

Report on the meeting of WEU Foreign Ministers held on 18 December in Paris (21 December 1954)

Caption: On 18 December 1954, the seven Foreign Ministers of Western European Union (WEU) meet in Paris. The ministers discuss the questions raised at previous sessions, particularly the machinery for fulfilling the military tasks of the Council. The President of the Council and French Foreign Minister Pierre Mendès France emphasises that, while the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's authority should not be diminished, the Council also has various military responsibilities such as regulating the maximum level of forces and controlling armaments, and that it would be useful to hold meetings between the national representatives in order to fulfil these tasks.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General's Report to the Interim Commission. Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Western European Union Countries. 21.12.1954. IWG/20. Copy No 47. 5 p. Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux). <http://www.anlux.lu>. Western European Union Archives. Secretariat-General/Council's Archives. 1954-1987. BTO 1 12th - Consulative Council - 14th Meeting - Paris - April 1954. Year: 1954, 15/03/1954-30/12/1954. File BTO-012. Volume 1/1.

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21st December, 1954SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT TO THE
INTERIM COMMISSIONMeeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Western
European Union Countries, Paris, 18th December,
1954

The Foreign Ministers of the seven Western European Union countries held a meeting after dinner at the Luxembourg Legation in Paris on 18th December, 1954. The following were present:

<u>BELGIUM</u>	S.E. M. SPAAK	Ministre des Affaires Etrangères.
	S.E. le Baron GUILLAUME	Ambassadeur de Belgique à Paris.
	M. André de STAERCKE	Délégué Permanent à l'OTAN.
<u>FRANCE</u>	S.E. M. MENDES-FRANCE	Président du Conseil.
	M. R. de MOUSTIER	Secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires Etrangères.
	M. F. SEYDOUX	Ministre Plénipotentiaire.
<u>FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY</u>	H.E. Mr. BLÜCHER	Vice-Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.
	H.E. Mr. BLANKENHORN	Director of Political Department, Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
	H.E. Mr. HAUSENSTEIN	Chargé d'Affaires of the Federal Republic of Germany in Paris.
<u>ITALY</u>	H.E. Mr. MARTINO	Minister for Foreign Affairs
	H.E. Mr. P. GUARONI	Italian Ambassador in Paris.
	H.E. Mr. M. MAGISTRATI	Minister Plenipotentiary, Director- General of Political Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

.../

LUXEMBOURG

S.E. M. BECH	Premier Ministre et Ministre des Affaires Etrangères.
S.E. M. Robert ALS	Ministre du Luxembourg à Paris.
M. N. HOMMEL	Délégué Permanent à l'OTAN.
M. G. HEISBOURG	Conseiller de Légation, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères.

NETHERLANDS

H.E. Mr. BEYEN	Minister for Foreign Affairs.
H.E. Baron van BOETZELAER van OOSTERHOUT	Netherlands Ambassador in Paris.
H.E. Jhr. A.W.L. TJARDA van STARKENBORCH STACHOUWER	Permanent Delegate to NATO.

UNITED KINGDOM

The Rt.Hon. Sir Anthony EDEN, K.G., M.C., M.P.	Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
H.E. Sir Gladwyn JEBB, K.C.M.G., C.B.	United Kingdom Ambassador in Paris.
Sir Harold CACCIA, K.C.M.G.	Deputy Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office.

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

Baron M.F. de SELYS LONGCHAMPS	Secretary-General.
Mr. P.B. FRASER	Deputy Secretary-General.

The meeting was held under the Chairmanship of M. Joseph BECH.

The Ministers reviewed the progress made so far by the Interim Commission in planning the structure and organisation of the future Western European Union, and had before them Document IWG/16 - a summary of the Commission's main activities prepared by the Secretary-General.

The Ministers agreed that their exchange of views, using this document as a working paper, did not constitute firm decisions committing Governments, but was to be considered as general guidance for the continuance of the work of the Interim Commission.

The following are the chief observations made in the course of the meeting on the questions raised in the Secretary-General's Note:

1. Permanent Structure of the Council

The Meeting was in general agreement with the views expressed by the Interim Commission on this point, and that it would be for each country to decide its own system of permanent representation in the light of experience. With regard to the appointment of special representatives (and it was agreed that this would be a gradual process) the United Kingdom would need notice of such appointments since legislation was required to regulate questions of diplomatic privilege.

2. Machinery for fulfilling the permanent Military Tasks of the Council

Mr. BEYEN drew attention to the last sentence of the paragraph relating to possible meetings of the Western European Union Chiefs of Staff. Since it had been decided that NATO would provide the machinery for discussion of defence matters, he felt the suggestions to be in contradiction with the Treaty as revised and modified.

M. MENDES-FRANCE pointed out that, while nothing should be done to diminish NATO's authority in defence matters, the Council would in fact have certain permanent tasks of a military character, for example, the regulation of the maximum level of forces, the control of armaments, and perhaps further questions arising from the Working Group on Production and Standardisation of Armaments, due to meet on 17th January, 1955. He considered that it might prove helpful to have recourse to meetings of national representatives as envisaged by the Commission in order to fulfil these tasks. In any event, nothing should be done to detract from the importance of the Council's responsibilities in these matters.

M. SPAAK did not see at this stage any purpose in planning special machinery, and he was anxious to avoid defining organically the future structure and procedure which might be required. He would prefer, as a feature of all planning for the present, more suppleness and less of a tendency to lay down rules.

Mr. MARTINO .../

Mr. MARTINO, while agreeing with M. Mendès-France that nothing should be done to weaken the Council's importance and that, for the purposes of dealing with such matters as the maximum level of forces, interior and police forces, etc., meetings of the Chiefs of Staff might be useful, nevertheless supported M. Spaak's plea to avoid rules and rigidity.

Sir Anthony EDEN thought that the title of this paragraph being rather pretentious was misleading, and if the final sentence had been omitted the main preoccupations of his colleagues would have been met.

M. BECH, in summing up, said that he thought this represented the consensus of opinion.

3. Machinery for maintaining and extending the present Activities of the Brussels Treaty Organisation

There was agreement on the Commission's proposal for maintaining and extending the present activities of the Brussels Treaty Organisation.

4. Relationship with other International Organisations and with Countries who are not signatory to the Brussels Treaty

M. SPAAK indicated the danger of making specific references to certain countries or other organisations being represented by observers. Needless to say, whenever matters of common interest were being discussed the appropriate observers could be invited.

Sir Anthony EDEN recalled that the United States had made an official request for a decision regarding their presence at meetings of the Interim Commission, since they were directly involved in questions arising from the Saar. The United States and, in fact, Canada also, were concerned in the supply of armaments.

It was agreed that a reply could now be sent to the United States Government indicating that the Western European Union would be glad to invite representatives to meetings at which questions of common interest were to be discussed.

With regard to a question raised by M. Mendès-France on the position of the Saar, it was noted that the Saar Commissioner would have an advisory capacity at meetings of the Council. Once the Franco-German Agreement had been finalised it would be for the other Western European Union Powers to approve those provisions of the Agreement that required their approval. The precise procedure for doing so, which might involve parliamentary action, could be worked out later.

5. .../

5. Organisation of the Assembly of Western European Union

The Ministers agreed that since the proposals made in the Resolution recently adopted by the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe were principally of concern to the Western European Union Assembly, it would be advisable to have this question referred back to the Interim Commission for detailed study before taking any decision.

6. Agency for the Control of Armaments

The Meeting felt that it was not possible at this stage to agree on a definite appointment to the post of Director of the Agency. Countries might, however, look for likely candidates, their qualifications being in any case more important than their nationality. It was agreed that nevertheless the Interim Commission could proceed to draft proposals for the organisation of the Agency. Sir Anthony EDEN thought that the Commission might need to consult military authorities in doing so.

7. Preparation for the Working Group on Arms Production and Standardisation

The Ministers noted that plans were going ahead to organise the Working Group's meetings.

It was agreed that the Chairmanship should be undertaken by Luxembourg. As suggested by M. BECH, it might prove necessary to call upon another country, for example the Netherlands, to supply a Vice-chairman. It should be left, however, to the Working Group itself to decide this question finally.

8. Other Questions

It was noted that a number of other matters, mentioned under the first section of paragraph 8 of the Secretary-General's report, could not be dealt with at the present stage, but that a General Report covering all its studies could be submitted eventually to the Western European Union Council by the Interim Commission.

The Ministers expressed their thanks to the Interim Commission for the useful work they had done.



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