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BRUSSELS TREATY ORGANISATION

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INTERIM COMMISSION

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Draft Reply to the Soviet Note dated 13th January, 1955

At their 9th Meeting, on the 27th January 1955, the Interim Commission adopted, for submission to Governments, the following draft Reply to the Soviet Note of the 13th January 1955:

- " 1. (The Government concerned), in consultation with the Governments signatory to the agreements instituting the Western European Union, has considered the Soviet Government's Note of January 13th in which it is alleged that the Paris Agreements of October 23rd, 1954, are incompatible with the Geneva Protocol of June 17th, 1925, concerning the prohibition of the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and of bacteriological methods of warfare.
- 2. (The Government concerned) can see no justification for this allegation which misrepresents the essential purpose of the Paris Agreements. These lay down, by common agreement, a system which, in an entirely new way, provides for the effective limitation and control, by an international body, of bacteriological and chemical weapons, as well as of other types of armaments. No comparable system is understood to exist in Eastern Europe.
- 3. In establishing this system of control the Paris Agreements do not create an obligation for the production of these weapons and (the Government concerned) can therefore find no justification for the Soviet Government's statement that these Agreements provide for the "piling up" of stocks or, still less, for the use of these weapons.
- 4. The object of the Geneva Protocol, as the Soviet Government pointed out, is to prohibit the use in war of chemical and bacteriological weapons; it does not prohibit countries from maintaining stocks of such weapons.
- 5. 1st Alternative: .../ (1)

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(1)

5. 1st Alternative: Indeed, both the (Government concerned) and the Soviet Government, in their instruments of ratification of the Geneva Protocol, reserved the right to retaliate in kind against any Power which should first use such weapons against them. They thus reserved the right to manufacture and stock such weapons.

(2)

2nd Alternative: Indeed, several governments, including the Soviet Government, in their instruments of ratification reserved their right to retaliate in kind against any Power which should first use such weapons against them. They thus reserved their right to manufacture and stock such weapons.

6. (The Government concerned), in accord with the other signatories to the Western European Union Agreements, will continue to observe the Geneva Protocol as scrupulously as hitherto. They cannot accept the Soviet Government's allegation that any conflict exists between their obligations under the Geneva Protocol and the Paris Agreements respectively."

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NOTE: The following additional passage will be included in the United Kingdom Note only, between paragraphs 5 and 6:

" The Soviet Note suggests that the Geneva Protocol rather than the fear of retaliation prevented the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons during the Second World War. This was evidently not the view held by the Soviet Government in 1942. At that time they welcomed the assurance that the British Government would use their stocks of gas weapons against Germany in retaliation for any use of poison gas against the U.S.S.R. In a message to Sir Winston Churchill of March 30th, 1942, Marshal Stalin said :

' I wish to express to you the Soviet Government's gratitude for the assurance that the British Government will look upon any use by the Germans of poison gas against the U.S.S.R. in the same light as if this weapon had been used against Great Britain/ and /that the British Air Force will immediately use against suitable objectives in Germany the large stocks of gas bombs held in England. ' "

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(1) Governments which made reservations when ratifying the Geneva Protocol.

(2) Governments which made no reservation.