

## Methodology

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### Research question and hypothesis

The thematic ePublication ‘Franco-British diplomatic games and issues in WEU (1954–1982)’ is the result of a thorough exploration of the WEU archives based around the following research question: What were the positions adopted by the French and the British within WEU on major issues relating to European security and defence?

The research hypothesis of the ePublication is that the positions supported by France and the United Kingdom in WEU were in line with their general positions on the development of European defence: Paris was in favour of a strictly European mechanism, attached to the European Communities (EC), while London preferred the NATO option. Our research has shed light on how these specific strategic positions structured the debates within WEU on the major defence and security issues that marked the period 1954–1982.<sup>[1]</sup> An analysis of the exchanges between the WEU Council and Assembly<sup>[2]</sup> on defence matters also illustrates the intra-institutional political dynamic and its influence on Franco-British relations. As a whole, the debates within WEU — between either its Member States or its political bodies — offer a new perspective on how the process of establishing a system of European defence was dependent on the impetus (or lack of impetus) of France and Britain.

The documents in the ePublication were primarily selected on the basis of our consultation and methodical analysis of the WEU archives. Documents from the WEU archives were compared with national diplomatic documents. The aim of this comparison was to identify consistency and variation in the positions of France and the United Kingdom depending on where these positions were expressed (in a national or multilateral setting), as well as convergences and divergences between the positions of the two countries. Discourse analysis also enabled an assessment to be made of the organisation’s role and powers by recognising the legitimacy of French and/or British action, or conversely by observing expressions demonstrating unilateralism or suggesting the importance of other organisations with regard to the topics covered. These expressions of position can mainly be attributed to national stakeholders — ministers and ambassadors — and also to the WEU institutions themselves. An analysis of relevant documentation, in particular statements by ministers or ambassadors, is performed for each of the four themes addressed in the ePublication.

The thematic ePublication ‘Franco-British diplomatic games and issues in WEU (1954–1982)’ is complemented by an academic article, published in the form of an ePaper. This article draws and develops conclusions from an original analysis based on a selection of resources published within the ePublication. The analysis involved tools and methods related to digital humanities, in particular TEI (Text Encoding Initiative)<sup>[3]</sup> editing, in addition to the traditional methodological approaches associated with social sciences and humanities.

The experimental XML-TEI encoding of a series of documents from the section on the Defence Technological and Industrial Base (DTIB) was intended to address our research question by enabling us to identify ‘linguistic patterns’ relating to the question of armaments in the discourse of the various speakers, particularly the British and French representatives and also institutional representatives — representatives of the Council (session chairs), the Agency for the Control of Armaments (ACA) and the Standing Armaments Committee (SAC). The hope was that this would open up new avenues for research.

The article also examines various security and defence questions that reflect Franco-British relations within WEU, and aims to provide a substantiated response to the research question addressed in the thematic ePublication.

## Structure of the ePublication

The ePublication is based around a thematic approach, with each theme being developed chronologically. The structure reflects the main issues that shaped Franco-British diplomatic relations between 1954 and 1982, as identified from a cross-comparison of WEU documents — particularly minutes of meetings of the Assembly and documents from the WEU Permanent Council — and other primary sources (French, British and American diplomatic archives, interviews with eyewitnesses) and secondary sources.

The ePublication starts with a general presentation of WEU, including its establishment, organisation, powers, operation and dissolution. The ePublication also contains an interactive timeline that illustrates all the milestones in the life of WEU, particularly any important events that affected Franco-British relations during the period from 1954 to 1982.

The research question is examined by means of four case studies, each of which comprises a thematic section in the ePublication. The first case study concerns relations between WEU and NATO, distinguishing between the periods 1954–1966 and 1966–1982, the latter characterised by France's absence from the NATO integrated military command. The second section focuses on the nuclear question, in particular the implications of deterrence, disarmament and the Euromissiles crisis. The third section looks at issues related to the Defence Technological and Industrial Base (DTIB), examining both arms design and production and arms control.<sup>[4]</sup> Finally, the fourth case study analyses NATO's 'out-of-area' operations (from West Africa to Afghanistan).

The thematic sections are divided into several sub-sections. Each section and sub-section begins with a brief introductory text, which contextualises and presents the major issues related to each of the topics under study and identifies the implications for and positions of France and the United Kingdom. The policies pursued and positions adopted by the United States and the USSR on these various issues are also considered, bearing in mind the vital role played by these two countries during the period in question. For each theme, the actions of WEU are also reviewed.

Within each section and sub-section, the selected documents are presented in chronological order. Each document is accompanied by a bibliographical reference, which can be used for citation purposes, and an explanatory caption which places the document in context and highlights any relevant points in relation to the theme or sub-theme in question.

## Research limitations

The thematic ePublication and the ePaper cover the period from 1954 to 1982. The selection of documents does not include Western Union; it concentrates on WEU.<sup>[5]</sup> The upper limit of the period analysed was determined by the conditions governing the release of diplomatic documents to the public. In accordance with final decision C(11)05 of the WEU Permanent Council of 11 May 2011, only documents dating back more than 30 years can be communicated and published. The project was launched in 2012, so the timeframe under analysis ends in 1982.

The research scope also excludes documents and systematic analysis of the purely bilateral dimension of Franco-British relations, which is nevertheless not ignored, since it can shed light on foreign and defence policy. More emphasis is placed on the multilateral dimension, however. Similarly, French and British bilateral relations with other countries have been considered inasmuch as the various diplomatic documents suggest an influence on French and British positions with regard to the issues under study.

Since the analysis is focused on WEU and its activities, and on interactions between France and the United Kingdom within this forum, the archives of other organisations such as NATO and the EC/EU have not been consulted. There are occasional references to documents from these other organisations, however, either because they were found in the WEU archives or because they are treaties and agreements which had an impact on WEU and/or its Member States.

### **Principles for the selection of documents**

Systematic research was carried out in the database of the WEU archives. This enabled us to pinpoint a series of documents that were representative of the positions adopted by France and the United Kingdom within WEU on the various themes under investigation.

The following sections of the WEU archives were specifically consulted: Interim Period, Brussels Treaty Organisation (BTO), Secretariat-General/Council's archives (1954–1987), Armament Bodies — Agency for the Control of Armaments (ACA) and Standing Armaments Committee (SAC).

For France, archive documents were selected from the collection of French diplomatic documents up to the first semester of 1967 and from our consultation of the archives of the French Embassy in London (WEU series for the period 1954 to 1982) held at the Centre for Diplomatic Archives in Nantes. For the United Kingdom, the documents come from the National Archives, which were consulted both online and at Kew.

In addition to these diplomatic and institutional documents, the ePublication includes press articles from national newspapers such as *Le Monde* and *Le Monde Diplomatique* for France and *The Guardian* and *The Observer* for the United Kingdom, as well as some dispatches from *Agence Europe* and *Atlantic News* which were found in the WEU archives.

All the sections except for 'The DTIB: the development and production of armaments' also include photos illustrating the main events relating to each case study.

Finally, some sections contain maps that offer a geographical representation of the subject, as well as excerpts from interviews conducted by the CVCE with people who served in one of the WEU bodies or were involved in WEU's activities. The ePublication includes excerpts from interview with Charles Goerens, former President of the WEU Assembly, Willem Van Eekelen, former Secretary-General of WEU, and Francis Gutmann, former Secretary-General of the French Foreign Ministry.

Although the ePublication mentions the factors that led to the revival of WEU in 1984, this event is outside the chosen timeframe, so the years 1983 and 1984 are not covered in depth.

The resources included in the ePublication have been selected according to the following criteria:

- relevance of the content to the general question addressed in the ePublication and the various topics covered;

- balance between the decades — for some of the topics analysed, fewer documents were found, e.g. the Euromissiles Crisis or the period prior to France's withdrawal from the NATO integrated command;

- balance between the four sections. It should be emphasised that some documents could not be consulted and/or published, given their highly sensitive nature (such as French diplomatic documents on nuclear issues);

prevalence of documents from the WEU archives and a balance with other types of document;

reliability of sources;

varied nature of the documents (institutional documents, diplomatic correspondence, autobiographies/biographies, press articles, etc.);

documents from a variety of disciplines (political and legal documents, etc.);

varied format of the documents (texts, images, audio and video recordings, diagrams, etc.).

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[1] Éric Remacle referred to the ‘instrumentalisation’ of WEU by these two countries, which he identified as ‘successive leader states’ within the organisation. REMACLE, Éric. *L’Union (de l’Europe) occidentale durant la guerre froide (1948–1989)*. In Éric Remacle and P. Winand (eds), *L’Amérique, l’Europe, l’Afrique (1945–1973)*, Brussels: PIE-Peter-Lang, 2009, p. 197.

[2] Sometimes meeting at ambassadorial level, sometimes at ministerial level.

[3] See <http://www.tei-c.org/>.

[4] The second and third sections are partly inspired by BRIGOT, André (ed.), *France/United Kingdom. Consultations on defence and security*. CIRPES-EHESS/EPPI — Warwick University, 1994, 166 p.

[5] To introduce the topic and ensure continuity of reflection, some documents from just before (1953) and just after (1983) the period under analysis are included.