation the benefits inherent in the completion, on an appropriate scale, of an immense task.

5. It is proposed that the French delegation should be instructed by the government to base its actions on the spirit and the letter of the Messina Resolution. Moreover, the French memorandum should be amended in accordance with the attached document. The French delegate to the Nuclear Energy Committee would not submit the amended text, which would constitute an instruction to him, but he would declare that the initial text which had been submitted is now withdrawn.

Nuclear Energy

MEMORANDUM of the FRENCH DELEGATION

At a time when the development of the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes is entering the industrial phase, the resources which nations need to mobilise are so great that they are bound to exceed the financial, technical and industrial capacities of each individual country. That is why France is proposing the creation of a European Atomic Agency.

1. The aim of the Agency is to promote a joint European effort which would make each country's resources available to everyone. From the outset, that effort must cover a broad sector which will include the following:

- (a) the extraction of uranium and thorium ores and the industrial production of nuclear materials;
- (b) experimental reactors, prototype reactors generating industrial electricity, and prototype reactors producing nuclear fuel;
- (c) the knowledge and experience resulting from the above-mentioned devices and from their implementation on a large scale;
- (d) exchanges of information in all the above fields with the exception of military studies and programmes.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

- (aa) basic research involving, either directly or indirectly, the production and use of nuclear energy and the use of its by-products.
- (b) experimental reactors, prototype reactors generating industrial electricity, prototype reactors producing nuclear fuel, and the components of such devices.

MEMORANDUM of the FRENCH DELEGATION

2. National nuclear programmes will continue to be the responsibility of governments, particularly as regards the industrial production of energy. As for research, including the development of prototype reactors, the Agency will have the role of coordinating national programmes and will be responsible for establishing supplementary programmes.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

2. New wording

National programmes will be restricted to the construction and operation of the units which are necessary for national energy programmes, including the coordination of all such programmes (conventional energy programmes).

Installations for the extraction of plutonium and uranium 235 will be the responsibility of the Agency, which may transfer them to the national organisations when it believes that the technical and economic conditions justify such a transfer.

The Agency will have access to the installations which are within the scope of national programmes, in conditions which will enable it to ensure that all participating countries benefit from the progress which has been made, provided that it guarantees respect and fair remuneration for scientific or industrial property rights.

MEMORANDUM of the FRENCH DELEGATION

3. The Agency will have the active role of meeting the needs of each country, at the best price and without rationing, so as to enable them to complete their projects and, in particular, of supplying it with sufficient quantities of the nuclear materials needed for its programmes and for the programmes of member countries which will inform the Agency of their overall requirements. In order to do this, it will have purchasing rights extended to cover the entire production of member countries and of their overseas territories, taking existing industrial agreements into account, and it will be responsible for purchases from countries which are not members of the Agency.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

3. New wording

The Agency will meet, at the best price, the nuclear materials requirements of the national programmes referred to in paragraph 2.

It will have a purchasing monopoly or pre-emptive rights over the entire production of member countries and of their overseas territories, taking existing industrial agreements into account, and it will be responsible for purchases from countries which are not members of the Agency.

MEMORANDUM of the FRENCH DELEGATION

4. The Agency will have to develop production and new manufacturing processes by creating mining and industrial companies. In particular, it will create industrial companies with a view to the separation of uranium 235, the production of heavy water and the processing of irradiated nuclear fuels in reactors with a view to extracting plutonium and uranium 235.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

4. New wording

The Agency will have to develop production and new manufacturing processes such as the separation of uranium 235, the production of heavy water and the processing of irradiated nuclear fuels in reactors with a view to extracting plutonium and uranium 235. In order to do this, it may create industrial or mining companies.

MEMORANDUM of the FRENCH DELEGATION

5. The Agency will conclude research contracts with laboratories and universities in the member countries, and will create common laboratories specialising in certain pure and applied research disciplines. It will be able to contribute to the training of researchers and form specialist teams for the construction of the reactors for the common programme.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

5. New wording

The Agency will conclude research contracts with laboratories and universities in the member countries and will create common laboratories specialising in certain pure and applied research disciplines. It may contribute to the training of research workers and form specialist teams for the construction of reactors provided for in the joint programme.

MEMORANDUM of the FRENCH DELEGATION

6. The implementation of such a programme will entail, during the first few years, annual resources amounting to approximately 100 million European Payments Union units of account.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

6. New wording

National installations other than those referred to in paragraph 2, subparagraph 1, will be transferred to the Agency which may entrust their management to the state in whose territory they are located.

The value of installations thus transferred will be set off against the contributions to the common budget in accordance with detailed rules to be determined.

The common budget may not be less than the total sum of the amounts devoted to nuclear energy by the Member States during the year preceding the signing of the treaty.

MEMORANDUM of the FRENCH DELEGATION

7. This Atomic Energy Agency must be open to all the countries of Europe and, in particular, to those whose technical or industrial development will represent an important asset.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Unchanged.

MEMORANDUM of the FRENCH DELEGATION

8. Finally, in line with the plan for an International Atomic Energy Agency which is being promoted by the United States and currently being discussed in various countries, it will require the support of the US Government.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Unchanged.