

February 10, 1957

**Letter by Max Kohnstamm to Jean Monnet on the
Committee of the Three Wise Men**

Citation:

"Letter by Max Kohnstamm to Jean Monnet on the Committee of the Three Wise Men", February 10, 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Historical Archives of the European Union, MK-7. Obtained for NPIHP by Grégoire Mallard.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/121253>

Summary:

This letter to Jean Monnet details the success of recent meetings between President Eisenhower, the Atomic Energy Commission, and other parties.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

double

X4

10 February 1957

Mr. Jean Monnet
Hyde Park Hotel
London, England

Dear Mr. Monnet,

I am sending this letter straight to the Hyde Park Hotel, as I am afraid it will miss you in Paris. Although Bob Bowie certainly will give you the full story, I would like to make a few remarks.

Firstly: the visit has really been a great success. Everyone, from President Eisenhower to the people in the Atomic Energy Commission, has been extremely cooperative and generous. I think our Wise Men are aware to what extent you prepared the way for them. The press coverage in America has been very much all right. It is a pity that owing to too much other important news and difficulties of communication, the European coverage seemed to have been slight.

Second: Task Force. I lunched yesterday with Bob Bowie and Gerry Smith, and Bob will probably have told you the direction in which our thoughts go. It seems to me that we should definitely write our Report before the end of March and not postpone it until important results of the task force can be incorporated. In the first place, this would postpone our Report to the end of May, possibly even June. In the second place, the task force should not only try to enlarge our knowledge on such matters as cost, reactor types, etc., but could start to look for sites of reactors, working on the health and safety problems, and so on and so forth. They should, in a way, continue exactly from where the Report must stop. One of the recommendations of the Report could, it seems to me, be to have the task force continue the work. It shouldn't be difficult to agree with Adenauer, Mollet, and others, before the Report is published that they will immediately respond to such a proposition and ask the Wise Men to continue supervising the work of the joint task force. But this said, it seems to me very useful to have a small number (maybe two or three) people over from the beginning of March, during the weeks in which we have to write the Report. They could advise us on what exactly we could say on matters such as production and investment costs, and would calm the now-and-then ruffled feelings of our Wise Men. At

Mr. Monnet

-2-

10 February 1957

the same time, they could work with us on our program for the task force. I think it would be very dangerous to have a group of first-class Americans come to Europe and then not find useful work to do immediately. Therefore, the drawing up of an Agenda of things to do, together with two or three outstanding men from the American side (including possibly a man from industry), would be very important. The timing would then be as follows:

About the 7th of March: Arrival of first two or three Americans, giving us technical advice during the phase of writing the Report and drawing up with us the program of works.

About the 20th of March: Report in final form handed to the printers.

About the same time: Program of work for the task force drawn up and sent to America, so that the right people can be chosen.

Beginning of April: Arrival of task force and beginning of their work. Of course, the European members of the task force should have been appointed by the Wise Men by then.

Nothing has been definitely settled yet, and nothing can be definitely settled before it has been talked over with the Commission by Gerry Smith and with the Wise Men by me. Even after that, we will still be free to change, if we think it better. If you think these ideas completely wrong, I would be grateful to have your reactions immediately. If in general you think they are right, it could wait until we have a chance to talk things over.

Third: Etzel did very well here and made a good impression. Of course he is not sure of himself on the technical level, but he has done very well on the political. I had a long talk with him Friday evening before he left Washington and had the impression that he is growing constantly more interested in Euratom. Armand, on the whole, has also done well, more on the technical than on the political level. I often find it difficult to work with him, as a result of his instability. One never knows where he will jump next, and he is easily scared. He has in mind the reduction of 15,000,000 kw by 1967 to half that in our final Report. In my opinion, that would be a terrible mistake. The Krauer (Brussels) Report gives as the total of national programs over 6,000,000 kw by '67. If all that Euratom adds to that would be 1,500,000 kw, it really isn't worth the effort. I hope you will go to work on him as soon as he gets back to Paris. Giordani has been very useful and probably most deserves the designation "wise."

Fourth: Spaak. The attitude of Spaak and his men has, to say the least, been astonishing. As I told you, the only thing that was said by Rothschild and Van der Meulen has been that we have oversold it and thereby prepared a big disillusionment for the Americans when they see what is really in the Treaty. Gerry Smith put the ownership case very clearly in the meeting between Spaak and

Mr. Monnet

-3-

10 February 1957

Foster at which we did not assist. Spaak seemed not to agree and gave as a reason the fact that Euratom could not own fissile materials in French weapons.

Andre Visson, whom I saw yesterday, told me that Butterworth again spoke in most clear terms on ownership during a dinner. And Stanley Cleveland did the same at a meeting Saturday afternoon at the Belgian Embassy where Spaak, Rothschild, and Van der Woulen went over the Euratom Treaty with him. It has been pointed out to Spaak that Euratom should have ownership over all the fissile materials as long as the treaty gives it control. There is no real problem with the French weapons. At the moment that fissile material is put into the weapon, Euratom control stops and ownership should also stop. Butterworth and Cleveland have both explained to Spaak that it is difficult to see how Congress will ever accept European control instead of Euratom control, if there were not one single ownership pattern akin to the American pattern within Euratom. But Spaak, and I consider this very serious, according to Gerry Smith said in the meeting with Foster that no one in Europe would mind American control. This is not only stupid from the political point of view, it is also technically stupid. It is conceivable to have American control if a few kilograms of fissile material is given to Europe for research purposes, but it is, even from the technical point of view, completely inconceivable to have foreign control when tons and tons of fissile material are delivered everywhere and spread all over the place.

Our party left yesterday early for Shippingport. I stayed in Washington to see Gerry Smith, Bob Bowie, Walter Lippman, and Andre Visson. I am going now to the airfield to join our friends in Oak Ridge. It may be difficult for me to phone you during the next few days, owing to constant travel and also owing to the fact that the funds which the High Authority has put at our disposal are limited and running out rapidly. I will fly a week today to London, where I propose to spend two days in order to prepare our visit with Whitehall and the press. If I have no chance of phoning before, I will in any case call you Sunday late in the afternoon before seeing anyone in London Monday and Tuesday. If it is possible for you to leave me a note with some of your impressions, or to convey them to Edward Sehr, whom I will certainly see, this would be a great help to me. I hope you have interesting and enjoyable days in London and good oysters at Scott's.