

Secretary-General’s note on NATO–WEU relations (London, 14 June 1968)

Caption: On 14 June 1968, the Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) circulates a note on relations with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), based to a large extent on the British proposals of 31 May 1968. On the matter of the limitation of forces and armaments, the document explains the new working procedure between WEU and NATO, proposed by the Council and outlined by the British in their document. However, France cannot accept that the discussions between the Seven in the WEU Council should focus on the level of forces, or that the Agency for the Control of Armaments should submit an annual report other than that presented to the Council by the SACEUR officer on the verification of French land and air forces. The French delegation expresses other reservations but affirms its commitment to its mutual defence obligations and agrees that the new NATO procedures should be used, by agreement between the Seven, to implement Article V of the Brussels Treaty.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General's Note. NATO-WEO relations. 14.06.1968. WPM (68) 31. 9 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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SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

NATO-W.E.U. relations

The Secretary-General circulates herewith the results of the working group's discussions on NATO-W.E.U. relations at their meetings of 12th and 14th June.

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NATO-W.E.U. relations

I. LIMITATION OF FORCES AND ARMAMENTS

A. Level of forces and armaments under NATO command

1. The maximum levels of land and air forces which member States shall place under SACEUR are specified in Article I of Protocol No. II.

The French Government has decided to withdraw all its forces from NATO command and these forces have passed under national command. They therefore, in accordance with a strict interpretation of the Treaty, come within the limitations prescribed in Article V of Protocol No. II and in the Agreement of 14th December 1957. They cannot in future be the subject of recommendations by permanent representatives on the basis of the NATO Annual Review. However, in its unilateral declaration of 13th September 1967, the French Government stressed that the ceilings for strengths of forces referred to in Article I of Protocol No. II continue to apply to French units stationed in the Federal Republic of Germany which might be called upon to co-operate with the allied forces. Its subsequent declaration of 21st February 1968 specified that these ceilings also apply to the air force units previously subject to limitation.(1)

/As levels ...

- (1) As regards the application of the procedure concerned for the year 1967, it will be recalled that the Council, at their meeting of 6th May 1968, (CR (68) 5, V), took note of the information supplied by NATO and of a declaration communicated by the NATO French representative, stating that:
- "French forces under national command for the common defence do not exceed the limits laid down in Article I of Protocol No. II of the revised Brussels Treaty."

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As levels of armaments depend on levels of forces, the French forces covered by the declaration of 13th September 1967, and the subsequent additional statement, are subject to the limitations prescribed by the existing texts.⁽¹⁾

2. The procedures for verifying the observance of these maximum levels will have to be adapted. At present the W.E.U. Council satisfies itself that these limitations are being respected in two ways:

- a) In accordance with a resolution of the W.E.U. Council of 15th September 1956, there is an annual meeting of the permanent representatives on the North Atlantic Council of W.E.U. member Governments during the preparation of the NATO Annual Review at which, among other things, they examine whether the forces of the seven member States of W.E.U. proposed for inclusion in the NATO Annual Review fall within the limits specified in Articles I and II of Protocol No. II. They inform the W.E.U. Council of their findings.
- b) In Article IV of Protocol No. II it is stated that "in order that it may be established that the limits specified in Articles I and II are being observed, the Council of Western European Union will regularly receive information acquired as a result of

/inspections ...

⁽¹⁾CR (67) 17, p. 7 paragraph 1.

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inspections carried out by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe. Such information will be transmitted by a high ranking officer designated by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe". The high ranking officer reports each year to the Council that the limits have been respected.

As a consequence of the withdrawal of French forces from NATO, there will no longer be a French representative at the meeting referred to at (a) above, whilst the high ranking officer from SHAPE will no longer be able to give any information about French forces.

3. The Permanent Council has therefore suggested the following new procedures:

- a) The six member States which retain forces under NATO command shall meet annually during the NATO Annual Review to ensure that the limits set out in Articles I and II of Protocol No. II have been observed and to consider any proposals for increasing the limits set out in those Articles. This could be followed by a meeting attended by all seven members of W.E.U. at which the representatives of the members of W.E.U. which retain forces

/under NATO ...

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under NATO command will inform the French representative that the limits specified in Articles I and II of Protocol No. II have been observed and will inform him of any proposal to increase those limits. The French representative in turn will inform the representatives of the other members of W.E.U. that French forces for the common defence under national command come within the limits specified for French land and air forces in Article I of Protocol No. II and of any proposal to increase those limits. [At this meeting it will be possible for representatives of all seven W.E.U. member countries to put to each other any questions which may arise from the exchange of information about force levels.] Reports of both meetings will then be forwarded to the Council, which will be required to take a unanimous decision on any proposal to increase the limits referred to above.

- [b) The verification of information about French land and air forces under national command would become the task of the Armaments Control Agency, which would be required to submit a separate annual report to the Council on this subject at the same time as the report presented by the high ranking officer designated by SACEUR, who is referred to in Article IV of Protocol No. II.]⁽¹⁾

/4. ...

⁽¹⁾ The French delegation cannot accept this proposal which, in their view, would involve amending the text of the Treaty. The Secretariat-General will investigate how far the British proposal would in fact require such an amendment.

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4. If these new procedures are to operate effectively, the information supplied by the French authorities in respect of their forces under national command should be provided in comparable detail to that submitted by other members of W.E.U. on their forces and armaments under NATO command.⁽¹⁾

B. Levels of forces and armaments under national command

a) All French forces now come into the category of forces under national command, which are sub-divided by the texts in force, as follows: common defence, overseas defence, internal defence and police forces. The French Government will submit these forces to the procedures prescribed in the agreements in force. However, forces under national command covered by the French unilateral declaration of 13th September, and the subsequent additional statement, will be subject to the limitations referred to in paragraph I, A, 1 of the present note.

b) According to Article 4 of the Agreement of 14th December 1957, the strengths of the forces for common defence have to be communicated annually by the North Atlantic Council to the Council of W.E.U., who are required to accept them. The French Government will continue to follow this procedure. The Council do not, however,

/exclude ...

(1) French reserve

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exclude the possibility of adapting the Agreement of 14th December 1957, to enable it to achieve the same aims as in the past.⁷

II. QUANTITATIVE CONTROL OF ARMAMENTS

5. The guiding principle for the control of armaments is that the level should be appropriate to the size and mission of the forces. (Protocol No. IV of the revised Brussels Treaty).

6. As regards contrôles sur place, these in the case of the French forces will in future be conducted by representatives of the A.C.A. only, whereas in the case of France's allies they will be conducted jointly between the A.C.A. and SHAPE. This, however, in the opinion of the Permanent Council should prove quite satisfactory.

7. In the case, however, of contrôles sur pièces, some modification of procedure is necessary. At present both the A.C.A. and the Council are required to accept unconditionally information about forces under national command received from NATO because it is assumed that this information would have been scrutinised in NATO. This as regards French forces will no longer be the case and in future the A.C.A. and the Council should be able to carry out any desired scrutiny themselves.⁷⁽¹⁾

/8. ...

(1) French reserve

8. Certain French depots and units not previously subject to control measures are now covered by them, so that the number of missions carried out among the French forces increased.⁽¹⁾

III. MUTUAL DEFENCE OBLIGATIONS

9. Article V of the revised Brussels Treaty states:

"If any of the High Contracting Parties should be the object of an armed attack in Europe, the other High Contracting Parties will, in accordance with the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, afford the Parties so attacked all the military and other aid and assistance in their power."

In 1950, the Consultative Council of the Brussels Treaty Organisation unanimously passed a resolution to the effect that the Parties would fulfil their obligations under Article V of the Treaty by using the military machinery of NATO and that they would not maintain any separate military organisation within W.E.U. The French withdrawal from the NATO integrated military command means that there are no longer any arrangements or plans agreed between the seven members of W.E.U. for the fulfilment of their mutual defence obligations.

/However, ...

⁽¹⁾ See Annual Report C (68) 57, p. 10.

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However, the French Government has several times stated that the withdrawal of French forces from the NATO integrated command arrangements in no way modifies the undertakings given under Article V of the revised Brussels Treaty.

Moreover, the French delegation have informed their allies in the Council of W.E.U. that they were willing to agree that the new procedures for implementing Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty, now being negotiated between the French and allied Chiefs-of-Staff, should be used, by agreement between the Seven, to implement Article V of the Brussels Treaty.⁽¹⁾

The French Government considers that, this being so, French forces for the common defence can if necessary be assigned, with greater flexibility than would previously have been the case, to certain missions arising from the undertakings given under Article V of the revised Brussels Treaty.

(1) CR (67) 17, p. 5 to the end.

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