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**THE NETHERLANDS AND THE
EUROPEAN DEFENCE COMMUNITY**

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I

In the course of 1950, and especially after the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in New York in September of that year, the idea of a direct participation of German troops within NATO became more and more acceptable in western Europe. Without the contribution of German soldiers it was deemed impossible to execute NATO's "forward strategy" (a defence as far to the east in Europe as possible) in a credible way. Only France persisted in its refusal to allow German remilitarization, which led to the country finding itself increasingly isolated. The French government was fully aware of the delicate position and earnestly attempted to find a solution which would be acceptable to both the parliament and the people. By October 1950 France had to deal with the following problems. The French army had many non-European commitments, mainly in Indo-China, so the fear existed that, in the event of a German rearmament, Germany would soon have the biggest army in NATO; the Treaty on the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (the result of the discussions on the Schuman proposal of May 1950) was still not signed; and there was still no agreement on the Saar problem.

At the meeting of the French National Assembly on 24 October 1950 Prime Minister Pleven proposed the creation (for the common defence of Europe) of a European army - which would include some German contingents - under the control of the political institutions of a united Europe. This proposal, Pleven argued, sprang directly from the Council of Europe's Assembly resolution of 11 August 1950, which had called for

"the immediate creation of a unified European army, under the authority of a European Minister of Defence, subject to proper European democratic control and acting in full cooperation with the United States and Canada".

The Pleven plan in fact meant a supranational solution to the problem of a West German defence contribution. To the French, the integrative approach (on the lines of the Schuman plan) seemed to be the only way to ensure effective control over the reestablishment of a national German army.

Pleven argued that, as the simple joining together of national military units would only conceal a coalition of the old type, a united European army would "bring about as near as possible a fusion of its human and material components under a single political and military authority".

A European defence minister or defence commissioner, who would be nominated by the governments involved, would be responsible to a Council of Ministers and a European Assembly. The rearmament and equipment programme for Europe would be laid down and carried out under his authority. Furthermore, he would be accountable for obtaining the contingents, equipment, material and supplies from the various member states. The contingents provided by the participating countries would be integrated in the European army on the level of the smallest possible unit, that of battalions of 3-4000 men. The financial contributions would be harmonized by a common budget.

Those participating states which had part of their forces stationed outside Europe would retain their authority over that part. The part declared available for integration into the European force would, however, operate in accordance with the undertakings of the Atlantic Pact. Pleven reassured the NATO countries that the European army plan would not in any way hold up the Atlantic Council's plans which were designed to create national forces under unified command (1).

It was on this basis that the French government suggested inviting some countries of western Europe which had already in Strasbourg agreed to share in the creation of a European army, in order to work out in common the implementation of the proposals at a conference to be held in Paris.

The United Kingdom was also invited although this country had only agreed to help in the creation of a European army (excluding itself). Furthermore, it had supported the idea of a common defence of western Europe, provided the United States cooperated in the common plans. The first comment on the French plan by the Dutch ministry of foreign affairs was very unfavourable. In the Netherlands it was felt that the plan would be an obstacle rather than a support to the improvement of the west European defence capability. Although in the course of 1950 the Dutch government had become an ardent supporter of the idea of German rearmament, it was convinced that the Pleven plan did not offer the proper framework for the implementation of such a rearmament. The Dutch thought that their interests would be better promoted within NATO and they feared that the French plan would bring about a cleavage in the Atlantic community. Moreover, they foresaw that Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries did not want to be at all

involved in a European army. The fear existed that in a continental European army France would make its influence entirely felt, mainly at the cost of Germany. The French tried for instance to oppose the creation of a federal recruiting agency in Germany and the installation of a German minister of defence. Moreover they denied the need of German tactical air-forces in support of German contingents. The Dutch immediately pronounced themselves in favour of equal rights for Germany (2).

Foreign Minister Stikker warned that "the pace of the military build-up in the North Atlantic domain would be needlessly slackened" (3). The Dutch had just recently started to organize their army in western Europe along the lines of NATO's Medium Term Defence Plan. They had promised to build up five divisions which were planned to be ready by the end of 1954. These divisions would be standardized with American equipment and according to the American system of combat. Dutch army authorities feared that experiments with an integrated European force would not only hamper the execution of the Medium Term Defence Plan but also thwart the recently developed standardization plans. Another reason for the strong opposition to the French plan concerned the Dutch conviction that any attempt to form effective forces by mixing battalions of different nationalities into the basic army unit, the division, was militarily unsound and could never produce a fighting army. The Dutch suspected the French of trying to delay German rearmament. The Netherlands needed a rapid build-up of German armed forces for military-strategic (defence on the Elbe instead of on the Rhine-Ijssel) as well as financial reasons (the build-up of German troops would decrease the urgency of the preparedness of the Dutch army).

In the United States, it was mainly the Pentagon which looked askance at the purport of the French proposal. The American military rejected the idea of integrating small army units of different nationalities. And although the official reaction by the State Department was likewise unfavourable, it soon became clear that some civil servants felt secretly relieved that, on the issue of German rearmament, they had not received a point-blank refusal from the French.

Stikker soon discerned that the American view on the Pleven plan was rather flexible. In November 1950 he warned the Raad Militaire Aangelegenheden van het Koninkrijk (Council for Military Affairs of the Kingdom) against a sudden change of opinion in the United States in favour of the European army. Once again, Stikker criticized the French plan, stating that the creation of a European army with political organs involved the construction of a completely federal state, consisting of France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries. He thought it objectionable to join such a state but, given the foreseen change of opinion in the United States, he feared that in the long run pressure would be put on the Dutch to take part. He did not place much confidence in the internal political stability of France, Italy and Germany. He looked askance at the size of the communist parties in France and Italy (4).

In order to forestall the Americans, Stikker developed a plan which was meant as a compromise between the official American standpoint (German rearmament within the Atlantic framework) and the French plan for an integrated European army. The Stikker proposal sought to restrict the level of military integration to the troops which were stationed in Germany. These troops would

fall under the command of a NATO High Commissioner who would be appointed by and responsible to the Council of Ministers of NATO. In Stikker's plan there was no talk of a parliamentary organization or a supranational framework.

In flat contradiction to the Dutch principles, the proposal was obviously discriminatory against Germany, particularly in its initial phase. This was done deliberately in order to enlist French support. Although the proposal mentioned the creation of a German defence agency, it was intended that the powers of this agency would be limited. It could for instance recruit troops but only if it did not break the strict rules set by the High Commissioner. Moreover the agency would train troops under the direction of the High Commissioner. It would have its own responsibilities concerning pay, feeding, clothing and housing. Stikker's proposal provided that reserved powers could be shifted gradually to the German defence agency, "in proportion as NATO's confidence in Germany increased".

Stikker's main aim was to facilitate and speed up German rearmament, because he felt that his plan could be realized at short notice. The presence of German soldiers would be the only way to bring about the desired implementation of the "forward strategy". The proposal did not, however, gain any particular favour with Secretary of State Acheson, Chancellor Adenauer and French Foreign Minister Schuman. Adenauer made a stand against the discriminatory provisions against Germany. Acheson held the view that if, in the circumstances, the French leaders preferred their own idea, it would be better not to discourage them. In the meantime much progress was made in NATO's Council of Deputies towards reconciling the American and the French views.

Disappointed by the lack of interest abroad, Stikker decided to drop his plan in December.

Nevertheless, the Dutch maintained their opposition to the Pleven plan and they hoped that other countries would support them. They had placed their hopes on Great Britain. The British Foreign Minister, Bevin, had made known that he preferred an Atlantic confederation to a supranational European army. Stikker encouraged Bevin to develop his ideas of a more intensive cooperation within the Atlantic framework or within the so-called "Colombo-federation", because the Dutch government did not appreciate the idea of committing itself to a small continental bloc (5). However, to the disappointment of the Dutch, the British government appeared to be reluctant to become too much involved in discussions on European defence matters. In December 1950 the United States had conceded to the French wish to convene a conference in Paris in order to discuss the idea of a European army. The British thought it preferable to resign themselves to this American concession, the more so as they expected that the United States would not force them to participate in the discussions in Paris.

Moreover, the British did not have to feel entirely excluded: in December the United States, France, Germany and Great Britain agreed on the convocation of a meeting in Petersberg (at the same time as the conference in Paris would convene) in order to study the possibilities of the immediate activation of national German troops within the framework of NATO.

Early in January 1951 General Eisenhower visited the Hague, where he urged the Dutch to increase their defence efforts. Stikker used the talk with Eisenhower to ventilate all his

grievances about the European army plan. He thought it an error that the French were permitted to call, in February, a conference on the creation of a European army because, in his view, such an army could never be realized and would only aggravate the existing disagreements and the divisions of opinion, not only over Germany but also over the French concept of European federation (which the United Kingdom, the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands opposed). His main worry about a European army conference at that time concerned his fear that such a conference would give rise to new disagreements on the question of German rearmament. According to Stikker, German rearmament was indispensable to the execution of an "Elbe strategy". He argued that "without the build-up of German forces the Rhine-Ijssel would be the main defence line which was totally unacceptable to the Netherlands" (6).

Although the Dutch felt isolated, the government refused to accept the invitation by the French government (on 27 January) to participate as a full member at the conference on the European army. In spite of the fact that a majority of Dutch parliamentarians favoured the idea of a European army, the government decided to be represented only as observer in Paris. It justified its reticence by pointing to difficulties following the fall of the Drees cabinet on 24 January. It was obvious, however, that the government vehemently opposed the principles of the plans for a European army. Besides, it was strongly convinced that the French plan would never be realized.

In the first half of 1951 the ministry of foreign affairs shared the government's criticism. It pointed at several inconveniences:

a. For financial and economic reasons it would be preferable to consider the fusion of the European armies as the coping-stone of the integration process, rather than as the starting point,

b. The traditional Dutch interests in the domain of finance, economics and politics would be insufficiently protected in a purely continental combination without the participation of Great Britain. The Dutch feared a revival of French hegemony over continental European affairs or a possible future domination by Germany,

c. Although at the start of the Paris conference the French had made the concession that the combat team (regiment with extra armour and artillery support) rather than the battalion, would be the smallest possible army unit, the Dutch felt that this concession was not sufficient. They urged that there should be no integration below the level of the (homogeneous national) division,

d. (the main argument): German rearmament would be hampered by experiments with a European force. A further delay would be dangerous in view of the geographical position of the Netherlands.

The conviction held at the time that the Dutch interests would be sufficiently protected by choosing the position of observer, was strengthened by the full membership of the two Benelux partners. During the first months of the Paris conference, the French and the Germans appeared to be strongly divided about some essential provisions of the Pleven plan. The Dutch feared that as a full member they would be forced by the Belgians to take sides against France with the resultant risk that France would look for a coalition with Germany. However, by choosing the status of observer, the Dutch left the thankless task of criticizing the French plan to the Belgian delegation.

Early in 1951 a few officials in the foreign ministry, Kohnstamm and Patijn, in particular, favoured the idea of a European army, but they represented only a minority with their "pro-European" view.

Nevertheless, the events in Paris developed in different direction from what the Dutch had expected. This was caused mainly by an external factor. From the summer of 1951 onwards, after the failure of the Petersberg conference (on the recreation of a national German army), the United States had become a staunch supporter of the plan for a supranational European army. Bruce, the American ambassador to France, McCloy, the American High Commissioner in Germany, and Monnet had managed to convert General Eisenhower who, in his turn, had exercised considerable influence on President Truman and Acheson. The European army plan was accepted and supported by official United States policy as the only avenue open to German rearmament, since the French did not want to accept any other solution. The Americans pointed also to the positive influence the European army might have on the whole process of European integration. It would be much easier for the Americans to deal with Europe as a whole than with six separate countries. Furthermore, the idea had gained ground that the European army could bring about a repeal of the Occupation Statute, as well as an opportunity to "bring American boys home".

Moreover, the conference itself made a lot of progress. At the end of June the Military Committee managed to produce a draft interim report which was approved by the conference on 24 July. The report not only contained general outlines and objectives but it also gave an overview of the outstanding problems. The original Pleven plan was substantially modified, in that several discriminatory elements had been eliminated. Concerning the level of integration of army units, the French had again made concessions to Germany. They accepted the "unité de base" of 12,500 to 14,500 men as a homogeneous national unit. The basis

unit was much more equal to a single-nationality division. The Germans were also permitted to have their own recruiting offices. In return, Germany said it was prepared to refrain from a national German weapon industry.

The Dutch were highly suspicious of the developments made at the Paris conference. It became obvious that the integration would not be restricted to army units but that it would also embrace armament industries, defence budgets, legal systems etc. In the foreign ministry it was argued that the basic error of the idea of a European army resided in the effort to federalize a most vital public institution: defence. The consequence of this should not be underestimated, according to the foreign ministry, because it would be impossible to federalize one sector while leaving other sectors to national control. It was feared that integration of the armies implicitly meant integration of the foreign policies. Such a process would eliminate the possibility of independent policy-making in the Netherlands, because it was unavoidable that within a supranational state the big powers would dominate the small powers (7).

The most important grievances of the Dutch concerned the American change of opinion in favour of the European army. In the Netherlands, there was much disappointment about the "vague" desire of the Americans for European unification. The Dutch Ambassador to the United States, De Beus, wrote that he was annoyed by the fact that the Americans asked the European countries to transfer a part of their sovereignty to the European army institutions while the United States itself was reluctant to transfer any sovereignty to NATO. De Beus noticed a difference between the European and the American mentality: "the first is

more founded on principles and is directed towards long-term goals; the second is often inclined to be guided by motives of immediate practical and opportunistic importance". De Beus' view was shared by the foreign ministry in the Hague. However, the ambassador warned the ministry not to have too many illusions about the influence of the Netherlands. De Beus wrote to the Hague that the American governmental authorities did not have much notion of the Dutch objections to the European army (8).

The American change of view compelled the Dutch to reflect on their position. In August 1951 an "Ambassador's conference" was organized in the Hague which was attended by Dutch ambassadors, ministers and some officials of the foreign ministry. Concerning the European army the main objections were raised by Prime Minister Drees and Foreign Minister Stikker. Under Drees the Netherlands had gradually recovered from the losses suffered in the Second World War and the prime minister feared that the laborious process of recovery would be endangered by experiments with European institutions, in which unstable countries like France, Germany and Italy would also participate. However, at the meeting there were also people who stressed the advantages of full membership at the Paris conference. They argued that full membership would enable the Dutch to influence the discussions. One of the most ardent advocates was Spierenburg, representative of the ministry of economic affairs. He argued as follows:

a. The then current influence of the Netherlands on NATO affairs was very limited. Presumably it would increase within a continental European framework,

b. Europe should increase its efforts to promote its own interests because foreign policy-making in the United States was sometimes very incautious,

c. The creation of the European army presented the only way in which the French would accede to German rearmament. Similarly,

many Germans considered the French plan the most acceptable form of rearmament,

d. Given the political instability in France, Germany and Italy, it was necessary to lend strong support to the reliable and stable elements in these countries, viz. the parties which were pursuing a narrow continental cooperation (MRP in France, DC in Italy, CDU in Germany) (9).

Spierenburg's speech had a marked effect. Although many objections remained valid, it became increasingly clear that the Netherlands could hardly maintain its attitude of standing aloof in Paris. The Benelux cooperation was at stake and, more important, the United States might reconsider the allocation of economic and military aid to the Netherlands if the Dutch maintained their stubborn attitude. The question was posed whether Holland could financially afford to remain outside the European army.

The international pressure on the Netherlands increased. However, the government did not want to give in to foreign pressure. In order to give a clear demonstration of the Dutch point of view the government formulated a counter proposal which was presented to the governments of the big three (United States, United Kingdom and France). In the proposal it was emphasized that "NATO remained the best safeguard against aggression and therefore safety should in the first place be sought by strengthening the link between the members of that organization". It was also written that NATO offered the most proper framework for preventing the resurgence of an aggressive Germany. This passage was evidently meant to propitiate the French.

The Dutch objections centered on the impracticability of three of the organizational aspects of the European army: the unified administration (High Commissioner), the common budget and the common armament programme. In their counter proposal the Dutch sought to simplify the structure of the European Defence Community (from the end of July 1951, the term European Defence Community - EDC - very largely replaced that of European army) by a decrease of the importance of the High Commission(er) and a strengthening of the role of the Council of Ministers. In the Dutch view, the fixation and implementation of the common budget should be the privilege of the Council. The main aim of the Dutch was to avoid the relinquishment of certain essential sovereign powers (10).

The counter proposal which could be characterised as an act of despair did not gain much attention. The Dutch government was disappointed but not surprised when it noticed this. Early in September 1951 the Dutch received an aide-mémoire from the US government stating that the Americans attached the utmost importance to the creation of an effective EDC and that they hoped that an agreement could be reached in the immediate future.

Ultimately, Stikker came to realize that obstinacy was not the best way to achieve the Dutch goals. However, his argument in favour of changing the Dutch position did not emanate from a more favourable attitude towards the European defence integration. Stikker wrote to Drees that he had noticed that the French had suddenly ceased to put such strong pressure on the Netherlands to become active participant. According to him, the main reason for this changed attitude was the French fear that the Dutch, as full member, would cooperate with the Italian and Belgian delegations, with a view to thwarting the French plans. For this very reason

Stikker suddenly advocated an active participation at the conference. He added:

"Unpleasant as it may be, we have to take into account the development of political events, since the "Big Three" have promised their support for the creation of a European army. It is hard indeed to accept the loss of independence in the making of our own foreign policy."

Stikker mentioned some new objections to the process of integration in continental Europe. He feared that a continental federation would strengthen the protectionist tendencies in France, Italy and Germany. Stikker also complained about the harmful social and inflationary influence of France.

Furthermore, in Stikker's view there was no substantial basis in Europe for an advanced process of integration. He argued that if there existed a parliamentary majority at all in France, Italy and Germany in favour of the European army, it would only be a narrow one. He feared that a change of government in these countries would have disastrous effects on the whole idea of European integration.

In conclusion to his letter to Drees, Stikker showed much concern about the growing tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. In the event of an escalation of the tension, as Stikker argued, western Europe would be victimized:

"Europe must defend itself as adequately as possible. German rearmament is necessary for a credible Dutch defence. It has been proved that such rearmament can only be realized within a European army. Whether we like it or not, we have to concede to it. However, our attitude at the conference will undoubtedly be critical". (11)

Early in October 1951 the Dutch cabinet reluctantly took the decision to change its status at the conference in Paris from observer to participant. Van Vredenburg, an experienced diplomat, was appointed head of the delegation. The cabinet gave the following instructions to the delegates in Paris: firstly, the common budget must be limited to some EDC institutions such as the High Commission and the general staffs, on the condition that important financial obligations may be concluded only with approval of the national parliaments. Secondly, the small states must retain a substantial influence within the Community. They must be represented in a Board of Commissioners (instead of one Commissioner with broad powers, as the French had proposed). Furthermore, the authority of the Council of Ministers must be strengthened through the provision that important decisions must be taken with a unanimous vote. Finally, the administrative and strategic authorities of NATO must be clearly defined vis-à-vis the EDC (12).

In general the instructions aimed at the restriction of military integration to an absolute minimum. In this form the mission of van Vredenburg et al seemed impossible. In practice it appeared however that van Vredenburg had some room for diplomatic manoeuvre. He carefully ensured that the Dutch contribution to the conference was as constructive as possible and he soon succeeded in removing the prevailing doubts about the sincere intentions of the Dutch.

The Dutch change of status was very important for Benelux cooperation. Earlier in the year many small irritations had worsened the relations between the countries. The Belgians

resented the Dutch obstinacy, while the Netherlands complained about the self-willed, unpredictable policy of Van Zeeland, the Belgian Foreign Minister, and about the pro-French attitude of the Walloons. Moreover, Benelux payments problems had resurfaced with the Korean War. In 1950 the Dutch had a considerable trade deficit with Belgium.

Nevertheless, the Dutch had become convinced of the usefulness of an alliance with the Benelux partners in the struggle against the supranational provisions in the EDC plans. They noticed that, following the approval of the interim report in July, the cooperation between the French and the Germans had increased. The delegations of France and Germany often met to come to an agreement on essential issues before the plenary discussions at the conference. The Dutch, fearful of isolation, felt relieved when the Belgians made known that they were not adverse to closer collaboration. The Belgian government said that it opposed the EDC treaty because of its reluctance to amend the constitution. Such an amendment was indispensable because of the transfer of sovereignty to supranational institutions. A more profound reason for the Belgian opposition concerned their fear that, within a European framework, Belgium would lose its national identity. This identity was already strongly affected by the war of languages which divided the country in two separate parts. Although the Dutch were rather sceptical about the confusing way of policy-making in Belgium (they even complained that the Belgians did not have their own standpoint concerning the EDC), they were very pleased to see the Belgians taking the Dutch side in the struggle against the EDC.

At the end of October the governments of the Benelux countries met in Brussels. Drees summarized the Dutch objections to the single Commissioner and the common budget. Instead of the Commissioner he proposed a council of commissioners in which the Benelux countries would be represented in an adequate manner. Concerning the common budget Drees thought it unacceptable that an international organization would take over the control of one third of the national budget. He further argued that one could not deprive the national parliaments of their right to decide on the defence budgets. The Dutch preferred the simple juxtaposition of the national budgets without any influence by the High Commission(er). France and Germany advocated a real fusion of the budgets. Furthermore, the Dutch headed for a long transitional period, during which the application of the national regulations would be maintained.

In principle the Belgians agreed with the Dutch objections but at the time they did not have an official opinion. Although there was no talk of a common EDC policy in the future, at the end of the meeting the Benelux countries decided to "maintain the closest possible relations" (13).

Following the Benelux conference the Dutch were surprised to see that the Belgian delegation, more than the Dutch, became the "enfant terrible" at the Paris conference by its critical, almost destructive attitude. The Belgians proposed for instance to restrict the integration of armies to only the forces of the "Big Three".

The Belgian change of attitude raised suspicion. In consequence of this, the Dutch negotiating position considerably improved: Belgium became the scapegoat at the conference which

enabled the Dutch to come out with constructive proposals. The chairman of the Paris conference, Alphand, was obviously embarrassed by the creation of what he saw as a firm Benelux front against the EDC. It was remarkable that the original French-German controversy had disappeared and that it was replaced by a controversy between the "Big Three" (France, Germany and Italy) and the "Small Three" (the Benelux countries). The attitude of the German delegation appeared to be much more constructive than it had been at the start of the conference. Half November Germany and France expressed their common desire for the rapid creation of a supranational EDC. They tried to undermine the position of the "Small Three".

The Benelux countries found themselves in a delicate situation. They worried because they could see themselves being absorbed into an organization where the strength of the three larger partners would predominate. Van Zeeland and Stikker decided to band together: at the meeting of the NATO council in Rome in November 1951 Belgium and the Netherlands for the first time took up a joint position. Both countries feared that the EDC plans would in the future be expanded into the political field far beyond the original concept. This fear was caused by several public statements Schuman, the French Foreign Minister, had made about the creation of a European political association. Early in December the Dutch noticed that the French started to take a dislike to their own European initiatives. Prime Minister Drees made the remark that the French proposals for the creation of a political community became more and more radical. He felt that the French parliament would presumably never approve the radical pro-integration policy of its own government. Lieftinck, the minister

of finance, said that, according to his French colleague Mayer, France advocated German membership of the EDC mainly for financial reasons. A third of the French defence budget was spent in Indo-China and the French thought it indispensable that Germany would take a part of the French expenses for its own account (14).

In the meantime the Dutch had started their opposition to the common armament programme of the EDC which provided that the High Commission(er) would exercise a strict control over the production, import and export of war materials. The underlying idea was to increase the efficiency in the production of war material in western Europe by means of an advanced process of standardization. The Dutch advocated the retention of their national production programme, at least for a long transitional period. Moreover they felt that the standardization policy should remain under the competence of NATO. The Dutch did not have a war industry at their disposition and they feared that the High Commission(er) would use up the Dutch contribution to the common budget by placing defence orders with foreign industries. Hence the Dutch insistence on the involvement of the textile, food, and footgear industries in the common armament programme. It was argued that Dutch factories were pre-eminently able to manufacture uniforms, blankets, tinned food and boots for the European army.

Another reason of concern to the Benelux countries was the decision of the "Big Three" to make the completion of the contractual arrangements with Germany conditional on the creation of the EDC. Stikker said that this placed an extra heavy responsibility on the shoulders of the small countries, which were not consulted about this decision and which were still thinking of trying to back out of the EDC discussions. Furthermore, it was

feared that, without allied control, Germany would become too independent in making its own policy. Stikker urged a strengthening of the Atlantic Community (an increase of the responsibilities of NATO in economic, political and cultural affairs) in order to keep a proper check on the Germans. He also pressed for closer links between NATO and the EDC. Instead, France and Germany emphasized the independence of the new defence organization.

In December 1951 the Paris conference was on the verge of collapse. The Belgians were still the main antagonists of the EDC plans but the Dutch too refused to cede ground. Drees and Lief tinck said they had no scruples in sacrificing the EDC if the Dutch wishes concerning the High Commission and the common budget were not met. Drees added that he was not apprehensive of critical reactions in the Dutch parliament which had always been far more convinced of the desirability of creating the EDC (15). Stikker investigated the possibilities of a closer cooperation with the neutral countries Sweden and Switzerland (16).

In Paris and Washington there was much discussion about the possibility of creating the EDC without the Benelux countries. The Americans in particular were disappointed with the lack of progress. Acheson tried to persuade the low countries to assume a more compromising attitude. Bruce, who was a convinced "integrationist", advised Acheson to change the American policy concerning allocation of military assistance to Belgium and the Netherlands, "if these countries failed to join an EDC created by the remaining countries" (17). Acheson replied however that it would be inappropriate to distinguish between members and non-members of EDC as far as the amount or manner of receiving US aid

was concerned. He thought it objectionable to penalize the Benelux countries for not joining the EDC. On the other hand, he also stated that the United States would approve an EDC composed of France, Italy and Germany, if the Benelux countries could not be satisfied in time (18).

Chancellor Adenauer said that the time might come that Germany, France and Italy "would have to have a showdown" with the Benelux countries, and if so, he trusted that the United States would back the stand of the former group in EDC. However, as Adenauer argued, if the Benelux countries persisted in being obdurate and the bigger countries were forced to take the decision to go ahead regardless of them, this would lead to difficulties in the German, French and Italian parliaments which would make ratification very difficult (19).

Several questions which could not be solved at the Paris conference were discussed at meetings of the foreign ministers of the six countries. At a conference of the six ministers in Paris at the end of December, the decision was taken to create a Board of Commissioners instead of a single commissioner. In this board the Benelux countries would be represented in an adequate way. The Dutch were of course very pleased with this result. It was felt that the close cooperation between the Benelux countries on this issue had yielded fruit (20). In return, the Dutch had to make a concession on the question of the common budget. They said they were prepared to accept the common budget provided that during a short transitional period the budget would be unanimously approved by the Council of Ministers. This transitional period should, in the Dutch view, coincide with the duration of NATO's Medium Term Defence Plan. This meant that for some time the national

contributions would be fixed according to the NATO procedures. In Paris the Dutch had abandoned their claim that the budget should be approved by the national parliaments.

By the end of 1951 the main problems concerning the EDC had been removed. The danger of an imminent failure of the Paris conference had dissolved. Early in January 1952 the State Department declared that the EDC was not feasible without the participation of the Benelux countries. The Americans offered their services in order to solve the outstanding problems. The main Dutch problem concerned the liaison between NATO and EDC. The American ambassador to France, Bruce, urged the Germans and the French to make a joint declaration containing the acceptance of the overall authority of NATO in order to reassure the Dutch. Bruce also argued that in return for this Franco-German concession the Dutch should be able to agree that the European institutions have authority and responsibility from the first day, so that both the discrimination against Germany and the creation of a German national army would be avoided (21).

Other outstanding problems at the Paris conference were concerned with purely military questions such as the composition of the European army, the appointment of officers and the creation of the territorial organization. Moreover, a vexed question arose as a result of the American plans to change the way of lending financial, economic and military assistance to Europe. The United States came out in favour of arranging these affairs with Europe as a whole, viz. by means of the new EDC. The Dutch believed that they could obtain more US end-items and other military support if the aid were handled on a national basis. They desperately tried to safeguard the bilateral relationship with America, particularly

in the field of dollar aid and offshore procurements. Stikker said he was prepared to make concessions in the domain of the military end-item aid, but with regard to pure economic affairs he refused to sacrifice the bilateral tradition. He even threatened to withdraw the Dutch delegation from the conference if the United States decided to carry through its idea. However, the Dutch opposition did not have much impact. And although the Netherlands maintained the obstinate attitude for some time, in the long run it had to concede to American wishes. This concession was also urged by delegation leader van Vredenburg, who had become irritated by the stubbornness of his government (22).

In the meantime, many other obstacles had been removed at the Paris conference. After the successful London foreign ministers conference and the North Atlantic Council meeting in Lisbon, both in February 1952, nearly everything seemed prepared for the signing of the EDC treaty. The Dutch government was pleased to see that the Atlantic Council meeting in Lisbon had provided for a close link between NATO and EDC. The Council had decided that all members of the two organizations should be bound by reciprocal security undertakings. EDC nations would agree to consider an attack on NATO as an attack on EDC and vice-versa.

In March, however, the Dutch came forward with new objections. The German delegation had raised the point that the EDC treaty should automatically commit all members of the EDC to resist an attack on any member of the Community. The Dutch refused to accept this as they could see themselves committed to fighting for a German (or Italian) interest without British forces alongside. Furthermore, this would go beyond the provisions of the North Atlantic Treaty, because Germany was the only member of the

EDC which was not involved in NATO. The Paris conference was once more threatened with breakdown. The only way out of this disagreement was by making an appeal to the United Kingdom for action.

The Dutch had always hoped that the British Conservative government would some day decide to join the Community if the EDC plans were sufficiently watered down, but this hope had appeared to be idle. The British Foreign Minister, Eden, initially refused to give any guarantee but later he felt bound to concede to the desire of the EDC countries for a close association of Britain with the EDC. Great Britain entered into a formal relationship with the EDC in the middle of April (23).

The Dutch also pressed the United States to come forth with guarantees. The French even wanted a formal guarantee from the Americans but it was clear that this would require congressional approval. Drees appeared to be sceptical about the value of such a guarantee. If Germany decided to withdraw from the EDC, he argued, the French apparently expected that the United States and the United Kingdom would take counter measures. He feared that the Germans would take the side of the Russians if they were dealt with severely. His scepticism was not shared by the other members of the cabinet (24). In the end, all fears were pacified with a joint Anglo-American declaration that "if any action from whatever quarter would threaten the integrity or unity of the Community, the two governments would regard this as a threat to their own security".

Concerning the duration of the term of military service within the European army, the Dutch cabinet made it clear that a uniform term of service (which was pressed for by the Belgian

delegation) would be acceptable only if it did not interfere with the fulfilment of the NATO obligations (25).

A persistent worry of the Dutch concerned the German financial contribution to the EDC. Experts at the Paris conference, including the Germans, seemed to share the view that Germany would contribute more than the cost of its own contingents in the first year but that it would contribute less in subsequent years. The Dutch feared that Germany would spend more on occupation costs (the maintenance of British and American occupation troops) than on its own defence. The basic concern was that the rapid build-up and equipment of the German contingents would be attempted at the expense of the Dutch plans for the build-up of their own national army. The Dutch were also dissatisfied because they had not been involved in the discussions on the German contribution. Stikker complained that Holland was considered "quantité négligeable". However, the Dutch dissatisfaction did not have much impact; ultimately they had to accept the decisions taken by the allies (26).

Just before the definite signing of the EDC treaty, in May 1952, the Dutch showed their discontent at the planned 50-year duration of the EDC. NATO had been given an initial life of 20 years, after which period a member could withdraw at one year's notice. As the EDC was to lie within the framework of NATO, for how long would it be binding? The Dutch had the strong impression that some countries, particularly France, considered NATO as only a temporary affair. The Dutch government wanted to have some freedom of action within the EDC in order to be able to take its own decision after the termination of the first 20 years membership of NATO. Moreover it was in favour of an extension of

the duration of NATO to 50 years (just as the EDC). On this issue the Dutch were not backed by other countries but the government decided to remain intransigent. Stikker wanted to make this problem conditional on the development of the process of political integration and on the duration of the British guarantee (20 years). Acheson succeeded in easing Stikker's mind by proposing that, in the event of a premature death of NATO (within 50 years) a "new situation" would come into existence. Stikker was rather satisfied with the clause "new situation", because it would enable the Dutch to consult the partners. He thought the clause would also make it morally justifiable to withdraw from the EDC if international developments required it. Stikker's colleagues in the cabinet remained sceptical but there was no other possibility than to accept the new formula (27).

On 27 May 1952 the EDC treaty and its associated protocols were signed by the governments of France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The scepticism in the Netherlands remained. Drees doubted the degree of sincerity in the rapprochement between France and Germany. The treaty still contained discriminatory measures against Germany, such as the provision that Germany, being a "strategically exposed area", was forbidden to manufacture heavy war materials. Furthermore, he thought that ratification of the EDC treaty in Germany would become very difficult in the event of a defeat of Adenauer at the elections of 1953. Finally, he mistrusted the EDC provision concerning the establishment of military schools in North Africa. He felt that the French had added this provision with the preconceived intention to involve the other EDC countries in their colonial problems. The Dutch had originally proposed to restrict

the stationing of EDC troops to the NATO territory in Europe but ultimately they had to accept that the European forces could also be stationed outside Europe.

Defence Minister Staf made the remark that the advice of the military experts at the EDC negotiations had been fully neglected. In Staf's view the EDC had mainly become a political affair (28). This view was shared by the military authorities in the Netherlands. The Dutch military had always vehemently opposed the European army plan, mainly because of their unwillingness to sacrifice national control over the Dutch army. Within NATO they still had a considerable influence on national military affairs but it was feared that within the EDC this influence would be seriously curtailed. Besides the army corps, the army corps command and the general staff were also to be integrated. The Dutch army authorities feared that the Dutch voice would be neglected within the supranational framework. Moreover, they were concerned about the creation of international military schools which would bring about the closure of the traditional, national schools.

Until the summer of 1951 the Dutch government had gratefully taken advantage of the critical arguments offered by the military authorities. However, with the approval of the interim report drawn up by the military committee at the Paris conference in June 1951 the government felt that the integration level of the military units had been so much improved that it would be better to direct the attention to other problems related to the European defence (common budget, common armament programme, board of commissioners etc). The generals maintained their criticism with

respect to the EDC and they were very indignant with the neglect of their opinion by the government.

The conclusions drawn up by the foreign ministry concerning the results which the Dutch delegation had produced at the Paris conference were not entirely favourable. Although it was generally acknowledged that van Vredenburg had headed the Dutch delegation in the best possible way, there was some disappointment with the concrete results at the conference table. According to the report of foreign affairs, the starting position of the French delegation had been so strong that it could often assert its will at the cost of the other delegations. Dutch efforts to stir up latent differences of opinion between France and Germany had not been very successful. The Dutch view was only occasionally accepted by the other countries; in the course of the discussions the Dutch often had to abandon their view. In their efforts to avoid the creation of the EDC, they had sometimes pointed to their obligations within the framework of NATO but they had not received any support from the representatives of SHAPE at the Paris conference.

The Dutch welcomed the fact that the navy and the naval industry would not form part of the EDC. Although the naval forces received a European status, they would remain under the command of the national or NATO authorities (29).

The EDC treaty had come into existence but the real battle, the ratification procedure in the national parliaments was yet to begin.

III

After the second Drees cabinet, consisting of KVP, PvdA, CHU and VVD, had been dissolved the general elections for a new Dutch parliament were held in June 1952. The Partij van de Arbeid (Labour Party) of Prime Minister Drees won the elections and became the largest party in the country, followed closely by the Katholieke Volkspartij (Catholic Party). Drees himself was charged with forming a new coalition. On 1 September the third Drees cabinet was formed, consisting of the Labour Party, the Catholic Party and two Protestant parties, the Christelijk Historische Unie (CHU) and the Anti-Revolutionaire Partij (ARP). The Liberal Party (VVD) of foreign minister Stikker was not represented in this new coalition and so after four years as foreign minister Stikker was replaced. He went to London where he was appointed Dutch ambassador to Great Britain.

In the new cabinet an innovation was made with the nomination of two ministers for foreign affairs instead of one, Beyen (without party affiliation) and Luns (KVP). In reality it was Beyen who devoted most of his time to EDC affairs. From the summer of 1952 the discussions on EDC were transferred from the foreign ministry to the cabinet.

After the signing of the EDC treaty an interim committee was established at the conference in Paris. Its tasks were first to consider problems of concern to the Community and the necessary measures which signatory governments could take in advance of the institutions being established. Secondly, to prepare executive texts for enforcement when the treaty had been ratified in order that the institutions could function, and finally to carry out such work as would enable the Board of Commissioners, once

constituted, to exercise its many responsibilities. The Dutch representative at this committee was Tjarda van Starckenborgh Stachouwer, who had succeeded van Vredenburg as leader of the delegation.

Which country would be the first to ratify the treaty? In the Netherlands, defence minister Staf thought it of great importance for the preparation and elaboration of the EDC treaty that the Dutch parliament would ratify the treaty as quickly as possible. He argued that by doing this it would be much easier to turn down new French proposals which were, in his view, predominantly of political purport. Drees remarked that the United States government was convinced that the Dutch would ratify the treaty but that it expected problems in that connection in the French parliament (30).

In October 1952 the Belgian foreign minister, van Zeeland, made the proposal to transfer the discussions on European cooperation to the institutions of the Brussels Treaty Organization which was dominated by Great Britain. Van Zeeland feared that France would never ratify the EDC treaty in the then present form and he therefore proposed the revival of the intergovernmental BTO. He considered the British membership of this organization a favourable accidental circumstance for Belgium (31). He did not, however, receive support for his proposal, not even from the Dutch.

Foreign minister Beyen appeared to be a moderate advocate of the EDC. In his view the EDC would be a useful intermediate station to the attainment of the main goal of Dutch European policy: the realization of a customs union. In September Beyen had made his first proposal for a closer economic cooperation between

the continental countries of western Europe. He sought to realize this aim within the framework of the European Political Community which was under discussion then as a result of the insertion of Article 38 in the EDC treaty. This article foreshadowed the establishment of a long-term political structure which would govern the supranational elements of the new Europe. The contemplated EPC was so closely tied to the EDC that it was generally assumed that a failure of the latter would automatically lead to the dissolution of the EPC. Beyen of course tried to avoid this because of his strong intention to promote the economic integration of western Europe by means of the EPC. Beyen came out in support of the EDC and he refused to believe that the French parliament did not seriously consider ratification of the treaty (32). His colleagues in the cabinet were more sceptical about the French intentions. Although Zijlstra, the minister of economic affairs, and Mansholt, the minister of agriculture, were not adverse to an advanced process of European integration, particularly in the economic field, they felt that the EDC was not the right instrument to promote this process. Drees remained as reluctant as he already had been before the signing of the treaty. This reluctance even increased when he became informed of a statement of the French foreign minister, Schuman, who had expressed his hope that fascist Spain would soon become a member of the EDC. Drees said he could not imagine how Spain under the then present régime would participate in a democratically elected Assemblée (33). Nevertheless, like Beyen, Drees was also convinced that the Netherlands should ratify the EDC treaty as soon as possible.

In January 1952 there was a feeling of uneasiness within the Dutch government caused by the interpretative protocols which the new Mayer government in France wished to attach to the EDC treaty. In Mayer's view, some modification to the EDC was necessary because it was becoming increasingly clear that the Treaty in the then present form would never be ratified by the French parliament. The purpose of the interpretative protocols was to ensure the integrity of French forces and to produce Franco-German equality in a weighted voting procedure; to ensure French freedom to withdraw forces for use within the French Union, particularly in Indo-China; to ensure that the French forces which remained in Germany after June 1953 would have the same status as the British and American forces, and finally to ensure French freedom to produce and export war material within the French Union without the possibility of a veto by the EDC Board of Commissioners.

The interpretative protocols increased the Dutch cabinet's conviction that the French looked for ways to back out of the EDC. Drees, who was obviously irritated by the "unpredictable" policy of the French, remarked that the Dutch should follow the French example by proposing their own protocols concerning the maintenance of the national scale of salary and the maintenance of the national criminal law. The cabinet felt that the French proposals were so radical that the introduction of the ratification bill in the Dutch parliament should be accompanied with an enumeration of the cabinet's objections to these proposals (34).

However, in April the Dutch agreed to the signing of the French protocols, probably under strong American pressure. Drees had to accept this notwithstanding his persistent opposition to

the protocol concerning the possibilities of withdrawing army units in case of emergency in overseas possessions. Drees thought that this was not a different interpretation but an essential departure from the text of the treaty (35).

In spite of the approval of the protocols, he remained pessimistic about the chances of ratification in France. In the Netherlands, Beyen carefully ensured that sufficient progress was made in preparing the parliamentary debate on ratification. He realized that the Dutch would build up a lot of goodwill in the United States if they decided to ratify soon. The American Secretary of State, Dulles, promoted the process of European integration in an unprecedented way. United States policy and United States prestige became increasingly identified with the ratification of the EDC treaty. Almost from the beginning of Dulles taking over the Department of State, he used the threat of a reversal of America's European policy if EDC failed. The Americans stressed the link between speedy ratification and the decisions by Congress and the Administration in the field of military and economic aid. The Netherlands proved very sensitive to the American threats. The country was in urgent need of the American aid, particularly after the disaster caused by the floods in the province of Zeeland on 1 February 1953.

Beyen pressed for a quick ratification in parliament. Even some "pro-European" parliamentarians, who had always criticized the government for its lukewarm attitude towards the EDC, were now sometimes worried by Beyen's way of speeding up the ratification. His colleagues in the cabinet endorsed this policy. They saw that a pro-EDC attitude was welcomed by the United States and that it thus yielded fruit. Moreover, in the course of 1953 they came to

realize that the EDC would never be ratified by the French parliament and they therefore felt that the only way which would lead to the incorporation of Germany into NATO (which the Dutch ardently advocated) was to have the EDC treaty promptly ratified in the Dutch parliament. They hoped that the parliaments of Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and Italy would soon follow this example because "in that case the finger of blame for the failure of the EDC could be clearly pointed at France" (36). For the greater part of the Dutch cabinet the EDC was still a necessary evil. It was in fact only Beyen who welcomed the principles of the Defence Community. Remarkably, his policy for a quick ratification happened to coincide with the general opinion in the cabinet.

Beyen was obviously more in favour of an advanced process of European integration than his predecessor Stikker. This appeared very clearly from an exchange of letters between the two in March 1953. Stikker, who had become Dutch ambassador to the United Kingdom, made it clear that Dutch participation in the process of European integration under the leadership of France would be futile. Stikker doubted the sincerity of the French efforts to ratify the EDC treaty. Moreover, he continued, even if the treaty were ratified in France, it would soon appear that the creation of a common market remained unacceptable to the French. As a result of this, he dissuaded Beyen from advocating the European integration policy. Instead, he urged a closer cooperation with the United Kingdom and the Scandinavian countries, especially for economic reasons. An advanced process of European integration would only push the British towards an economic policy orientated more towards America, which could be very harmful to the European continent. Finally, he suggested that Beyen should find another

framework for the integration of Germany into the defence of Europe. He knew that his suggestion would not be welcomed by the Dutch parliament which "had never woken up to the fact that the French plans were weak and unsound" (37).

Beyen appeared to be slightly irritated by the contents of Stikker's letter. He pointed out to him that the EDC had been signed by the former Dutch cabinet (with Stikker as foreign minister) and that, as a result of this, the Dutch had come to the "point of no return". Since the EDC had become reality, Beyen argued that Stikker's wisdom in retrospect was useless. Beyen wrote that he personally welcomed the various initiatives to European integration. He thought that in this respect the European Coal and Steel Community had set a good example. According to Beyen, the European defence problems could only be solved by the creation of the EDC simply because there were no alternatives left. He wrote that he even preferred the EDC solution to the direct admission of German troops into NATO. He said he feared the internal political consequences of the reestablishment of a national "Wehrmacht" in Germany. Unlike Stikker, he stated he still believed in the ratification of the EDC treaty. He was convinced that the realization of the EDC would pave the way for a closer economic cooperation in western Europe. Beyen was not at all in favour of an advanced political integration of the European continent. In his view, this idea would be acceptable in the Netherlands only if enough progress were made in the economic field. He said he could not understand Stikker's plea for a closer cooperation with Great Britain. Until then the British had never shown any interest in developing such cooperation. He thought that any further attempt to involve the British in the process of

European integration would only lead to disappointment, so it would be preferable to look for the desired solutions within the continental framework (38).

However, in the meantime Drees continued to find ways to get rid of the EDC. In June 1953 he pointed to new developments in the relations between the "free world" and the Soviet bloc following Stalin's death in March of that year. Although Drees said he could not know whether the Soviet intentions were serious concerning the improvement of the contacts with the western world, it was obvious that he regarded recent changes in the communist world with much sympathy. He argued that, if the Russians were prepared not only to withdraw from East Germany and Austria (which would create a non-communist Germany) but also to refrain from strengthening the German military potential, the possibility of an improvement of the mutual contacts should not be precluded beforehand. According to Drees, such an improvement offered a good opportunity to bring about German reunification without risking a war. He pointed to the great importance of the reunification of Germany for the maintenance of universal peace. He thought it desirable to abandon the idea that German reunification should never be realized at the cost of the western military cooperation with Germany.

The cabinet agreed with Drees, although Beyen doubted the sincerity of the Soviet intentions concerning Germany. The foreign minister urged the cabinet to continue the then present policy of speeding up the ratification of the EDC treaty in the Dutch parliament (39). In August, Drees said that if the German reunification were realized and if the reunified country were free to make its own decision about participation in an international

defence system, he would oppose Germany's inclusion in the EDC. He would then prefer the incorporation of Germany into NATO (40).

The United States government put pressure on the EDC countries to ratify the treaty as quickly as possible. President Eisenhower made it clear that he would be very pleased if a country other than Germany were the first to ratify. It was obvious that he had placed his hope on the Netherlands. The Dutch conceded to the American wishes. In May 1953 the Dutch constitution was revised, as a result of which the government was empowered to transfer sovereignty to supranational institutions.

At the instance of Beyen the Second Chamber of the States General (Lower House of the parliament) said it was prepared to postpone its summer recess in order to discuss the EDC Bill. This postponement was also urged by the Dutch ambassador in Washington, De Beus. In a letter to Beyen, De Beus expounded again the advantages of quick ratification. First there was the argument regarding the goodwill the Dutch would earn in the United States. Even in the event of the EDC treaty not being ratified by other countries, a quick ratification would still have made, De Beus explained, "a good impression". Secondly, he warned that the United States threatened to reduce its defence commitments in Europe if the EDC treaty was not quickly ratified in the six countries (41). This was the result of the Richards amendment in the US House of Representatives which suggested a reduction of the military aid to a value of \$1000 million if the EDC did not come into force. Congress linked the Richards amendment to the Military Security Program for 1953-4. Half of the funds provided for European military aid could be made available only to the EDC or to its member countries. If the Community failed to come into

existence the funds could not be made available by the executive branch unless Congress changed this provision on recommendation of the President.

The Dutch government was not pleased when it learned about this new element of American pressure. Beyen feared that the American influence would be needlessly emphasized at the EDC debate in the Second Chamber. He thought it of great importance that during the debate the government would make it clear that ratification was the own free will of the Dutch. Moreover, it was hoped that Eisenhower would ask Congress to suspend the relevant section (the special EDC clause) of the Mutual Security Act of 1953, in order to avoid the delay or the decrease of military assistance.

On 23 July 1953 the EDC Bill was discussed at a plenary meeting of the Second Chamber. The treaty was ratified by 75 votes to 11. The noes belonged to extreme right and extreme left, i.e. to the Catholic National Party (KNP), the Political Calvinist Party (SGP) and the Communist Party (CPN). There was also one member of the ARP, a party in office, who voted against the treaty: Gerbrandy, Dutch Prime Minister during the Second World War.

Just before the ratification decision the Second Chamber adopted an amendment, according to which every future international commitment resulting from EDC would have to be submitted to approval by parliament. The government regretted this initiative but reluctantly it had to comply. During the debates the government showed a lack of cogency while advocating its arguments in favour of the EDC. Beyen's continuous efforts to cast the rumours about American influence on Dutch policy-making to the

realm of fancy were not always very convincing. There was for instance the persistent rumour that the Americans considered an increase in the placing of defence orders with Dutch industries if Holland were the first to ratify the treaty.

Dulles was very pleased with the "constructive step" which the Dutch Lower House had taken. However, at the same time he became increasingly suspicious of French manoeuvres to delay the ratification in the Assemblée. In December 1953 he issued a clear warning to the European governments by stating that

"If the EDC should not become effective; if France and Germany remain apart, so that they would again be potential enemies, then indeed there would be grave doubt whether continental Europe could be made a place of safety. That would compel an agonising reappraisal of basic American policy."

Dulles obviously made this statement with intent to put pressure on the French. In a private conversation with Adenauer he reassured the Germans that American troops would stay in Germany even if there was a reappraisal. Nevertheless, Dulles' speech called forth much criticism in Europe, particularly in France. The Dutch were disappointed with Dulles' statement that, for the moment, the American government refused to consider the possibility of suspending the special EDC clause in the Mutual Security Act. The Dutch urged the normal continuation of American military assistance to those countries which had ratified the treaty or were about to ratify. The government initially considered to enter a protest against the American way of acting but, after mature consideration, it decided to drop this idea because it was realized that Dulles' remarks were meant to impress the French (42).

In January 1954, just before the start of the Four Power conference in Berlin, the First Chamber (Upper House) of the States General debated the EDC Bill. The First Chamber approved the treaty by a large majority of 36 votes to 4. The non-contents were the Communists, one member of the CHU and one of the VVD. The decision of the First Chamber led to the Netherlands, originally in 1951 the most hesitant, becoming the first participating nation to ratify the EDC. The Dutch cabinet did not however change its attitude towards the EDC. Drees still considered the EDC a rather unattractive "pis aller" which was only devised as a means to make German rearmament feasible. With the exception of Beyen the whole cabinet preferred a direct German participation in NATO.

The military authorities continued to point to the unfavourable effects which the EDC would have on the build-up of the national Dutch army. However, after the signing of the treaty in May 1952 it had become clear that the political and the financial-economic, rather than the military, aspects played a crucial role in the opposition of the Dutch government to the EDC. From early 1953 on the government became interested in the opinions of the industrialists. The greater part of the Dutch industry, "Philips" in particular, feared the predominant influence of the Board of Commissioners concerning the placing of orders with the defence industries of the six countries. It was thought that mainly France would profit from the common armament programme and its provisions concerning "strategically exposed areas" (which meant Germany). An independent Dutch weapons industry was nearly non-existent. The "Artillerie Inrichtingen", "Holland Signaal", "Nederlandsche Springstoffenfabriek" and "Fokker" had the disposal of only small capacities for the

production of respectively ammunition, fire direction, gunpowder and aeroplanes. There were some branches of industry (nutrition textile) which welcomed the new opportunities presented by the EDC. The textile industry was in difficult straits then and it hoped to receive orders for the production of uniforms and blankets for the European army. In industrial circles there was much uncertainty about the practical effects of the common armament programme. The discussions on these effects were only speculative as long as the EDC had not been ratified by the other countries.

The Four Powers conference in Berlin, in January 1954, did not lead to much. Beyen said he had the impression that the Soviets needed a few years rest. This impression proceeded from the fact that the Soviet Union refused to abandon any of its strategic positions in the world. According to Beyen, the Soviet Union feared that the abandonment of their position in East Germany would have an unfavourable influence on the satellite countries (43). Drees had to give up all his hopes of a rapprochement between the Soviet Union and the West. From then on the Dutch cabinet held the view that the EDC treaty should either come into force within the months immediately following or else Germany should be directly involved in NATO. In the Dutch view, the rearmament of West Germany could no longer be delayed. This meant all-round ratification and a clear definition of the United Kingdom's commitment.

In November 1953 Defence Minister Staf had noticed that, as far as the air force was concerned, the British were prepared to integrate most of their forces in the EDC. Concerning the army sector the British proceeded in the same direction (44). In

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January 1954 the Dutch had their doubts about the continuation of the British military commitment in Germany. The question cropped up whether Great Britain would withdraw divisions from the continent, in proportion as Germany would build up its own divisions. Staf felt that the British plans were not aimed at a speedy evacuation but at a longer stay. He realized, however, that Great Britain experienced some financial problems. The British had their troops in Europe at the German expense. This would change at the moment the EDC would come into existence, because the British would then have to pay themselves for their occupation troops. Drees remarked that Great Britain would withdraw its troops from Germany only if the United States set the example. Furthermore, he thought that, if the United Kingdom managed to withdraw some of their troops from Egypt, it would be less difficult to maintain its troops in Germany even if the costs were charged on its own account.

At the instance of France, the Dutch government asked the British for more information about the presence of British troops in Germany. The British replied that even if they were prepared to maintain their troops they refused to inform the French of the size of the commitment, unless it was definitely established that the French would no longer try to attach new demands to the ratification of the EDC treaty (45).

In April the Dutch were satisfied when the agreement regarding cooperation between the United Kingdom and the EDC was signed. Beyen said that the British had even gone further than the Dutch had originally expected. Nevertheless, the Dutch cabinet stated once again that a further delay of German rearmament was perilous. The United States soon followed the example set by Great

Britain. In the middle of April President Eisenhower reaffirmed the unequivocal American commitment to NATO and support for the EDC.

By the end of April four countries had ratified the treaty: the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg. Moreover, the ratification position in Italy seemed rather favourable. France experienced many hesitations. The Dutch regretted the French attitude towards the EDC. Besides they mistrusted the French plans for the creation of a European Political Community which would only be the master organization of the ECSC and the EDC. The Dutch cabinet insisted on the involvement of economic regulations in the EPC in order to reach the desired customs union. For the moment they said they would content themselves with the abolition or at least the reduction of trade barriers in Europe.

The French however vehemently opposed any European proposal in the economic field. In the beginning of the '50s the competitive position of the French economy declined sharply while at the same time the economic situation of most of the other countries in western Europe, especially of Germany, improved substantially. By 1950 French industry was still competitive but between that year and 1954 economic developments followed a course which was strongly disadvantageous to France. It was therefore not surprising that the French increasingly criticized the economic provisions of their own plans and of the plans of others (the Beyen Plan within the EPC) for an integrated Europe.

Beyen noticed that, by 1954, France experienced a profound internal conflict with respect to the supranational institutions of Europe. It was his opinion that the French found themselves in an intellectual isolation. This feeling of isolation was

reinforced by the French adherence to their glorious past. According to Beyen, this had led to the curious paradox that France had taken the initiative for a close cooperation between the six countries, but that for the same reason it had also become the strongest opponent of this initiative (46).

In June 1954 there was an increasing uneasiness among the Dutch about the fate of the EDC treaty. In France, the Laniel government had fallen and the general expectation was that under the new Mendès-France government (with the "anticedist" General Koenig as defence minister) the EDC treaty would never be ratified. Mansholt predicted that the new French government would not last for long. Zijlstra assumed that Mendès-France would succeed in solving the Indo-China problem only if this problem were linked up with a rejection of the EDC (47). The cabinet, which was almost reconciled then to the idea of a premature death of the EDC, continued to advocate the direct entrance of Germany into NATO. Beyen was the only dissenter. He felt that within NATO it would be much more difficult to keep a proper check on German rearmament than within the EDC. According to Beyen, NATO's main aim was to strive for a maximum increase of troops in Europe, without any restriction. He warned that in the event of a failure of the EDC, the German problem would be far from solved.

Beyen still believed that the French parliament would ratify the treaty. In his view, a small majority for ratification would be sufficient because the "French people were less averse to the EDC than the politicians". He resisted the idea of discussing "solutions de rechange". He thought that the situation would be much clarified if the French were confronted with the alternative either to ratify the treaty or to accept German membership of NATO

(48). The cabinet decided to discuss the impasse concerning EDC matters with the Benelux partners.

At the end of June the foreign ministers of the Benelux countries, Beyen, Spaak and Bech, proposed the convocation of a conference of the foreign ministers of the six EDC countries, but Mendès-France replied immediately that for the time being he had no mind and no time to discuss the EDC.

The Dutch parliament rejected the suggestion made by the United States on the creation of a small EDC without France (49). Early in July Drees mentioned his strongest grievances against the EDC: the idea of mixed army corps troops and of a uniform system of salary and promotion (50).

On 21 July the Geneva conference on the Indo-China problem was brought to a successful conclusion. Mendès-France was considered the main architect of the final solution. His prestige on the international political scene increased immensely. Beyen welcomed this because he thought that the strengthened position of Mendès-France would increase the chances of ratification of the EDC treaty in the French Assemblée. He was convinced that the French prime minister was no longer inclined to sacrifice the EDC.

On the other hand, Beyen wondered why the Soviets had made concessions to the West in Geneva. Were they apprehensive of an extension of the Indo-China conflict into a world-wide conflict; or did they consciously head for the solution reached in Geneva in order to be able to interfere in the process of European integration? Beyen was inclined to choose the latter motive because immediately after Geneva the Soviet Union had proposed the convocation of a European conference.

Concerning the ratification position of France, Beyen argued that in the French Assemblée there was a group of undecided parliamentarians and a group which felt itself tied by decisions taken in the past. He thought it possible to induce these groups to ratify the Treaty. However, for the moment he opposed any modification of the text of the EDC treaty. He disagreed with Drees who argued that Holland should continue its efforts to change the treaty to the Dutch advantage by introducing new solutions. Drees thought that the forthcoming conference of the six EDC ministers in Brussels in August would present a good opportunity to come out with new Dutch proposals (51).

Just before the start of the Brussels conference Mendès-France introduced his "Projet de protocole d'application du Traité instituant la CED". The Dutch cabinet felt that the tenor of these new French protocols was strongly anti-supranational. Moreover, they were openly discriminatory against Germany. Beyen's main objection concerned the proposal which stipulated that for eight years after the treaty came into force, a member state could suspend (in effect veto) any decision of the Board of Commissioners or Council which it considered as affecting its vital interests. In his opinion, it would be pointless to involve the Netherlands in a community of six countries if such an involvement were not attended by the general acceptance of a joint responsibility. Furthermore he objected that the French protocols were not aimed at solving the German question. Even if the Germans decided to accept the obligations resulting from the protocols, he argued that at a later stage they would doubtless try to back out of those obligations.

Finally he reproached the French that concerning the delivery of war material they sought to exclude themselves from competition with the other five countries. Beyen was appalled at the change in fundamental nature of the treaty envisaged. He was obviously disappointed: for the first time he even said that it would be better to drop the whole idea of creating an EDC than to continue the deliberations on the French terms.

Staf remarked that according to the French protocol integration of ground force units would be limited to those stationed in the "zone de couverture" (forward zone) and to air units supporting those forward troops. Staf argued that concerning the air units such a limitation would serve no useful purpose: the Belgian territory would fall outside this forward zone, while a part of the Netherlands would also be kept out of it.

Drees thought it curious that the French proposed that all decisions relating to defence policy should be taken jointly by the EDC Council and the NATO Council. In Drees' view, this proposal implied that Germany would be involved in NATO (52).

The Brussels conference turned out to be a big failure. Mendès-France met with a solid front of refusal. Beyen reproached the French prime minister that he did not want at all an organization with joint responsibility. He further warned that the protocols could never be sanctioned without a renewed ratification procedure in the parliaments. The other delegations supported Beyen in his resistance to Mendès-France and the conference was adjourned without results.

Soon afterwards the Dutch cabinet reviewed the Brussels conference. Although Mendès-France's attitude at the conference was subject to much criticism, it was also hoped that the French

government would not fall as a result of the EDC problem. It was feared that an early fall of the Mendès-France government would have unfavourable effects. Drees supposed that Mendès-France personally did not welcome the ratification of the EDC but that he also did not dare to torpedo the treaty. Drees continued that, if this supposition were true, Mendès-France's declaration about the alternative of the EDC, viz. Germany's involvement in the Western Union, was of great importance. Drees presumed that Mendès-France had gone to London to discuss this alternative with Churchill.

Beyen said he did not expect that Mendès-France would stake the existence of his government on the question of the EDC, if he were not sure of a majority in the Assemblée (53). He was put in the right. At the end of August 1954, when the French National Assembly took its final decision on the EDC, Mendès-France refused to put a question of confidence. The Assembly, voting not on the treaty itself but on a Gaullist motion to remove the treaty from the agenda to pass to other business, rejected the treaty by 319 against 264 votes with 43 abstentions, some of whom included members of the government. In short, the EDC was buried.

The decision of the French parliament did not confuse the Dutch. Beyen was the only member of the cabinet who voiced feelings of disappointment, particularly concerning the "lukewarm attitude" of Mendès-France. Beyen had always preferred the EDC to the direct participation of Germany in NATO.

The cabinet raised objections to the convocation of a conference of five countries plus the United States but without France. A conference of eight countries (the EDC countries plus the United States and the United Kingdom) was deemed preferable to a smaller meeting.

Early in September the government occupied itself with the question to which extent the French could obstruct German membership of NATO. Drees argued that a French refusal would certainly make German membership very difficult. France could for example put its veto on a decision of the NATO Council and, being an occupying power, it could also refuse to agree with Germany's inclusion in the western defence. Concerning limitations on German rearmament, Drees thought it desirable that Germany would not have the disposition of atomic bombs. He felt however that the Netherlands should not stipulate for a limitation of the number of German divisions. Luns, the minister without portfolio, objected that the renouncement of such a stipulation might be dangerous in view of the strong German desire for reunification with and liberation of East Germany. Drees replied that any form of German rearmament would be dangerous but he added that the West German government was very well aware of the fact that a policy of adventures would inevitably lead to the destruction of the entire country (54).

The aborting of EDC stirred great diplomatic activity aimed at solving the problem of German rearmament. In September and October 1954 the Brussels Pact countries met in London and Paris with the United States, Canada, Italy and Germany. The resulting Paris Agreements regularized relations between members of NATO and the Federal Republic of Germany. In May 1955 West Germany became member of NATO. Italy and West Germany acceded to the Brussels Pact, and the Western Union of 1948 was thereby transformed into the West European Union. The United States and the United Kingdom again made pledges to maintain troops on the European continent. The Dutch government and parliament accepted the results of the

London and Paris Agreements without much objection, because one of the main goals of Dutch foreign policy, German rearmament, had finally been reached.

1. E. Fursdon, The European Defence Community. A History London 1980, 89-90.
2. Archive of the Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, the Hague, Min Bu ZA, 921.331, Memorandum Stuyt (Head DEU/WS), 24 October 1950.
3. Ibid., Code telegram Stikker, 24 October 1950.
4. Ibid., Code telegram Stikker, 26 October 1950.
5. Algemeen Rijksarchief, the Hague. Ministerraad Archive ARA, MR. Continentale en Atlantische Politiek, 27 November 1950. The British Commonwealth Colombo Plan was originally meant as a counterpart to the Marshall Plan for Europe.
6. Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1951, Volume 3 part 1, Telegram Anderson to Acheson, 11 January, 413-414.
7. Min Bu Za, 921.331 (dossier 7), Memorandum Kamerlingh Onnes. Constitutionele opmerkingen bij het Pleveln plan, 2 August 1951.
8. Ibid., Code telegram De Beus, 10 August 1951.
9. Ibid., Resumé van de Ambassadeursconferentie over het Europese Leger, 28 August 1951.
10. FRUS 1951 vol. 3(1), Telegram Webb to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 5 October, 886; ARA, Archive of Buitenlandse Economische Betrekkingen (BEB), 2.06.10, EDC 640, Dutch counter proposal of August 1951.
11. Min. Bu Za, 921.331 (dossier 8), Note Stikker, 24 September 1951.
12. Ibid., Instructies voor Van Vredenburg, 8 October 1951. Apart from Van Vredenburg the Dutch delegates in Paris were Mathon for military affairs, Blaisse for economic affairs, De Groot van Embden for financial affairs and Riphagen for juridical affairs.
13. Min. Bu Za, 999.0 (dossier 16), Notulen van de vergadering van Benelux landen in Brussel, 25 October 1951.
14. Archive Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, the Hague, Raad Militaire Aangelegenheden van het Koninkrijk, Min AZ, Raad MAK, Notulen van de vergadering van 1 December 1951. De nieuwe status van West Duitsland en de EDG.
15. ARA, MR, De EDG, 10 December 1951; ibid., 22 December 1951.
16. Min. AZ, Raad MAK, Notulen vergadering 1 December 1951.
17. FRUS 1951, vol. 3(1), Telegram Bruce to Acheson, 10 December, 958.

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18. Ibid., Telegram Acheson to American Embassy in France, Dec. 20, 976-977.

19. Ibid., Telegram Bruce to Acheson, Dec. 29, 982.

20. According to the French ambassador to the United Kingdom, Massigli, an interdepartmental committee in France had already decided in August 1951 that the French delegation at the negotiations in Paris could, if necessary, accept a Board of Commissioners. R. Massigli, Une comédie des erreurs 1943-1956, Paris 1978, 287-288.

21. FRUS 1952-1954, vol. 5(1), Telegram Bruce to the Department of State, 3 January 1952, 572-575.

22. Min. Bu Za, 999.1 (dossier 63), Code telegram Stikker, 23 January 1952; ibid., Code telegram Van Vredenburg, 22 March 1952; H.F.L.K. van Vredenburg, Den Haag antwoordt niet. Herinneringen, Leiden 1985, 462-463.

23. ARA, MR. Gesprek met Minister Eden, 24 March 1952.

24. Ibid., De EDG, 5/6 May 1952.

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26. Private archive Prof. Mr. W. Riphagen. Archive Riphagen, Analyse van de onderhandelingen ter Parijse Conferentie, 23.

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29. Archive Riphagen, Analyse van de onderhandelingen ter Parijse Conferentie, 28.

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33. Ibid., 27 October 1952.

34. Ibid., Het EDG-verdrag, 26 January 1953.

35. Ibid., De Franse protocollen bij het EDG-verdrag, 20 April 1953.

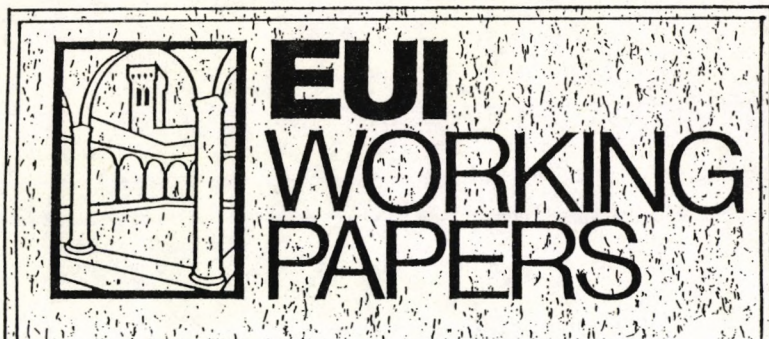
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40. Ibid., De Europese Gemeenschap, 3 August 1953.
41. Min. Bu Za, 999.1 (dossier 55), Code telegram De Beus, July 1953.
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48. Ibidem.
49. Ibid., 28 June 1954.
50. Ibid., 5 July 1954.
51. Ibid., De situatie in Frankrijk na de Conferentie van Genève, 26 July 1954.
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