

## Spero S.Z. Paravantes, The Defence Industry and Technology Base (DTIB): the development and production of armaments

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## **The Defence Industry and Technology Base (DTIB): the development and production of armaments**

Since its creation, one of WEU's responsibilities was its role in controlling the land-based conventional military assets of member countries. The WEU Council, though it was theoretically permitted to do, did not make use of the modified Brussels treaty provisions to establish any role for the ACA to control Atomic, Biological or Chemical (ABC) weapons. The Agency for the Control of Armaments (ACA), established on May 7th 1955, was responsible for presenting the results of its audits to the WEU Assembly annually. In contrast to the ACA's auditing duties, in 1955, the Standing Armaments Committee (SAC) of the WEU was also formed in 1955, as an attempt to try to influence the procurement and production of defence materiel. The objective was to standardise general European military commitments, integration and effectiveness. The role of ACA may therefore be described as that of a confidence and cooperation builder for its members, to help stabilize and unify Europe, while SAC's role was to encourage industrial and technological growth, innovation and cooperation at the European level.

WEU members stated the need for greater cooperation in arms production in order to prevent Europe from falling behind in terms of technological development. However, a reoccurring obstacle to achieving cooperation in the field of arms production came either from individual members' desire to maintain a certain level of political independence in military affairs, or because they lacked the necessary domestic market and manufacturing capabilities to make such projects economically feasible.

A survey of British and French government records relating to the coordination of arms production reveals that for the British, a significant concern was lowering costs. For the French, a concern was establishing weapons' production outside the sphere of NATO and the US. Another tendency on the part of the British and French governments on this issue was their alternating enthusiasm for, and then pull-back from, the bodies they established to support coordinated weapons production. Their recognition of the need to support European technological development and R&D, in addition to the desire to protect West European manufacturing, would generate support for revitalizing an existing organ, such as SAC, or the creation of a new one such as the Independent European Program Group (IEPG). However, domestic political interests in addition to practical issues relating to the implementation of these programs would impede their work and progress, leading to the stalling and at times dissolution of these organs.

Notwithstanding the obstacles to the Control and Production of Arms in Western Europe, WEU succeeded in gathering and communicating significant amounts of data relating to the conventional arms levels and requirements of its members, and the IEPG did succeed in organizing a number of joint arms projects.

The following chart shows the various organizations which were involved in the control and conception of armaments at the European level.

### **WEU**

CPA/SCA-1955

ACA-1955

IEPG-1976

### **NATO**

EUROGROUP

### **FINABEL (independent)**

## Production of arms

Throughout its existence the WEU attempted to streamline and coordinate the design and production of armaments between members. On May 7<sup>th</sup> 1955, the Standing Armaments Committee (SAC) was formed to promote consultation and cooperation in the production of armaments, the intention being to lead to a European arms industry that simultaneously encouraged technological development and industrial production. Another role was to develop close links with NATO and to help member nations of both NATO and WEU meet their arms requirements. SAC became a forum for member states to present their armaments needs and projects, and to look for production partners. SAC was located in Paris to be close to NATO offices in order to more easily fulfil its purpose and to establish closer links with NATO and facilitating the efforts of member nations to find common solutions to satisfy their national armaments' needs.

A precursor to SAC, FINBEL, was set up in late 1953 independently from the WEU and NATO, in order to assist European Army leaders, to have better coordination procuring land weapons, and when West Germany joined in 1956, its acronym was changed to FINABEL. FINABEL did not involve itself in production, but acted mainly to help coordinate concepts and specifications for European armaments, doing so without having the power to issue binding recommendations. SAC had to report to the WEU Council twice per year, and through the framework of the WEU General Secretariat, to cooperate with FINABEL. Both the SAC and FINABEL worked closely with NATO, and contributed to improving operational standards between European armies and NATO partners, however SAC's impact was confined to operational research and to evaluating military materiel and technical experiments. Though no equipment was developed in this context, the SAC facilitated links being created between industry, research, government officials and the military to deal with equipment needs. The preferred method of solving these issues was through bi-lateral and multilateral accords to coordinate production between WEU and NATO members. The results of the SAC's work can be seen in the joint European defence projects such as the design and production of the Eurofighter and the Eurocopter, which were completed later, under the framework of the IEPG.

Eurogroup, a NATO associated European organization which also worked on the promotion of joint arms production, helped coordinate the acquisition of military aircraft and aimed at further coordinating defence policy within Europe. Eurogroup was also a forum for members to press other members to meet their respective defence requirements for NATO and discuss the status of, or upgrades needed to, each other's armed forces.<sup>[1]</sup> However, France was not a member of Eurogroup owing to its association with NATO.

The most definitive step WEU made towards a distinct European defence identity came in 1976 with the formation of the IEPG to deal with the sharing of defence materiel procurement.<sup>[2]</sup> France joined IEPG since it was associated with WEU instead of NATO. Though it was formed to assist the coordination of arms conception and production, differences in philosophy of what constituted joint conception and production, as well as differences in terms of how Western Europe and the United States and how individual members of WEU and NATO conceived of these terms, served to limit what IPEG could actually accomplish.

According to a Rand corporation report of the 1980s, the main obstacle for IPEG achieving collective weapon development was the difficulty in identifying 'even two weapons systems' that could meet a specific country's time and military requirements. The second obstacle was that the 'family of weapons concept,' favoured by the US, was not capable of providing the structure at the development stage that West Europeans preferred.<sup>[3]</sup> This concept was based on the idea to have two or more countries to produce, for example, short and medium range missiles, with one country producing one

missile, and another country producing the other. However, whether it was SAC, IEPG, Eurogroup, or FINABEL, individual countries' needs and means to produce arms (in contrast to collective European needs means) played a large role in the selection, implementation and ultimate success of certain defence projects. For example, the French came to assume control over numerous projects over time, such as the Alpha Jet Trainer, and also the Atlantic maritime patrol program, at times financing the project alone which in turn afforded them a high level of control over the project as a whole.<sup>[4]</sup> The Transall Transport Aircraft (C-160) was a successful collaboration between France and Germany to jointly produce a military transport aircraft in the 1960s. However, it did not represent a fully European project since only France and Germany were involved in its production.<sup>[5]</sup>

The British were involved in a '*Family of Weapons*' project, building medium range surface to air missiles and aircraft with European partners. Despite repeatedly stating the need for greater cooperation in arms production in order to prevent Europe from falling behind in terms of technological development, the reoccurring problem in achieving cooperation in the field of arms production came from individual countries' desire to maintain political independence, and limitations in domestic market and manufacturing conditions.<sup>[6]</sup>

A survey of British and French government records relating to the coordination of arms production reveals that for the British, their principal concern was lowering costs. For the French, the objective was to establish weapons production outside the sphere of NATO and the US. Another tendency on the part of the British and French governments on this issue was their alternating support for, and then pull-back from, the bodies they established to encourage coordinated weapons production. Their recognition of the need to support European technological development and R&D, in addition to the desire to protect West European manufacturing, would generate support for revitalizing an existing organ, such as SAC, or the creation of a new as the IEPG. However, domestic political interests, in addition to practical issues relating the implementation of these programs, would impede their work and progress, leading to the stalling and at times dissolution of these organs.

After almost a decade of relative inactivity, the French attempted to revitalize SAC in December 1981 when the State Secretary to the Ministry of Defence Georges Lemoine, stated that cooperation between SAC and the WEU Assembly should increase, and that with the consent of the WEU Council, SAC could be placed at the disposal of the Assembly to promote this cooperation. However, his recommendation was not followed through, and SAC was closed in 1989. IEPG continued to function until its name was changed to Western European Armaments Group (WEAG) in May 1993 to reflect the addition of 6 new members, and continued functioning until May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2005.<sup>[7]</sup>

### **Control of armaments- ACA**

At WEU's inception the control of arms was seen as a method of fostering trust between members after the Second World War, and remained one of WEU's main tasks throughout its existence. The control of weapons therefore was a central competence for WEU in its formative years as Britain and France wanted to ensure that the FRG was honouring its commitment to not engage in the manufacturing of the armaments defined in Annexes II and III to Protocol III of the Brussels Treaty, specifically atomic, biological and chemical (ABC) weapons and certain conventional types.

The idea was to enable WEU to control and report maximum and actual armed forces levels and types to the Assembly in order to build confidence among members, preventing them from becoming suspicious of one another, which could upset European stability and inhibit the process of European integration. Article 19, Protocol IV of the modified Brussels treaty outlined the appropriate levels of Weapons production at a European level, and WEU formed the Agency for Arms Control (ACA) in 1954 to assess and report on member nations' arms levels. Protocol IV also established the parameters through which ACA would operate, and made it responsible to the WEU Council. The ACA

functioned by conducting inspections of members' armed forces, or, in the case of members' forces under the control of NATO, relied on reports supplied by NATO to provide the needed information. Protocol IV also stipulated how members should notify ACA of their arms stock levels, and how members that contravened the treaty regulations could be sanctioned. Until it was closed in 1985, ACA accounted for a significant portion of WEU's budget.

Though the Brussels Treaty established ACA to control arms, it was limited in its ability to do so as a result of 'Treaty vs. practical' control, since it was not given authority over the signatories of the modified Brussels Treaty (or rather, the signatories had not submitted themselves to ACA's authority) to control their maximum levels of forces and weapons. This meant that ACA had to rely on the cooperation of WEU's members to fulfil its mission. The ACA's role was complicated by the withdrawal of France in 1966 from NATO's integrated command structure (a development which was examined in section 1 dealing with WEU/NATO relations). France never ratified the convention which was intended to allow the ACA to audit French armaments' levels. From the British perspective, the French withdrawal from NATO's integrated military command would weaken not only NATO, but also the WEU even though France was still a WEU member. However, in June 1968, the French delegation to the WEU, re-affirmed France's commitment to European defence and security, and pledged to respect the limits on and inspections of French air and land forces with the exception of nuclear weapons, and to report those levels to the WEU.

In relation to the issue of auditing levels of ABC weapons, there was a degree of consistency between the British and French positions towards WEU armament control, and it was to keep these weapons from being controlled. The WEU Council, though it was theoretically permitted to do, did not make use of the modified Brussels treaty provisions to establish any role for the ACA to control ABC weapons. Though plans were made to hire a "Nuclear Weapons expert," to help with inspection and prescription activities, the WEU tended to defer to EURATOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) when it came to the auditing of Atomic weapons' production and levels in Europe.<sup>[8]</sup>

Generally speaking, British and French attitudes towards ACA can be summarised by the decade. In the 1950s to early 1960s, ACA was used primarily to control West German re-armament. Beginning with the withdrawal of France from NATO's integrated command, from the mid-1960s to the 1980s, West Germany came to be seen as an important partner in European defence and control of its arms industry was more a matter of formality and cooperation, rather than fear. In the 1980s, as a result of the perspective that all signatories of the Modified Brussels Treaty should be treated equally, ACA came to be seen as outdated, and was abolished in April 1985.

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[1] [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written\\_answers/1975/jun/19/european-programme#S5CV0893P0\\_19750619\\_CWA\\_285](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1975/jun/19/european-programme#S5CV0893P0_19750619_CWA_285)

[2] It is important to note that IPEG's activities did not grow significantly until December 1<sup>st</sup> 1991 in Maastricht, when WEU ministers decided to pursue increased cooperation in the field of armaments in order to create a European Armaments Agency. The next year in Bonn, the Defence ministers of the 13 IPEG member states (Luxembourg, Belgium, The Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Portugal, France, Spain, Germany, Greece, Turkey, United Kingdom, Italy) agreed to transfer IPEG's functions to the WEU, which was completed in May 1993 at a conference in Rome, where the name was changed to Western European Armaments Group (WEAG) and six new members (Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Poland and Sweden) were added.

[3] Covington, Terrel G, Keith W. Brendley, Mary E. Chenoweth, A RAND NOTE, "A review of European Arms Collaboration and Prospects for its Expansion Under the Independent European Program Group," (July 1987, the Rand Corporation) p. Vii.

[4] Ibid., p. VIII

[5] Ibid., p. 3. France joined the IEPG because it operated outside of NATO, rather than Eurogroup which operated 'within the framework of NATO.

[6] Rand, p. x.

[7] WEU website. IEPG page, located at: <http://www.weu.int/weag/weag.htm>, retrieved: September 9<sup>th</sup> 2014. In the

early 1970s, the FRG raised the issue of disbanding the SAC.

[8] “French delegation to the WEU Council on questions to the WEU Assembly about the spread of Nuclear energy and defence issues,” (London, January 20th 1978) in WEU Archives, Secretary General / Council's Archives, 1954-87, Year 1977, File 202.415.30, Volume 1/1.