



ORGANISATION DU TRAITÉ DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD
NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

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PO/57/1482

To : Permanent Representatives
From: Secretary General

Letter from the Secretary General to Western
European Union

(Reference: PO/57/1482)

Attached is a copy of a letter I sent to the Secretary
General of Western European Union yesterday.

(Signed) P.-H. SPAAK

12th December, 1957

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11th December, 1957

Mr. Louis GOFFIN,
Secretary General,
Western European Union.

Sir,

In your letter of 25th November, 1957, you drew my attention to the conditions under which the Assembly of Western European Union is fulfilling the responsibilities imposed on it by the Brussels Treaty. You stressed the difficulties it experiences in obtaining from the Council of the Union certain information on defence matters. In the circumstances, you asked me to bring this question to the knowledge of the North Atlantic Council with a request for its views on a procedure **proposed** by the Council of Western European Union to enable it to cope with the situation. You expressed the hope that NATO co-operation would take the following form:

- "(a) NATO to supply the substance of answers to written questions and recommendations submitted from the Assembly to the Council and which the Council finds to be outside their own sphere of activities;
- (b) a representative to assist the Council in answering supplementary questions at joint meetings with the Defence Committee of the Assembly."

The North Atlantic Council examined these proposals at its meeting on 11th December. Acceptance of the principle of NATO assistance for the Council of Western European Union seems to be a foregone conclusion. However, the Council was in some doubt regarding the following points, on which it desires enlightenment.

In the first place, there is a problem of competence: mention is made in paragraph 4 of "supplementary questions falling within the competence of NATO" and, still in the same paragraph, of questions and recommendations "outside their own sphere of activities." Is the Council thinking in terms of questions falling within the competence of NATO but which only concern the seven member countries of Western European Union or, on the contrary, is the point at issue problems which, by their very nature, overstep the framework of Western European Union and therefore arise not for these countries alone, but for NATO as a whole? Should both these possibilities not be considered together?

The Council also queried the position of the NATO representative when assisting the Council to answer supplementary questions at joint meetings with the Defence Committee of the Assembly. Would this representative be expected to take the floor himself - which might raise objections - or would he merely assist the Chairman of the WEU Council who, in effect, would alone reply to the questions put?

The general question of security was also brought up and would doubtless have to be taken into account for implementation of the procedure which may be decided.

I should be grateful if you would enable me to give the North Atlantic Council the information requested. It is to be presumed that the Heads of Government meeting next week and the preparatory work it entails will prevent the Council from taking any decision between now and then on the request contained in your letter of 25th November. You could, however, inform the Council of Western European Union forthwith, at its meeting on 14th December, of the desire manifested by the North Atlantic Council to give it all possible assistance in the fulfilment of its responsibilities and the assurance that it will receive a definite answer, probably at the very beginning of January.

(Signed) P.-H. SPAAK

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