

Written question E-0473/01 by Lucio Manico, MEP, to the Council (23 February 2001)

Caption: Example of a written question put by a Member of the European Parliament to the Council relating to the common foreign and security policy (CFSP).

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Written question E-0473/01 of 23 February 2001 by Lucio Manisco, Member of the European Parliament (GUE/NGL), to the Council

(23 February 2001)

Subject: USA antiballistic missile system and global strategic stability

According to the international press, the statements made by the United States Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld at the 'Wehrkunde' conference in Munich on 2, 3 and 4 February 2000 marked a dramatic shift in relations between the Bush administration and the European Union and have confronted the Union with decisions that are clearly faits accomplis in the area of the National Missile Defence system, abrogating, de facto, the ABM treaty of 1972.

Referring to President George W. Bush's 'moral and constitutional duty' to defend his people, Secretary Rumsfeld has entirely failed to honour the undertaking that was made to consult the United States' allies on the introduction of a high-technology defence system that is as futuristic as it is unjustifiable. The system threatens to destabilise the existing delicate geopolitical situation by sparking off the militarisation of space, which will lead, over the coming decades, to complete strategic dominance over the whole planet by the United States.

Further strongly critical statements made by Donald Rumsfeld and other representatives from the United States delegation on the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), EU reservations about the role of Turkey and the further enlargement of NATO have raised the prospect of unacceptable vetoes being imposed on initiatives taken by the Council and the Commission with the approval of the European Parliament.

1. Does the Council not consider that the issue of this dramatic shift in transatlantic relations should be addressed as a matter of urgency with a view to adopting a common European position on the diktats imposed by the United States at the 'Wehrkunde' conference in Munich?
2. Does the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, not consider that he should report back immediately to the European Parliament on the official and unofficial exchanges which took place in Munich and on the ways in which Europe should react diplomatically and politically?

Reply

(10 July 2001)

1. The Council does not agree that there has been a dramatic shift in transatlantic relations. There are frequent not to say continuous contacts between the European Union and the United States on the views of the incoming Administration on European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) as on other issues. The Council is confident that any differences will be resolved by this process of steady diplomacy and exchange. It welcomes the assurances given publicly and in private meetings most recently by Secretary of State Powell during the recent Troika visit to Washington, when he expressed satisfaction with the ESDP which would raise European capabilities. The EU also welcomes the US administration's assurances that it will consult fully with its European allies on US plans to develop a missile defence system.
2. The High Representative, Dr Javier Solana, does address the European Parliament regularly on the Common Foreign and Security Policy, most recently on 31 January 2001 and he intends to continue to brief the European Parliament on the development of the Union's foreign and security policy, but he cannot be expected to report immediately to the European Parliament on his many informal consultations.