

Address given by Georges Lemoine to the WEU Assembly (Paris, 1 December 1981)


Caption: On 1 December 1981, Georges Lemoine, State Secretary to the French Defence Minister, gives an address to the Assembly of Western European Union (WEU). He particularly discusses the Euromissiles crisis and expresses concern at the shift in the balance of forces in favour of the Soviet Union. He also mentions the French deterrent force, his country's relations with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the role of WEU, particularly through the Standing Armaments Committee.

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Mr. Bernini (continued)

must not, however, ignore the centrifugal pressures demonstrated by the differences which emerged at the recent London meeting.

The starting point must, therefore, be the Europe that already exists. Regardless of the form it may take, the construction of European union will make no progress if we do not first of all apply the existing treaties: on the one hand by exploiting the powers of the Commission and the European Parliament, by pressing on with the process of economic integration by bringing in new countries and, in this context, by further developing co-operation with the countries of the third world; on the other hand, by affirming and strengthening the rôle of the WEU Council and Assembly in their proper sphere, which is that of European defence and security.

The draft order would therefore appear to be questionable and in many respects unacceptable, particularly where it invites the President of the Assembly and the Chairman of the General Affairs Committee to make the necessary contacts to promote exchanges of observers and joint meetings between the two parliamentary assemblies and the Commission and the Committee, which is none other than a way of involving the Community in defence problems contrary to the Treaty of Rome.

There also seem to be a number of questionable points in the recommendation calling on the Council of WEU to foster the formation of a working group of the European Council to pave the way for establishing a European union based on the harmonisation of the Rome and Brussels Treaties, when what is required first and foremost is action to implement those treaties. That is why, if we are to accept the recommendation and more especially the order, the enacting terms will have to be modified so as to bind the Council more closely to the full implementation of WEU's obligations under the modified Brussels Treaty, either by strengthening the SAC to foster European co-operation in arms production or, within the Atlantic Alliance, by promoting more active participation by Europe in problems of its own defence and in the reduction and control of armaments. To this end, member governments should be called on to commit their national parliaments accordingly with a view to the adoption of measures which will enable WEU to discharge its functions in full, in implementation of the modified Brussels Treaty.

We believe that by acting in this way and committing national parliaments to work for the strengthening of existing European structures, the establishment of the European union can best be advanced in practice.

(Mr. Mulley, President of the Assembly, resumed the Chair)

The PRESIDENT. – Thank you very much, Mr. Bernini.

I now adjourn the debate on Mr. De Poi's report and we shall resume at the conclusion of our session with the Minister.

4. Address by Mr. Lemoine, Secretary of State to the French Minister of Defence

The PRESIDENT. – We have the great privilege and pleasure of an address by Mr. Lemoine, who is Secretary of State to the French Minister of Defence.

I am also glad to see that the United Kingdom Minister of State, Ministry of Defence, Mr. Blaker, is here listening to our debates. He will be speaking to us this afternoon.

It is a particular pleasure to welcome Mr. Lemoine, who is a former member of the Assembly. It is satisfying to find our members in ministerial ranks. This is the first occasion that a member of the new French Government has addressed us and we look forward to hearing what he has to tell us about his government's defence policy.

I welcome you, Mr. Lemoine, and ask you to come to the rostrum. I understand that you have kindly agreed to answer questions after your speech.

Mr. LEMOINE (*Secretary of State to the French Minister of Defence*) (Translation). – Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me first of all to thank you for your kind words in welcoming me here.

Speaking here eight years ago, one of my predecessors expressed some disappointment as he noted that Europe's rôle had been reduced to that of a bystander observing events which directly affected its fundamental interests.

Deploring the exclusion of European countries, Mr. Jobert then expressed his concern about this situation; the establishment of the territories of the two superpowers as sanctuaries could give fresh value to the use of conventional weapons or even of tactical nuclear weapons on the European theatres in between. Moreover, even in peacetime, the process of détente would be adversely affected if Europe were "stuck between brackets" as a kind of "heedful and self-effacing Cinderella".

I am recalling these words pronounced before this Assembly because they enable us to grasp the extent and significance of the changes which have occurred since, for it must be said

Mr. Lemoine (continued)

that the developments which have taken place over the last eight years are hardly of a nature to belie the concern expressed here in 1973 by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

An analysis of the facts underlying the European situation reveals no cause for optimism, whether as regards the deterioration of the global balance between the United States and the USSR, the persistence of destabilising conflicts in the third world or the absence of decisive progress in strengthening specific political ties between European nations.

In 1973 it was possible to speak of the establishment of a complex and relatively stable balance between the two major nuclear powers. Today there can be no talk of stability.

On the one hand, the United States has basically not enlarged on the product of the arms programmes of the 1960s. Admittedly, a major budgetary effort is to be made in 1981 and an ambitious rearmament programme was announced two months ago by President Reagan. But these decisions will have no tangible effects during the remaining years of this decade. It is worth noting that the Reagan plan, if adopted and implemented, could in turn have destabilising effects. Consequently the initiation of serious talks between the United States and the Soviet Union on the reduction of nuclear weapons is that much more necessary now.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union has relentlessly pursued a tremendous effort which, within the next four or five years, threatens to shift the overall balance of forces clearly in its favour. In terms of conventional weapons, the Soviet Union has steadily increased its lead, with some 50,000 main battle tanks as opposed to one-third that number for the United States and the European countries.

At the other extreme, the Soviet Union has caught up with the United States in the matter of sanctuary nuclear vehicles, with the prospect of achieving a predominant anti-personnel capability in the coming years. In addition, it has deployed nearly 250 mobile triple-MIRV SS-20 missiles, which have no equivalent elsewhere. For not only can these weapons destroy all European cities in a few minutes – matching in this the existing SS-4s and SS-5s – but, because of their great accuracy, they also have the ability to annihilate ground military installations and the European countries' economic infrastructure. True, the Soviet Union still appears to be at a disadvantage as regards short-range so-called tactical nuclear weapons, but with the deployment of SS-21s and SS-22s and the development of the

SS-X-23, it will probably have closed the gap in a few years' time.

This being so, it is not surprising that détente should have suffered and that it is hardly part of the present international political vocabulary: the hopes which sprang from the 1971 accord concerning the status of Berlin and from the final act of Helsinki have given way to scepticism and disillusion.

Furthermore, the new imbalance has produced irrational reactions from some sections of European public opinion. In the name of ill-understood pacifism, some seem to fear the weapons intended to safeguard freedom more than the weapons directed against them.

The prospects in the third world countries are hardly more encouraging. The deep, lasting conflicts in the Middle East and southern Africa remain more than ever a source of instability with very serious potential consequences.

It would be a grave mistake to allow such trouble spots to persist. It would be a strategic error to seek at all costs to turn these local conflicts – complex but with known causes – into theatres of American/Soviet confrontation. No one can win at this game, neither the direct protagonists nor the superpowers nor needless to say our ancient Europe whose economy depends on an unhindered flow of trade with the entire international community.

And, here again, we must recognise that the situation has worsened seriously since the beginning of the last decade. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan is the most dramatic example of this trend. Faced with this deterioration, how have the European states reacted? The picture here is not entirely negative.

It is true for example that political co-operation between member countries of the European Community has allowed Europe in some instances to affirm its identity on the diplomatic scene. Cases in point have been in connection with the Middle East conflict and in the conduct of negotiations linked with the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. It is also possible that recent proposals by the Federal Republic of Germany and Italy to revive the Community's political union will facilitate such a development.

The practice of holding European councils has resulted in greater cohesion in approaching the economic and sometimes political problems with which our countries are confronted.

On the whole, however, we must recognise that the collective results have hardly measured up to the magnitude of the challenges. It is true that the variety of national situations in Europe does not always facilitate a global approach to Europe's security.

Mr. Lemoine (continued)

The Ten? As Mr. Claude Cheysson recently put it at the meeting of the Community Foreign Ministers in Brussels on 17th November, "There can be no question of the Ten talking about defence matters, firstly because one member country – Ireland – would not agree and secondly because there is Western European Union."

Therefore, as things stand at present, any progress in the realm of defence might seem ruled out. On the other hand, some advances may be possible in the discussion of security questions in the broad sense. The programme submitted by Mr. Colombo and Mr. Genscher represents a positive effort in this direction, as were also the ideas put forward by Mr. von Hassel when he was President.

After Europe of the Ten, what of the Atlantic Alliance? All the states represented here have signed and ratified the Washington Treaty of 1949 and I take this opportunity to reaffirm that France remains true to this Alliance, as was confirmed by the President of the Republic at his press conference on 24th September last. The Atlantic Alliance, however, cannot be the specific forum for dealing with security matters from the European angle.

Yet, despite the differences in national attitudes, there is a European dimension to security. True, France, thanks to its completely independent control of a strategic nuclear force, possesses a last resource for defending its territory. In contrast, France's continental partners must rely ultimately on the American pledge to defend Europe.

It is however obvious, and here I would like to recall the speech delivered by the Minister of Defence, Charles Hernu, on 16th November before the *Institut des Hautes Études de Défense Nationale*, in which he stated that a serious threat to the security of these states would gravely affect France's security. This realisation of the existence of an objective European solidarity must therefore be the basis of our thinking.

The natural variety of situations should not conceal the deep solidarity existing between the members of a free community of men who share a set of democratic values and live in the same geographical area with close economic ties. It is precisely because the European states differ that it is necessary to consider the specifically European dimension of the problems. Some people talk of Finlandisation or neutralism. I would personally add another risk – that of Balkanisation – in other words the risk which would arise from national behaviour patterns taking too little account of the basic interests common to our European countries.

I fear that such a tendency may underlie certain peace movements which have proved particularly vigorous in recent months. If pacifism is spreading far and wide, it is only because Europe is weak and dependent.

The potential imbalance between the United States and the USSR outside Europe, pacifism and neutralism within – these are the factors which are combining to threaten Europe's security.

Under these conditions, Western European Union, as a genuine European institution, must have a special rôle to play, particularly its parliamentary Assembly which you represent.

Why WEU? It seems to me that the answer lies above all in the Brussels Treaty. The French Prime Minister, Mr. Pierre Mauroy, recalled, in a speech delivered before the *Institut des Hautes Études de Défense Nationale* on 14th September 1981, that France acknowledges all the treaties which gave birth to Western European Union. For the Brussels Treaty sets out in precise terms the obligation for member countries of WEU to afford military assistance in the event of an armed attack against one of them. Thus written statutes exist. But we also have practical reality, since it so happens that the seven members of WEU also belong to the European Community and the Atlantic Alliance. It is therefore hardly illogical to suppose that some day it may become necessary to increase the organisation's workload. Meanwhile it would appear necessary to give the existing institutions the means to carry out their tasks. Some rearranging could no doubt be carried out but should under no circumstances call into question the existing *modus vivendi*. I should like to add that the maintenance of the existing institutions should not exclude a substantial boost to work connected with the Assembly's tasks.

Since WEU remains the symbol of the undertaking given by the seven European countries to afford assistance, the Assembly is the natural venue for debating European defence matters. This particular competence of the Assembly is written into the Brussels Treaty and is confirmed, almost negatively, by the provisions of the treaties setting up the European Community.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, your Assembly, of which I was a member for three years, must and can reinforce its action and increase its influence on defence matters without major problems as regards institutions or further financial involvements. I will outline three different ways of achieving this.

First, the Assembly can diversify its subjects. Since, as I have said, Western Europe is the scene of the pacifist movements, a report on

Mr. Lemoine (continued)

this question would be most useful. What are these movements? Who are their leaders? How do they operate in European countries? What are the reasons for these different forms of action? These are all questions, Ladies and Gentlemen, to which your Assembly could try to supply answers.

Likewise, the Assembly could undertake a study of the overall Soviet/American nuclear balance from the European angle. A study of this subject by the Assembly would make it possible – more than any assessment by the two superpowers involved – to reveal the true situation to public opinion in our own European countries. Again, at a time when the Madrid conference delegates are talking about the mandate of the European disarmament conference, it would be interesting to have a study concerning the balance of ground forces in Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals.

Such studies would require the Assembly to tackle, with the utmost determination, problems which directly affect the security of all countries.

An independent source of technical information would be required for this work.

Such an instrument is available. All we need do is use it. I refer to the Standing Armaments Committee. This institution may have had some difficulty in finding its true rôle since bodies besides the SAC already existed for arms co-operation on a bilateral basis – Franco-German for example – or on a multilateral basis in the shape of the Independent European Programme Group. Precedents, although infrequent in recent years, have shown that the SAC can be placed at the disposal of the Assembly subject to the consent of the Council of WEU. And rather than need to obtain the Council's consent each time, could not the SAC be authorised, at each session of the Assembly, to give help with the various studies decided upon? This is just one suggestion, but other solutions are possible, of course. If the political will exists, I do not think anyway that institutional obstacles could hinder an expansion of the SAC's rôle.

With, as it were, an information and research department available to it, the Assembly would be in a position to initiate more ambitious studies. It could rely on an independent, specifically European agency whose work could not be suspected of being biased, which is the most important thing. I would remind you that the SAC is currently composed of 28 civil servants of different categories. This staff is large enough to carry out such tasks on behalf of the Assembly.

I previously said that your Assembly was the only body competent to deal with defence problems. Obviously, this does not mean that it should remain isolated or that its reports should remain confidential. On the contrary, it would be highly beneficial to give them wider circulation. Here I have in mind more particularly the European Parliament, the more so as Mr. De Poi has just submitted an outstanding report on the respective rôles of WEU and the European Parliament. I for one believe that the sharing of responsibilities and competences, which emerges clearly from the texts on which the existence of both assemblies is founded, does not rule out certain links. Thus the Assembly could recommend the Council to forward any of its reports to the European Parliament. This would be a useful way of keeping the European Parliament informed, while at the same time emphasising the specific areas of competence of your Assembly. Going a step further, why not extend this arrangement to the other assemblies – Council of Europe or North Atlantic – if certain reports are relevant to their problems?

Some may view these proposals as inadequate to meet the needs of the present situation. Nevertheless I believe them to be suited to the existing possibilities and I think that, as in other areas, small steps will show that we are moving.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like you to know how indebted I am to you for all the experience I gained during the three years I worked with you in WEU and the Council of Europe. I know how high are the personal standards of each one of you and how seriously you take the tasks you are asked to perform.

I am equally aware of the high standard of the staff who have the difficult job of running these European organisations. Yet I also know that all of you elected members of parliaments, regardless of which country you come from, share with the administrative staff a European-mindedness in line with our traditions and, may I say, our civilisation.

For one could trace a path over the centuries to underscore the urgency of the duty we have, today more than ever, to face up to the problems confronting us. But I believe above all that, in our respective countries, we must rally public opinion and stress the need we have – we Europeans, I mean – to guarantee our security. Peace is dependent on Europe's sustained and recognised security.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, by way of conclusion I should like to recall what President Mitterrand said at his press conference on 24th September: "The arms negotiation debate must be based on the fundamental notion that

Mr. Lemoine (continued)

only a balance of forces can preserve peace... Therefore I would like to see negotiations begun, but only on a clear basis, without either partner being able to speculate on a momentary advantage."

A military balance at the lowest possible level and effective and verifiable disarmament are France's goals. And it wishes to discuss them within the only European organisation which stems from a specific treaty still in force and which is unchallengeably of topical significance. That organisation is Western European Union. France attaches importance to its existence, to an expanding of its activities and more particularly to the labours of your Assembly. (*Applause*)

The PRESIDENT. – I am sure that I speak on behalf of all members of the Assembly in warmly thanking you, Minister, for your most interesting address. We note with pleasure the continuing support that your government gives to WEU and, in particular, to the work of the Assembly. I am sure that the relevant Committees will have noted the interesting proposal that you made for their further studies and work programmes.

You have kindly undertaken to answer questions. I believe that it will be convenient for you to reply globally at the end of questions.

Before I call for questions, let me point out that we have another Minister present. It is sometimes said that we do not have sufficient ministerial involvement. We look forward to hearing Mr. Blaker from the United Kingdom at three o'clock, so I ask members to be in their places at the beginning of the sitting. It was pointed out in a point of order this morning that we had a thin attendance at ten o'clock.

We now come to questions. The first question will be from Mr. Smith and Mr. Cavaliere will follow.

Mr. SMITH (*United Kingdom*). – In his wide-ranging, most interesting and robust speech the minister mentioned specific weapons. What is the French Government's attitude towards the enhanced radiation weapon?

The PRESIDENT. – I hope that members will keep their questions brief, because we are pressed for time.

I call Mr. Cavaliere.

Mr. CAVALIERE (*Italy*) (Translation). – Mr. Minister, at the conference held at the *Institut des Hautes Études de la Défense Nationale* on 29th September 1981, General Lacaze, Chief of Staff of the French Armed Forces ruled out any possibility of France's taking part, in

peacetime, in what is called the "Battle of the Marne" and used the following words: "Within NATO, French forces will remain under national command and will be deployed to points or zones covering national territory".

Do you not think, Sir, that these statements conflict with the correct interpretation of mutual assistance between the allies in the event of an armed attack against them and constitute a clear denial of the automatic action enshrined in Article V of the Brussels Treaty and several times confirmed by French Government representatives speaking in this Assembly?

In the light of these quoted words of General Lacaze, what significance can be attached to the statement on defence made by Mr. Mauroy on 4th September 1981?

The PRESIDENT. – We should like you to bring your question to a conclusion, Mr. Cavaliere.

Mr. CAVALIERE (*Italy*) (Translation). – I am asking a question. What significance can be attached to the statements to the effect that defence does not start the moment an enemy sets foot on national territory but when he sets foot on the territory of another member of the Alliance?

The PRESIDENT. – I call Mr. Büchner.

Mr. BÜCHNER (*Federal Republic of Germany*) (Translation). – At the beginning of his statement the Secretary of State drew attention to the shift in the balance of forces in recent years with regard to certain kinds of weapons and ended with a quotation from Mr. Mitterrand reminding us that at no time during the negotiations must one side or the other enjoy any superiority. My question is: does he not think that a shift in the relative importance of the western organisations, on which he has made proposals, or supported the proposals of others, might have a negative effect on this process? In other words, could the debate about the importance of various organisations on the western side actually hamper the process of negotiation?

The PRESIDENT. – I call Sir Frederic Bennett.

Sir Frederic BENNETT (*United Kingdom*). – In the years that I have been a member of WEU I have never heard a more supportive speech about its rôle than we heard today. We are all grateful for that.

In the earlier part of his discourse the Secretary of State mentioned the fearful rôle of the SS-20s. As he says that it is right that the public should be educated in these matters, can he confirm that the range of the SS-20s is such that even if they were moved behind the Urals,

Sir Frederic Bennett (continued)

as one of the offers implies, and fired from there, they could still destroy the whole of Western Europe with the possible exceptions of Portugal and Ireland?

The PRESIDENT. – I call Mr. van den Bergh.

Mr. van den BERGH (*Netherlands*) (Translation). – Mr. President, can the statement by the Secretary of State on the Standing Armaments Committee be taken to mean that he agrees it may also carry out studies for the Assembly on armaments in the East and West and the balance of forces in general?

The PRESIDENT. – I call Mr. Reddemann.

Mr. REDDEMANN (*Federal Republic of Germany*) (Translation). – May I say first of all that I am pleased to see the Secretary of State back in our Assembly and therefore almost regret that I have to put a critical question to him. However, following on what Mr. Cavaliere said, I must tell him that in the Federal Republic of Germany too there are different interpretations of the present French Government's approach to defence. Mr. Augstein, the editor of the news magazine *Der Spiegel*, whom the Secretary of State knows personally, recently stated in a television discussion with Matthias Walden, the editor of the daily newspaper *Die Welt*, that in the event of a conflict the French Government would try to remain neutral and would not fulfil its treaty obligations. The Secretary of State is to be commended for pointing out today that the treaty governing Western European Union also stipulates this obligation under the Alliance, a theme which he then developed. May I ask him whether he could once again make that statement, very specifically, so as to remove any lingering doubts on the part of his country's allies?

The PRESIDENT. – I call Mrs. Knight.

Mrs. KNIGHT (*United Kingdom*). – The Secretary of State referred to the strong impetus and re-emergence of the pacifist movement that we saw in the CND campaigns during the 1960s. Will he comment on the Soviet involvement, in terms of money and influence, in the new campaigns and agree that there is now a different dimension to the movement? There are demands that we should dispense with nuclear power as well as nuclear bombs. Will the Secretary of State confirm that the loss of nuclear power would have a big effect on a country's ability to defend itself?

The PRESIDENT. – I call Mr. Mertens.

Mr. MERTENS (*Netherlands*) (Translation). – Mr. President, President François Mit-

terrand's predecessor did not really commit himself on the implementation of the NATO twofold decision. President Mitterrand himself has come out pretty much in favour of it. My question is: how can French strategic nuclear weapons be included in the discussions which began in Geneva yesterday? They are, after all, weapons which can be fired either from submarines, or from the Plateau d'Albion or from the Mirage, exactly the kind of weapons, in fact, on which the United States and the Soviet Union are negotiating.

The PRESIDENT. – Thank you, Mr. Mertens.

I call Mr. Wilkinson.

Mr. WILKINSON (*United Kingdom*). – May I first echo the sentiments of Sir Frederic Bennett? I have been in the Assembly for only two and a half years, but I have never heard a more heartening speech. I especially welcome the commitment of France to WEU. We enormously appreciate the rôle that France plays in Europe's defence and as host to the Assembly.

May I press the Minister further on the rôle of the Standing Armaments Committee? That body could surely fulfil a far more fruitful rôle, as the Minister himself has suggested. In particular, I suggest the monitoring of high technology development in fields which could be critical to European defence. The Assembly has taken a particular interest in space matters, for example.

If operational requirements could be better harmonised and the rôle of the IEPG better monitored, the Assembly could play a key and crucial rôle in the development and harmonisation of high technology within Europe for European defence. I should welcome the Minister's comments on that.

The PRESIDENT. – Thank you, Mr. Wilkinson.

I hope that members will keep their questions short. I know that it is tempting for members to give the Minister the benefit of their own views, having greatly benefited from his.

I call Mr. De Poi, followed by Mr. van Eekelen.

Mr. DE POI (*Italy*) (Translation). – Minister, I greatly appreciated the realistic and European tenor of your speech and I thank you for your kind words concerning the report I had the honour to submit regarding WEU's rôle in European union.

Do you think that establishing interchanges between our Assembly and the assembly of the European Communities with a view to coordinating their work, while at the same time

Mr. De Poi (continued)

strictly observing their respective spheres of competence, would be likely to reduce the freedom of action which the French Government claims in the realm of defence? Personally I do not believe so, but I should like to know what your own views are on the matter.

The PRESIDENT. – I shall call Mr. van Eekelen, then Mr. Osborn, then Mr. Brasseur and then Lord Duncan-Sandys. After that, I think, we must conclude.

Mr. van EEKELEN (*Netherlands*) (Translation). – Mr. President, as I listened to the most interesting suggestions made by the French Secretary of State to the Minister of Defence, I wondered to what extent the French forces, whether nuclear or conventional, can be counted in the balance of forces he has just suggested.

The PRESIDENT. – Thank you, Mr. van Eekelen.

I call Mr. Osborn.

Mr. OSBORN (*United Kingdom*). – I should be grateful if the Minister would consider the question of the pacifist groups which has already been raised. The view that theatre nuclear weapons are American nuclear weapons on European soil primarily for American defence is often promoted by the Soviet Union in international assemblies. Two questions arise from this.

First, to what extent do European countries – members of WEU and wider – want the responsibility of having their hand on the trigger for these theatre nuclear weapons and sharing this with the United States?

Secondly, it is a matter which not only could be discussed with the United States of America but on which the position could be made clear to the peoples of Europe and to the pacifist groups?

The PRESIDENT. – Thank you, Mr. Osborn.

I call Mr. Brasseur.

Mr. BRASSEUR (*France*) (Translation). – The Government of the United States would like to see Pershing and cruise-type missiles installed on European territory if negotiations with the Soviet Union break down. This has become an issue in every European state. I should like to know the French Government's position.

The PRESIDENT. – Thank you, Mr. Brasseur.

I call Lord Duncan-Sandys.

Lord DUNCAN-SANDYS (*United Kingdom*). – In his most positive address, the Minister reaffirmed – I am sure that we all welcome this – the unqualified, automatic obligation of the signatories of the Brussels Treaty to come to one another's aid in the event of attack. In those circumstances, does he think that it would increase the efficiency of our joint defence if France were to participate fully in the NATO military system on the same footing as the other signatory states?

The PRESIDENT. – Thank you very much, Lord Duncan-Sandys.

That concludes the questions. I fear, Minister, that you have been given a formidable list of questions, but that, of course, is a reflection of our appreciation of, stimulation by and interest in the speech that you were good enough to give to us. We are now asking almost the impossible of you, that is, to take on board in a short time the great number of questions that have been posed, as I know that you must leave us before too long.

I call Mr. Lemoine.

Mr. LEMOINE (*Secretary of State to the French Minister of Defence*) (Translation). – Mr. Cavaliere asked me about a declaration made by General Lacaze.

The quotation, as it stood, could indeed lead to a misunderstanding, or at any rate prompt questions. However, the texts need to be consulted in this respect.

The WEU treaty does not provide for the integration of forces. Therefore, when General Lacaze talks about maintaining French forces under national command, there is both logic and consistency between the statement of a principle – that of participation – and the adaptations and the means deployed under French command.

Also it should be noted that General Lacaze's remarks referred to a clearly-defined case, namely that of a specific threat against French national territory. Here too it seems to me that General Lacaze's reply had a certain logic.

Mr. CAVALIERE (*Italy*) (Translation). – I have here the full text of Mr. Lacaze's speech. He was referring not to the defence of France but to that of Europe.

Mr. LEMOINE (*Secretary of State to the French Minister of Defence*) (Translation). – I shall therefore qualify my reply a little further and would refer you to the quotation I just gave from Mr. Hernu's declaration to the effect that any armed attack outside or near France would involve national security. This means that France can under no circumstances remain indifferent to what might take place around her.

Mr. Lemoine (continued)

It would be wrong to extrapolate from the reply of a military leader addressing a special audience and defining the rôles and tasks of a national command.

Mr. Büchner, I naturally do not underestimate the present or possible future difficulties – and you and I certainly experienced many in the days we both sat in the Council of Europe, when the tasks of the Council of Europe had to be defined in relation to the European Parliament. I believe that it is easier than you appear to think to include WEU's own rôle in this line of thought. But since you are well acquainted with the respective spheres of the different assemblies, I think your question was more of a suggestion.

According to the texts and the treaties, defence problems remain the province of Western European Union. However, in view of all the implications of defence, security and armament problems, I believe that there are necessarily also economic connotations. The development of weapons, or of the concerns which manufacture them, also has an impact on the national economy, as you know, and many channels indeed can lead from one Assembly to the other. Nonetheless, what I wish to forcefully stress is that competence for security and defence problems lies with the Assembly of WEU.

I now come to the question concerning the range of the SS-20s.

Knowing that Sir Frederic Bennett is better acquainted than anyone else with the problems and effectiveness of certain types of weapons, I have no doubt that although he asked this question he already knows the answer. He would like it to be stated that the SS-20 has a range and relocation capability such that it constitutes a deadly weapon for any country that might be its target. I believe we are all convinced of this today, which is why the problems of balanced armaments, more than disarmament, appear to us so important.

A question was asked regarding French military nuclear armament. I will answer right away because it is important to our debate. Obviously, the current French deterrent potential forms a whole. It constitutes France's strategic system and is meaningful today only in the context of independence. It is true that our country made this choice many years ago. As things stand at present, there is no way it could negotiate on even part of the armaments involved, for to negotiate on what is the minimum credibility threshold of its deterrent force, i.e. to embark upon a form of stand-down, would be to place the deterrence which stems from credibility at great risk. Conse-

quently France has only a defence system, and a defence based on the principle of deterrence which at present precludes any other approach.

I will now answer a question which is linked to the previous one and relates to neutron-type weapons. Let me repeat what you already know, namely that our country and those responsible for defence and research, have stated that we are still only in the stage of design studies. I can confirm that these are continuing, though we have still reached no decision concerning this kind of nuclear weapon.

Mr. De Poi has asked us to say more on WEU's rôle within the European union and what its outcome might be.

I would not like to overstep the strict limits I set myself this morning for my remarks, whose diplomatic importance you well understand, for which I thank you all, but having been a parliamentarian myself and being far too respectful of the rôle of parliamentarians, I would not like to interfere in what is the responsibility of parliamentarians. You yourselves have to define your areas of competence. I see here the familiar faces of many parliamentarians with sound experience of European assemblies, so that I know that I can rely on you, well aware that in all these proceedings you will know how to keep within reasonable bounds. The main thing I ask of you is that the need for efficiency be always borne in mind.

I should be deeply embarrassed if I had to answer Mrs. Knight's question about the pacifist movements. You enquire, Madam, about the extent of Soviet participation in the pacifist campaign. I confess that I am not an honoured correspondent of the country you mention and that, as far as pacifism is concerned, my own situation is rather like yours, that is, I observe and note the way it has been developing and what links and ties it has. One thing is certain, namely that this pacifist movement is a reality and that, as you rightly pointed out, it has reached a certain scale in European countries in recent months.

There has been an organised pacifist movement in Europe since the start of the present century. Proof of this lies in all the congresses held from 1905 onwards, at a time when the threat of a conflict was already being felt in Europe. All those great gatherings in Amsterdam, Geneva and, I think, Paris as well, were quite different from those of today, so that we must closely scrutinise a movement like the one you mention, which is on such a scale that it could not have been created spontaneously.

There is a psychological attitude among our fellow citizens: peace; we want peace; we all want peace and we are all distressed at what is happening around us. Moreover, we have

Mr. Lemoine (continued)

been branded psychologically by history. Recall certain dates: 1914-1919 – add twenty years and you come to 1939-1944; add twenty years and you are in 1964. For us French 1964 is a landmark date: the end of all our commitments in overseas territories, Indochina and North Africa. Another twenty years bring us to 1984.

My son, who is twenty, said this to me: “Your grandfather experienced 1870, your father 1914 and 1940. You yourself went through the events of 1960 in North Africa. What will my turn bring?”

It is true that we have before us today a generation which is fearful and which cannot help wondering. If you take a look at the composition of these big pacifist demonstrations, you will note the great numbers of young people. It is up to us to provide them with what they need to live feeling secure, and to convince them that we want to do all in our power to guarantee peace for them. This is most important.

It could also be the result of general apprehension as we move into a new millennium. In the Middle Ages there was immense fear in Europe when it was time to cross into a new millennium. Nowadays we fear neither the plague nor the cholera that used to decimate our populations, but other no less dangerous threats hang over us.

Mr. President, I think I have given answers to all the questions I was asked...

Mr. BRASSEUR (*Belgium*) (Translation). – Minister, I am sorry but you have not replied to the question I asked you about the installation of Pershing missiles.

Mr. LEMOINE (*Secretary of State to the French Minister of Defence*) (Translation). – That is true, but would you please be good enough to repeat your question.

Mr. BRASSEUR (*Belgium*) (Translation). – Minister, as you are aware, the American Government wishes, if possible, to install Pershing and cruise-type missiles on European territory. Naturally, negotiations are to be held on the subject. I should like to know whether France would if necessary be prepared to have such missiles on its territory, or whether it has on the contrary already made it known that this would be refused?

Mr. LEMOINE (*Secretary of State to the French Minister of Defence*) (Translation). – Your question, Sir, is admirably clear and it is up to me to answer with equal clarity.

It seems to me that you have deliberately left out a point whose importance no one here can deny, namely that France is not part of NATO.

Now it is because France is no longer part of NATO that it created its own deterrent force to which I referred earlier. Consequently we already have, installed on our own territory, a very real deterrent force which is a significant component part of the overall resources available for the defence of Europe.

The PRESIDENT. – Thank you very much, Mr. Lemoine.

We must now bring this part of our proceedings to an end because we have imposed an impossible task on the Minister by asking him to answer so many questions.

Mr. Lemoine, do I understand that you wish now to answer a further question? This must be the end, for otherwise everyone will want to ask his own question again.

I call Mr. Reddemann.

Mr. REDDEMANN (*Federal Republic of Germany*) (Translation). – Mr. President, may I make myself quite clear. I want to know if it is true that in the event of an East-West conflict the French Government would remain neutral, as some journalists in the Federal Republic of Germany assert.

The PRESIDENT. – I call the Minister.

Mr. LEMOINE (*Secretary of State to the French Minister of Defence*) (Translation). – Neutrality is not something that can be decreed. As I said before with considerable emphasis, we shall honour the treaties we have signed. And among them are the WEU and Brussels Treaties in particular, which are binding. I repeat, we shall honour our commitments. (*Applause*)

The PRESIDENT. – I am sure, Minister, that we were particularly glad to have that last assurance from you. I apologise both to you and to members that I went rather quickly, but I knew that you had to leave and I am also a little anxious about our own time-table. I apologise to you, therefore, Minister, that perhaps we rather rushed the questions.

We are extremely grateful to you for making so positive a statement and dealing with a wide variety of questions so that we now have a very clear view of French policies. How pleased we are to welcome one of our former colleagues back in our presence in a ministerial capacity! Thank you very much, Minister.