

Draft reply prepared by the United Kingdom delegation to Recommendation 202 of the WEU Assembly on the situation in the Middle East (London, 11 February 1971)


Caption: On 11 February 1971, the Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) circulates a draft reply prepared by the United Kingdom delegation to Recommendation 202 of the WEU Assembly on the situation in the Middle East. It notes the efforts made by the international community to reach a peaceful settlement of the hostilities between Israel and the Arab countries in the region, while emphasising the usefulness of ministerial meetings on the subject to identify common interests and the means by which European countries can promote these interests through consultation and coordination.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General's note. Recommendation 202 on the situation in the Middle East. London: 11.02.1971. WPM (71) 7. Copy n°52. 4 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: 1970, 01/12/1970-30/11/1971. File 202.424.09. Volume 1/1 .

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http://www.cvce.eu/obj/draft_reply_prepared_by_the_united_kingdom_delegation_to_recommendation_202_of_the_weu_assembly_on_the_situation_in_the_middle_east_london_11_february_1971-en-1b60459f-2bbo-45ec-a928-bd2b61857136.html

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SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Recommendation 202 on the situation in the Middle East (C (70) 147)

The Secretary-General circulates herewith a draft reply, prepared by the United Kingdom delegation, to Assembly Recommendation 202 on the situation in the Middle East.

This draft will be considered by the working group at a forthcoming meeting.


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London, S.W.1.

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Draft reply to Recommendation 202 prepared
by the United Kingdom delegation

1. The Council agree that they should pursue their discussions at ministerial level on the situation in the Middle East with a view to identifying areas of common interest and ways in which consultation and co-ordination of approach between west European countries could help to promote these interests. Europe has a particularly important role to play now that four members of Western European Union are members of the Security Council.

2. There is no reason to suppose that the prospects for achieving international agreement on the limitation or cessation of military assistance to the parties to the Arab-Israel dispute are now better than they have been in the past. Both sides consider it essential to maintain and increase their military strength lest hostilities should be renewed. Moreover, the Soviet Government, like the Arab governments concerned, have always opposed any agreement on arms limitation except in the context of a political settlement, since they believe that such agreement would only perpetuate Israel's military superiority.

/3. The Council ...

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3. The Council accept the desirability of maintaining a ceasefire until a political settlement is achieved. But it is necessary to take account of the feeling among the Arab governments concerned that the ceasefire cannot be indefinitely prolonged in the absence of progress towards a settlement which provides for Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories. The prospects for achieving a formal agreement as proposed by the Assembly are therefore uncertain.

4. A settlement of the refugee problem will be an essential part of a comprehensive political settlement in the region. European countries will certainly have a part to play in such a settlement. However, any attempt to provide for the economic and social resettlement of the refugees in advance of a political settlement is likely, as in the past, to raise major political issues which it will be difficult if not impossible to resolve. Any recommendation linking the contribution made by the European countries to the economic development of the states of the area to progress on the resettlement of the refugees must be considered in this light.

/5. The Council ...

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5. The Council welcome the resumption of the talks under Dr. Jarring's auspices and hope that these will lead to early progress towards a settlement in accordance with Security Council Resolution 242 of 22nd November, 1967. The Council believe that the talks should be based on this Resolution. The Council agree that proposals for the protection of the parties against all acts of hostility and for external guarantees of the settlement could be usefully considered as part of the negotiations. The Council also believe that after a settlement had been achieved there would be advantage in the elaboration of an economic development programme for the region as a whole.

6. The Council welcome any ideas which could prepare the way towards a political settlement. But they believe that many of the measures suggested by the Assembly could only be taken as part of or after a settlement in accordance with Security Council Resolution 242.

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