



Communiqué

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have, from the outset, welcomed the French initiative of 9th May and have been fully alive to its bold character and far-reaching importance for future relations between France and Germany in particular. They earnestly hope that international discussions upon it may lead to a new phase in Franco-German relations, with beneficial effects for Western Europe as a whole.

2. His Majesty's Government have been most anxious to be associated with these discussions and made their position in this respect clear to the French Government at the outset. It is their view that these discussions should serve to clarify the practical application of the French proposal which must necessarily be worked out on an international basis and they strongly desire to make a helpful, constructive and practical contribution in the hope that a detailed scheme would emerge which they would be able to join. They themselves are actively engaged in working on proposals inspired by the French initiative of 9th May, in order that they may be ready to make such a contribution.

3. The French Government, for their part, have taken the view that the first step in the execution of their plan must be an international conference of countries prepared to accept the commitment in principle to pool their coal and steel resources and to set up a new high authority whose decisions would bind the governments concerned. In the view of the French Government, negotiations should be aimed in the first instance at the preparation of a treaty embodying these principles and establishing the high authority, to be submitted for ratification by parliaments. His Majesty's Government do not feel able to accept in advance, nor do they wish to reject in advance, the principles underlying the French proposals. They consider that a detailed discussion, which would throw light on the nature of the scheme and its full political and economic consequences, is a normal and indeed essential preliminary to the conclusion of a treaty. They feel that there is a substantially different approach between the two governments as to the basis on which negotiations should be opened. An unhappy situation would arise if, having bound themselves to certain principles without knowing how they would work out in practice, they were to find themselves, as a result of discussions, compelled to withdraw from their undertakings. They have accordingly, to their regret, found it impossible, in view of their responsibility to Parliament and the people, to associate themselves with the negotiations on the terms proposed by the French Government.

4. His Majesty's Government are anxious to do their best to see whether a workable scheme could be produced that is fair and just to all concerned and they feel that this could best be furthered by a meeting of ministers of countries interested, at which the questions of most effective and expeditious methods of discussing the problems at issue could be examined and settled. If the French Government were prepared to reconsider their attitude and arrange for a meeting of ministers to reach agreement on the procedure for the opening of negotiations, His Majesty's Government would be glad to participate and they have so informed the French Government.