

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

Caption: On 31 May 1968, the French delegation submits a draft note on relations between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Western European Union (WEU) covering various aspects relating to France's withdrawal from the NATO command, particularly the ceilings for forces, levels of armaments and controls carried out by the Agency for the Control of Armaments (ACA). Finally, the French Government reaffirms its allegiance to the commitments laid down in Article V of the Brussels Treaty, even noting that there may be greater flexibility in the assignment of French forces than was previously the case. This latter observation is taken up in the final text of the Working Party on NATO–WEU relations (WPM (68) 31).

Source: Council of the Western European Union. NATO-WEU relations. French proposals. 31.05.1968. 3 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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NATO-W.E.U. Relations

French proposals

I.1.a) The French Government has decided to withdraw all its forces from NATO command and these forces have passed under national command. They therefore 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.

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)

(1) See CR (67) 17, p. 7 paragraph 1).

I.1.b) As France has no forces under NATO command and does not take part in the NATO Annual Review, decisions taken by the Council in application of the Resolution of 15th September 1950, implementing Article III of Protocol No. II, will be governed by a modified procedure. France will inform the NATO representatives of the six other member countries that the levels of its forces subject to the limitations prescribed by Article I of Protocol No. II do not exceed the ceilings fixed in 1952. In return, the Six will give the same assurance to France. This information will then be conveyed to the Council of W.E.U. who, as in the past, will take any consequent decision by a unanimous vote.

I.2.a) 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 prescribed in paragraph 2 a) of the preceding note.

II.1.b) 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)

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

Article V of the revised Brussels Treaty

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.

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.