

Reply by the WEU Council to Assembly Recommendation 361 on the political implications for Europe of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (London, 28 April 1981)


Caption: On 28 April 1981, the Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) circulates the draft reply by the WEU Council to Assembly Recommendation 361 on the political implications for Europe of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

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WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

W.E.U. RESTRICTED

C (81) 66

Original: English/French

28th April, 1981

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Recommendation 361
on the political implications for Europe of
the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan
(C (80) 171)

The Secretary-General circulates herewith a draft reply to Assembly Recommendation 361.

As agreed, this draft will be considered as approved, and will be transmitted to the Assembly, if no delegation has raised an objection before 6 p.m. on Thursday, 7th May.

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

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Draft reply to Recommendation 361
(WPM (81) 17/2)

1. The member States of W.E.U. have always considered détente to be a worldwide, indivisible and general process implying, inter alia, respect for the principles of international law and peaceful coexistence among States. Since the invasion of Afghanistan by Soviet troops, they have unceasingly and vigorously denounced this act of intervention which has been condemned by the great majority of the international community and which constitutes an unacceptable violation of the United Nations Charter and the principles enshrined in the Final Act of Helsinki. The W.E.U. member States call for an immediate withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan, and call upon all parties concerned to work for the urgent achievement of a political solution and the creation of the necessary conditions which would enable the Afghan refugees to return voluntarily to their homes in safety and honour. The W.E.U. member States reconfirm the right of the Afghan people to determine their own form of government and to choose their economic, political and social system free from outside intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint of any kind whatsoever. The W.E.U. member States repeat that preservation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and neutral and non-aligned character of Afghanistan is essential for a peaceful solution of the problem.

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2. The governments of the W.E.U. member States, concerned to seek in the appropriate institutions the broadest possible consultations, have on numerous occasions expressed their determination to do their utmost to bring about full implementation of the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act by all the signatory countries. During the first phase of the Madrid meeting, devoted to reviewing the implementation of the Final Act in the past two years since the Belgrade review meeting, the delegations of the signatory countries of the Paris Agreements made firm statements to this effect.

: 3. During the second phase devoted to the discussion of
: new proposals they are striving to bring about a substantial
: and balanced final document with concrete decisions in all
: spheres of the Final Act and in particular in the field of
: human rights, human contacts, information and military aspects
: of security.

: 4. As to the latter field, they fully support the proposal
of one of the W.E.U. member States for a Conference on
Disarmament in Europe to negotiate initially militarily
significant verifiable and binding confidence-building
measures applying to the whole of Europe from the Atlantic
to the Urals.

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5. With regard to MBFR, those member countries participating in these negotiations tabled on 20th December, 1979, new constructive proposals for a simplified Phase I agreement designed to contribute to the early conclusion of such an agreement and thus open the way towards the establishment of parity in military manpower in central Europe.

The Council reiterate their support for the SALT process. In this connection, they welcome the new United States administration's intention to continue the SALT process. They also note that preliminary conversations took place in Geneva last autumn between the United States and the Soviet Union on medium-range nuclear weapons.

The withdrawal from Europe of 1,000 United States nuclear warheads in accordance with the decision taken at the special meeting of NATO Foreign and Defence Ministers on 12th December, 1979, has been completed.

6. The Council recall that at the ministerial meeting of the Defence Planning Committee in December, 1980, NATO clearly showed its will to improve its military potential, particularly following the events in Afghanistan and the Gulf. A statement

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: along the same lines was made by the North Atlantic Council. It is now recognised by all that the efforts and sacrifices necessary for deterrence and defence at both conventional and nuclear level must be made. On this last point, the Council note that the implementation of the modernisation part of the decision of 12th December, 1979, about theatre nuclear weapons in Europe is being continued by the countries concerned in line with the timetable designed to see the entry into service of the first systems by the end of 1983. The countries concerned again stress the importance of pursuing armaments modernisation and arms control negotiations as a parallel and complementary approach.

7. The member countries of the European Community intend to maintain and deepen their close relations with Yugoslavia, with which they already have links through a trade and cooperation agreement.

8. At the conclusion of the meeting of the European Council in Luxembourg in December 1980, the Nine expressed their intention, in their relations with Poland, to conform strictly to the United Nations Charter and to the principles of the Helsinki Final Act.

In this context, they pointed out that in subscribing to these principles, the States signatory to the Final Act had undertaken in particular to:

/- respect the ...

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- respect the right of every country to choose and freely develop its own political, social, economic and cultural system as well as to determine its own laws and regulations;

- refrain from any direct or indirect, individual or collective intervention in internal or external affairs which fall within the national competence of another signatory state regardless of their mutual relations;

- recognise the right of all people to pursue their own political, economic, social and cultural development as they see fit and without external interference.

The Nine accordingly called upon all the signatory States to abide by these principles with regard to Poland and the Polish people. They emphasised that any other attitude would have very serious consequences for the future of international relations in Europe and throughout the world.

They forthwith took a series of measures designed to meet the requests for economic aid which had been made to them by Poland.

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9. In accordance with their intention, clearly expressed in their declaration of 13th June, 1980, issued at Venice, to work more positively for peace and to make the necessary contacts with all parties concerned, the Nine entrusted the Presidency of the Council with a contact-making mission which was carried out by M. Thorn during the second half of 1980.

A report was prepared in the framework of political co-operation, designed to give a positive content to the principles of the Venice declaration, in accordance with the instructions of the Foreign Ministers of the Nine, given on 15th September, 1980.

This work was approved by the Foreign Ministers of the Nine in Brussels on 24th and 25th November and by the European Council in Luxembourg on 1st and 2nd December.

To ensure a more thorough consideration of the formulae set out in the report thus approved and with a view to encouraging a climate more favourable to negotiations, the European Council decided to make further contacts with the parties concerned at the same time as the report was considered within their own group.

The Foreign Ministers of the Ten, meeting in Brussels on 20th January, 1981, instructed the Netherlands Presidency to continue this European action.

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10. Member countries are aware that the occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet troops brings severe hardship to the Afghan people and causes a massive outflow of refugees. They express once again their readiness to take and to support any initiative designed to promote a political solution which would provide for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, ensure the free exercise by the Afghan people of the right of self-determination and enable Afghanistan to recover its traditional position as an independent, neutral and non-aligned State. It is in this spirit that they welcome the initiative which formed the subject of the United Nations resolution of 20th November, 1980, and that recently put forward by France.

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11. Each Government intends, for its own part, scrupulously to comply with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, including those concerning international security, and binding decisions of the Security Council taken in accordance with Chapter VII.

12. On 23rd September 1980, the Foreign Ministers of the Nine, meeting in New York, in a statement on the conflict between Iran and Iraq, emphasised "the vital importance for the entire international community of freedom of navigation in the Gulf, with which it is imperative not to interfere."

13. In the same statement, the Nine expressed their deep concern at the military confrontation between Iraq and Iran. Noting the bilateral nature of the current conflict, they emphasised the need to avoid any action which could lead to its escalation. In this connection, they trusted that other States, notably the major powers, would continue to show restraint. They endorsed the appeal by the Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference for an immediate ceasefire and, with reference to the consultations initiated by Mr. Waldheim, Secretary-General of the United Nations, declared their willingness to support any international initiative that could lead to a political settlement of the dispute.

/14. On 20th January ...

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14. On 20th January 1981, the Ten expressed their great satisfaction at the decision of the Iranian authorities to free, safe and sound, the members of the staff of the United States Embassy in Teheran who had been held hostage for more than a year.

The Ten therefore considered that measures taken against Iran following their declarations of 22nd April and 18th May 1980 were no longer necessary and that each member State should take the steps it considered appropriate to re-establish satisfactory relations.

In the same context, the Ten also appealed to the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to hasten the freeing of the four British nationals still held in that country. Three of these hostages have subsequently been released.

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