

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES  
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

455th meeting of the Council

- Energy -

Luxembourg, 14 June 1977

President: Mr Tony BENN,  
Secretary of State for Energy  
of the United Kingdom

14.VI.77

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Marcel FREROTTE

Director-General for Energy  
Ministry of Economic Affairs

Denmark:

Mr Niels ERSBØLL

Permanent Representative

Germany:

Mr Hans FRIDERICH

Federal Minister for Economic  
Affairs

France:

Mr René MONORY

Minister for Industry and Trade

Ireland:

Mr Brendan DILLON

Ambassador,  
Permanent Representative

Italy:

Mr Carlo DONAT CATTIN

Minister for Industry, Trade  
and Craft Trades

Luxembourg:

Mr Marcel MART

Minister for Economic Affairs  
and Energy

Netherlands:

Mr R.F.M. LUBBERS

Minister for Economic Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr Tony BENN

Secretary of State for Energy

Mr Dickson MABON

Minister of State,  
Department of Energy

Commission:

Mr Guido BRUNNER

Member

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14.VI.77

WORK PROGRAMME

The Council took stock of current progress on the various matters on the work programme of the "Energy" Council for the first half of 1977 and emphasized the advisability of drawing up such a programme for subsequent work.

In this connection, the Council noted a statement by the Netherlands Minister who, referring to his memorandum which had been submitted previously, stressed the need for progress in the study of energy costs in view of their implications for energy policy.

The Council also agreed to hold a general debate, at each meeting on energy, on the situation in the field of energy at both world-wide and Community levels.

NUCLEAR PROBLEMS

The Council conducted an initial and general policy debate on the various problems arising in connection with the development of nuclear energy.

The debate centred on specific problems facing the Community, problems relating to the supply and demand of uranium, the reprocessing of nuclear fuel and waste management, including the implications for the environment and in particular problems relating to safety and supervision.

During the debate, the Council expressed its appreciation of the Economic and Social Committee's Study on a Community Nuclear Safety Code, which was welcomed as an important contribution to the discussion of these problems.

In its discussions, the Council gave special attention to the measures to be taken with a view to reassuring public opinion in regard to the development of nuclear techniques and emphasizing the necessity of having recourse to nuclear energy in order to avoid an increase in oil imports.

COAL SECTOR

Within the framework of its discussions on the situation on the common market in coal, the Council took note of the Commission's intention to submit to it in the near future a proposal for a decision - in accordance with the Council's agreement in principle of 29 March - aimed at the establishment of a Community system for monitoring coal imports from third countries; on this basis, the Commission could then submit a full report on imports to the Council as early as the autumn.

The Council furthermore examined the problems posed by the Commission proposal for the adoption of arrangements for Community financial aid to promote the use of coal for electricity generation. It invited the Permanent Representatives Committee to prepare its subsequent discussions on the matter.

The Council also held an initial exchange of views - pending delivery of the European Parliament's Opinion - on the proposal concerning Community aid for financing cyclical stocks of hard coal, coke and patent fuel. It agreed to continue its examination of this question once it had received the European Parliament's Opinion.

REFINING PROBLEMS IN THE COMMUNITY

The Council held a far-reaching discussion to work out a Community approach to refining problems in the Community, in particular the establishment of general monitoring of developments in the refining sector, a procedure for prior consultation on the construction of new refinery capacity and a procedure for imports of refined products from third countries. The Council agreed to continue its deliberations on the subject at its next meeting on energy.

14.VI.77

PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF ENERGY INVESTMENTS

The Council noted the Commission communications on the development and protection of energy investments, the minimum guaranteed price for energy produced in the Community and on the granting of financial support for projects to exploit alternative energy sources. It called upon the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue examining these documents and to submit its findings to it as soon as possible so that the Council could act on the matter.



RATIONAL USE OF ENERGY

The Council noted the second series of legislative proposals submitted by the Commission in the context of the Community action programme on the rational use of energy. It emphasized the importance and urgency which should be attached to the examination of these proposals so as to enable it to act on the matter at its next meeting on energy.

14.VI.77

REDUCTION OF ENERGY

The Council evolved a common guideline for the setting of a Community target for a reduction in the consumption of primary forms of energy in the event of difficulties in the supply of crude oil and petroleum products.

However, one delegation, which asked for some time to reflect on this guideline, will make its position known at an early date.

MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONS

Commercial policy

The Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities,

- the Regulations:

- on the opening, allocation and administration of a Community tariff quota for certain steels falling within subheading No ex 03.01 A II of the Common Customs Tariff (1 July 1977 - 30 June 1978);
- maintaining in force the arrangements making the importation into the Benelux countries of jute yarn, originating in the Kingdom of Thailand, subject to authorization;

- the Decisions:

- concerning the acceptance of the Customs Co-operation Council Recommendation of 18 June 1976 to amend the Nomenclature for the Classification of Goods in Customs Tariffs;
- on the import arrangements to be applied in respect of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam;

- the Regulations:

- suspending the application of indicative ceilings established by Regulations (EEC) Nos 3230/76, 3231/76, 3233/76, 3234/76 and 3235/76 for imports of certain products originating in certain EFTA countries;
- on the conclusion of the Agreements for the amendment of the Agreements between the European Economic Community and the Swiss Confederation, on the one hand, and the European Economic Community and the Republic of Austria, on the other hand, on the application of the rules on Community transit and on the entry into force of Decision No 1/77 of each of the Joint Committees set up under the said Agreements.

The Council also adopted the decision authorizing the Commission to negotiate agreements for the amendment of certain agreements between the EEC and certain non-member countries in order to adapt the tariff specifications.

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ECSC

The Council gave its assent in accordance with the second paragraph of Article 54 of the ECSC Treaty for the financing of a pelletization plant with a capacity of 3 million tonnes of pellets a year, to be built by ITABRASCO (Brazil).

The Council granted the consultation requested by the Commission under Article 6(1) of Commission Decision No 528/76/ECSC on the financial aid awarded by the Member States to the coal industry in 1976.

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The Council adopted in the official languages of the Communities the Decision concerning the changing of a tranche of a Community loan from variable to fixed rates of interest.

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On a proposal from the United Kingdom Government, the Council appointed Mr C. BOOTH, Department of Education and Science, a full member of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training in replacement of Mr D.G. LIBBY, who has resigned, for the remainder of the latter's term of office, i.e. until 20 June 1978.

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Background to press conference given by Mr. Guido BRUNNER, Commissioner responsible for energy.

The series of proposals the Commission has sent to the Energy Council is intended to give Ministers the opportunity for a thorough debate about a comprehensive energy policy for the Community.

The Commission is presenting the Ministers with a number of papers ranging from nuclear affairs to actual demonstration projects for the use of alternative sources of energy. Although separate, these proposals should not be seen in isolation one from another. Taken together they form a structured presentation of a possible approach towards a comprehensive energy policy.

Mr. Brunner says:

"In international political terms, the timing seems propitious. The recent North-South dialogue came to an inconclusive close in the field of energy. In the United States, Congress is still working on the details of President Carter's new energy policy which he outlined in the Spring. The oil producing countries within OPEC are still debating the raising of oil prices and are meeting next month in Stockholm. As a big energy consumer, the Community now has a unique opportunity to make its voice heard in determining the direction of world developments in the energy field".

The Commissioner believes that progress in the elaboration of an energy policy is indispensable if the Community is to have a serious chance of reducing its dependence on outside sources of energy supply, as well as diversify and develop to the full the potential of its own resources.

The Council is being asked to discuss proposals in the following areas:

1) Energy saving and Rational Use of Energy.

Directive regulating the performance of heat generators, and three recommendations on space heaters and production of hot water in the home, regulation of heating in industrial undertakings, creation of advisory bodies on combined heat and power production and for district heating. Directive on modernisation of older houses (insulation of roofs and walls, double glazing, etc.) which could lead to the creation of thousand of new jobs.

2) Development of alternative sources of energy including financial aid for demonstration projects in the field of geo-thermal energy, coal gasification and coal liquifaction.

3) Utilisation of coal and problems of nuclear energy. The Commission is proposing to encourage the burning of coal in new power stations, financial support for coal stocks, and improved methods of monitoring coal imports.

In addition the Commission is putting forward its ideas on the second part of the crisis mechanism which will consist of a progress report on the setting of common standards of energy conservation in the Community in the event of an emergency. There will also be a discussion on the problem of overcapacity in the Community's refineries, the development and protection of energy investments in the Community including the proposal for setting a minimum selling price (MSP) for domestic oil production and suggestions for securing adequate supplies by long term contracts.

Sees notes P: 4 - 24 - 25 - 47.

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BRUXELLES, LE 13.6.77

REF NR 57198/LAB

NOTE BIO (77) 217 AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX  
CC AUX MEMBRES DU GROUPE ET A M LE DIRECTEUR GENERAL DE LA DG I  
ET A M OPITZ, DG VIII

MR BRUNNER S PRESS CONFERENCE  
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AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE IN PREPARATION FOR THE ENERGY MINISTER S COUNCIL IN LUXEMBOURG TOMORROW, THE COMMISSIONER RESPONSIBLE FOR ENERGY., MR GUIDO BRUNNER., SAID HE HOPED THE MINISTERS WOULD TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A THOROUGH-GOING DEBATE ON A PROPER ENERGY POLICY FOR THE COMMUNITY. HE ALSO MADE AN APPEAL FOR ONE LAST POLITICAL PUSH, POSSIBLY AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL, TO GET A SITE FOR THE JET PROJECT ACCEPTED AT LAST. HE CIRCULATED THE TEXT OF A TELEGRAM FROM THE JET DESIGN TEAM MANAGER AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE TO THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ALSO APPEALING FOR A DECISION. THIS ALSO POINTED OUT THAT CONSTRUCTION FUNDS HAD NOT BEEN RELEASED., THERE WAS NO AUTHORITY TO RECRUIT STAFF AND THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF A DECISION BY JUNE 30 THE PROJECT WOULD COME TO AN END. MR BRUNNER SAID A NON-DECISION WOULD INDEED MEAN THE END FOR JET WOULD DO EVERYTHING TO GIVE THE POLITICAL IMPULSE. EUROPE HAD PROBABLY LOST AN ADVANTAGE IT DID HAVE IN FUSION RESEARCH BUT NONETHELESS THE PROJECT WAS STILL WORTH WHILE. AND WOULD BE USEFUL FOR ALL MEMBER STATES. THE COST WAS RISING ALL THE TIME. HE THOUGHT IT WOULD COST ABOUT 150 MILLION UNITS OF ACCOUNT NOW.

IN HIS INTRODUCTION TO THE ENERGY MINISTERS' COUNCIL TOMORROW, MR BRUNNER IN EMPHASISING THE NEED FOR AN ENERGY POLICY FOR THE COMMUNITY AS SUCH, SAID THAT IF THE SAUDI ARABIANS DO INDEED RAISE PRICES AS ALREADY ALLEGED BY FIVE PERCENT AT NEXT MONTHS MEETING OF OPEC, THIS WOULD COST THE COMMUNITY AN EXTRA 700 MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR. ANY PRICE RISE HURT EUROPEAN COMPETITIVENESS MORE THAN IT DID THAT OF THE USA OR JAPAN. THE PROSPECT OF FURTHER OIL PRICERISES, THE LACK OF A PROPER FORUM FOR A NORTH SOUTH DIALOGUE, MEANT THAT THIS COUNCIL MEETING HELD SPECIAL IMPORTANCE. IF UN SECRETARY GENERAL KURT WALDHEIM S SUGGESTION FOR A WORLD ENERGY INSTITUTE CAME TO ANYTHING, THEN MR BRUNNER SAID THE COMMUNITY WOULD CLAIM THE RIGHT TO BE REPRESENTED IN IT AS A COMMUNITY. HE HOPED THE MINISTERS WOULD DRAW UP A COMPLETE PICTURE OF THE WORLD ENERGY SITUATION AND PROVE THE POLITICAL WILL TO DECIDE ON A POLICY WHICH WOULD BE A SIGNAL TO OTHER THAT THE MEMBER STATES INTENDED TO PUT THEIR AFFAIRS IN ORDER. THE BUNDLE OF MEASURES BEFORE THE MEETING, HE HOPED, WOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED IN ISOLATION, BUT AS MAKING UP A COHERENT WHOLE., A FRAMEWORK IN WHICH THE COUNCIL COULD CONTINUE THEIR DISCUSSIONS ON INDIVIDUAL ITEMS IN THE AUTUMN.

ON URANIUM SUPPLIES: MR BRUNNER SAID PRICES HAD RISEN SEVEN-FOLD SINCE 1973. THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH CANADA WERE STILL GOING ON BUT THE EMBARGO REMAINED. LAST WEEK THE CANADIANS HAD PUT FORWARD NEW PROPOSALS., THESE WERE NOW BEING STUDIED AND A REPLY WOULD BE SENT IN DUE TIME. HE HOPED THE CANADIANS WOULD RECONSIDER THE EMBARGO WHILE NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUED. IT WAS CAUSING DAMAGE TO INVESTORS AND TO ENTERPRISES AND TO REACTORS. WHILE THERE WAS NO IMMEDIATE CRISES OF SUPPLY, MR BRUNNER SAID HE BELIEVED RECONSIDERATION OF THE EMBARGO WOULD BE A TOKEN OF GOOD-WILL, AND WOULD ALSO COUNTER SOME RUMOURS, SUCH AS HAD EMERGED IN THE AMERICAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ABOUT PRICE FIXING IN URANIUM A GESTURE OF THAT KIND WOULD DECONGEST AND FACILITATE NEGOTIATIONS.

AS FOR SHIPMENTS OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM FROM THE UNITED STATES, MR BRUNNER CONFIRMED THESE WERE NOW ARRIVING REGULARLY AS PROMISED.

AMITIES  
R. RUGGIERO

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PRIERE DE FAIRE DIFFUSION HABITUELLE A PARTIR DE BRUXELLES POUR  
WASHINGTON, NEW YORK, OTTAWA ET ISPRA

MONSIEUR RUGGIERO  
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NOTE BIO (77) 217 (SUITE1) AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX  
C.C.:MEMBRES DU GROUPE, M. LE DIRECTEUR GENERAL DG I, M.OPITZ DG VIII

CONSEIL ENERGIE  
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THE COUNCIL OF ENERGY MINISTERS BEGAN MEETING AT 10.25 TODAY UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF MR TONY BENN WHO EXPRESSED HIS GRATITUDE TO THE COMMISSION FOR THE HEAVY PROGRAMME OF WORK THEY HAD ACCOMPLISHED SINCE THE MARCH MEETING. AT MR. BENN'S SUGGESTION THE MINISTERS BEGAN WITH A GENERAL DEBATE. FOR THE COMMISSION MR. BRUNNER SAID THAT IT SEEMED GENERALLY AGREED THAT THE COMMUNITY'S ENERGY SITUATION WAS NOT GOOD. HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE COUNCIL DEMONSTRATING TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD THAT THE COMMUNITY COULD ACT INSOFAR AS THEIR INTEREST WAS CONVERGING. PRESIDENT CARTER'S ENERGY SAVING PROGRAMME WAS MEETING SOME RESISTANCE AND THAT WOULD HAVE REPERCUSSIONS ON WORLD MARKET. THE COMMUNITY HAD TO DEMONSTRATE HIS ATTITUDE ON NUCLEAR ENERGY, THE ONLY SOURCE IN WHICH THE COMMUNITY COULD OBTAIN INDEPENDANCE. THE COUNCIL COULD GIVE A GOOD SIGN TO PUBLIC OPINION. SOME SIGN SHOULD ALSO BE GIVEN TO OUTSIDE SUPPLIERS OF URANIUM, SUCH AS CANADA WITH WHOM DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS WERE UNDERWAY. THE COUNCIL SHOULD SHOW THEY HAD OBJECTIVES WHICH ALL SHARED AND THAT THEY HAD THE POLITICAL WILL TO LAUNCH A SERIES OF ACTIONS, INCLUDING MAJOR EFFORTS IN THE FIELD OF ENERGY SAVING. SUMMING UP AFTER A GENERAL DEBATE IN WHICH ALL THE MINISTERS PARTICIPATED MR BENN SUGGESTED THAT IN THE FUTURE IT WOULD BE VALUABLE TO HAVE ON THE AGENDA THE TWO

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ITEMS THE GENERAL ENERGY SITUATION IN THE COMMUNITY, AND THE WORLD ENERGY SITUATION. DURING HIS TALKS WITH AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON HE WAS IMPRESSED BY THE EMPHASIS GIVEN TO THE EXPLOITATION OF COAL, AND TO THE RETHINKING OF NUCLEAR POLICY. THE PROPOSALS WERE BOLD AND BRAVE BUT WERE COMING UNDER CRITICAL EVALUATION. THE CIA FORECASTS ON WHICH SOME OF THE PROGRAMME WAS BASED DID NOT NOW SEEM TO BE SO ACCURATE AS AT FIRST CONSIDERED. AS FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY EVERYBODY WAS NOW COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PROBLEM AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF A DIFFICULT PUBLIC DISCUSSION.

THE COUNCIL DECIDED TO DISCUSS THE NUCLEAR ITEM ON THE AGENDA IN PUBLIC SESSION. MR BRUNNER IN A COMMENT ON THE NEGOTIATIONS DEALING WITH THE NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE SAID THE COMMUNITY MUST PARTICIPATE ALTHOUGH THERE COULD BE DIFFERENCES OF VIEW ON KEYPOINTS. NUCLEAR ENERGY WAS ONE SOURCE WHICH COULD BE USED TO REDUCE DEPENDENCE. 350,000 WORKERS WERE CONCERNED IN IT. ON THE CANADIAN NEGOTIATIONS HE SAID THERE WAS A NEW PROPOSAL FROM CANADA WHICH MODIFIED THE DEMANDS BEING MADE ABOUT REGULATIONS OF THE TRANSFER OF NUCLEAR FUEL. THIS WOULD BE STUDIES BUT HE WOULD NOT WANT TO PREEMPT MATTERS.

MORE LATER

R. ELPHICK

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PRIERE DE FAIRE DIFFUSION HABITUELLE A PARTIR DE BRUXELLES POUR  
WASHINGTON, NEW YORK, OTTAWA ET ISPRA  
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DG VIII  
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ENERGY COUNCIL  
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THE MINISTERS SHOWED LESS OF A MEETING OF MINDS IT CAME TO A  
DISCUSSION OF THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS ON COAL. THE  
AGREEMENT AT THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING IN MARCH ON MAINTAINING OF  
IMPORTS WAS BEING INTRODUCED . MR BENN APPEALED TO TWO  
(UNNAMED COUNTRIES) TO HASTEN THEIR REPORTING PROCEDURES.

ON THE GIVING OF FINANCIAL AID TO ENCOURAGE THE BURNING OF  
COAL IN POWER STATIONS, HOWEVER, THE MINISTERS CAME UP AGAINST  
A FUNDAMENTAL DIVISION OF OPINION BETWEEN THOSE STATES WHO  
WANTED THE AID TO GO TO IMPORTED AS WELL AS DOMESTIC COAL  
PRODUCTION (ITALY PRINCIPALLY ) AND THOSE WHO BELIEVED THIS  
MEASURE SHOULD BE APPLIED TO DOMESTIC PRODUCERS ONLY(U.K.,  
GERMANY). IN SPITE OF A PLEA FROM MR BRUNNER FOR SOME GUIDING  
OPINION FROM THIS COUNCIL, EVEN ON A "MIX" OF THE TWO MEASURES,  
THE CHAIRMAN IN THE END SUGGESTED THIS MEASURE WOULD HAVE TO GO  
BACK FOR RECONSIDERATION TO COREPER. THE MINISTERS THEN DECIDED IT  
WAS TIME FOR LUNCH.

MORE LATER

B. ELPHICK

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ENERGY COUNCIL  
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THE ENERGY MINISTERS RETURNED AFTER LUNCH TO TACKLE THE REST OF THE AGENDA. THE PROPOSAL TO FINANCE COAL STOCKS WILL BE BROUGHT BACK FOR THE CONSIDERATION AT THE NEXT MEETING. ON REFINERIES THERE WAS A GOOD DEAL OF EVIDENT DISAGREEMENT OVER HOW TO DEAL WITH OVERCAPACITY, AS REGARDS THE ORGANIZATION OF THE INTERNAL MARKET AND THIS SUBJECT WILL ALSO COME UP AGAIN. TURNING TO THE PAPERS ON THE PROTECTION OF INVESTMENTS, THE MINIMUM SELLING PRICE AND RATIONAL USE OF ENERGY, THE MINISTERS AGREED TO LOOK AT THEM AGAIN AS WELL. THE MINISTERS WERE ABLE TO RECORD HOWEVER SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS ON THE SECOND PART OF THE COMMUNITY'S PLANS TO COUNTER ANOTHER OIL EMERGENCY ON THE 73 SCALE. THIS WAS OUR PARTICULAR CONCERN TO THE ITALIAN DELEGATION).M THE BASIC PROPOSAL WAS THAT THE COMMUNITY MAY SET A TARGET FOR A 10 0/0 - REDUCTION FOR TWO MONTHSAFTER WHICH FURTHER REDUCTIONS MAY BE PROPOSED AND EXTENDED TO OTHER FORMS OF ENERGY APART FROM OIL . IN THAT CASE THE COUNCIL WOULD TAKE A DECISION WITHIN 10 DAYS ON ANY PROPOSALS FROM THE COMMISSION. IT EMERGED THAT EIGHT DELEGATIONS WERE IN FAVOUR OF THE COUNCIL TAKING THE DECISION BY QUALIFIED MAJORITY. THE U.K. DELEGATE ON THE OTHER HAND INSISTED THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE A UNANIMOUS DECISION AND EXPRESSED A RESERVATION. AFTER THE MINISATERS AJOURNED BOTH MR BENN AND MR BRUNNER EXPRESSED SATISFACTION AT THE WAY THINGS HAD GONE. MR BENN TOLD THE JOURNALISTS THERE WERE NO PUBLIC RELATIONS SUCCESSES IN ENERGY POLICIES. HE THOUGHT THESE LAST SIX MONTHS HAD BEEN A SOLID SIX MONTHS OF WORK, AND HE HAD NO COMPLAINTS. IN SEPARATE TALKS WITH JOURNALISTS MR BRUNNER EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE DEBATE ON NUCLEAR AFFAIRS HAD BEEN MOST VALUABLE AND HE WAS PLEASED THAT THE MINISTERS HAD BEGUN TO LOOK AT THE PROPOSALS AS A COHERENT WHOLE.

CONGRATULATING MR BENN DURING THE MEETING MR BRUNNER SAID HE THOUGHT MINISTERS HAD GOT TO THE POINT WHERE THEY WERE SLOWLY BRIDGING D DIFFERENCES OF NATIONAL INTERESTS AND THE DESIGN OF A MODEST BUT PRATICAL MODEL OF AN ENERGY POLICY FOR THE COMMUNITY WAS BEGINNING TO EMERGE.

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