

## Letter from E. J. W. Barnes to Frank Stanley Tomlinson about WEU force levels (10 January 1964)

**Caption:** On 10 January 1964, John Barnes, Head of the Western Organisations Department of the Foreign Office, sends a note to Frank Stanley Tomlinson, Minister on the United Kingdom Permanent Delegation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), in which he outlines the British position on the German proposal to use NATO document MC 26/4 on force requirements for 1966, as a basis for revised Western European Union (WEU) force levels, thus enabling the Federal Republic of Germany to meet agreed NATO requirements. The note shows the British Government concerns to accept MC 26/4, which is only a planning document that has never received the full approval of the North Atlantic Council and about which a number of countries entertain reservations. The Foreign Office proposes to postpone any decision on the subject for a further year in order to reach a more satisfactory agreement.

**Source:** The National Archives of the UK (TNA). Foreign Office, Political Departments, General Correspondence from 1906-1966. WESTERN ORGANISATIONS (WU): Meeting of WEU Ministers at The Hague: Armed forces controlled by WEU: UK contribution to European forces; FRG forces. 01/01/1963-31/12/1963, FO 371/173487 (Former Reference Dep: File 1192 (pp 21 to end)).

**Copyright:** (c) The National Archives of the United Kingdom

**URL:**

[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/letter\\_from\\_e\\_j\\_w\\_barnes\\_to\\_frank\\_stanley\\_tomlinson\\_about\\_weu\\_force\\_levels\\_10\\_january\\_1964-en-820e0c56-f229-4da7-bd40-fo682a1d42do.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/letter_from_e_j_w_barnes_to_frank_stanley_tomlinson_about_weu_force_levels_10_january_1964-en-820e0c56-f229-4da7-bd40-fo682a1d42do.html)



**Last updated:** 13/10/2016



January 10, 1964

SECRET

Mumford wrote on December 19 to Fielding about W.E.U. force levels.

2. We see difficulty about accepting MC 26/4 as the basis of revised W.E.U. levels as proposed by Herr Sahn. MC 26/4 is only a planning document, which has never received the full approval of the North Atlantic Council, and about which a number of countries entertain reservations. (Incidentally even the Germans do not accept MC 26/4 in toto; they do not agree with the requirement for fighters.) It seems particularly pointless to adopt MC 26/4 for the W.E.U. purpose at a time when we hope the force planning exercise will result in agreement on more authoritative force goals for the period up to 1970. We would therefore much prefer to leave the W.E.U. tables unchanged this year, in the hope that in 12 months' time it will be possible to bring them up to date, and satisfy German requirements, in a more workmanlike manner.

3. At the same time we do not want to appear unhelpful to the Germans on a point to which they may attach political importance, or to seem to be thwarting legitimate German plans by too much zeal in applying the letter of the law in W.E.U. We should therefore if possible prefer to reach some agreement with the Germans in the more "technical" atmosphere of Paris rather than invest the issue with political overtones at this stage by a demarche in Bonn.

4. We should therefore be grateful if you could return to the charge with Sahn. You could explain that H.M.G. are in principle prepared to consider favourably whatever changes in the W.E.U. Council's existing force level tables may be necessary to permit Germany to meet agreed NATO requirements. But, for the reasons given in paragraph 2 above, we do not think the present moment opportune of MC 26/4 suitable as a yardstick. German plans for 1964 as announced in the intermediate review do not necessitate any change to the present W.E.U. levels. Would it not be possible to postpone the question of major amendment for a further year, by which time we might have more authoritative and far-reaching force goals on which to base revised W.E.U. levels?

5. We have considered the French compromise proposal (paragraph 3 of Mumford's letter under reference) under which certain minor amendments would be made to the W.E.U. tables

/to

F. S. Tomlinson, Esq., C.M.G.,  
U.K. Delegation to NATO,  
PARIS.

SECRET



SECRET

to bring them into conformity with the naval programme recommended by SACEUR for Germany for 1964. For the reasons given above, we much prefer to undertake no amendments this year. But we have no basic objection to the French proposal. If you think it would be helpful, you have authority to tell Sahm that you support it.

...

6. I attach, a toutes fins utiles, a comparative table setting out the various sets of figures at issue. You will see that German plans for 1964 envisage 54 naval reconnaissance/attack aircraft, where the maximum W.E.U. permitted figure is 48. We do not propose to draw attention to this, since, taking maritime aircraft as a whole, Germany is well within the limit (59 aircraft out of the permitted 72).

7. I am sending copies of this letter, with the enclosure, to Dodds in the Ministry of Defence and Duff in Bonn.

(E. J. W. Barnes)

SECRET