

## Internal note from the British Foreign Office on the limitations on German arms production (London, 16 February 1959)

**Caption:** This internal note from the British Foreign Office dated 16 February 1959 describes the recent initiatives taken by West Germany to amend Protocol III of the Revised Brussels Treaty, which limits arms production in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). In this context, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) asks the Western European Union (WEU) Member States if they have any objection to his supporting the German request for an amendment to the Treaty which would permit the FRG to undertake the joint production of surface-to-air guided missiles. The Foreign Office recommends that no objection be raised to SACEUR's supporting this German request.

**Source:** The National Archives of the UK (TNA). Foreign Office: Political Departments: General Correspondence from 1906-1966. WESTERN ORGANISATIONS (WU): Western European Union-WEU (WUW). Limitations on FRG arms production. 01/01/1959-31/12/1959, FO 371/146464 (Former Reference Dep: File 1195).

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**URL:**

[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/internal\\_note\\_from\\_the\\_british\\_foreign\\_office\\_on\\_the\\_limitations\\_on\\_german\\_arms\\_production\\_london\\_16\\_february\\_1959-en-e45783bb-5069-420d-9351-fa24503349ff.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/internal_note_from_the_british_foreign_office_on_the_limitations_on_german_arms_production_london_16_february_1959-en-e45783bb-5069-420d-9351-fa24503349ff.html)



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WESTERN DEPARTMENT

WUW/1195/4

1959

NORTH ATLANTIC  
TREATY ORGANIZATION

FROM

K. D. Minette  
Mr. Pigott

SUBJECT:

Limitations on German Arms  
Productions in the Revised  
Brussels Treaty  
- German request for amendment.

No.

Dated 16 February

Received Feb. 17.

References

13

MINUTES

Action postponed

See p 3.

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(Printing Instructions)

(Outward Action)

16  
at 6/6

(Action completed)

17/2/59

(Main Indexed)

2/6/60

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APPROVED  
17 FEB 1959

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Top Secret. ADF  
Secret. PP  
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Open.

LIMITATIONS ON GERMAN ARMS PRODUCTIONS IN  
THE REVISED BRUSSELS TREATY

German Request for Amendment

*Under Protocol III of*  
~~The restrictions on German arms production~~

Draft. Submission

~~in the Revised Brussels Treaty (Annex III to  
Germany is forbidden to produce Atomic, Biological  
Protocol III) cover in general most forms of  
and Chemical Weapons, Long Range and Guided Missiles,  
offensive weapons and in particular limit the  
Influence Mines, Large Warships and Strategic  
Germans to the manufacture of very small missiles  
Bomber Aircraft.~~

? *Mr Hancock*

2 The WEU Council can amend these  
restrictions (except for restrictions on  
production of atomic biological and chemical  
weapons) by a two-thirds majority, <sup>on the</sup> ~~after taking~~  
~~the advice of SACEUR.~~ <sup>recommendation</sup> In the course of 1958  
the Council agreed to two amendments to permit  
Germany to manufacture, first anti-tank guided  
missiles, and secondly one training ship with a  
displacement greater than the limits permitted  
in the Treaty. There have been Parliamentary  
Questions about these amendments but no adverse  
public reaction.

3 SACEUR has now asked if we have any  
objection to his supporting a German request  
to the WEU Council for an amendment to the  
Treaty which would permit Germany to undertake,  
in concert with certain other WEU countries,  
the joint production of surface-to-air guided  
missiles.

4 The background to the German request for  
~~amendment~~ is an agreement between France, Italy,  
Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, concluded  
within the framework of the NATO Armaments  
Committee, to manufacture jointly the American  
HAWK surface-to-air missile. Production would  
be shared among the participating countries

/in

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*[Handwritten signature]*

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in proportion to their requirement for this missile. The requirements are:

Belgium	3 battalions
France	10 battalions
Germany	9 battalions
Italy	4 battalions
Netherlands	2 battalions

Each battalion will be allowed 36 missiles.

The HAWK is a defensive weapon and has no atomic capability, (although a future development of it might have).

5 The Foreign Office would give careful study to the terms of any amendment to the Treaty suggested by the Germans to ensure that:

- (a) only defensive surface-to-air missiles were excluded from the restrictions;
- (b) the provisions of the Treaty concerning the manufacture of nuclear devices, parts or assemblies were not affected;
- (c) the joint manufacture of any prohibited weapon with several countries would not automatically entitle Germany to a further amendment of the Brussels Treaty enabling her to take part.

6 From the political point of view we should find it difficult to object to an amendment which satisfied these conditions. The U.K. has been trying to get a British missile (either BLOODHOUND or THUNDERBIRD) adopted as a joint project by the continental countries in opposition to the HAWK. Any objection by the U.K. at this stage would give rise to the suspicion of trying to sabotage this project.

7 Moreover any objection would not necessarily be effective. The Germans will have the support  
/of

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of their partners in the project and this is sufficient to ensure a majority in favour of an amendment when it is discussed in the WEU Council. As far as the recommendation from SACEUR is concerned the Americans have adopted a very strong sales drive with the HAWK missile and no doubt would exert pressure on SACEUR to help the project on its way.

8 Finally joint production by European countries including Germany of a weapon of this kind is a logical development of the concept of inter-dependence.

9 The Chiefs of Staff have asked to be consulted before a reply is sent to SACEUR. We should also wish to consult the French as we have done on previous occasions although this would presumably be only a formality since the French are partners in the project.

Recommendation

16 It is recommended that we should raise no objection to SACEUR supporting this German request for an amendment to the Brussels Treaty. When it is put to the Council we should wish to secure the safeguards in paragraph 5 above. Subject to the concurrence of the Chiefs of Staff and of the French, SACEUR should be informed accordingly.

17 . PUSD and the Ministry of Defence concur.

W158875/12R. Nov. 1945