

Extract from minutes of the joint meeting between the WEU Council and the Assembly Committee on Defence Questions (2 July 1957)

Caption: At a joint meeting held on 2 July 1957, the Council of Western European Union (WEU) replies to questions from the WEU Assembly's Committee on Defence Questions. On the matter of the activities of the Agency for the Control of Armaments (ACA), particularly the question of nuclear testing, French ambassador Jean Chauvel repeatedly states that the Council is not in a position or is not authorised to give answers in this field since some points are already being examined by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Sub-Committee on Disarmament.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Extract from the minutes of the joint meeting Council – Assembly Committee on defence questions, 2nd July 1957. C (57) 134. 2 p. Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux). <http://www.anlux.lu>. Western European Union Archives. Secretariat-General/Council's Archives. 1954-1987. Organs of the Western European Union. Year: 1955, 19/12/1955-22/04/1958. File 202.415.20. Volume 1/1.

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EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING
COUNCIL - ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE QUESTIONS,
2nd JULY 1957 (C(57)134)

DECLASSIFIED
W.E.U. 1st MARCH 1989

A. RECOMMENDATION No.8

I. General Strategy (Question 2, see footnote)

The Chairman recalled that M.Spaak, speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the Council, had said that the question of nuclear tests had become "such an important problem of European policy that it should, in my opinion, be examined at W.E.U. or N.A.T.O. level in the near future". This meant that M.Spaak had thought it possible that W.E.U. might take part in a study of a strategic question.

Question 2 reads : Have member government of W.E.U. informed NATO that they accept these principles* and that they must therefore be taken into consideration in the general review of the resources of the Atlantic Alliance at present being undertaken by NATO?

* See paragraphs I,1,2 and 3 of Recommendation No.8)

D. QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE A.C.A.

4. Regarding the prohibition of nuclear tests, the

Committee would like some information from the Agency as to whether tests could be carried out in a given country without other countries being able to detect them.

M. CHAUVEL replied that the Agency was not in a position to supply such information. He pointed out that none of the member States of W.E.U. at present produced atomic weapons on the Continent.

5. The Committee will recall that in a speech in Strasbourg on 6th May, 1957 M. Spaak, the President of the Council, expressed the opinion that with regard to the suspension of nuclear tests:

"this is such an important problem of European policy that it should, in my opinion be examined at W.E.U. or N.A.T.O. level in the near future."

Has the question of the suspension of nuclear tests, pending the working out of a common policy, already been discussed by the Council?

M. CHAUVEL replied that this was one of the questions being discussed in the Disarmament Sub-Committee on which the Western members reported to N.A.T.O. Since, therefore, the problem was being dealt with on the N.A.T.O. level, the Council of W.E.U. had not discussed it. M. Chauvel added that the quotation in the Committee's question came from remarks made by M. Spaak in a personal capacity which, M. Spaak had insisted, should not be quoted.

6. Does the Council share the opinion of the Committee as expressed in the draft Recommendation on nuclear tests, that in the course of a conference of independent scientists, those taking part should state objectively what the effects of those tests on the health of mankind are likely to be?

M. CHAUVEL said that this question was most interesting, since, like a number of earlier questions, it showed the lines along which the Assembly was thinking - in this case, towards the convening of a conference of independent scientists.

Though the Council could not reply to this question, they would certainly draw the attention of member Governments to the Assembly's view.

The CHAIRMAN of the Committee informed the Council that when General Corniglion-Molinier had been seeking information, at 24 hours notice, for his report, in answer to the request of the Consultative Assembly for an opinion from the W.E.U. Assembly on this question, he had asked for information to be obtained from the Agency and the Standing Armaments Committee. This had not proved possible and he had had to get the information elsewhere. The Chairman asked the Council to authorise the Director and the Head of the International Secretariat of the S.A.C. to give information direct to the Committee.

M. CHAUVEL pointed out that both gentlemen were present at the meeting and would later reply on certain technical questions. However, contacts outside joint meetings raised a question of procedure, and the Council felt that such contacts should be made through their intermediary.

The CHAIRMAN of the Committee pointed out that there was not always time to follow this procedure, as in the case cited above. He asked the Council whether they would agree to these two officials attending meetings of the Committee to answer questions concerning the Agency and the S.A.C.

M. CHAUVEL replied that the Council would examine this proposal.