

Reply by the WEU Council to Recommendation 68

Caption: The reply by the Council of Western European Union (WEU) to Recommendation 68 on the Standing Armaments Committee and the joint production of armaments reproduces the entire British proposal (C(61)182) except for paragraph 4, for which the proposal by French representative Jean Chauvel was chosen at the Council of 6 December 1961 (CR(61)25). The Council supports the principle of interdependence in the production of armaments as a means of making savings in costs and manpower and increasing military efficiency.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Reply to recommendation N°68 . [s.d]. C (61)191. pp2-3. Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux).<http://www.anlux.lu>. Western European Union Archives. Secretariat-General/Council's Archives. 1954-1987. Organs of the Western European Union. Year: 1957, 07/05/1957- 30/05/1976. File 202.411.19. Volume 1/4.

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Reply to Recommendation No. 68

1. The Council of Western European Union supports the principle of interdependence in the production of armaments, with a view to achieving savings in costs and in manpower and increasing military efficiency.

2. The Assembly will be aware, from the Council's written reply of 9th November 1961 to question No. 6 of the Committee on Defence Questions and Armaments, that member Governments give their full support to all useful measures designed to strengthen co-operation in the field of defence production, both within W.E.U. and NATO.

3. The Council considers that, given the circumstances, the progress so far made in W.E.U. and in NATO is reasonably satisfactory. It is not, however, easy to identify, in quantitative terms, the full results of the work performed by the Armaments Committees of W.E.U. and NATO, or the benefits which have flowed from the close co-operation between experts in many fields over recent years. For example, much wasted effort and expenditure has been avoided because member countries, having been made aware of the ideas and work of their Allies, did not undertake work which they might otherwise have begun. Moreover, modern weapons may take as long as ten years to develop. Member Governments have naturally been reluctant to abandon projects already under development, and the greatest scope for co-operation must inevitably lie in meeting the longer term requirements.

4. The Council approves paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of the Recommendation and, with some reservations, paragraphs 1 and 2.

Joint production though it can often furnish the best solution to problems of armaments development, is not a universal panacea.

It is important, when projects are selected and production is distributed between the member countries of the Atlantic and W.E.U. Alliances, to ensure that duplication is avoided and that the best weapons and equipment are selected for general use.

Bilateral and multilateral production should neither delay the introduction into service of modern weapons nor result in increased costs. It may even be in the interests of economy and efficiency in certain cases for individual countries to specialise in the development and production of those types of weapon or equipment which they are best qualified to provide.

/Finally ...

Finally, recourse should only be had to joint production where it will enable new weapons to be supplied to the Western Alliances by the quickest and cheapest means.

5. With regard to paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Recommendation, the Council is aware of the difficulties experienced by the Standing Armaments Committee. The Representatives of member Governments on the Committee are currently engaged in discussions with the Head of the International Secretariat with a view to ascertaining whether there is additional work which the Committee could profitably undertake.