

Recommendation 367 of the WEU Assembly on talks on the reduction of long-range theatre nuclear forces in Europe (Paris, 16 May 1981)

Caption: On 16 May 1981, following the deployment of SS-20 missiles by the Soviet Union, the Assembly of Western European Union (WEU) adopts Recommendation 367 on talks on the reduction of long-range theatre nuclear forces in Europe. The Assembly recommends that the WEU Council should urge the North Atlantic Council to ensure that the negotiations on strategic arms limitation are resumed and to call for the continued respect of the SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) agreements and the ABM (anti-ballistic missile) Treaty. The Assembly would also like an objective and comparable assessment of the nuclear balance.

Source: Assembly of Western European Union. 'Recommendation 367 on the talks on the reduction of long-range theatre nuclear forces in Europe (Paris, third sitting, 16th Mai 1981)' in Proceedings: Twenty-seventh ordinary session: First Part, Vol. II, Minutes: Official Report of Debates. Paris: Assembly of WEU. June 1981, p. 30.

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RECOMMENDATION 367***on talks on the reduction of long-range theatre nuclear forces in Europe***

The Assembly,

- (i) Believing that the broad economic and cultural interdependence of Europe and the United States, and their shared concept of an open society, make a frank dialogue between the two both possible and desirable, especially on mutual security;
- (ii) Considering it desirable for the European countries of the Alliance to adopt a common constructive position in that dialogue, the better to influence the United States, in particular on security matters such as long-range theatre nuclear forces;
- (iii) Noting with concern the vast modernisation of Soviet forces, both conventional and nuclear, and in particular the continued deployment of SS-20 missiles at the rate foreseen in Recommendation 360;
- (iv) Reiterating its support for the twofold NATO decision of 12th December 1979 on LRTNF as a realistic basis for negotiating seriously on reductions in the levels of these weapons;
- (v) Believing that such negotiations should provide the political impetus for broad negotiations on the limitation and reduction of all nuclear weapons, strategic and tactical, long-range and battlefield so as to forestall an unrestricted nuclear arms race in an already too dangerous world;
- (vi) Stressing the urgent need for the LRTNF negotiations with the Soviet Union to begin and to be pursued in the general SALT framework, taking into account the whole continuum of nuclear weapons on which deterrence depends, with a view to securing agreement on broad parity with reduced levels of all such weapons in an overall military balance;
- (vii) Aware of the Warsaw Pact superiority in conventional forces on the central front;
- (viii) Aware that all defence policy must rely on the trust and support of properly-informed public opinion, that that opinion is both concerned and confused about nuclear weapons and calling therefore for objective comparable information to be published on the nuclear balance as a whole as perceived both by NATO and the Warsaw Pact;
- (ix) Welcoming the decision of the United States to embark on negotiations on LRTNF with the Soviet Union before the end of the year;
- (x) Welcoming in particular the readiness of the United States to consult its allies on nuclear policy, in particular in the framework of the Nuclear Planning Group, the Special Consultative Group, and the High Level Group, which enable their European members to participate constructively in formulating nuclear strategy and in the limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

Call on member governments to urge the North Atlantic Council :

1. To ensure that negotiations on LRTNF reductions in the framework of SALT begin without further delay;
2. To call for the urgent resumption of negotiations on the limitation of strategic arms as a whole with a view to securing broad parity at greatly reduced levels of nuclear weapons;
3. To call meanwhile for the continued mutual respect of the SALT II limits and of the SALT I agreement and ABM treaty;
4. To call subsequently for negotiations to secure a balance at much lower levels of battlefield nuclear and conventional weapons;
5. To provide an objective and comparable assessment of the nuclear balance as a whole;
6. To call for immediate pursuit of the proposal for a disarmament conference for Europe.