

Confidential

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My dear Roger,

As I have reported in various telegrams I spoke quite roughly to the French about their behaviour in sending off their letter to Adenauer about the abolition of controls on iron and steel. But I confess I am not quite sure why we were so worked up about it. I agree that the French were behaving badly and were infringing the principle that one of the Occupying Powers should not communicate its opinions on a topic concerning all three of them to the Germans without previous agreement with the other two. The French tended to slide over this by saying that they were merely recording their own opinion, and in reply to this I asked both Charpentier and Bourbon-Busset (Schuman's Chef de Cabinet) what they would think if the British Government in a letter to the Germans expressed their opinion that the Germans ought to have an army of 20 divisions "subject of course to French approval".

But the French seemed to me to be genuinely puzzled at our attitude, and Charpentier said he thought we were being "formalist." I think they knew they were being naughty, but felt that they had no option if they were to get a German signature and that we ought to have realized this. I am afraid that if we make public reservations about their letter they will suspect that we are making a rather feeble attempt to sabotage the Schuman Treaty. I do not think Schuman himself feels this, and indeed he said during my conversation with him that H.M.G. had always been very "loyal" in their attitude throughout the negotiations, but I think that the press and public would certainly interpret any reservation by us in this sense, and would not take the rather subtle point about the necessity for unanimity between the three Occupying Powers even in expressions of opinion. It may be, however, that there is some deeper point behind all this which escapes me.

Incidentally, I took the occasion of my conversation with Schuman to congratulate him on the signature of the Treaty. I had a painful impression that he would not receive any such congratulations from any other British source. I know we are not mad keen about the whole affair, but it is extraordinary what a lot could be done by a few kind words of this sort, spoken publicly by a representative of H.M.G. In one of his despatches the Ambassador spoke about the desirability of our occasionally saying rather more than we feel in relation to European affairs, and I think this would perhaps have been a good occasion to do this.

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