

Extract from minutes of the 533rd meeting of the WEU Council on the division of work between the Standing Armaments Committee and the independent European Programme Group (15 February 1978)

Caption: On 15 February 1978, the 533rd meeting of the Western European Union (WEU) Council is held. This extract from the minutes concerns the draft note to the Assembly on the division of work between the Standing Armaments Committee (SAC) and the independent European Programme Group (IEPG), drawn up by Alain Plantey, Head of the International Secretariat of the SAC. British representative Sir A. David S. Goodall says that he can accept the draft note and the amendments proposed by the Netherlands representative, particularly regarding the fact that the Council cannot guarantee that the SAC will be kept informed by a body outside the organisation. The French representative, Ambassador Jean Sauvagnargues, prefers to forward the note as it stands, since a detailed analysis of the whole text might lead to lengthy discussions. However, he does also accept the second amendment by the Netherlands delegation. The final note is subsequently published with the reference C(78)35.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Extract from minutes of the 533rd Meeting of WEU Council held on 15 February 1978. CR (78)1. pp.10-11. 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: 1979, 01/10/1977- 31/07/1979. File 250.01. Volume 10/15.

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III RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COUNCIL & THE ASSEMBLY

2. Draft note to the Assembly on the division
of work between the Standing Armaments
Committee and the independent European
Programme Group

(C (78) 15)

The CHAIRMAN submitted to the Council the draft note to the Assembly prepared by M. Plantey, Head of the International Secretariat of the S.A.C., in accordance with the decision taken by the Council at their last meeting; this draft had been circulated as C (78) 15.

M. PHILIPPE regretted that the document did not explain why only two of the five sub-groups of Panel III of the I.E.P.G. were mentioned in connection with the study now in progress. Otherwise he had no objections.

Mr. PACK said that his authorities felt that the note should satisfy the Assembly's immediate requirements and could approve it with two minor amendments. They thought that the words, "and will be able to use the findings of studies now in progress in the S.A.C. on the subject" in the second, third and fourth lines on page 3 should be deleted; this wording in fact assumed that the S.A.C. would have completed its work before Sub-Group 4 of the I.E.P.G., and this was not certain. On the thirteenth and fourteenth lines, they would like the wording, "the Council therefore stipulated that the S.A.C. should be kept sufficiently closely informed of progress of the work of the I.E.P.G." to be replaced by, "the Council therefore requested that the S.A.C. should be kept sufficiently closely informed ..."; the Council could not in fact stipulate that information should be provided by a body outside the Organisation.

Mr. GOODALL said that the United Kingdom delegation could accept the note drafted by M. Plantey, together with the amendments proposed by the Netherlands Ambassador.

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M. SAUVAGNARGUES thought it would be better simply to forward the note as it stood, on the understanding that it was a report by an official responsible to the Council. The Ambassador feared that if the Council embarked on a detailed examination of the whole text, they might become involved in lengthy discussions. In his view, the first amendment proposed by the Netherlands Ambassador was not a minor amendment, and he would in any event be unable to accept it.

While fully understanding the views of the French Ambassador, M. VLES stressed that it was for the Council to accept responsibility for the note to be sent to the Assembly, and therefore to amend it if necessary.

Mr. RUTE agreed with his Belgian colleague. The German delegation had no objection to the draft in C (78) 15, or to the Netherlands amendments.

M. PHILIPPE would personally be inclined to follow the line suggested by the French Ambassador but with the Council assuming responsibility for the note, as they must.

M. SAUVAGNARGUES fully agreed on this point. His sole concern was to avoid raising problems of substance about such a document.

Mr. FACK recalled that the note was the result of an undertaking given by the Chairman in Office of the Council at a joint meeting with an Assembly Committee, and confirmed by her at a plenary Session of the Assembly. It was the responsibility of the Council, and of the Council alone, to provide the Assembly with information on the question raised. That was why the Netherlands delegation had studied M. Plantey's draft closely. In proposing the requested amendments, they were marking the importance that they attached to them even if, in their view, they were only minor amendments.

M. DUCCI suggested, as a compromise, that the third, fourth and fifth lines on page 3 should be worded, "... and will be able to use any available findings of studies now in progress in the S.A.C. on the subject".

The CHAIRMAN noted that all delegations could accept this wording, together with the second amendment proposed by the Netherlands delegation. He would therefore forward this amended text of the note to the President of the Assembly.

+ See C(78)35