

## Extract from minutes of the 411th meeting of the WEU Council (20 January 1971)

**Caption:** At its meeting on 20 January 1971, the Council of Western European Union (WEU) discusses the procedure established by Protocol No II on the level of forces of WEU Member States under the command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Discussions focus on the question of the special procedure from 1967 (see CR (67) 21), and French Ambassador Geoffroy Chodron de Courcel makes a statement in which he notes that, despite a lack of instructions from his government, he believes it would be in favour of the procedure being maintained. He points out that when France withdrew from the Council, its delegation was already not in agreement on the introduction of a new procedure. He is therefore not sure that the French Government will be able to accept the British proposal submitted in December 1968.

**Source:** Council of the Western European Union. Extract from minutes of the 411th meeting of WEU Council held on 20th January 1971. CR (71) 2. pp. 13-15. Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux). <http://www.anlux.lu>. Western European Union Archives. Secretariat-General/Council's Archives. 1954-1987. Organs of Western European Union. Year: 1980, 01/10/1968-31/05/1980. File 243.20. Volume 3/5.

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[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/extract\\_from\\_minutes\\_of\\_the\\_411th\\_meeting\\_of\\_the\\_weu\\_council\\_20\\_january\\_1971-en-dd8f5d1e-7049-432d-bd3a-13894a5e4292.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/extract_from_minutes_of_the_411th_meeting_of_the_weu_council_20_january_1971-en-dd8f5d1e-7049-432d-bd3a-13894a5e4292.html)

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EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF 41<sup>st</sup> MEETING  
OF W.E.U. COUNCIL HELD ON 20<sup>th</sup> January 1971

III. LEVEL OF FORCES OF MEMBER STATES OF W.E.U. PLACED  
UNDER NATO COMMAND

(CR (70) 23, VIII, 5; C (71) 2)

[M. HEISBOURG]

The CHAIRMAN recalled that, in their meeting on 9th December, 1970 (CR (70) 23), the Council had decided to resume consideration of the procedure set out in the Resolution of 15th September, 1956, with regard to the level of forces of member states placed under NATO command, at their meeting following the Ministerial Council of 11th January, 1971.

By their Resolution of 15th September, 1956, the Council had recommended member governments to instruct their permanent representatives on the NATO Council to meet once a year during the preparation of the annual review, to examine whether the level of forces of the seven member states fell within the limits specified in Articles I and II of Protocol No. II, taking account of any increases authorised by the Council of W.E.U.

The same Resolution also invited the member governments to instruct their representatives to submit recommendations on any proposals the effect of which would be to increase the level of forces above the specified limits, and to report to the Council of W.E.U. which would take any necessary decision by unanimous vote.

This subject had been discussed on a number of occasions in the Permanent Council since France's withdrawal from the NATO Integrated Commands. These exchanges of view had been summarised in the note circulated by the Secretariat under reference C (69) 4, on 16th January, 1969.

By a note C (71) 2, dated 8th January, 1971, the Secretariat had circulated the letter received from the permanent representative of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to the North Atlantic Council, dated 18th December, 1970, together with the annex thereto concerning the level of forces in 1970.

The Chairman observed that a provisional, ad hoc procedure had been adopted for 1967, whereby the W.E.U. Council had been seized of two documents; the first (C (68) 2) containing the report on the level of forces of six member states, and the second (C (68) 13) concerning a declaration on French forces. The Council had subsequently taken note of these two statements.

W.E.U. CONFIDENTIAL

CR (71) 2

As mentioned in document C (71) 2, the covering note to the report of the six governments with forces under NATO command indicated that it was the intention of the French Government to make a declaration to the W.E.U. Council as they were entitled to do under the terms of Article III to Protocol No. II of the revised Brussels Treaty.

The Chairman therefore asked the French Ambassador if he was in a position to make this statement.

M. de COURCEL regretted very much that, due in part to the fact that the French delegation had, for some time, been absent from the Council and to a number of staff changes in the competent French services, he had not yet been able to receive instructions from his Government, either on the matter of procedure or concerning the substance of the question now being discussed.

Whilst awaiting the necessary instructions from Paris, the Ambassador stated that his Government, who had no wish to delay proceedings unduly, would be interested in any views delegations might have at the present time on the matter in hand, particularly as certain delegations had evoked some legal problems two years previously. For his own part, he thought that his Government would probably remain in favour of the procedure used on the last occasion, but he hoped to be able to make known their definitive views at the next meeting of the Council.

Thanking M. de Courcel for these remarks, the CHAIRMAN then invited comments from the other delegations on the procedural aspect of the problem, as opposed to the report for the year 1970.

M. MANZINI declared that his Government favoured the procedure proposed by the British delegation on 18th December, 1968.+

/In reply to ...

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+ (CR (68) 23, IV)

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CR (71) 2

In reply to a question by the Chairman as to whether, in the view of the Italian Government, such a procedure should already apply for 1970, M. Manzini stated that they would in principle support such a proposal if it were to be generally upheld. Recalling that the French delegation had been present when the British proposal had been made, the Ambassador observed that it was merely a question of taking up the matter where it had been left off.

At this point, M. de COURCEL intervened to add that, at the time when they had withdrawn from the Council, the French delegation had not been in agreement on a new procedure.

He repeated the personal view that, on the French side, the 1967 ad hoc procedure could probably be retained. If, however, the whole procedural debate were to be reopened, he would have to transmit all the various arguments of delegations to Paris, and he was not sure that even then his Government would be more inclined to agree to the new proposal than they had been in January 1969. But in the event of the British proposal being adopted, could the new procedure be applied to what had already taken place in NATO, for 1970? Putting it another way, the meeting in NATO would not be in conformity with the new procedure. Or would this be applicable only for the 1971 force levels?

In the interests of clarity, M. MANZINI remarked that the Italian Government, for their part, had been in complete agreement with the procedure previously used. He recalled that the Netherlands, and then the British delegations had made new proposals. If the whole debate were to restart, his Government would, in principle, support the United Kingdom proposal. Otherwise, they were happy with the 1967 formula.

Mr. HUYDECOPER reminded the Council that, in the past, the Netherlands delegation had expressed their doubts on the procedure adopted. Certain inherent drawbacks had been clearly demonstrated last December, for example, when the permanent representatives on the North Atlantic Council of the W.E.U. member states, with the exception of France, had come together and gone over the same material that had been examined by their Defence Ministers a few weeks earlier.

This having been said, Mr. Huydecoper stated that the Netherlands Government could align themselves with the majority view in the Council. While not insisting on changing the present system or on keeping it, they nevertheless maintained the views they had expressed.

It was agreed that this question would be discussed further at the next meeting of the Council.