

## Memorandum by the Chiefs of Staff on the defence organisation of Western Union (25 August 1948)

**Caption:** In a memorandum dated 25 August 1948, the Chiefs of Staff of the Member States of Western Union put forward recommendations to the Defence Ministers for the establishment of a more comprehensive and permanent defence organisation.

**Source:** National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>, Records of international organizations, DG. Copies of records of the Brussels Treaty Organisation and Western European Union. Brussels Treaty Organisations and Western European Union: Microfilm copies of files, DG 1.

Military Committee of the Five Powers. Western Union - Defence Organisation. Memorandum by the Chiefs of Staff, F.P. (48) 17. London: 25.08.1948. 3 p.

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[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/memorandum\\_by\\_the\\_chiefs\\_of\\_staff\\_on\\_the\\_defence\\_organisation\\_of\\_western\\_union\\_25\\_august\\_1948-en-73e420de-daab-4357-b1a9-fada06f91231.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/memorandum_by_the_chiefs_of_staff_on_the_defence_organisation_of_western_union_25_august_1948-en-73e420de-daab-4357-b1a9-fada06f91231.html)

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25TH AUGUST, 1948.

MILITARY COMMITTEE OF THE FIVE POWERS

WESTERN UNION DEFENCE ORGANISATION

Memorandum by the Chiefs of Staff

At our Meeting on 24th August we discussed in detail a paper submitted by the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff.

2. We desire to put forward the following recommendations to Ministers of Defence for establishing a more comprehensive and more permanent defence organisation for the Five Powers :-

A. Governmental Control

That there should be a formal Western Union Defence Committee composed of Ministers responsible for defence in peace and war and that this Committee should meet as occasion requires and not necessarily at regular intervals.

B. Higher Military Direction

(i) That there should be a permanent Western Union Chiefs of Staff Committee in London meeting regularly and as occasion requires.

(ii) That each of the Five Powers should have the right to be represented on this Committee; that all the Chiefs of Staff of each Power should be members but that normally they should be represented on the Committee by one Chief of Staff; and that an invitation should be sent to the Government of the United States to send a representative of their Chiefs of Staff to sit on this Committee.

(iii) That the function of the Western Union Chiefs of Staff Committee should be to advise the Western Union Defence Committee on all matters affecting the defence of the Western Union as a whole, including overseas territories, and to investigate and consider in common all matters which may be referred to it by the Western Union Defence Committee. Within this broad directive its special tasks should be to ensure that within Western Europe :-

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- (a) The military resources of the five countries are organised to meet the strategic requirements of the Allies.
  - (b) The forces of the various nations are welded into an effective fighting machine.
  - (c) The combined resources of the five nations are allotted in the best way.
  - (d) A proper balance is maintained between the conflicting requirements of internal security and home defence on the one hand, and the European battle on the other.
  - (e) The evaluation, preparation and distribution of the necessary resources, in particular to the Commander of the European battle, whose special task will be to make the necessary operational plans and to put them into operation.
  - (f) The exact area of the responsibility of the command of the European battle in war is defined. It will be necessary to keep this under constant review.
- (iv) That the Western Union Chiefs of Staff Committee should be served by a permanent combined staff in London, the exact composition of which should be worked out forthwith by the existing Military Committee.
- (v) That there should be one single international Secretariat-General to serve the Western Union Defence Committee, the Western Union Chiefs of Staff Committee, the combined staff and all its sub-committees; and that the exact composition and powers of this Secretariat should be worked out by the Military Committee.

### C. Organisation of Command

- (i) The appointment of a Supreme or Deputy Supreme Commander does not appear possible at the moment. It is, however, vital that Army and Air Force Commanders-in-Chief for Western Europe should be appointed at once, together with a senior Naval Adviser for the time being.
- (ii) That the functions of these Commanders-in-Chief and of the Naval Adviser should be, under the direction of the Western Union Chiefs of Staff, to :-
  - (a) Plan the battle to hold the enemy in Europe with the resources allocated by the Western Union Chiefs of Staff.
  - (b) Advise the Western Union Chiefs of Staff on the requirements to fight the battle so that the forces allocated are organised, trained and equipped in the manner necessary to implement their plans; and to ensure that the necessary operational and administrative facilities are available at the outbreak of war.

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- (c) Prepare the necessary operational directives to formations detailed to be under the command of the Supreme Commander in war, so that they know their immediate role. This applies particularly to the allied forces of occupation in Germany.
- (d) To visit and maintain contact with Commanders and formations who come under their command in war.
- (iii) That these Commanders-in-Chief should make their own recommendations on the location of their headquarters, bearing in mind that the headquarters must be together and must be on the Continent in war and that they must be ready to function as soon as war starts.
- (iv) That one officer should direct and co-ordinate the work of these Commanders-in-Chief and the Naval Adviser in Committee, but that his appointment should be considered later..
- (v) That the nationalities of the above Commanders-in-Chief should be as follows :-
- |                         |         |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Land Commander-in-Chief | French  |
| Air Commander-in-Chief  | British |
| Naval Adviser           | French  |
- "(vi) That instructions should be sent to the Commanders-in-Chief to meet together forthwith, discuss their task and report to us in person as early as possible for a joint examination of the problems involved. "

(Signed) TEDDER

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25TH AUGUST, 1948.