

Minutes of the 108th meeting of the Standing Armaments Committee (Paris, 19 October 1972)

Caption: On 29 September 1972, the 108th meeting of the Standing Armaments Committee (SAC) is held in Paris. A few weeks later, on 19 October 1972, the minutes of the meeting present the discussions between the French and British delegations on the situation created by the forthcoming accession of the United Kingdom to FINABEL, whose initial mission is to harmonise the doctrines of the European land forces. The discussions focus on issues including the dissolution of the ad hoc group set up to serve as a link between the United Kingdom and FINABEL.

Source: Western European Union. Standing Armaments Committee. Report of the 108th meeting of the Standing Armaments Committee, held in Paris on 29th September 1972. Paris: 18.10.1972. SAC (72)R/108. pp.1; 3-4; annex; pp. 1-2. 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: 1967, 16/03/1956-30/04/1967. File 250.10. Volume 2/2.

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URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/minutes_of_the_108th_meeting_of_the_standing_armaments_committee_paris_19_october_1972-en-aeec62ad-779c-4245-84ac-02351af77533.html



Last updated: 25/10/2016

WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

STANDING ARMAMENTS COMMITTEE

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SAC (72) R/108
Original French
19th October 1972

REPORT OF THE 108th MEETING OF THE STANDING ARMAMENTS
COMMITTEE, HELD IN PARIS ON 29th SEPTEMBER 1972

Chairman : M. le Préfet ROUX
Assistant Secretary General
of W.E.U.,
Head of the International
Secretariat of the S.A.C.

BELGIUM

Lt. Colonel WARNON

FRANCE

Ingénieur Général BRINDEAU

FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF GERMANY

Dr. ANSEL

ITALY

Colonel REGHINI

LUXEMBURG

Mr. BOUR (apology for absence)

NETHERLANDS

Mr. de GRAAUW

UNITED KINGDOM

Mr. QUINLAN

N.A.T.O. Observer

Mr. STONE

International Secretariat

Mr. CAMPBELL
Group Captain KELLY
Colonel STEIN
Admiral GIACCHETTI

43 avenue du Président Wilson
PARIS 16e.

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Delegates decided that the document containing the Trials Programme, which was originally intended as a guide for writing Trials Methods and Test Data Record Sheets, needed simplifying now that the work was nearing its end.

The Experts made considerable progress in their study of Trials Methods and Test Data Record Sheets.

The Sub-Group was informed that the contract, drawn up between the United Kingdom Authorities and a private, British firm for the writing of these documents, would come to an end on 31st March 1973.

Under these circumstances and in view of the work remaining to be done, the Sub-Group felt that the following meetings were necessary :

21st to 23rd November 1972 : Experts meeting
5th to 7th February 1973 : Experts meeting
13th to 15th March 1973 : Plenary meeting
9th to 11th October 1973 : Plenary meeting.

III. STUDY OF THE SITUATION ARISING FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM'S
ADHESION TO FINABEL

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL recalled that, following the discussion at the last meeting, it had been decided that the International Secretariat would write a new version of the Draft Recommendation with an Explanatory Memorandum. This document which, he thought, exactly reflected the feelings of the Standing Armaments Committee, had been circulated under SP (72) 948 on September 7th 1972. M. le Préfet Roux asked whether delegates were able to give their views on this new draft.

Mr. de GRAAUW could do no more than confirm the statement made by the Netherlands Delegate at the last meeting. For general political reasons the Netherlands

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felt that it was too soon to give their views on the situation arising from the United Kingdom's adhesion to FINABEL. The Standing Armaments Committee's reorganisation should be envisaged in the more general context of the reorganisation of W.E.U. which it was still too early to study.

Colonel REGHINI said that the Italian Government, which had studied the new version, agreed to the dissolution of Sub-Group No 3 and the transfer of Sub-Group No 5's work to FINABEL. It also agreed to the transfer of Sub-Group No 8 to the Standing Armaments Committee, providing that its work covered interarms questions. On the other hand, the Italian Authorities were against keeping Sub-Group Nos. 6 and 7 whose work should be transferred to FINABEL Groups E and G respectively.

Ingénieur Général BRINDEAU had nothing to add to the suggestion he had made at the last meeting. He would not speak again until the Committee was in a position to discuss the problem as a whole.

Lt-Colonel WARNON said that, on the whole, Belgium was in favour of the International Secretariat's Draft Recommendation but that his Authorities had doubts as to the utility of keeping Sub-Group No 6.

Dr. ANSEL said that the problem was still being studied by the German Authorities who wished, above all, to avoid duplication of effort. Like the other countries, they felt that there was no further reason for the Ad Hoc Group's existence.

Mr. QUINLAN could only repeat what he had said at the last meeting, that the United Kingdom could not take up a position before its adherence to FINABEL; it was, of course, understood that his Authorities agreed to the dissolution of the Ad Hoc Group.

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL noted the delegates' statements from which it would appear that the Committee was not yet ready to undertake joint action.

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THE SOCIETY OF BRITISH AEROSPACE COMPANIES

FARNBOROUGH, 7th SEPTEMBER 1972

1. The Society of British Aerospace Companies, its Member firms and its guest exhibitors from Europe cooperated in organising the 28th Air Show. This was the first time in its history that this Aerospace Show had been opened to a large number of European Companies.

2. The programme included a flying display of aircraft from British, Commonwealth and Foreign countries. Among these were several projects involving two or more countries, such as the :

- a) SEPECAT/Jaguar tactical support aircraft;
- b) Harrier V/STOL close support tactical aircraft in service in R.A.F. and U.S. Marine Corps;
- c) Gazelle light-weight helicopter;
- d) VFW - Fokker F 28 short haul transport;
- e) Aeronautica Macchi - MB 326 K single seat trainer/close support with Rolls-Royce Viper turbo jet.

3. Some 200 companies had cooperated to mount this Exhibition of aircraft, aero-engines, missiles, space technology, electronics and other equipment and materials produced by Member companies of the S.B.A.C. and, at its invitation, of companies within Europe represented through the Association Internationale des Constructeurs de Matériel Aérospatial (A.I.C.M.A.) and of Government Departments concerned with Aerospace in those countries.

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4. Apart from these examples of European cooperation, it was most heartening to see that A.I.C.M.A., founded in 1950, is now recognised as fully representative of the Western European aerospace industry.

A visit to the A.I.C.M.A. Chalet, at Farnborough, showed what a close understanding has developed between its members in the different countries.

5. It may be of interest to know, that special studies by A.I.C.M.A. resulted in the publication of two reports : the first dealt with obstacles to the development of European cooperation within the aerospace field, and proposed recommendations with a view to eliminating them ; the second analysed the economic consequences and long term implications of dollar purchases of aeronautical equipment. These two reports created a great stir and may have considerable bearing on the A.I.C.M.A. programme for years to come, particularly in the production field.

6. To give some idea of progress made, attached, is an impressive list of major aerospace programmes being undertaken in collaboration by the industries of the nations of A.I.C.M.A.

7. Is there no way in which W.E.U. resources could be used to enhance further this collaboration which is so important for Europe's future ?

AIRCRAFT

France, Germany, Great Britain, Netherlands	A 300 B AIRBUS
France, Germany	ALPHAJET
Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Italy	ATLANTIC
France, Great Britain	CONCORDE
Germany, Great Britain, Netherlands	F.28 FELLOWSHIP
France, Great Britain	GAZELLE
France, Great Britain	JAGUAR
France, Great Britain	LYNX
Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, Switzerland	MERCURE
Germany, Great Britain, Italy	MRCA
France, Great Britain	PUMA
France, Germany	TRANSALL
Germany, Belgium, Netherlands	VFW 614

ENGINES

France, Great Britain	ADOUR
France, Great Britain	M 45 H
France, Great Britain	OLYMPUS
Germany, Great Britain, Italy	FB 199
Germany, Great Britain	RB 193
Great Britain, Italy	VIPER

MISSILES

France, Germany	HOT
France, Great Britain	MARTEL
France, Germany	MILAN
France, Germany	ROLAND

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Annex

SPACE

ELDO/CECLES CONSORTIUM
(Belgium, France, Great Britain,
Italy)

EUROPA I, II

CIFAS CONSORTIUM
(France, Germany)

SYMPHONIE

MESH CONSORTIUM
(France, Germany, Great Britain,
Italy, Sweden).

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PROPOSAL BY THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL, FOR
A SOLUTION TO THE FINABEL - S.A.C. PROBLEM

- I. The United Kingdom has officially applied for membership of FINABEL which is the "body for coordination" set up by the Army Chiefs of Staff of the Six continental states of Western European Union. This candidature has been accepted by the present members of FINABEL and the United Kingdom (Army Chief of Staff) will be welcomed as a new member of this body on 1st January 1973.
- II. The fact that the United Kingdom will shortly become a member of FINABEL raises the problem of the co-existence of this body and the Standing Armaments Committee of W.E.U.(1), which is an off-shoot of W.E.U., set up on 7th May 1955 by a decision of the Council of Ministers stemming directly from discussions prior to the Paris Agreements of 1954.
- III. The Permanent Council of W.E.U. in London has been apprised of the existence of this problem and again even more specifically so by the fact that FINABEL and the Standing Armaments Committee of W.E.U. are each separately studying the consequences of the United Kingdom's membership in FINABEL.
- IV. The Standing Armaments Committee has received no directives regarding the follow-up action that the Governments intend to take in the situation thus created.

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(1) On several occasions the S.A.C. and its international Secretariat have produced abundant documentation relative to the two bodies, their origins, their relations during the years 1955-1972 and the present situation. This constitutes proof that the matter raised in § II. above is a real and specific problem. All the delegations in London and all the W.E.U. chancelleries should have this documentation.

b) At the time when the Council of Ministers of W.E.U. created the Standing Armaments Committee, it also established the relations of the latter with NATO but completely ignored FINABEL which was nevertheless set up before NATO; this was because it was inconceivable that it should be necessary to define, in an annex to an international Treaty, the relations between a body set up by international law and a simple de facto organisation.

c) The mission entrusted to the Standing Armaments Committee by the Council of Ministers of W.E.U. excludes no form, field or level of cooperation.

IX. Nevertheless, the de facto problem of coexistence of the two bodies existed right from the start. A first proposal (Belgium) favoured a meeting of the senior national military Authorities (Army) within the S.A.C. with a view to fixing the priorities of the equipment to be studied. Luxemburg and France supported this point of view although without insistence. The aim in fact was to render the FINABEL meetings superfluous except in the case of matters of standardisation. Italy considered that FINABEL should continue to lay down the military specifications and that development of the equipment should be the responsibility of the S.A.C. The United Kingdom stated that nothing should be done that might lead to the creation of a W.E.U. military organisation in parallel to NATO. The Netherlands adopted the same attitude.(1)

No decision was taken at this time.

X. The question was raised again later after the Federal Republic had joined FINABEL when the Chiefs of Staff discussed the draft protocols of The Hague and Cologne (29th May and 21st September 1956).(2)

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- (1) The talks in question took place before Germany joined FINBEL which now became FINABEL as a result of this country becoming a member in 1956.
- (2) The F.R.G. was to state, in this connection, that it considered that even "the proposed exchange (by the Chiefs of Staff) of observers between the S.A.C. and FINABEL would seem to raise difficulties of a legal and technical nature".

- XI. At the heart of the problem of the relations between FINABEL and the S.A.C., lies this fact of capital importance : the United Kingdom is a Member of the Standing Armaments Committee of W.E.U. and is not a Member of FINABEL.
- XII. She obviously cannot claim to exercise any action whatsoever on FINABEL. However, she has a right to express her opinion as a Member of the S.A.C. In addition her doctrine has always been perfectly clear and highly sound and logical. This doctrine was put before the Permanent Council on 17th April 1957.

"The United Kingdom Government thought it was a mistake, on practical grounds, to divorce discussion of military characteristics from the general complex of technical, economic and production considerations and possibilities. (1) They therefore considered that discussion of the military characteristics of equipment should take place within the ambit of the Standing Armaments Committee from the start ; in other words, that such discussion should be a joint operation in which military staffs and technical and production experts would jointly examine requirements and possibilities with a regard to army equipment...

(The United Kingdom Government) did not feel they would wish to become a member of FINABEL, essentially for two reasons : the first, ... was that they were doubtful whether the best results could be achieved by first undertaking a purely military study and then handing over the results to the production experts. They felt that valuable time could be lost in this way and that an exercise which was a joint military and civilian undertaking from the start would give more satisfactory results. The Standing Armaments Committee could provide the forum for such exercises, where the military experts could discuss equipment with the technical, scientific, industrial and economic experts. The second reason was political. Lord Hood recalled that at the time of the creation of W.E.U. there had been a strong feeling on the part, he thought, of all the seven Governments that there should be no W.E.U. military machinery in order to avoid duplicating or giving the impression that W.E.U. was duplicating the NATO military structure. His Government felt that this argument still had great force... The considered opinion of the United Kingdom Government was therefore that they should not join FINABEL ; they thought that the necessary body already existed in the shape of the Standing Armaments Committee." (2)

(1) see § VII.

(2) Permanent Council of 17 April 1957 - CR (57) 16.

XIII. The disparity between the numbers of the members of Standing Armaments Committee (seven) and of those of FINABEL (six) nevertheless made it necessary (in order to ensure a liaison between the Six and the United Kingdom) to create the "Ad Hoc Group" and this resulted in a situation that was confused from the very start.

XIV. To-day, the fact that the United Kingdom is joining FINABEL, because the participation of the two Organisations will now be identical, will make it possible to sweep away all that has led to confusion and paralysis for fifteen years and to clarify the situation on the basis of the United Kingdom interpretation of the mission entrusted to the Standing Armaments Committee by the decision of 7th May 1955.

It is not up to the writer to judge whether FINABEL should continue to exist and assume powers in matters of tactics, organisation and training of troops⁽¹⁾.

However, a conclusion is called for and it will be as follows: all that constitutes international cooperation in the field of standardisation of armaments should be returned, unequivocally and by an explicit joint governmental decision, to the Standing Armaments Committee which was created on 7th May 1955 precisely to execute this mission.

(1) In short, FINABEL could exercise, with respect to the S.A.C., the role played by the NATO Military Committee vis-à-vis the Assistant Secretary-General for Logistics and Defence Support on the understanding that contrary to a Military Committee which is part of NATO, FINABEL would remain outside W.E.U. - S.A.C.