

Draft reply by the United Kingdom delegation to the WEU Council to Assembly Recommendation 324 on the limitation of strategic arms (London, 18 January 1979)


Caption: On 18 January 1979, the Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) circulates a draft reply from the WEU Council, prepared by the British delegation, to Assembly Recommendation 324 on the limitation of strategic arms. Most of the text is included in the final reply to the recommendation (C(79)54), particularly the points on the Council’s resolve to seek further improvement in East/West relations and its support for specific arms control and disarmament measures.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General's note. Recommendation 324 on the limitation of strategic arms. London: 18.01.1979. WPM (79) 2. 5 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 202.413.24. Volume 1/1.

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URL:
http://www.cvce.eu/obj/draft_reply_by_the_united_kingdom_delegation_to_the_we_u_council_to_assembly_recommendation_324_on_the_limitation_of_strategic_arms_london_18_january_1979-en-e4429a68-ddbf-4640-bff2-2cboaa4f2a4e.html

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WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

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Original: English

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18th January, 1979

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Recommendation 324 on the limitation of strategic arms (C (78) 154)

The Secretary-General circulates herewith a draft reply, prepared by the United Kingdom delegation, to Assembly Recommendation 324 on the limitation of strategic arms.

This draft will be considered by the working group at a forthcoming meeting.

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Draft reply to Recommendation 324
prepared by the United Kingdom delegation

1. The member governments have recently reaffirmed their resolve to seek further improvement in East/West relations and their continued commitment to a policy of détente as the best means of promoting stable and mutually beneficial relationships between governments and better and more frequent contacts between individuals. Concrete, balanced and verifiable arms control and disarmament measures would in their view contribute significantly to this search for security, stability and peace.

2. In this context a SALT II Agreement which contributes to strategic stability, maintains deterrence and responds to the security interests and concerns of the North Atlantic Alliance is considered to be in the common interest. Member governments have recently welcomed the progress made in the negotiations, and have expressed support for American efforts to bring them to a successful conclusion.

3. SALT bears directly on the interests of member governments because of the role of American strategic forces in the "NATO Triad" of conventional forces, tactical nuclear forces and strategic nuclear forces, which provide a spectrum of

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military capabilities enabling NATO to meet aggression at any level with an appropriate response, while also making it impossible for an aggressor to calculate in advance the nature of the response his attack will provoke, or how the conflict may develop thereafter.

4. Conscious of this direct interest, the Americans have kept the North Atlantic Council informed of progress throughout the negotiations. There have been close consultations on those issues of particular interest to member governments of W.E.U. These are: the likely provision on non-circumvention in the SALT II Treaty; the limitations on cruise missiles; and the question whether the SALT process should be extended to address nuclear delivery systems of less than inter-continental range at present excluded from the negotiations ("grey area systems"). The American position on these issues takes account of European interests.

5. Notwithstanding repeated eastern assurances that their aim is not to seek military superiority, member governments have continued to note with concern the steady build-up of Warsaw Pact forces and armaments, both conventional and nuclear. In the face of these developments, it remains the view of member governments that there is a need to devote the resources necessary to modernise and strengthen allied capabilities to the extent required for deterrence and defence.

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RECOMMENDATION 324

on the limitation of strategic arms

The Assembly,

Believing that the security of Europe must continue to rely both on a credible nuclear deterrent, i.e. a clearly-demonstrated threat of destruction to the adversary far greater than the stake represented by the territories defended, and on sufficiently numerous conventional forces;

Considering that the United States strategic nuclear forces form the preponderant part of the allied deterrent but that the British and French nuclear forces, through the uncertainties with which they face Soviet planners, make a greater contribution than their size would suggest;

Stressing that the Atlantic declaration made in Ottawa on 19th June 1974 assigns to the British and French strategic nuclear forces a deterrent role of their own;

Deploing the inadequacy of progress in détente and concerned by the deterioration of East-West relations;

Welcoming any attempt to curb or stop the quantitative or qualitative strategic arms race;

Convinced of the essential and urgent nature of genuine European concertation on defence matters, for which the W.E.U. Council is the natural framework,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

1. Work together to reach agreement on a common defence policy based on deterrence and taking account of the results of the strategic arms limitation talks;

2. Accept no restrictions, imposed or implied, on the forces of allied countries not directly participating in the talks;

/3. Maintain the right ...

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3. Maintain the right of nuclear powers members of the Alliance to provide mutual assistance in respect of nuclear weapons;
4. Look to a co-ordinated effort to re-establish the true balance of nuclear and conventional forces between the Alliance and the Warsaw Pact;
5. Monitor the pursuit, deepening and extension of the process of détente;
6. Ensure that the North Atlantic Council effectively examines every aspect of the strategic arms limitation talks and that the W.E.U. member states may through this channel assert their interests in this field.

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