

ANNEX II B

Statement by the United Kingdom Secretary of State (the Right Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P.) at the Fourth Plenary Meeting

Gentlemen, I think we all feel that we have just listened to a statement from the United States Secretary of State of very rare quality and much valued frankness. What he has said to us, those of us who are European, is I think all that in present conditions we could possibly expect from the United States.

As we survey these post-war years we, I fear, too readily at times take for granted what this generous brother has done for us in Europe at a time when but for his help all must have collapsed in confusion and, perhaps, into Communism also. On behalf of the country I represent here, I would like to assure him that what the United States has done are not "All good deeds past, forgot as soon as done"—but will be remembered with thankfulness, and not for our own sakes alone. So I would like to tell Mr. Foster Dulles that the words he has said, so far as our Government are concerned, will be examined with gratitude and with understanding, and that we shall do our best—I believe this conference will do its best—to prove worthy of that greater confidence the United States will show as we establish our ability to prove our unity and our strength.

Now in all this I am conscious that my own country has a part to play. I do not want to go back over the full history of past declarations and past undertakings, though there are perhaps one or two that I ought to mention if the setting of what I want to say this afternoon is to be understood. We gave, as the United States Government gave, a series of undertakings to the EDC. We gave them by treaty, we gave them by agreement, we gave them by declarations, and as I have already informed my colleagues we stand by those undertakings, and we are ready to reaffirm them. They are not, I think, unimportant, but some of them are, it is true, inapplicable in the absence of EDC. Some of those that have as a result of the disappearance of EDC now disappeared may, and probably will, be covered by the proposals which this conference is now considering. The provision of automatic military assistance, for instance, which was contained in our treaty with EDC will be reproduced, I trust, by the proposed enlargement of the Brussels Treaty. Co-operation between the armed forces, the deployment and integration of those forces, consultation about the level of forces, will all now take place, though perhaps within a different framework.

I am very conscious, and so are my colleagues, that there is one particular plane on which many of you here would wish us to make our position clearer, and where if we were able to do so it might assist the work of this conference. This relates to the maintenance of British forces on the continent of Europe, and in respect of that I have a new proposal to put to my colleagues. The United Kingdom will continue to maintain on the mainland of Europe, including Germany, the effective strength of the United Kingdom forces now assigned to SACEUR—four divisions of the tactical Air Force—or whatever SACEUR regards as equivalent fighting capacity.

The United Kingdom undertakes not to withdraw those forces against the wishes of the majority of the Brussels Treaty Powers, who should take their decision in the knowledge of SACEUR's views. This undertaking would be