

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Intersessional Committee

BELGIAN RESTRICTIONS ON IMPORTS FROM THE DOLLAR AREA

Telegram from United States Government¹

"The Government of the United States has on various occasions expressed concern re import restrictions imposed by Belgium against dollar goods. It has carefully and sympathetically studied the Belgian justification for these restrictions. The United States Government recognizes the seriousness of the Belgian intra-European surplus problem and the importance of achieving an early and satisfactory solution to the problem. However, the United States Government believes that dollar import restrictions will not make any significant contribution toward solving the problem and, if anything, are likely to increase some of Belgium's present economic difficulties. In the view of the United States Government the Belgian action in applying discriminatory import restrictions under these circumstances is inconsistent with Belgian obligations under GATT. In sum, the United States Government sees no basis for justifying these restrictions, either in terms of the provisions of the GATT or in terms of devising an effective solution to the problems facing Belgium.

"The United States Government considers that the benefits accruing to it directly and indirectly under the General Agreement, in its trade with Belgium, are being nullified and impaired and that the attainment of the objective of the General Agreement is being impeded as a result of the Belgian import restrictions, which are inconsistent with the obligations of Belgium under the General Agreement. Written representations to this effect were made to Belgium on January 4th, 1952, by a note delivered to the Belgian Government, but no satisfactory adjustment has been effected. Accordingly, the Government of the United States hereby refers the matter to the Contracting Parties in accordance with the provisions of Article XXIII of the General Agreement and requests that the Intersessional Committee establish a working party to consider the problem and to report back to the Contracting Parties."

¹ Dated 21 February 1952.