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CIVIL SEABORNE IMPORT REQUIREMENTS IN TIME OF WAR

Note by the International Staff

1. As stated in the letter from FEB secretariat to the Executive Secretary, document D-D(52)9, the FEB at its meeting of the 20th December decided to forward to the Council Deputies the second interim report of the Working Party on civil seaborne import requirements in time of war.
2. This report deals with "the nature and functions of any standby organization or organizations which might be established within NATO to provide the Defence Shipping Authority in wartime with agreed programmes of civilian imports for NATO countries (D-D(51)135 (Final))."
3. The Working Party agreed (document FEB-D(51)64 (Final)):
 - (a) that there would be a need, in wartime, for the establishment of a body or bodies responsible for preparing import programmes;
 - (b) that such body or bodies would probably also be responsible for any needed international action in the field of production, procurement and allocation of supplies;
 - (c) that before it can carry examination further, some guidance would be needed on the general framework of wartime economic organization.
4. As a contribution to discussion on this last wider issue, the Working Party has set out the alternative views expressed (annexes I and II to FEB-D(51)64 (Final)):
 - (i) The French and Italian Delegations consider:
 - (a) that the appropriate framework of the organization in time of war would be
 - a Central Economic Authority subservient to the Political Authority and vested with wide economic powers, especially in the field of import programmes
 - Specialised bodies for main commodities and subservient to the Central Economic Authority which would seek advice from these technical ad hoc committees;

(b)/

- (b) that it is important to set up a peacetime organization which would contain the germ of the wartime organization.
- (ii) The United Kingdom Delegation considers that the wartime organization should consist of a limited number of Inter-governmental Supply Authorities responsible for submitting import programmes to the Defence Shipping Authority. When any major question of shipping priority arose between the needs of the different Supply Authorities or between the military and civilian requirements, it would have to be referred to the superior political authority for decision as the problem in most cases would be a conflict between military and civilian requirements for shipping.

5. Conclusions.

The FEB Working Party on civil seaborne import requirements in time of war have asked guidance on the general framework of wartime economic organization. The FEB has referred this question to the Deputies.

It would appear that the Deputies' request to FEB was conceived in terms of civilian imports only. The United Kingdom Delegation to FEB takes the view that there would actually be few major import problems which would not involve military requirements.

In considering the question of organization in time of war, the Deputies might therefore examine whether it is possible to dissociate civilian and military import requirements.