

## British proposals for the note on NATO–WEU relations (31 May 1968)

**Caption:** On 31 May 1968, the British delegation submits its draft for the note on relations between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Western European Union (WEU). The text focuses on the consequences of France's withdrawal from the NATO integrated command arrangements and the possible solutions to the potential problems raised by this decision. It highlights the close relations between the two organisations, as made clear in Article IV of the modified Brussels Treaty, and the particular situation of France with regard to the WEU armaments control system given that the procedures differ depending on whether forces and armaments are under national command or under NATO command. On this matter, the British delegation relates the new procedure devised by the Permanent Council in which the WEU Council would become a forum for exchanging information supplied by the six Member States in the integrated command on compliance with the limits set in Articles I and II of Protocol No II and the information from the French delegation on this matter, which it is no longer able to communicate directly within the North Atlantic Council. Finally, on the question of mutual defence obligations, the draft note explains that France's withdrawal from the NATO integrated military command means that there are no longer any arrangements agreed between the seven members of WEU for the fulfilment of their obligations.

**Source:** NATO-WEU relations. United Kingdom proposals. 31.05.1968. 4 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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[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/british\\_proposals\\_for\\_the\\_note\\_on\\_nato\\_weu\\_relations\\_31\\_may\\_1968-en-88dd30e2-516b-4442-bc25-3a264f08230c.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/british_proposals_for_the_note_on_nato_weu_relations_31_may_1968-en-88dd30e2-516b-4442-bc25-3a264f08230c.html)

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31st May 1968

NATO-W.E.U. RELATIONS

United Kingdom proposals

Preamble

The purpose of this note is:

- (a) to examine the effects of the action taken by France in 1966 in withdrawing her forces from the NATO integrated command arrangements on the application of the provisions of the revised Brussels Treaty, its Protocols and related agreements and resolutions;
- (b) to consider possible remedies for any anomalies or imbalances resulting from the French action.

2. That the revised Brussels Treaty envisaged a close relationship between W.E.U. and NATO is made clear under Article IV of the Treaty which reads:

"In the execution of the Treaty, the High Contracting Parties and any Organs established by Them under the Treaty shall work in close co-operation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Recognising the undesirability of duplicating the military staffs of NATO, the Council and its agency will rely on the appropriate military authorities of NATO for information and advice on military matters".

Furthermore, under the Protocols to the revised Brussels Treaty both organisations have certain duties to perform and are thus bound to co-operate closely.

3. France has withdrawn her forces from the NATO integrated command. She remains, however, a member of the North Atlantic Council and a party to the North Atlantic Treaty. She also remains a party to the revised Brussels Treaty.

4. The W.E.U. Control System provides for the control both of forces and armaments on the mainland of Europe which have been placed under NATO command and of those which have been retained  
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under national command. The action taken by France in 1966 has resulted in all French forces and armaments now being subject to the control procedures for forces and armaments under national command, whereas formerly a proportion were subject to the control procedures for forces and armaments under NATO command.

5. This development has had the effect of placing France in an exceptional position vis-à-vis the W.E.U. control system, as the control procedures for forces and armaments under national command are different from those for forces and armaments under NATO command. If the W.E.U. Council is to continue to discharge its responsibilities in respect of French forces, certain modifications in the existing control procedures will be necessary.

#### I. Limitation of Forces and Armaments

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. Although the French Government has withdrawn all its forces from under NATO command, the French delegation has informed its allies that the level of French forces for the common defence under national command nevertheless continues to be subject to the maximum levels set out in Article I of Protocol No. II.

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 WEU. proposed for inclusion in the NATO Annual

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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 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 representative of the members of W.E.U. which retain forces 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

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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.

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.

## 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

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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.

### III. Mutual Defence Obligations

8. 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 W.E.U. Council 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.

9. This is clearly a most unsatisfactory situation (but the Permanent Council are unable to agree on any remedy).