

Reply by the WEU Council to Recommendation 368 on the European combat aircraft and other aeronautical developments (London, 20 November 1981)

Caption: In its note dated 20 November 1981, the Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) circulates the Council's reply to Assembly Recommendation 368 on the European combat aircraft and other aeronautical developments. Various British amendments incorporated into the final version insist on the intention of the countries concerned to explore the way forward in this field. The Council also clearly states that any further progress is dependent on the harmonisation of characteristics currently being discussed between the military authorities and the staff of the armaments directors of the various countries.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General note. Recommendation N°368 on the European combat aircraft and other aeronautical developments. London : 20.11.1981. C(81)158. 2 p. 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: 1974, 01/07/1974-26/07/1982. File 202.411.18 vol 3/4.

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URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/reply_by_the_weu_council_to_recommendation_368_on_the_european_combat_aircraft_and_other_aeronautical_developments_london_20_november_1981-en-446228dd-70c6-420b-a1e2-60c308faaf2b.html



Last updated: 13/10/2016

WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

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Original: English/French

C (81) 158

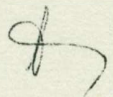
20th November, 1981

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Recommendation 368
on the European combat aircraft and
other aeronautical developments
(C (81) 96)

The Secretary-General circulates herewith the Council's reply to Assembly Recommendation 368.

This reply, approved by all delegations, has been forwarded to the Assembly.


9, Grosvenor Place,
London, S.W.1.

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Reply to Recommendation 368
on the European combat aircraft and
other aeronautical developments

The Council welcome the interest which the Assembly, the only European Assembly competent in defence matters, shows in projects arising from European co-operation in the field of aeronautics, notably the combat aircraft.

1. The Council are fully aware of the need to design a technologically advanced multi-purpose aircraft able to meet the various forms of threat to which European countries may be subjected.

2. The development of co-operative armaments programmes is a long and arduous task calling for consensus at national level between industrial, economic, military and political interests. The countries concerned with the combat aircraft are fully apprised of the importance of flexibility and efficiency in organisation, taking into account its requirements. Co-operation in the matter of armaments, which is the fruit of pragmatic and patient efforts, naturally draws upon the lessons of the past, even if the programmes present themselves under the same configuration.

3. The countries concerned will be considering together most carefully the way forward in this field. At the preliminary design stage, definition of characteristics and harmonisation procedures must involve using with maximum efficiency the already existing machinery for concerted action in the sphere of armaments and chiefly the I.E.P.G. and Conference of National Armaments Directors.

4. The future combat aircraft is notably the subject of intense tripartite discussions between the French, German and United Kingdom Governments. In addition, because of the interest shown by various European Governments, a project group for this aircraft has been set up within the Independent European Programme Group, thus providing a vehicle for

/concerted action ...

concerted action and exchanges of information. Although the interest of the various countries within the I.E.P.G. has been stressed and regularly reaffirmed, the fact remains that any further progress within this project group will be dependent on harmonisation of characteristics, a matter currently being discussed in detail between the military authorities and the staff of the armaments directors of the various countries.

5. The efforts pursued within the framework of the I.E.P.G. are aimed at the maximum harmonisation of renewal plans and military requirements; thus it examines on an annual basis the evolution of the schedules of each of the member countries and endeavours to promote machinery for co-operation whenever this is possible. With regard to aeronautics, in addition to the future combat aircraft, joint talks have started, particularly in connection with helicopters and transport aircraft. Regarding the latter, initial studies have led to the setting up within the I.E.P.G. of an exploratory group whose terms of reference are to determine the long-term requirements of the various European countries in the matter of transport aircraft.