

October 25, 1962

Minutes of the Council of Ministers, The Hague, 25 October 1962

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Summary:

A record of the meeting of the Dutch Council of Ministers at The Hague. The Prime Minister talks of the need to give a Dutch standpoint to the crisis, which has yet to be delivered. Minister of Home Affairs suggests that whatever action the United States adopts, the Dutch should comply for the sake of Western solidarity. The question of NATO is brought up, specifically if it should be included in an official Dutch position on Cuba.

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TOP SECRET

Council of Ministers

No. 3098

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 25 October 1962 in the Trêves Room commenced at ten o'clock in the morning

Present:

Prime minister De Quay and ministers Van Aartsen, Beerman, Klompé, Korthals, Marijnen, De Pous, Toxopeus, Veldkamp, Visser (partially) and Zijlstra
(Absent are ministers Cals en Luns)
Secretary: J. Middelburg

1. The Cuban issue

The prime minister - before proceeding to the actual subject of this meeting - raises the Cuban issue. The previous day he had a telephone conversation with [foreign] minister [Joseph] Luns, who will return to The Hague this evening. In the House of Representatives the chairman originally was to announce that the government could not yet make a statement about the Dutch standpoint, but he called the speaker shortly before the start of the meeting to ask if he would do so himself. [...]

Minister [of Home Affairs Edzo] Toxopeus also feels that the statement is too long. [Belgian Foreign] Minister Spaak, after a meeting with the ministers of foreign affairs of the Six, made a statement. Whatever one's opinion of the American action toward Cuba may be, the unity of the West demands, that it is supported.

The prime minister agrees with minister Toxopeus, that even if the government would not agree with the American government, it would still be obliged to be in solidarity. Speaker concludes, that the introduction should be greatly reduced in size.

Minister [of Transport, Public Works and Water Management Henk] Korthals remarks, that Cuba does not belong to NATO territory. Speaker has in a letter sent the previous day repeated his earlier request of 4 October to the ship owners to abstain from transporting weapons to Cuba. To this he has now added instructions for the captains not to cause incidents, should they be stopped by the American navy.

Minister [of Justice] Beerman asks whether it is right to mention NATO in the government statement, since the American government took the measures with no prior knowledge of the NATO Council. Minister [of the Treasury Jelle] Zijlstra remarks, that Cuba might not be in NATO territory, but that if a crisis were to ensue there, it would have repercussions for the Berlin issue. Speaker points out, that it was not possible for the American government to consult the NATO Council in advance; consultation will however be necessary regarding the offering of support, since that should be dealt with within NATO. Minister [of Social Work Marga] Klompé inquires as to what was discussed in the NATO Council. The prime minister answers, that the American representative in NATO has said, that there is no doubt, that offensive military bases have been constructed in Cuba. Furthermore it was said, that the NATO countries would be kept informed about the continuation of the American quarantine measures. From other NATO countries' side it has been stated, that Cuba falls outside of NATO's territory, but that all countries are politically very interested in this action.

In the other NATO countries only a few special measures have been taken. Minister Beerman wonders what the American quarantine measure means. It cannot only consist of checking ships' papers, but must also include bringing ships into an American port.

[...]

Minister Zijlstra understands support for the American policy, with which the draft statement ends, in the first place to mean the effort to get the Dutch ships to cooperate with the American measures (which for the Netherlands with its large fleet could mean a sacrifice) and furthermore supporting the American standpoint in the UN by dismissing all other resolutions. The prime minister proposes, that he will once more attempt to get in touch with minister Luns, so as to tell him, that the Council of Ministers agrees with issuing the (shortened) statement. The council is agreed on this.

[...]

The prime minister later in the meeting announces, that has spoken to minister Luns on the telephone and that the latter agreed with the statement that speaker will now send to the chairman of the House of Representatives.

[...]