

Extract from minutes of the 325th meeting of the WEU Council (12 July 1967)

Caption: At its meeting on 12 July 1967, the Permanent Council of Western European Union (WEU) discusses the continued examination of the question of relations between WEU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which it was asked to consider by the Council meeting at ministerial level on 4 and 5 July. During the discussions, French Ambassador Geoffroy de Courcel states that his government is prepared to continue to supply the tables on France's forces for common defence through the North Atlantic Council, and that its operational forces under national command can be considered for common defence, although France cannot enter into any further undertakings. While Lord Hood considers that the authorised limits should apply to all the forces maintained by the Member States for common defence, the French Ambassador states that there is an exception for forces recognised by NATO as being under national command. Lord Hood also mentions that France's withdrawal from the NATO integrated command structure is making it more difficult for the Council to pursue the aims of the modified Brussels Treaty.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Extract from minutes of the 325th meeting of WEU Council held on 12 July 1967. CR (67) 16. 2 p. Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux). <http://www.anlux.lu>. Western European Union Archives. Secretariat-General/Council's Archives. 1954-1987. Interpretation of Brussels Treaty & Paris Protocols. Year: 1967, 01/03/1967-14/06/1968. File 113.2. Volume 2/2.

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EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF 325th MEETING CR (67) 16
 OF W.E.U. COUNCIL HELD ON 12th July 1967

II Meetings of the Council at Ministerial level.

2. Recent Ministerial Council held in The Hague

The CHAIRMAN thought that members might wish to exchange views on the meeting. The Secretariat had noted the three following points as requiring action on the part of the Council in due course:

- a general review of relations between the Council and the Assembly and consideration of the various suggestions made for improvement;
- report on developments within the Alliance, requested by the Assembly;

- note on NATO-W.E.U. relations.

c) Note on NATO-W.E.U. relations

(CR (67) 13, II; CR (67) 15, II, 5;
 C (67) 45 and CM (67) 2)

The CHAIRMAN recalled that, at the Council of Ministers held in The Hague on 4th and 5th July, the Permanent Council had been instructed "to continue their studies" of NATO-W.E.U. relations and "to complete them in time for the next meeting at ministerial level".

Delegations would remember that the note in question (CM (67) 2) contained three passages which had been the subject of reserves and that a broader proposal had been made by the British delegate, who had expressed concern on much the same points as the Netherlands delegate. This was the present state of the question which delegations would have to consider at an appropriate time.

Lord HOOD thought that the note provided a very valuable basis for discussion by the Permanent Council in their search for answers to the problems raised. However, it was principally the conclusions of their studies which had to be submitted to the Ministers. Lord Hood therefore felt that the exchange of views begun on 5th June should be continued.

M. de COURCEL, referring to the subject raised on that occasion by the United Kingdom representative, namely, the level of forces for the common defence, recalled that the French Government were prepared, as hitherto, to supply the tables for these forces through the North Atlantic Council. They had also agreed that French operational forces wholly under national command should be regarded as forces for the common defence. On the other hand, the maximum level for these forces raised a problem because it was difficult to see how the ceiling formerly applied to the integrated forces could also be applied to a different category, namely, forces for the common defence, which at present made up almost the whole of French forces. This was a practical problem requiring a solution.

The Ambassador added that France's commitments in this matter derived from Article I of Protocol No. II. The French Government did not repudiate these commitments but could not enter into any further undertakings.

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As regards the three passages in the note mentioned by the Chairman, M. de Courcel was now in a position to state that his Government could withdraw their reserves.

Lord HOOD considered that the ceiling in question had been intended to apply to all forces maintained on the mainland by member States for the common defence. Certain other categories, such as forces for overseas defence, had been foreseen, but these had since been substantially reduced in numbers and importance. Lord Hood recalled that by the terms of Part IV (a) of the Final Act of the Nine-Power Conference of 1954: "All forces of NATO countries stationed on the continent of Europe should be placed under the authority of SACEUR".

M. de COURCEL pointed out that the same Article made an exception for forces which NATO "has recognised or will recognise as suitable to remain under national command".

On the suggestion of the CHAIRMAN, delegations agreed to continue the exchange of views on this point before the holidays. The Council would meet at 10.45 a.m. on Thursday, 20th July, for that purpose.

Answering M. GROOTHAERT, Lord HOOD said he thought that the discussion might be directed first to the point he had raised on 5th June. Did the fact that there were no longer any French troops under NATO command relieve the Council of their duty to satisfy themselves that the armed forces of France, like those of the other countries, did not exceed the permitted limits? Secondly, the procedures for checking stocks of armaments would have to be examined; controls that NATO was no longer in a position to carry out should, of course, be performed by W.E.U. Finally, Lord Hood recalled that the Council had certain defence obligations which it had discharged through NATO since 1950. The fact that France no longer participated in the NATO integrated command structure made it more difficult for the Council to fulfil its obligations under the Treaty. These were some of the questions which might be discussed.

ALL ...

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