CABINET

THE POSITION OF BELGIUM IN THE PROPOSED FIVE
POWER CONFERENCE.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Committee of Imperial Defence at their Meeting on 29th October, 1936, the accompanying Report by the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee (C.I.D. Paper No. 1269-B), together with an extract from the draft Minutes of the 233rd Meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence, are circulated to the Cabinet.

(Signed) M.P.A. HANKEY.
Secretary to the Cabinet.

Whitehall Gardens, S.W. 1.
30th October, 1936.

* These Minutes, being in draft form only, are subject to correction.
(3)—POSITION OF BELGIUM IN THE PROPOSED FIVE-POWER CONFERENCE.

(C.I.D. Paper No. 1269-B)

(Previous reference: C.I.D. Minutes of the 282nd Meeting, Minute 5.)

THE COMMITTEE had under consideration a report by the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee (C.I.D. Paper No. 1269-B) regarding the position of Belgium in the proposed Five-Power Conference.

SIR ERNLE CHATFIELD, at the request of the Chairman, introduced the Report and summarised the salient points, leading to the conclusion that from the military point of view His Majesty's Government should not ask that in the new Treaty Belgium should guarantee the United Kingdom, and should not support the view of the French Government that Belgium should guarantee France (and Germany). This conclusion was in accord with the conclusion reached in a report dated September 1936, dealing with the preparations for the Five-Power Conference.*

SIR ROBERT VANSITTART said that he had no reason to differ with the conclusion reached by the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee. Any opposition on our part to the policy recently declared by the Belgian Government might encourage the Belgians to pursue a less vigorous defence policy than now seemed possible.

CONCLUSIONS.

The Committee of Imperial Defence agreed—

To recommend—

(a) That approval should be given to the Report by the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee (C.I.D. Paper No. 1269-B), the conclusions of which are summarised in paragraph 15 as follows:—

"(i) From the military point of view, His Majesty's Government should not ask that in the new Treaty Belgium should guarantee the United Kingdom; and

(ii) From the military point of view, His Majesty's Government should not support the view of the French Government that in the new Treaty Belgium should guarantee France (and Germany)."

(b) That the Report should be submitted to the Cabinet together with the Minutes of the Committee on the subject.

* * * * * *

2 Whitehall Gardens, S.W. 1,
October 29, 1936.

* C.I.D. Paper No. 1930-B. (Also C.P. 218 (36).)
THE POSITION OF BELGIUM IN THE PROPOSED FIVE-POWER CONFERENCE.

(Previous C.I.D. Paper No. 1260-B.)

REPORT.

Introductory.

In our Report on the preparations for the Five-Power Conference, the conclusions that we recorded on the question as to whether—

"Belgium should be relieved of giving any guarantee, and her commitments limited to an understanding to defend her own territory,"

were as follows*:

"(i) An effective Belgian neutrality would be greatly to our advantage and should not deliberately be rendered impossible, even though the chances of its being maintained throughout a Western European war are remote.

(ii) We should, therefore, welcome a request by Belgium that she should not be a guarantor Power, but should merely give an undertaking to defend her own territory."

2. Since then, Belgium has made a public declaration of her policy. For the future she is determined to ensure the protection of her own frontiers, but she intends to have no obligations as a guarantor Power. In other words, Belgium has adopted the precise attitude which we hoped, from the military point of view, that she would adopt.

3. We have been informed by the Foreign Office that the French Government feel strongly on the subject of this declaration of Belgian policy, and that their Ambassador has indeed expressed the hope that His Majesty’s Government would support the French Government in urging the Belgian Government to remain a guarantor State.

4. We have, therefore, been requested (see Appendix) to re-examine the conclusions summarised in paragraph 1 above, in the light of the arguments adduced by the Belgians and France, in the notes which are annexed to the Appendix to this Report. (Enclosures Nos. 1 and 2 respectively.)

* Enclosure to C.I.D. Paper No. 1260-B, paragraph 45.
Belgian Arguments.

5. It would appear that Belgium has two principal reasons for her unwillingness to be a guarantor Power. In the first place, she desires to avoid the risk of being drawn into war as a result of French commitments in Central and Eastern Europe, and particularly as a result of the Franco-Soviet Pact. With this desire we have every sympathy, the more so since we recently emphasised in our Report on the preparations for the Five Power Conference, the importance, from our own point of view, of taking "steps to ensure that any guarantee we give will not automatically draw us into a war which has as its origin the rectification of Germany's Eastern frontier." (Enclosure to C.I.D. Paper No. 1260-B, paragraph 48.) In the same Report* we stressed the necessity, from the military point of view, for limiting our commitments in Europe, and for undertaking no liability to engage in any war in which our vital interests are not affected. It may be that in any case Belgium's chance of maintaining an effective neutrality throughout a Western war is small; but in our opinion the chance will be very much greater if she is relieved of any guarantees and if her only commitment is an understanding to defend her own territory.

Moreover, the greater her chance of maintaining her neutrality effectively the less is the likelihood of our being dragged in; consequently we ought to support her in gaining this end by relieving her of any guarantees.

6. Secondly, it seems that the Belgian Government desire to promote national unity in support of a national foreign policy, and thereby, to obtain the support of the Belgian people for the strengthening of their military forces and defences. As to this, it is clear that any action which renders Belgium the more able to defend her own territory, is to our advantage from the military point of view. If, therefore, the giving of a guarantee to France would, as we believe to be the case, wreck the hope of Belgian national unity in the field of foreign policy, and thereby prejudice the military preparations which, we learn, are being undertaken by the Belgian Government with commendable vigour in the face of strong Parliamentary opposition, it would be unwise on our part to use our influence for such guarantee.

French Arguments.

7. Turning now to the French objections to the declared policy of the Belgian Government (see Enclosure No. 2 to Appendix), they draw attention in the first place to its implications from the Belgian point of view. They argue that the close collaboration in the preparation of concerted defence plans that has hitherto existed between the French and Belgian General Staffs will no longer be possible. As a result, there will be inevitable delay in the assistance that can be given by the French Army, and a risk that Belgium may be overrun before such assistance can become effective.

8. There is, of course, some force in this argument. We would observe, however, that we have been informed by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that General Gamelin, the Chief of the French General Staff, informed our Military Attache in Paris, as recently as last March, that the French were prepared to support Belgium, only if it was known for certain that the British Field Force was on its way to Belgium. It seems probable that this threat to leave Belgium to her fate was intended to force us into a definite commitment to send the Field Force to Belgium at the outset of the war, and to undertake, in time of peace, the detailed military conversations that this commitment would involve. In these circumstances we are left with the strong impression that what the French most fear from the Belgian declaration—although they do not admit it—is that the termination of the existing close liaison between the French and Belgian General Staffs will automatically put an end to any hope of the Franco-British military conversations.

9. As to this, it is our opinion that mutual assistance pacts on a multilateral basis have no more military value than the Covenant of the League. Any multilateral agreement, as we have previously pointed out, precludes the possibility of effective staff conversations between the parties thereto, since it is

* Enclosure to C.I.D. Paper No. 1260-B, paragraphs 4 and 5.
† Enclosure to C.I.D. Paper No. 1260-B, paragraphs 59 to 62.
clearly impracticable to concert plans with A for war against B and, at the same time, with B for war against A. We have also expressed the view* that bilateral staff conversations or conversations between a limited number of the parties to a multilateral agreement would be invidious, and would, moreover, tend to involve us in military commitments which would fetter our freedom of action as to the form that our intervention might take when the occasion arose. Therefore, we again wish to emphasise that, whatever the position of Belgium in any new treaty that may be negotiated, other of course than a definite alliance, we should not be committed to military conversations, either with France or with Belgium. It might be thought right to make a definite statement to this effect to the French Government.

10. Turning again to the French objections, they argue that the recent Belgium declaration involves grave consequences to French and British interests. In the first place, the concentration of the French and British forces would, they consider, be prejudiced by the fact that, in the absence of a pre-concerted plan, the distant Franco-Belgian cover, which is at present contemplated, would not be available in time. This argument assumes, without justification, that we are committed to despatching the Field Force to France at the outset of hostilities.

11. Apart from this, the French contend that the most serious consequences of Belgian neutrality would arise in connection with aerial warfare (see Annex to Enclosure No. 2, Section II). They point out, in particular, that both France and Great Britain would, under the new Belgian policy, be deprived of the Belgian anti-aircraft observation service and anti-aircraft defences, and of the use of Belgian aerodromes. Great Britain would thus “find it impossible to operate on the vital zone of the Ruhr, and the German bases in Westphalia,” whilst the French air forces would be unable, without inevitable difficulties, to reach these objectives, for to do so they would have to make long flights over German territory. Germany, on the other hand, would be able to attack London from bases on the North Sea, whereas “Great Britain would have no chance of attacking, by way of reprisal, German objectives of comparable importance.

12. It is our view that recent technical developments have reduced the potential value to us of the Belgian observation service and anti-aircraft defences, and it is an over-statement to suggest that it would be impossible for us to operate against the Ruhr without the use of Belgian aerodromes. We could clearly do so by operating from bases in N.E. France, and the tactical difficulties in doing so would be largely offset by the greater security of occupying them and the added security and convenience of such bases and their lines of communication as compared to those in Belgium. Though we agree generally with the French thesis that a neutral Belgium would enable German Air Forces to attack our vital areas in greater strength than we could attack theirs, it must be observed that even if Belgium were not neutral, the Germans would still have the advantage due to the far greater importance and vulnerability of London than any comparable objective in Germany.

13. We have, however, seen a Record† of a conversation between Mr. Strang and M. Massigli in which the latter “admitted that there might be ways of getting round these difficulties, even if Belgium gave no express guarantee. She might, for example, consent to the passage of French or British forces, through or over her territory, in circumstances to be defined in the new treaty, and indeed, she was bound to do so under Article XVI (3), of the Covenant, if France and Great Britain were acting under that article.” The possibilities of the case clearly call for the most careful examination.

CONCLUSION.

14. The foregoing examination of the arguments adduced by the Belgians and French has led us to the conclusion that, from the military point of view, the balance of advantage is to be derived from adhering to the recommendations quoted in paragraph 1 above.

† Enclosure to C.I.D. Paper No. 1260-B, paragraphs 59 to 62.
† Enclosure to Paper No. C.O.S. 516.

[13990]
15. Accordingly, our answers to the specific questions put to us by the Foreign Office, are as follows:—

(i) From the military point of view, His Majesty’s Government should not ask that in the new Treaty Belgium should guarantee the United Kingdom; and

(ii) From the military point of view, His Majesty’s Government should not support the view of the French Government that in the new Treaty Belgium should guarantee France (and Germany).

(Signed) ERNLE CHATFIELD.
E. L. ELLINGTON.
C. J. DEVERELL.

2 Whitehall Gardens, S.W. 1,
October 26, 1936.
APPENDIX.

Copy of a letter from the Foreign Office to the Secretary, Committee of Imperial Defence.

[C.O.S. 515.]

Sir, Foreign Office, October 16, 1936.

IT will be recalled that in Foreign Office memorandum* of the 19th August on the preparations for the proposed Five Power Conference the advice of the Committee of Imperial Defence was sought on the question whether Belgium should be relieved of giving any guarantee and her commitments limited to an undertaking to defend her own territory. The views of the Committee of Imperial Defence on this question will be found in paragraphs 36-45 of the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee's Report† of the 1st September (C.P. 218 (36)). The conclusions of the Sub-Committee were that:—

(1) an effective Belgian neutrality would be greatly to our advantage and should not deliberately be rendered impossible even though the chances of its being maintained throughout a Western European war are remote; and

(2) we should, therefore, welcome a request by Belgium that she should not be a guarantor Power but should merely give an undertaking to defend her own territory.

2. Subsequently, on the 17th September, a memorandum was communicated to the four other Governments, in paragraph 5 (1) of which is expressed, in the following words, the view of His Majesty's Government as to which Powers should give and receive guarantees so far as the United Kingdom is concerned:—

"His Majesty's Government would be ready to guarantee the observance of such (non-aggression) arrangements as between Germany on the one hand and France and Belgium on the other, in return for similar guarantees for the United Kingdom from France against Germany and from Germany against France."*

It should be noted that in this memorandum no view is expressed by His Majesty's Government upon the question of a Belgian guarantee to France, or, indeed, respecting guarantees by or to any Power except in cases where His Majesty's Government are themselves directly interested.

3. During the recent discussions at Geneva it was learned that the French Government intended to emphasise the importance which, for a number of reasons, they attached to a Belgian guarantee to France. It was also learned (see Geneva despatch* No. 96 of the 30th September; copy enclosed) that the Belgian Government were very satisfied with our Note of the 17th September did not propose a Belgian guarantee to the United Kingdom and that they hoped that France also would not ask Belgium for a guarantee. Subsequently, the French Government's views were developed in detail in a memorandum‡ communicated by the French Delegation at Geneva on the 2nd October (Geneva despatch No. 106 of the 2nd October; copy enclosed). Copy of records§ of conversations at Geneva between French and Belgian Ministers and officials, which have been communicated confidentially by the French Embassy in London, are also enclosed.

4. The arguments used by the French and Belgian Governments for and against Belgium continuing as a guarantor Power are not discussed in the Foreign Office memorandum of the 19th August, nor in the Chiefs of Staff's memorandum of the 1st September. I am therefore directed by Mr. Secretary Eden to ask that the views of the Committee of Imperial Defence may be obtained with the least possible delay on such of these arguments as have a military character.

*Appendix to Enclosure to C.I.D. Paper No. 1200-B. †Enclosure to C.I.D. Paper No. 1200-B. ‡Enclosure No. 1 to Appendix. §Enclosure No. 2 to Appendix. " Not reproduced.
5. There are, in effect, two separate questions now under discussion:—

(a) Should His Majesty's Government ask that in the new Treaty Belgium should guarantee the United Kingdom, although this was not the case under the Locarno Treaty?

(b) Should His Majesty's Government support the view of the French Government that in the new Treaty, as in the Treaty of Locarno, Belgium should guarantee France (and Germany)?

6. Mr. Eden will be glad if the Committee of Imperial Defence will reconsider both these questions in relation to one another as well as in the light of the technical arguments now adduced by both the French and Belgian Governments. I am to point out that an early decision may be required of His Majesty's Government, as the French Ambassador asked on the 13th October to be furnished with their views as soon as possible. The French Government evidently feel strongly on this subject, and the Ambassador, indeed, expressed the hope that His Majesty's Government would support the French Government in urging the Belgian Government to remain a guarantor State.

7. Since the foregoing was written the need for very early consideration has been emphasised by the speech of the King of the Belgians on the 14th October.

I am, &c.

(Signed) R. F. Wigram.

ENCLOSURE No. 1 TO APPENDIX.

United Kingdom Delegate to Foreign Office.—(Received October 3.)

(No. 96.)

The United Kingdom delegate to the League of Nations presents his compliments, and has the honour to transmit copies of a record of a conversation between Mr. Eden and M. Spaak on the 28th September, respecting the Locarno conversations, of which a copy has been sent to His Majesty's Ambassador, Brussels.

United Kingdom Delegation,

Annex to Enclosure No. 1.

Record of a Conversation between Mr. Eden and M. Spaak.

I HAD a conversation this evening with M. Spaak, the Belgian Foreign Minister, who asked me whether I could give him any information as to the present position and prospects of the Five-Power meeting. He had heard some pessimistic reports which his own information did not seem to justify, and this had made him particularly anxious to obtain authentic information. I gave M. Spaak some account of recent developments, which, I said, led me to agree with him that, while there were still plenty of obstacles to be overcome, there seemed to me to be no grounds for excessive pessimism at present.

M. Spaak said that he had carefully studied the memorandum which we had sent to him stating our views as to the method we proposed for facilitating the progress of negotiations through the diplomatic channel. The Belgian Government were in entire agreement with those suggestions. They were, however, by no means so completely in agreement with the document submitted by the French Government, and M. Spaak asked me whether I intended to return any reply to this. I said that I had not yet had time to give any detailed study to the French document, and that I did not expect to be able to do this until I arrived back in London. I would then consider whether the document was of a character that called for a reply. My own impression was that the French Government had stated that it was for our information, and I supposed for that of the Belgian Government also, but that it had not been communicated to the other signatories of the Locarno Treaty. M. Spaak said that this was so. In the circumstances, I
added, the document was hardly in the same category as our memorandum, which had been submitted to all the signatories with a view to furthering progress, and it would perhaps be a pity if in this early stage of our diplomatic negotiations there were already two sets of proposals in existence. With this opinion M. Spaak declared himself to be in complete agreement.

The Belgian Foreign Minister then asked me whether I had had any conversation with the Dutch Government as to their participation in a new Western Pact. I replied that I had not, whereupon M. Spaak said that he had had some exchange of views with the Dutch Minister at Brussels, which had been followed up by some conversation with M. de Graaff himself at Geneva within the last few days. From this it appeared that the position of Holland was that she was willing to be guaranteed, but that she did not wish to be a signatory of the projected treaty. M. Spaak commented that this seemed to him to be hardly a tenable position, and he thought it likely that in due course the Dutch would move from it and be willing to sign a treaty by which their territory was guaranteed as long as they were not asked to guarantee others.

In this connexion the Belgian Foreign Minister expressed his gratitude that in our proposals we had not suggested that Belgium should guarantee Great Britain. As he understood our position, we did not ask Belgium for such a guarantee, but we did expect her to insist upon respect of her neutrality, both by land and by air. I replied that this was the position. M. Spaak expressed the earnest hope that it might be the position of the French Government also, for if Belgium had further to increase her armaments and her length of military service, both of which he feared would be necessary in the near future, it would be greatly facilitated if she were not asked to guarantee France. It was impossible to deny that, unfortunately, there was a certain anti-French feeling in Belgium. A graceful gesture by France, such as we had made in our proposals, while it could have no deep political significance, would be of the greatest assistance in promoting Belgian national unity in support of a national foreign policy; it would be all the better if Belgium and Holland could eventually be in the pact on the same terms.

I understood from M. Spaak that he had made some progress with the French Government in conversation on this subject, though the latter appeared to have certain apprehensions as to the consequences of Belgium not guaranteeing France. He himself thought these apprehensions misplaced, since France stood to gain if she only were attacked by Germany, for her own narrow frontier was heavily defended.

I asked M. Spaak what was his view as to the problem of Luxemburg which had been raised in the French memorandum. He replied that he did not consider that the matter had any political significance. Luxemburg’s position was unchanged in this respect by the violation of the demilitarised zone. The question was purely a military one and should be considered on that basis.

Finally, the Belgian Foreign Minister stated that he had the impression, from conversations which he had had with certain members of the French delegation in the last few days, that relations between France and Soviet Russia were now how a little less close than they had been a month or two ago. This fact seemed to give M. Spaak some satisfaction, even though he is a Socialist.


ANTHONY EDEN.
Annex to Enclosure No. 2.

(Translation.)

Consequences from the Military Point of View of a change in the International Situation of Belgium as established by the Treaty of Locarno.—(Communicated by M. Delbos to the Secretary of State.)

A modification of the international situation of Belgium tending to divest her of every obligation as a guarantor Power and leaving her merely in the position of one guaranteed might have serious consequences, both from the point of view of Belgian security and from the point of view of French and British interests.

I.

So long as Belgium intends herself to ensure the protection of her frontiers, such a modification would not result for her in any reduction of her military burdens.

Franco-Belgian military collaboration, in the event of a conflict, in effect only implies assistance to be rendered by the French armies to a Belgium whose territory has been violated or has been threatened with violation; by abandoning her position as guarantor Power in respect of France, Belgium would thus not be avoiding any positive obligation.

On the other hand, it is permissible to ask whether, once the international situation of Belgium has been modified, French assistance would have the same efficacy.

At present this assistance takes the form of intervention, after a very short lapse of time, by the first échelon of important forces.

The despatch of these forces after this short lapse of time presupposes a careful preparation in time of peace on the part of the General Staffs of the two armies working in collaboration; and it necessitates close and frequent contacts between these General Staffs.

As soon as the co-operation of the two armies no longer takes place as the consequence of reciprocal obligations between the two countries, two forces will operate to relax the military ties which exist between Paris and Brussels; on the one hand, the same Belgian elements which would favour the abandonment by Belgium of the position of guarantor would declare for a strict application of the principle of neutrality; on the other hand, Germany would not fail, proceeding from the modification which had taken place in the situation of Belgium in relation to France, to argue that the guarantee given without reciprocity by all the signatories of the new treaty to Belgium implies a loosening of the military ties with France. It is impossible not to recall in this respect the advantage which German apologetics have drawn from the supposed Anglo-Belgian Staff conversations which preceded 1914.

Thus the preparation in time of peace of the Franco-Belgian co-operation mentioned above would become impossible; from which the following consequences would result, which would not fail to have a serious import for Belgium:

An inevitable delay in the assistance given by the French armies to the Belgian armies fighting for the defence of the national frontiers;
A risk that the Belgian forces would find themselves unable to hold up the German forces on the Meuse;

The Belgian forces would be obliged to abandon to the enemy the greater part of the territory, with all the consequences which might result so far as concerns the subsequent conduct of operations.

Such risks would not, moreover, be compensated for by any chance that the Reich, on account of the attitude of strict neutrality adopted by Belgium, might at the beginning of a conflict renounce the invasion of that country. The invasion of Belgian territory by Germany in the event of military operations in Western Europe results in effect as much from strategical necessities as from political aims; every diminution of the possibility of defending the country would, by increasing the advantages to be gained from such an invasion, in the end only encourage the German General Staff still more to undertake it.
Such, generally speaking, from the Belgian point of view, are the military consequences to be foreseen, whether it is a case of war on land or of war in the air.

If the situation be now considered from the point of view of French and British interests, the consequences appear singularly grave.

It will be noted first that, should a German offensive in Belgian territory be facilitated for the reasons indicated above, the concentration of the French and British forces, deprived as they would be of the distant Franco-Belgian cover which it would not have been possible to organise in time, might be hindered. But it is, above all, from the point of view of aerial warfare that the consequences would be serious.

Here there are several hypotheses to examine:

(a) The case of a German attack confined to the Franco-German frontier and not including flight over Belgium.

Under the Treaty of Locarno, France and England were entitled to demand from Belgium the bringing into action of the Belgian observation service and anti-aircraft system, the right of flight over Belgium (which would result, in any case, from the application of article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations) and the right to use Belgian aerodromes. That being so, the French and British air forces would be able, without difficulty and effectively, to attack the Ruhr Basin. Moreover, the Belgian observation service would allow enemy forces making for Paris or London to be observed within a limit of time compatible with the necessary delay in putting into operation the arrangements for the defence of the two capitals.

On the other hand, in the event of Belgium confining herself to the attitude of a “guaranteed Power,” Great Britain would find it impossible to operate on the vital zone of the Ruhr, and on the German air bases in Westphalia; it would follow from this that the assistance of the British air forces would lose a great deal of its effect so far as France is concerned. As for the French air forces, they would be unable, without inevitable difficulties, to reach these objectives, for to do so they would have to make a long flight over German territory.

It will be observed, on the other hand, that Germany, operating from bases on the North Sea, would be able, without violating Belgian air, to attack London. In this case Great Britain would have no chance of attacking, by way of reprisals, German objectives of comparable importance.

(b) The case of a German land attack confined to the Franco-German frontier with violation of Belgian air, but without acts of war being committed on Belgian territory.

If the Belgian Government does not consider flight over its territory to be a \textit{casus belli}, the situation will be, from the French and English point of view, extremely serious. Certainly, French and British air forces will be able in their turn to fly over Belgian territory to attack the Ruhr and the German air bases in Westphalia; but France and Great Britain will lose the advantage of the Belgian observation service, which will be very serious for the security of Paris and still more for that of London.

(c) The case of the German attack violating the territory and the air of Belgium.

Evidently in this case there is no theoretical difference between Belgium as a guarantor and as a guaranteed Power. But if, in consequence of the new situation of Belgium, no preparations for intervention had been made in time of peace, the efficacy and, above all, the rapidity of the intervention of the Franco-British air forces would be seriously diminished. The absence of previous agreement for the organisation of the observation service in Belgian territory for the advantage of France and England would, moreover, have extremely awkward consequences, at least at the outset of the conflict.

III.

To sum up, the modification of the situation of Belgium in the new treaty would offer grave drawbacks from the point of view of French and British interests.
As for Belgium herself, since the French and British obligations towards a
guaranteed Power are identically the same as towards a guarantor Power, this
modification would be without practical inconvenience, if preparation could be
made in time of peace for the co-operation of the three countries. But, for the
reasons indicated above, the most serious doubts must be expressed in this
connexion. If these doubts are even in part well founded, the consequences for
Belgian security would be grave; in view of the conditions of modern war, having
regard at once to the possibility of a German attack by rapid motorised forces
and to the technical conditions of French intervention, a minute and continuous
preparation for co-operation is particularly necessary. In the absence of such
preparation, the French army would only be able, at the best, to form a rallying-
point for the Belgian army.

Geneva, October 2, 1936.