

Exchange of letters between the Foreign Office and the British Ministry of Defence on the question of supplying information to the ACA on American and Canadian military assistance to WEU Member States (8 January 1957)


Caption: On 8 January 1957, Cecil Gough from the British Ministry of Defence sends a letter to John Bushell at the Foreign Office on the interpretation of Article 23 of Protocol IV, which says that the Council of Western European Union (WEU) will transmit to the Arms Control Agency (ACA) information received from the United States and Canada about military aid furnished to the armed forces of WEU member States, deployed on the mainland of Europe.

Source: The National Archives of the UK (TNA). Foreign Office, Political Departments: General Correspondence from 1906-1966. WESTERN ORGANISATIONS (WU): Western European Union - WEU (WUW). Arms Control Agency. 01/01/1957-31/12/1957, FO 371/131152 (Former Reference Dep: File 11191).

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URL:
http://www.cvce.eu/obj/exchange_of_letters_between_the_foreign_office_and_the_british_ministry_of_defence_on_the_question_of_supplying_information_to_the_aca_on_american_and_canadian_military_assistance_to_weu_member_states_8_january_1957-en-dc028a84-fb68-4890-9937-369cef7fbb82.html

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WESTERN DEPARTMENT

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UW 1191/2

1957

WESTERN ORGANISATIONS

WESTERN

EUROPEAN UNION

FROM

Mr. Gough

Ministry of Defence

Mr. Bursell

No.

Dated

8/1/57

Received in
Registry—

11/1/57

Article 23 of Protocol IV: Information to be supplied
to the Arms Control Agency by Gough of WEU regarding
American and Canadian military aid.

Consider the above can be supplied direct and
there is no need for the Secretariat to ask Canada and
the U.S.A. direct for the info. Discuss type of information required.

References to former relevant papers

-11

MINUTES

See minutes on -1.

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(Print)

(How disposed of)

(Action
completed)

10/1/57

(Index)

10/1/57

References to later relevant papers

M4320 50774-1

E.R.

CONFIDENTIAL

From: Mr. G.E.F. Gough C.B.E.

WU1191/12

Your ref: WU1191/1

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE,
Storey's Gate,
London, S.W.1.

8th January 1957

Dear John,

Fleg L

Derryck Ward has shown me your letter to him of January 4 about putting into effect Article 23 of Protocol IV which says that the Council will transmit to the Arms Control Agency information received from the governments of the United States and Canada about military aid furnished to the forces on the mainland of Europe of member governments in WEU. I understand that Goffin has suggested that the Council authorise him to communicate with the governments of the United States and Canada through their diplomatic representatives in London, asking them to supply the information.

I think this is both unnecessary and wrong. Goffin interprets "the Council" to mean "the Secretariat". The Council, however, is a collective assembly of the member governments. The member governments themselves either know or ought to know for their own purposes what military equipment they have received or are about to receive in a given period ahead from the United States and Canadian governments. The member governments can thus transmit to the Agency such information about U.S. and Canadian military aid as is relevant for the purposes of the Agency.

I think the member governments would be making asses of themselves if they collectively instructed the Secretariat to ask the two North American governments for information of which the member governments already have knowledge.

Fleg M | Incidentally, the Arms Control Agency Questionnaire, Table I, "Total Quantities of Armaments" contains a line - 3(c) - entitled "External Aid in Military Material". It looks to me, therefore, as though the member governments are already under obligation to provide this information to the Arms Control Agency in any case. Perhaps to satisfy the literally minded it might be desirable to ask the member governments to identify that part of the military material in their returns which is derived from the U.S. and Canada respectively.

In saying all this I have assumed that what is really pertinent for the purposes of the Arms Control Agency is end item aid, in so far as the end items supplied are items on the controlled list. The Agency has no need to know about end items received as aid from North American which are not on the controlled list.

As far as we are concerned, we have agreed to provide information about controlled list items already in our depots on the mainland of Europe. If at any time these items include end items received as aid from North America, I see no reason why we should not say so.

/If, one

J.C.W. Bushell Esq.,
Foreign Office,
Downing Street,
London, S.W.1.

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If, one of these days, we get U.S. atomic warheads for Corporal there may be special security questions to be looked at. Anyway, if the plan is that information about U.S. aid is transmitted by member governments we shall at least be able to give effective consideration to any security issues entailed in disclosure to the Agency.

I would be prepared to argue that information about Defence Support Aid and other forms of financial and economic aid which go to underwrite defence programmes generally, is irrelevant for the purposes of the Arms Control Agency. Such information is certainly irrelevant so far as we are concerned, since the Agency has agreed that we confine ourselves to giving information about physical stocks of control items in our depots in Europe.

Finally I suggest that we always think rather carefully before sliding into the position of putting the Secretariat of WEU into direct correspondence with the governments of the U.S.A. and Canada. The only justification I can see for doing it in this case would be to deliberately build up the importance of the Secretariat of WEU. This has not been our policy hitherto, and even if it were I think we should choose a more sensible occasion for doing it.

It may be said that the U.S. and Canada provide information on end item aid to NATO and that, therefore, the amour propre of WEU demands that WEU should ask the Americans and Canadians to do the same for them. There are two obvious answers to this particular piece of nonsense. In the first place, the U.S. and Canada belong to NATO and they do not belong to WEU. In the second place, the information they provide to NATO has automatically become available to the member governments of WEU who can transmit it to the Agency via their Secretariat, so that it is patently absurd for the member governments to instruct their Secretariat to ask for the information all over again.

Incidentally, I remember when we were negotiating the Protocols in Paris and when it was my task to keep the United States Delegation informed of what was going on, my American contact expressed polite surprise that WEU had put in this particular Article. He asked whether the WEU expected America and Canada to provide them with information which they did not already provide to the member countries or to NATO. If so, he pointed out, he would assumed there would be an approach to the member governments to ask whether they would be willing to co-operate. I told them that I did not think there was any intention to ask for additional information and that in this context the Council would probably mean the member governments who would simply tell the Arms Control Agency what they already knew about their controlled list items which came from American or Canadian sources.

I am copying this to Cary in the U.K. Delegation. When I was there we were occasionally asked to discuss questions of statistical returns with Admiral Ferreri's staff, and for all I know this may still go on from time to time.

Yours ever,
Bevil