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BELGIUM AND NATO PUBLICITY

Report by the Belgian Delegation for Item 7  
of the Conference Agenda

As explained in the Report by the Belgian Delegation for Item 6 on the Agenda, the policy of the Government with regard to publicising NATO in Belgium is to abstain from propaganda and to rely on information centred on current events.

These being merely guiding principles, it would be wrong to refer to them as part of a publicity "programme" properly so-called. Current events connected with NATO are, however, used systematically as the basis of a special campaign designed to draw the attention of the public to NATO and make the country increasingly familiar with the concepts underlying the aims of the Atlantic Community.

The following are a few recent examples illustrating in what circumstances and fields of action this method of influencing the public in favour of NATO has been employed,

1. Celebration of third anniversary of signing of the North Atlantic Treaty

A tremendous effort was made through the Press, the radio and the films to disseminate as widely as possible the statements made by official leaders on this occasion and to stress the significance of the event; a special anniversary postmark was impressed on letters by all the major Post Offices of the country.

2. NATO Air Force Display - 11th and 13th July, 1952

These demonstrations, which included a big air show, military parades, etc., were an immense success and were, to all intents and purposes, "Atlantic Days" such as the SACEUR report No 72,352 now suggests should be organised in the different member countries.

3. General Ridgway's visit to Belgium - October, 1952

The Government did everything in its power to make this an outstanding occasion. The arrangements were so successful

that they earned Belgium high praise from N.TIS.

4. Ministerial statements and interviews

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and the National Defence Minister have frequently, in speeches or press conferences at home and abroad, stressed the significance of the Atlantic Treaty and the part played by Belgium in the Atlantic Community. Their statements have been given the widest possible publicity.

5. Invitations to journalists from NATO countries

At the invitation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, newspapermen from various NATO countries have visited Belgium and have thus been able to judge for themselves the importance of her contribution to the accomplishment of NATO's objectives.

6. Belgian lecturers sent to other NATO countries

On several occasions, outstanding Belgian personalities, at the request of the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs have visited NATO countries and have delivered lectures publicising the share taken by Belgium in the common effort of the Atlantic Nations.

It should also be mentioned that the Foreign Office Information Service constantly ensures the widest possible dissemination of all data which it receives from the NATO Information Service.

In 1953 the Belgian NATO information drive will be pursued along the same lines.

A special effort will be made to make even greater use of the radio network as a means of spreading NATO concepts. In this connection, it is planned:

1. To devote more programme time to comments on current NATO activities;
2. To organise radio discussions on NATO topics, to which Belgian and foreign speakers will be invited;
3. To increase the number of radio reports on the big NATO conferences.

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