

## Brief by the Foreign Office for the North Atlantic Council meeting in Paris on 9–11 May 1955: Relationship between NATO and WEU (4 May 1955)

**Caption:** On 4 May 1955, the Foreign Office issues a brief outlining the British position on NATO–WEU relations prior to the ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Paris from 9 to 11 May 1955. The United Kingdom’s position is that, while Western European Union (WEU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) should maintain close cooperation, WEU should not duplicate NATO’s work. The brief also lists the main WEU bodies that should develop working relationships with NATO: the WEU Council, the Armaments Control Agency and the Standing Armaments Committee.

**Source:** The National Archives of the UK (TNA). Foreign Office, Political Departments: General Correspondence from 1906-1966. WESTERN ORGANISATIONS (WU). Western European Union (WEU): Liaison with NATO. 01/01/1955-31/12/1955, FO 371/118579 (Former Reference Dep: File 10784).

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[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/brief\\_by\\_the\\_foreign\\_office\\_for\\_the\\_north\\_atlantic\\_council\\_meeting\\_in\\_paris\\_on\\_9\\_11\\_may\\_1955\\_relationship\\_between\\_nato\\_and\\_weu\\_4\\_may\\_1955-en-40f4096e-9737-4b7c-bcbf-f1a7bdc24056.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/brief_by_the_foreign_office_for_the_north_atlantic_council_meeting_in_paris_on_9_11_may_1955_relationship_between_nato_and_weu_4_may_1955-en-40f4096e-9737-4b7c-bcbf-f1a7bdc24056.html)



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WESTERN ORGANISATIONS DEPT.

NORTH ATLANTIC

TREATY ORGANIZATION

WU 10784/5

FROM

Foreign Office  
White, Hall Wood

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May 4 1955

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Relationship between NATO and W.E.U

Brief for Ministerial meeting May 9-11

NATO and 1) W.E.U Council  
2) the American's Control Agency  
3) the Standing American's Committee.

Contains chart showing relationship between W.E.U & NATO etc

References to former relevant papers

MINUTES

J. C. B.

1/5.

(Print)

CHART (How disposed of)

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References to later relevant papers

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CONFIDENTIAL

MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

PARIS: MAY 9 - 11.

Item III: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATO AND WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

It is Her Majesty's Government's policy that, whilst there should be close co-operation between the two Organisations, W.E.U. should not duplicate or cut across the work of NATO. The necessity for close co-operation has been explicitly affirmed both by NATO and in the Brussels Treaty Protocols. In the military sphere the latter also provide that the W.E.U. Council will rely on NATO for information and advice on military matters, and the W.E.U. Interim Commission has consequently agreed that there shall be no permanent military body within W.E.U.

2. It will now be necessary to develop a harmonious working relationship in practice between NATO and the following W.E.U. bodies:

- (a) The W.E.U. Council. The main practical link between the two Organisations will be the common membership of the Seven Powers. In addition the W.E.U. Interim Commission arranged for the exchange of documents and close informal collaboration between the two Secretaries-General.
- (b) The Armaments Control Agency. The principle of close relations is laid down in the Brussels Treaty Protocols, which state inter alia that the Agency will rely on NATO for information and advice on military matters. It will be for the Director as soon as he is appointed, to agree with Lord Ismay how to work together in practice.
- (c) The Standing Armaments Committee.  
(armaments production and standardisation). NATO was represented at the meetings of the W.E.U. Working Group. The latter's report provides for the association of NATO observers with the work of the new Committee and its subsidiary bodies; that agreements reached between  
/W.E.U.



W.E.U. countries would be open to participation by other NATO countries; that the Committee's seat will be in Paris; and that the national delegates may also be members of the national delegations to NATO. Our own delegate will be the United Kingdom Representative on the NATO Defence Production Committee.

3. In the wider political sphere our views of the proper relationship between NATO and W.E.U. are set out in our despatch No. 99 to Paris (at Annex). It would be a grave mistake for W.E.U. to seek to usurp the functions of NATO as the forum for consultation on the broad politico-strategic problems facing the West. W.E.U. will have its own sphere and responsibilities which will afford ample scope for useful and indeed essential work. M. Spaak now agrees with this view. Formerly he and others, notably the French, were suspected of wishing to build up W.E.U. into a rival forum to NATO. The Americans, Canadians and Scandinavians have all expressed anxiety at such a possibility. As this anxiety is unfounded, the Secretary of State will no doubt take any opportunity to reassure them.

Foreign Office,

May 4, 1955.