

Reply by the WEU Council to Assembly Recommendation 238 on European security — relations with the countries of Eastern Europe (London, 7 November 1973)


Caption: On 7 November 1973, the Council of Western European Union (WEU) circulates its reply to Recommendation 238 of the WEU Assembly on European security — relations with the countries of Eastern Europe. On the matter of Western defence, the Council considers that the maintenance of an adequate defence capability will continue to be essential and that the dual concept of ‘defence–détente’ remains the basis of the defence measures undertaken by the European countries in various institutions. With regard to Europe’s contribution to Western defence, the role of the Standing Armaments Committee (SAC) will be re-examined and its activities carefully monitored. Progress has been achieved within the Eurogroup. The issue of relations between the United States and Europe is currently being studied by the Atlantic Alliance. The United States has reaffirmed its formal pledge regarding its military presence in Europe, stating that it will maintain and improve its forces in Europe and not reduce them except in the context of an East/West agreement. As regards the negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR) in Europe, the Council points out that the Western governments have undertaken to maintain the indivisibility of the security of the Alliance and only to enter into commitments which ensure undiminished security for all. On the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), the close allied consultations will enable the WEU Member States to ensure that the negotiations do not jeopardise their security or their interests.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General's Note. Assembly Recommendation 238. London: 07.11.1973. C (73) 149. 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: 1973, 01/06/1973-30/11/1973. File 202.413.20. Volume 1/1.

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C (73) 149

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
7th November, 1973

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Assembly Recommendation 238

The Secretary-General circulates herewith the text of the Council's reply to Assembly Recommendation 238.

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


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

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C (73) 149

Reply to Assembly Recommendation 238
on European security - relations with the
countries of eastern Europe

1. As regards western defence, the Council consider that the maintenance of an adequate defence capability will continue to be essential. The dual concept of "defence-détente" remains the basis of the measures put in hand by the European countries in various institutions.

a) With regard to the Standing Armaments Committee, which is the Assembly's prime concern, the activities of this body have always been carefully studied by the member states; moreover, its whole role is now being re-examined by the Council.

b) Within the Eurogroup, 75% of the work on infrastructure financed by the European Defence Improvement Programme (E.D.I.P.) referred to in paragraph 1 of Recommendation 238 has been completed or is in hand, all the transport aircraft (C.130 and C.160) have been delivered, the armoured reconnaissance regiment is now available to SACEUR, and the programme for the extra "Jaguar" close support aircraft is going forward on schedule.

Under the heading of European participation, the Assembly will also have noted the formation last spring of a Standing Naval Force Channel.

The members of the Eurogroup, guided by the "principles of equipment collaboration" adopted by them in December, 1972, are constantly strengthening their co-operation in the field of joint development, production and procurement. For example:

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C (73) 149

- the Federal Republic of Germany, Belgium and the United Kingdom have accepted, either formally or conditionally, the Letters of Offer from the United States for the co-ordinated purchase of the LANCE missile system, thereby achieving more favourable and effective arrangements as regards cost, deliveries and logistic support;

- the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom have signed a memorandum of agreement for joint research and development work on a self-propelled 155 mm. howitzer (the SP 70);

- the Federal Republic of Germany and Norway have signed an agreement to co-operate in the development of the VIPER air-to-air missile;

- substantial progress has been achieved with battlefield communications, particularly to ensure interoperability with non-European allies.

2. The question of relationships between the United States and Europe is at present being studied both by the Atlantic Alliance (as regards the security aspects) and by the Nine (as regards, for example, economic and related matters), both in the framework of the European Economic Community and in the political co-operation machinery. The different competence of these groups, and of the wider international organisations concerned, such as the GATT and the I.M.F., makes it necessary to consider these aspects separately and inhibits any formal correlation between them.

At their meeting in Copenhagen on 10th and 11th September, 1973, the Foreign Ministers of the nine countries of the European Communities laid the foundation for a comprehensive and constructive dialogue with the United States.

At their meeting in June 1973, the fifteen Ministers from the member countries of the Alliance instructed the Permanent Council to examine inter-allied relationships "in a spirit of solidarity and by a common effort", in the light of the profound changes which were taking place in every field of international activity. At this meeting, the United States reaffirmed their formal pledge that "given a similar approach by their Allies, they would maintain and improve their forces in Europe and not reduce them except in the context of an East/West agreement". This commitment was confirmed at the meeting by a message from President Nixon himself.

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C (73) 149

All the member states of W.E.U. recognise that the American military presence in Europe remains indispensable to the overall defence of the Alliance.

3. As regards the negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions in central Europe the western governments taking part have accepted an obligation to their partners to bear in mind the indivisibility of the security of the Alliance, and only enter into commitments which will ensure undiminished security for all.

Those governments will attach due importance to the study of the rational deployment of forces on the central front and will co-operate fully in the work which is being done on this subject.

4. The aim of the negotiations on M.B.F.R. in central Europe is, in the opinion of the western governments taking part, to secure, step by step, practical arrangements which ensure undiminished security at a lower level of forces.

It is clear that neither the conduct nor the outcome of the negotiations should be allowed to inhibit in any way the agreed programme for the creation of a European union or the growth of European defence co-operation. Nor should it lead to the eventual creation of a zone of reduced political and military status.

5. No commitment to agree to the creation of permanent machinery was given by the western countries at the preparatory talks in Helsinki. The question - Item IV on the agenda - is to be studied not by a separate committee, but by the Co-ordinating Committee, which is supervising the work of the various committees and sub-committees during the second stage in Geneva. The Conference has thus accepted the western view that any study of how it might be followed up depends on the progress achieved on the other three items of the agenda.

In this context, the member governments hope that the C.S.C.E. will achieve positive and lasting results.

/6. As regards ...

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C (73) 149

6. As regards SALT, the United States have given their Allies information on the progress of the negotiations. In Copenhagen, the North Atlantic Council recognised "the importance of this subject for the Alliance and reaffirmed the continuing need for close allied consultation". It is only through such consultations that the member states of W.E.U. will be able to seek to ensure that the negotiations do not jeopardise either their security or their interests; the Council recognise that the point raised in paragraph 6 of the Assembly's Recommendation must of course be taken into consideration.

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