

1. Text of the Pleven Plan
(Excerpt from Address to National Assembly)
24 October 1950

"Ladies and gentlemen, the ideal of collective security has just achieved a victory in Korea which marks an historic advance in the efforts of the free nations to create in the world conditions of security such as to discourage any aggressive designs. The nations which concluded the Atlantic Treaty wished to forge the instrument for that security for the region covered by the Treaty. They have in the last few months achieved unprecedented progress in defining their views on a common defense programme and embarking on the implementation of those views...

The associated nations have recognized the need to defend the Atlantic community against any possible aggression, on a line situated as far to the East as possible. They have agreed that all those forces, irrespective of their nationality, should be placed under the command of a single Commander-in-Chief...

Germany, which is not a party to the Atlantic Treaty, is nevertheless also destined to enjoy the benefits of the security systems resulting therefrom. It is consequently right that it should make its contribution towards setting up a system of defense for Western Europe. Consequently, before opening discussions on this important problem in the Assembly, the government have decided to take the initiative of making the following declaration...

It proposes the creation, for our common defense, of a European army tied to political institutions of a united Europe.

This suggestion is directly inspired by the recommendations adopted on August 11, 1950 by the assembly of the Council of Europe, demanding the immediate creation of a unified European army destined to cooperate with the American and Canadian Forces in the defense of peace.

The setting up of a European army cannot result from a mere grouping together of national military units, which would in reality only mask a coalition of the old sort. For tasks which are inevitably common ones, common institutions will do. The army of a united Europe, composed of men coming from different European countries, must, so far as is possible, achieve a complete fusion of the human and material elements which make it up under a single European political and military authority.

A Minister of Defense would be appointed by the participating governments and would be responsible, under conditions to be determined, to those appointing him and to a European Assembly. That assembly might be the Assembly in Strasbourg, or an offshoot thereof, or an assembly composed of specially elected delegates. His powers with respect to the European army would be those of a national minister of defense with respect to the national forces of his own country. He would, in particular, be responsible for implementing such general directives as he might receive from a council composed of ministers of the participating countries. He would serve as the normal channel between the European Community and outside countries or international organs for everything relating to the carrying out of his task.

The contingents furnished by the participating states would be incorporated in the European army at the level of the smallest possible unit.

The money for the European army would be provided by a common budget. The European minister of defense would be responsible for the implementation of existing international obligations and for the negotiation and implementation of new international engagements on the basis of directives received from the council of ministers. The European armament and equipment programs would be decided and carried out under his authority.

That participating states which currently have national forces at their disposal would retain their own authority so far as concerned that part of their existing forces which was not integrated by them into the European army.

Conversely, the European Minister of Defence, might with the authorization of the Council of Ministers, place at the disposal of a participating government a part of its national forces comprised in the European force, for the purpose of meeting requirements other than those of common defense.

The European force placed at the disposal of the unified Atlantic Command would operate in accordance with the obligations assumed in the Atlantic Treaty, both so far as concerns general strategy and so far as concerns organization and equipment.

The European Minister of Defense would be responsible for obtaining from member countries of the European Community the contingents, the equipment, the armaments, and the supplies due from each state to the common army.

During the establishment of this European army a transitional phase will be necessary. During this period, a part of the existing national armies, although placed under the unified Atlantic command, will probably not be capable of immediate incorporation into the European army. The latter would have to develop progressively, each country furnishing its contribution of men, in proportions decided by the Council of Ministers and taking into account the general plan of defense drawn up by the Atlantic Council.

Finally, the creation of the European army cannot, either in the initial phase or in its ultimate realization, in any way constitute a cause for delay in the implementation of programs envisaged or under way within the Atlantic organization for the establishment of international forces under a unified command. On the contrary, the projected creation of the European army should facilitate the implementation of the Atlantic programs.

It is on the basis I have just sketched out that the French Government proposes to invite Great Britain and the free countries of continental Europe, should they agreed to participate with it in the creation of a European army, to work together on ways of realizing the principles just stated. Those studies would begin in Paris as soon as the coal and steel treaty is signed”