

Reply by the WEU Council to Recommendation 349 on the impact of the evolving situation in the Near and Middle East on western European security (London, 4 November 1980)

Caption: On 4 November 1980, the Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) circulates the reply by the WEU Council to Assembly Recommendation 349 on the impact of the evolving situation in the Near and Middle East on western European security. The Council notes the importance of consultation among the member countries when crises arise outside the North Atlantic Treaty area which might affect the security of the Alliance. The text raises the question of the concept of a neutral and non-aligned Afghanistan included in the Venice declaration adopted by the Nine, the efforts to obtain from Iran the freeing of the American diplomats held hostage, the association of Turkey with the economy of Western Europe and the question of a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General's note. Assembly Recommendation 349. London: 04.11.1980. C (80) 140. 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: 1980, 01/11/1980-05/05/1981. File 202.413.999.12. Volume 1/1 .

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WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

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4th November, 1980

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Assembly Recommendation 349

(C (80) 78)

The Secretary-General circulates herewith the Council's reply to Assembly Recommendation 349.

This reply, approved by all delegations, has been forwarded to the Assembly.

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

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Reply to Recommendation 349
on the impact of the evolving situation
in the Near and Middle East on
western European security

1. The Council recall that already in December, 1967, NATO stated that it favoured consultation among its members when crises and conflicts arose outside the North Atlantic Treaty area which might affect the security of the Alliance, either directly or by altering world balance.

In the declaration approved by the North Atlantic Council at Ottawa on 19th June, 1974, consultation between the member States of NATO is envisaged within the Atlantic Alliance for "matters relating to their common interests as members of the Alliance, bearing in mind that these interests can be affected by events in other areas of the world".

The present situation, particularly in Afghanistan, underlines the importance of such consultation. In their communiqué of 26th June, 1980, Alliance ministers "agreed that the international crisis caused by the Soviet intervention calls for a resolute, constant and concerted response on the part of the Allies".

2. Confirming the position regarding Afghanistan which they had expressed on 19th February, 1980, through the Presidency, the Nine, at the European Council of 27th and 28th April, 1980, reaffirmed the need to find a solution through the formulation of the concept of a neutral and non-aligned Afghanistan.

In its statement on Afghanistan, the European Council held in Venice on 12th and 13th June recalled the proposal it made in Luxembourg on 28th April that the great powers and neighbouring States should undertake the necessary commitments to allow Afghanistan to remain outside the competition among the powers and to return to its traditional position as a neutral and non-aligned State.

The Council also repeated its readiness to support any meaningful initiative designed to promote a solution of the Afghan crisis.

/3. Expressing their ...

3. Expressing their solidarity in efforts to obtain from Iran the freeing of the American diplomats held hostage, the Nine, through their Foreign Ministers at their meeting in Luxembourg on 22nd April, 1980, noted the results of the démarche of their Ambassadors to Tehran, decided upon by them at their previous meeting in Lisbon on 10th April, and decided:

1) to put into effect without delay measures relating to: reduction of the staffs of diplomatic missions exchanged between member countries and Iran; re-introduction of controls regarding the movements of Iranians travelling to the member States; and suspension of the supply of arms or defence-related equipment to Iran by the member countries;

2) to provide for the imposition of economic sanctions against Iran in accordance with the Security Council Resolution on Iran of 10th January, 1980, which was vetoed, and in accordance with the rules of international law.

The European Council of 28th April, 1980, in Luxembourg confirmed this decision and the Foreign Ministers of the Nine at their meeting in Naples on 17th and 18th May, 1980, concluding that there had been no significant progress towards the release of the hostages since their declaration of 22nd April, decided to apply the sanctions provided for, with the sole object of hastening the release of the hostages.

The Ministers also confirmed their support of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and their intention to remain in constant contact with him so that the measures taken with regard to Iran could be suspended rapidly if the United Nations mission made satisfactory progress.

When they met in Ankara on 26th June, the Foreign Ministers of the NATO countries published a fresh appeal to the Iranian Government to release the American hostages, alive and well, immediately.

/4. In the O.E.C.D. ...

4. In the O.E.C.D., member States gave broad support to the programme for Turkey adopted on 15th April, 1980, and to the Agreement of 23rd July, 1980, on the consolidation of a substantial part of Turkey's debt. They also co-operated fully in working out the three-year standby agreement arrived at by the International Monetary Fund on 18th June, 1980.

Finally, as regards the close association of Turkey with the economy of Western Europe, a major step was taken at the session of the E.E.C.-Turkey Association Council of 30th June, 1980.

However, at their meeting in Brussels on 15th September last the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Nine discussed the Turkish situation and took note with concern of political developments in Turkey. They noted the assurances given by the military authorities regarding the speedy re-establishment of democratic institutions, respect for human rights and guarantees concerning the treatment of persons in public life under house arrest. They entertain the firm hope that these declarations will soon be put into effect in full. It is in this spirit that the Community will continue its co-operation with Turkey.

5. In their declaration on the situation in the Middle East at the European Council held in Venice on 12th and 13th June, 1980, the Nine agreed that growing tensions affecting this region rendered a comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict more necessary and more pressing than ever.

Considering that the traditional ties and common interests which link Europe to the Middle East oblige them to play a special rôle and now require them to work in a more concrete way towards peace, the Nine decided to make the necessary contacts with all the parties concerned.

The making of these contacts was entrusted to the Presidency of the Nine, with the objective of ascertaining the position of the various parties with respect to the principles set out in the Venice declaration and in the light of the results of this consultation process, to enable the Nine to determine the form which such an initiative on their part could take.

/The Venice declaration...

The Venice declaration also provided the Nine with the opportunity to set out the basic principles governing the search for a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East, with special emphasis on:

- the right to existence and to security of all the States in the region, including Israel;
- justice for all the peoples, which implies the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, who must be placed in a position, by an appropriate process defined within the framework of the comprehensive peace settlement, to exercise fully their right to self-determination.

In his speech on 24th July, 1980, to the Special General Assembly of the United Nations on Palestine, the Foreign Minister holding the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the European Community recalled these principles and confirmed the will of the Nine to promote a peace settlement.