

Reply by the WEU Council to question 192 put by a member of the Assembly on the consequences of the SALT II Agreement (London, 22 March 1979)

Caption: On 22 March 1979, the Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) circulates the final reply by the WEU Council to question 192 put by a member of the Assembly on the consequences of the SALT II Agreement. Since the agreement has not yet been signed, the Council explains that many of the details remain confidential, but it refers to a US publication dating from 1978 on cruise missiles which confirms that the United States Government has been careful to preserve the most important options for its defence needs. On the matter of consequences for the European governments, the Council notes that SALT II is a bilateral agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union and will therefore not be legally binding on third countries when it comes to the development of military techniques. The Council also points out that NATO's deterrent strategy of flexible response is based on keeping open a series of options to tackle possible aggression, but that this does not mean that NATO must match the arms systems used by the Warsaw Pact with specific systems of its own.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General 's note. Written question 192 put to the Council by a member of the Assembly. London: 22.03.1979. C (79) 51. 3 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: 1977, 01/05/1977-30/03/1979. File 202.413.28. Volume 1/1.

Copyright: (c) WEU Secretariat General - Secrétariat Général UEO

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/reply_by_the_weu_council_to_question_192_put_by_a_member_of_the_assembly_on_the_consequences_of_the_salt_ii_agreement_london_22_march_1979-en-28ee1aa7-779a-4339-9981-25d8bca95373.html



Last updated: 25/10/2016

WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

W.E.U. UNCLASSIFIED

C (79) 51

Original: English/French

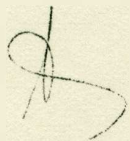
22nd March, 1979

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Written question 192 put to the Council
by a member of the Assembly

The Secretary-General circulates herewith the Council's reply to written question 192 put to the Council by Mr. Warren, a member of the Assembly (cf. C (79) 2).

This reply, adopted by the Council at their meeting on 21st March, 1979, has been forwarded to the Assembly (CR (79) 3, V, 2).



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

W.E.U. UNCLASSIFIED

Text of written question 192

If the United States and the Soviet Union reach agreement on the details of SALT II, will this limit United States European-based cruise missiles to a range of 300 miles, but leave the Soviets with their new mobile missile, the SS-20 which has a range of well over 2,000 miles, permitted to be present in Eastern Europe thus able to reach all of Western Europe?

Will SALT II limit the legal right of European governments to acquire and/or develop any forms of new military technology including cruise missiles?

o

o o

Reply by the Council

1. As the SALT II Agreement has not yet been concluded, many of its details remain confidential and it is too early to pronounce on its likely impact. However, an American official publication entitled "SALT and American Security" of November 1978 includes the following passage on the question of whether SALT II constrains the United States cruise missile programme.

"We have been careful to preserve those cruise missiles options most important to our defence needs. The new agreement will permit us to go ahead with the deployment of the air-launched long-range cruise missiles we now have decided to deploy on heavy bombers. The principal limitations on cruise missiles will be contained in the shorter term Protocol. Even during the period of the Protocol we will be permitted to flight-test all types of cruise missiles and to deploy ground and sea launched cruise missiles capable of ranges up to 600 km. (about 375 miles). We will be able to go ahead with development and testing programmes for all types of cruise missiles without altering present schedules. After the Protocol expires, there will be no limitations on ground and sea-launched cruise missiles unless mutually agreed upon in subsequent negotiations."

/2. There are no ...

2. There are no limitations on the Soviet SS-20 missile in the draft SALT II Agreement except as regards its possible conversion into an intercontinental missile.

3. NATO's deterrent strategy of flexible response is of course based on the need to preserve a continuous chain of options with which to respond to aggression should the need ever arise. This necessitates a strong linkage between conventional, theatre nuclear and strategic nuclear forces, but does not involve matching particular systems deployed by the Warsaw Pact with specific NATO systems.

4. SALT II will be a bilateral Agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union and therefore its provisions cannot be legally binding on third parties. Moreover, the American publication mentioned in paragraph 1 above stated in a section on the implications of SALT II for America's NATO Allies that "there will be no ban on the transfer of cruise missiles and other sophisticated technology".