



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
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FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY

WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION (WEU)

You sent me a copy of your minute of 16 April.

2. It is difficult to believe that yet another forum is needed to discuss defence matters (the problem is how to get results from those we have already), and I note that most of our WEU aims appear to be of a damage limitation rather than a constructive nature. Nevertheless, I realise that there would be problems if the UK were seen to be unwilling to co-operate at the present time in this European activity.

3. I particularly agree that we must be circumspect about the use that may be made of WEU for urging collaborative arms procurement - and not only because of the existence of Eurogroup, IEPG etc. I strongly welcome collaboration and/or specialisation - with WEU or other partners - where this is competitive and cost-effective. The main criterion for our public purchasing decisions, however, remains value for money for the purchaser. It is important that all concerned with WEU understand the UK position, and are not given the mistaken impression that we share the "buy European regardless" tendencies of some of them. This would be contrary to our own public procurement and economic strategy, and to the need to get the maximum defence effort and output from the massive resources which we are putting in.

4. I am copying this minute to OD colleagues, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'N.L.' with a flourish at the end.

(N.L.)

11 May 1984