

Telex for the British Embassy in Brussels on the reactivation of WEU (13 June 1984)

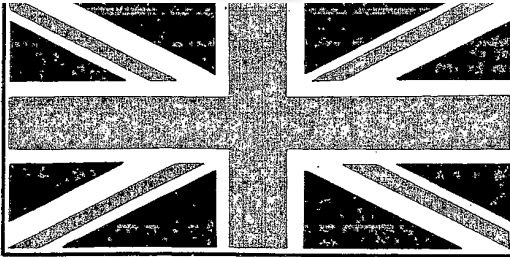
Caption: On 13 June 1984, the day after the meeting of the Council of Ministers of Western European Union (WEU), the British Embassy in Brussels receives a telex from London outlining the efforts made by British authorities for a reactivation of WEU.

Source: Foreign Ministers bid to relaunch Western European Union (13 June 1984). Brussels: British Embassy-Press service, [s.d.]. (Telex N°60).

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URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/telex_for_the_british_embassy_in_brussels_on_the_reactivation_of_weu_13_june_1984-en-23383a8b-9435-4dfc-ab2a-8f33c82d529b.html

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The following consists of unedited telex material received overnight from London

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13 June 1984

FOREIGN MINISTERS BID TO RELAUNCH WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

paris (lps): foreign ministers of the seven member nations of the western european union (weu) - britain, france, federal germany, italy, belgium, the netherlands and luxembourg - met here today 12 june for the first time in a decade to take the initial steps towards a possible reactivation of the largely quiescent body which celebrates its 30th anniversary later this year.

before the ministers, when they convened this morning, was a working paper drafted by a special group of officials set up at britain's instigation. this contains a number of proposals for strengthening the weu and giving it an effective role as a european pillar of the nato alliance.

speaking to the british press this afternoon, foreign and commonwealth secretary sir geoffrey howe, who led the uk delegation, recalled that the 1948 treaty of brussels upon which the weu was founded in 1954 remained important for those countries which signed it because it contained a mutual defence commitment which was in fact stronger than the north atlantic treaty (which set up nato). indeed it was especially important for britain because of the commitment unique to the uk to keep ground and air forces permanently stationed on the european continent.

so britain had been glad to welcome the french initiative in calling today's meeting and had approached it in an open-minded, constructive but pragmatic way.

the foreign secretary added that he hoped it would be possible to use the current renewal of interest in weu to foster increased use of the weu council and assembly but on the basis that the guiding criterion must be effectiveness. he stressed that there would obviously be no point in using the weu to duplicate or cut across other activities such as those of nato's euro group or independent european programme group which is responsible for european arms collaboration questions.

sir geoffrey went on: "i think the main thing is to keep in mind the ultimate object of the exercise which is to strengthen the european pillar of the atlantic alliance and strengthen the european contribution to western defence. it has always been our view that a stronger europe is a good thing in itself for the transatlantic partnership."

and the foreign secretary stressed that today's meeting has also been mindful of the interest shown by those nato members who were not in the weu and ministers had agreed that it was important to keep them closely informed.

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sir geoffrey pointed out that it was britain's suggestion that led to the meeting of weu permanent representatives and political directors in london at the end of march and the establishment of the working group to study the question of reactivating weu.

1,11/A-3,6, B/1,6,7, G/1-2,5