

Report of the 50th meeting of the Standing Armaments Committee on 8 December 1961 (Paris, 28 December 1961)

Caption: On 28 December 1961, the Standing Armaments Committee (SAC) circulates the report of its 50th meeting, which summarises the representatives' discussions on the SAC's future activities, specifically the convening of a technico-military group. This group's task would be to determine whether the solution put forward is in agreement with the military characteristics approved by the continental chiefs of staff and the War Office, which is responsible for the administration of the British army. The German delegate, Colonel Freygang, notes that on 4 November 1959, it was decided that the establishment of NATO's basic military requirements and the selection of armaments projects should be carried out in cooperation with the military authorities of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The Federal Republic of Germany infers that it would not be desirable to deal with a weapon system project such as PT. 428 within Western European Union (WEU). Mr Jardine, the British delegate, points out that the aim is to convene European experts to examine the merits of PT. 428 and to formulate a common European viewpoint, without duplicating any work being carried out within NATO. The French representative, Engineer-General Devenne, confirms that the French authorities have already informed their British counterparts that the PT. 428 does not correspond to their needs, and that they are not in favour of a specific meeting on the project. British representative Mr Humphreys concludes that with the agreement of Italy and the Netherlands it will be possible to make a start.

Source: Western European Union. Standing Armaments Committee Report of the 50 meeting of Standing Armaments Committee . Paris: 28.12.1961. SAC(61)R/50. pp.1-6.- Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux). <http://anlux.lu/>. Western European Union Archives. Armament Bodies. CPA/SAC. Comité permanent des armements. File CPA-069. Volume 1/1.

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WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION
STANDING ARMAMENTS COMMITTEE

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28th December, 1961

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REPORT OF THE 50th MEETING
OF THE STANDING ARMAMENTS COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 8th OF DECEMBER, 1961 AT 30, RUE LA PÉROUSE

Chairman: Général BRISAC	Assistant Secretary-General of W.E.U., Head of the International Secretariat of the Standing Armaments Committee
Lt. Colonel ABS	Belgium
Ingénieur Général DEVENNE	France
Colonel FREYGANG	German Federal Republic
Admiral CIANCHI	Italy
M. SCHELTEMA	Netherlands
Mr. HUMPHREYS	United Kingdom

NATO Observer

Ingénieur Général FISCHER

International Secretariat

M. CAMPBELL Committee Secretary

30, rue La Pérouse,
PARIS XVI^e

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Since Lt. Colonel MELCHERS had asked to be excused, General Brisac took the Chair.

I. APPROVAL OF THE REPORT OF THE 49th MEETING OF THE STANDING ARMAMENTS COMMITTEE (SAC (61) R/49)

The Report was approved.

II. CONTINUATION OF THE STUDY OF THE FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF THE STANDING ARMAMENTS COMMITTEE

a) Convening of a technico-military group

The CHAIRMAN asked the delegates, as agreed at the last meeting, to make known the replies of their Governments as to the advisability of convening a technico-military group to study project PT.428.

He pointed out that, in accordance with the terms of reference as defined in SAC (58) R/33, the Group's task would be to determine whether the solution put forward was in agreement with the military characteristics approved by the continental Chiefs of Staff and the War Office, without any commitments on the part of the Governments represented at the meeting as to the choice of the equipment being studied.

Colonel FREYGANG stated that the North Atlantic Council had agreed, on 4th November, 1959, that the establishment of NATO basic military requirements and the selection of armaments projects should be carried out with the cooperation of the military authorities of NATO. By this decision, the North Atlantic Council has given its approval to document C-M (59) 82. It is true that this document did not explicitly mention that NATO should have priority in the examination of weapon systems. However, the Federal Republic of Germany inferred that it would not be desirable for a weapon system project such as PT.428 to be dealt with by W.E.U. - which had no military planning or command organisation - before a decision had been taken by NATO. The Federal Government is therefore not in a position to agree to the proposal of calling together a technico-military group to study questions related to project PT.428.

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At the last meeting, the Assistant Secretary-General had also pointed out that, if necessary, the Ad Hoc Group could amend the characteristics laid down in 1960 and could also give their views on the solution of the problem of low-altitude air defence. In this context it was pointed out that the Ad Hoc Group would hold its next meeting in the Spring of 1962 and that it was intended to discuss at that meeting, among other things, questions related to a ground defence weapon system against low-flying aircraft. Consequently, his authorities did not consider it necessary that the Standing Armaments Committee should also request the Ad Hoc Group to study the questions involved.

Mr. JARDINE pointed out that the United Kingdom had not suggested a discussion of military operational requirements. The basic military requirements had already been agreed within NATO and most of the characteristics of the weapon meeting these requirements had also been agreed. Two weapons had been discussed in great technical detail: the American "MAULER" and the British PT.428, and Governments must soon choose between them. The United Kingdom had therefore proposed a meeting of European experts to investigate the merits of PT.428 with a view to formulating a common European viewpoint. This process need not duplicate anything happening in the NATO forum.

Colonel ABS said that he could only confirm what he had declared during the last meeting. He wished to add, however, that the Belgian authorities were very flexible in regard to this matter. If it appeared that other countries wished to carry out discussions at W.E.U. Belgium would have no objections, but it was unable to support the setting-up of a technico-military group which would run the risk of duplicating studies undertaken at NATO. Colonel Abs understood, in this connection, that the mixed Ad Hoc Working Group on low-altitude surface-to-air weapon systems had recently held a meeting in the course of which certain member countries of W.E.U. had shown their interest in the PT.428. As far as the Belgian authorities were concerned, they remained open to any change in the situation.

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Ingénieur Général DEVENNE stated that as far as a specific study of the PT.428 was concerned, the problem was, in reality, the following: the French authorities had already informed their British counterparts, during bilateral meetings, that although they considered the PT.428 to be a first-class achievement, they did not think that it corresponded to their needs. They were therefore clearly against a specific meeting on the project. On the other hand they were of the opinion that a meeting on the general problem of low-altitude air defence would be extremely useful. This question was at present being studied in the different Staff Headquarters, particularly in France, but as the discussions had not yet reached a sufficiently advanced stage, any exchange of views would be premature for the moment.

Admiral CIANCHI declared that his Authorities were ready to participate in the work of a technico-military group responsible for studying the PT.428. They pointed out, however, that this group's terms of reference should be limited to a technical evaluation of the project in question, in order to avoid any interference with the comparative study being carried out at NATO, and to exclude any presumption as to future commitments on the choice of weapon.

Mr. SCHELTEMA said that, although no final decision had been reached, the Netherlands Authorities were very interested in the PT.428 and were, therefore, prepared to take part in technico-military discussions. If such a group were formed the Netherlands authorities might, however, wish to submit their project L 4/5 (digital detection and fire control system) in order to study the possibility of adapting it to the PT.428 system.

Mr. HUMPHREYS said that, since Italy and the Netherlands agreed to the formation of a technico-military group, this was enough to make a start; it was to be hoped that other countries would later join the Group. He was interested to hear from his French colleague that the French authorities too had been conducting studies of the problem of low-altitude anti-aircraft defence and he believed that the results of these should be shared as soon as possible with their allies. If they proved to be relevant to the technical and military characteristics of PT.428, the study could be

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carried out by the same group. But if, for example, they related to a different time scale other machinery could be found. The British delegate added that, he for one, saw no reason why the technico-military group should not also take into account the suggestions made by the Italian and Dutch delegations.

Ingénieur Général DEVENNE stated that, although he had perfectly understood the role of the technico-military group, as recalled by his Italian colleague, it appeared, from the explanation given by Mr. Humphreys, that the technico-military group would have to undertake both the specific study of the PT.428 and that of the general problem of low-level A.A. defence. He feared that, since the Group would have to fulfill such widely-differing missions, it would find its task very awkward.

The CHAIRMAN stressed the fact that the two problems mentioned by the French delegate would be studied in different working groups. The object of the technico-military group would be to study whether the British solution agreed with the military characteristics given in Agreement 2.FT.2. The Ad Hoc Group, which had placed the problem of low-altitude air-defence on the agenda of its next meeting, would decide whether certain of the military characteristics, the approval of which dated back to 1960, needed to be altered in view of the development of ideas and techniques. It was understood that, if the Ad Hoc Group amended Agreement 2.FT.2., the technico-military group would be informed of the changes. On the other hand, if during the meeting of the technico-military group the technicians asked questions likely to bring up new military problems, the military representatives would be able to meet as an Ad Hoc Sub-Group to supply further information, as was the case for the Blue Water study. General Brisac also pointed out that, in accordance with the procedure laid down, the Chairmanship of the technico-military group could be taken over either by a technical or a military expert depending on the questions to be dealt with.

In the course of a detailed discussion of the tasks of the proposed technico-military group, Mr. HUMPHREYS pointed out that the United Kingdom project PT.428 was at present a design study only. It could still accommodate modifications suggested by the particular requirements of other countries or by the work they had themselves carried

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out in this field. He believed that the terms of reference of the technico-military group should be made sufficiently flexible to allow countries who so desired either to submit proposals with a view to improving the PT.428 project or competitive projects which they themselves had developed. If France were working on the same idea, it would be logical to take this into account. If this were not the case, the procedure to be followed would, of course, be different.

The CHAIRMAN observed that the British proposal to set up a technico-military group to study to what extent the PT.428 conformed to Agreement 2.FT.2. had been approved by Italy and the Netherlands, while noting the wish of the Dutch authorities to study their L 4/5 project at the same time. It was now up to the countries concerned to draw up the terms of reference of the technico-military group and to fix the date for the meeting. As soon as the Secretariat was in possession of all the necessary information the other delegations would be informed, thus enabling them, if they so desired, to clarify the attitude their Governments had decided to adopt with respect to the proposed meeting. According to the charter of the technico-military group (cf.SAC (58) R/33), all countries who had taken part in drawing up military characteristics would have to be informed of the progress made.

b) Italian Proposal

Referring to the second point which had been raised during the last meeting, the Assistant Secretary-General requested the delegates to state whether their Governments were agreed to organise an "ad hoc" meeting of the Standing Armaments Committee, with the representatives of the competent military authorities, to study subjects of common interest, lists of which would be communicated in due course.

Admiral CIANCHI stated that the Italian authorities were prepared to submit a list in February. He observed that the Italian representative would be the spokesman for the Defence General Staff.

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Colonel FREYGANG stated that his Government was not, in principle, against the proposal of convening a special meeting of the Standing Armaments Committee together with the representatives of the national Chiefs of Staff.

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