

Letter from Robert Eisenberg to Joseph Palmer (Luxembourg, 30 June 1955)

Caption: On 30 June 1955, Robert Eisenberg, US Representative to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), forwards to Joseph Palmer, Director of the Office of European Regional Affairs, a letter in which he comments on the implications of the revival of European integration.

Source: SLANEY, William Z. (Ed.). Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957. Volume IV: Western European Security and Integration. Washington: Department of State, 1986. 659 p. p. 301-302.

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Letter from the Acting United States Representative to the European Coal and Steel Community (Eisenberg) to the Acting Director of the Office of European Regional Affairs (Palmer) (1)

Luxembourg, June 30, 1955.

DEAR JOE: I had been planning to write a despatch evaluating the Messina Resolution in the light of the position papers and plans which the various delegates brought along. Pressure of other work, especially the June meeting of the Common Assembly and an instruction of the Department requesting a whole series of detailed reports on the cartel policy of the High Authority⁽²⁾, made it impossible for me to write the despatch as planned. In the meantime, the Department has received all the information necessary and I trust that, if required, the report will be written in Washington.

There are, however, a few aspects of the "relance" of the European integration on which I would like to comment.

As far as I can ascertain, the interested officials of the six countries feel that real progress toward integration can be expected only in the field of atomic energy. With regard to transportation, electric power and other forms of energy, little more than coordination of development programs is expected to result from the work of the Spaak Committee. There is not much scope for integration in these fields nor can any willingness be discerned on the part of the Governments for radical changes. The creation of a "European common market" on the other hand, is considered by officials in several of the six countries as a pretty nebulous project. Some form of a customs union might be achieved in the long run but not much is expected to be worked out, in terms of specific agreements, for considerable time. The fact that free movement of labor, harmonization of credit and social policies are listed in the Messina Resolution among the elements essential for the creation of the European common market, indicates how little realistic it would be for the time being to expect that this part of the Messina program will come to fruition.

With regard to atomic energy, all six countries have indicated more definitely than in other respects their desire to cooperate and even to create a common organization with appropriate responsibilities and powers. There may be some doubt as to whether the French are ready to agree to the creation of a European authority for atomic energy — ... Nevertheless, there is a definite pressure on all the six countries to cooperate in research and development in this field, resulting from their belief that individually they would be too small to keep up with the big nations and also from the fact that their coal industry already forms a common market and any problems for the coal resulting from the development of atomic energy would necessarily have to be handled jointly.

When discussing the prospects of the implementation of the Messina Resolution with European officials who are close to this work, I am impressed by the general optimism which they show with regard to integration in the field of atomic energy. It is generally expected that the Spaak group will succeed in working out proposals for integration in this field and some of my sources believe that eventually the central powers will be in the hands of a reorganized High Authority or of another, similar supranational institution. It is not believed that the United Kingdom will participate in any closer form than that of an association. In fact, the British do not seem to find it easy to decide on sending an observer to the work of the Spaak group. Beyen, when raising this question ten days ago, was told that the cabinet would have to decide what the British position would be.

In the eyes of many European officials, the success of the present plan to create a European Community for atomic energy depends to a large extent on the attitude of the United States. Two reasons are advanced in this connection: first, the leading role which the United States plays in the field of atomic energy and, secondly, the existence of the US-Belgian energy agreement and of other bilateral agreements. It is believed that the United States could kill the new integration plan outright if we insist on making bilateral agreements with each of the six countries. On the other hand, it is believed that the United States could supply a strong impetus to integration in the field of atomic energy and in this way to European integration in general.

I was glad to note that several posts have specifically raised the question of United States policy in this matter. It might take some time before a firm US policy can be developed and perhaps will be considered necessary to wait for some more tangible proofs of the European will to integrate in the field of atomic energy before US policy is fixed. It is obvious that pending a decision on US policy it is essential to avoid taking a position which might be interpreted in Europe as rejection of the atomic pool idea but I think it might be desirable for US Government to make clear that we have an open mind on the possibility of European integration in the atomic energy field.

The first meeting of the Spaak Committee is scheduled for July 9, the first interim meeting of the Ministers for September 5.

Sincerely,

Bob
Robert Eisenberg

P.S. I heard yesterday some more on the UK position on the question of cooperation with the Spaak Committee. Apparently the British Government is waiting for a formal invitation to participate in order to reply. The six governments, on the other hand, might wait for the Spaak Committee to convene before the invitation is sent out so that it could be sent in the name of the Committee.

Of more importance is an indication I received that the British attitude might be more positive than originally expected. It seems that there is a feeling in the British Government that the UK has to participate with the six countries in the technical development work on atomic energy. The British participation in the work of the Spaak Committee might therefore be more than that of sending an observer since they would want to participate in the discussions and drafting of agreements dealing with cooperation in this particular field. The 6 countries, on the other hand, will certainly want to go further in their own cooperation than joint work in the field of technical development. They will want to do some joint planning, financing, and investment in the field of actual exploitation of atomic energy rather than only the development activities.

R.E.

(1) Source: Department of State, RA Files: Lot 58 D 374, CSC—Correspondence with Eisenberg. Secret; Official-Informal.

(2) In instruction A-50 to Luxembourg, June 15, the Department summarized the CFEP consideration of the cartel problem in the ECSC and requested the U.S. Mission to the ECSC to furnish the Department with information regarding the problem. (Ibid., Central Files, 850.33/6-1555)