

Extract from minutes of the meeting of the Working Party (17 July 1956)

Caption: On 17 July 1956, the Working Party meets to discuss the French proposal on the plans for the units of the forces of the seven powers of Western European Union (WEU) which are under command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), as set out in document C(56)114. The representative of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), Ulrich Sahn, mentions the points raised by his government on the French proposal, including the fact that the decision concerning any increase in the level of forces must be taken unanimously by the seven High Contracting Parties, who must also decide whether the decision should be taken within WEU or NATO. The FRG Government would prefer the decision to be taken within NATO since it is related to defence policy, which comes within the remit of NATO. French representative Francis Huré, on the other hand, believes that WEU is the organisation responsible for taking any final political decisions and that only the technical aspects should be left to NATO. British representative Lord Samuel Hood considers that the permanent representatives should be in a position to examine the technical and political aspects but that they should report to the WEU Council as well as to their governments, since in the event of a disagreement, the final decision would have to be taken by the WEU Council of Ministers.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Extract from minutes of meeting of working party held on 17 July 1956. Plans for those units of the forces of the seven WEU Powers which are under NATO Command. 17.07.1956. GT/ACA/33. 3 p. Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux). <http://www.anlux.lu>. Western European Union Archives. Secretariat-General/Council's Archives. 1954-1987. Organs of Western European Union. Year: 1959, 01/07/1955-11/12/1959. File 243.20. Volume 1/5.

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http://www.cvce.eu/obj/extract_from_minutes_of_the_meeting_of_the_working_party_17_july_1956-en-52b841ce-9875-47ea-aa5c-8d34c997fb48.html



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EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF MEETING
WORKING PARTY
 OF ~~W.E.U. COUNCIL~~ HELD ON 17. VII. 56 (GT/ACA/33)

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W.E.U. 1st MARCH 1959

I. Plans for those units of the forces of the seven W.E.U. 4/3/56
Powers which are under NATO Command
 (GT/ACA/32)

H. Goffin
 The CHAIRMAN invited Dr. Sahn to give the views of his Government on the preliminary text on page 3 of document GT/ACA/32.

Dr. SAHM stated that the French proposal had been carefully studied by his Government, and he wished to make the following remarks:

1. the action under para. a) of the text, i.e. the determination of whether the level of forces fell within the limits specified in Articles I and II, was not foreseen in the Protocols. Action was only required in the event of an increase in the levels. He therefore proposed the deletion of the 2nd paragraph of the Preamble and of paragraph a);

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2. the proposal was drafted as a Resolution of the Council. In fact, under Article III, the decision concerning any increase in the levels of forces must be taken by the High Contracting Parties, i.e. the seven Governments, who must also agree whether they wished the decision to be taken within W.E.U. or within NATO; a short form of agreement between governments would be a preferable method;
3. after considering the relative advantages of taking the decision in W.E.U. or NATO, the Federal Government had concluded it was best to do so within NATO. Any increase would have to be discussed within that organisation in any case, and it would be preferable to carry out the task in one stage only, without the second stage of decision within W.E.U. Further, NATO was better equipped not only from the technical but also from the political point of view to take the decision. The political decision was closely connected with defence policy which was of course the responsibility of NATO; it was therefore preferable that this decision should be given by persons in close touch with such questions in NATO;
4. as the Council could not give instructions to the Permanent Representatives in NATO, he proposed to modify the wording of the paragraph concerned.

M. HURE, after thanking Dr. Sahn for his clear statement of views, made the following comments on the above points:

- Ref. 1. it would not be possible to know whether there was increase in the level of forces without an examination as provided under paragraph a). The aim of the procedure proposed was to avoid any sudden difficulty arising, and its periodicity would mean that no one country would have to take the initiative of calling for an examination.
- Ref. 2 & 3 NATO was responsible for the build-up of forces for the purpose of external defence; W.E.U. was responsible for the limitation of forces for purposes of internal security. It would **therefore** be illogical for NATO to engage in a limitation of forces when this was not its objective. The French Government therefore considered that W.E.U. was the proper organisation to take any final political decision, leaving the technical discussions to NATO. Further, the Permanent Representatives acted on instructions from their Governments as did the Council meeting in London, so there could be no advantage for NATO here;
- Ref. 4. M. HURE agreed with this point.

Mr. HUYDECOPER stated that his Government saw in the action required under para. a) a fact-finding exercise, as a prelude to the action under b). That a decision should be taken under c) by the Council of W.E.U. implied simply a choice of the alternatives in Article III for the purposes of routine procedure, and did not exclude in principle decisions within NATO.

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Mr. HUYDECOPER pointed out that, if any modification of the forces limited under Articles I and II took place, an examination would be necessary to see if these resulted in an increase. Such modifications were in fact foreseen in para. 2. of Article I. But if the Permanent Representatives concluded that there was no increase, a decision by the Council was not necessarily required under the terms of paragraph c).

Lord HOOD thought it was clear that the Permanent Representatives would examine both the technical and political aspects of the question. However, under the proposed procedure, in addition to reporting their conclusions to their Governments, they would report to the Council of W.E.U. If there were disagreements, it would doubtless be the responsibility of the Council of Ministers of W.E.U. to take the final decision.

Dr. SAHM thought that his Government would probably agree to the procedure if the Council of Ministers were to take the decision.

M. HURE thought that his Government would be able to accept this proviso.

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A discussion took place as to the responsibility for the observance of the limits specified in Articles I and II.

Dr. SAHM considered that this was primarily the responsibility of individual Governments who had undertaken to do so under the Paris Agreements. The two procedures of control and decision on increases, came into use at a second stage.

Lord HOOD stated that his Government was convinced, and had publicly stated, that it was a common responsibility to ensure that the limits were respected.

M. HURE agreed with this view.

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The Working Party then considered the text on page 3 of GT/ACA/32 and agreed the following modifications.

Preamble Delete 2nd paragraph
 Before "Instruct" insert
 "RECOMMENDS member Governments to"

para. a) Replace "determine" by "examine"

para. b) The French text was amended in order to make it conform with the English text, which seemed more appropriate.

para. c) Insert "necessary" after "any".

After certain other minor drafting amendments had been made, the WORKING PARTY decided to submit the revised text (see Annex) to the meeting of the Council to be held on 25th July 1956.