

Reply by the WEU Council to Assembly Recommendation 40 on the state of European security (London, 14 July 1960)

Caption: On 14 July 1960, the Council of Western European Union (WEU) circulates its final reply to Assembly Recommendation 40 on the state of European security. The Council appreciates the attention that the Assembly Committee on Defence Questions and Armaments has devoted to the analysis of defence issues in the WEU member countries. But the Council cannot accept the Assembly's argument that nuclear parity is leading to the threat of a limited war in Europe, since NATO doctrine precludes such a possibility. This doctrine states that the NATO shield should be strong enough to form a deterrent to all kinds of minor aggression. Moreover, the Council cannot accept the premise in the Assembly's Recommendation on the adoption of a regional policy for European security within the Atlantic Alliance, since it believes that the collective defence of Europe and North America should be based on this organisation. It cannot accept that in the event of an attack on a NATO member, the other states would not provide their full support. The Council also considers the creation of a joint European strategic nuclear force under WEU control to be unacceptable. On the matter of cooperation in the field of arms production, the Council explains that experience has shown that it is virtually impossible to develop an overall plan for the joint production of armaments.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General's Note. Recommendation No. 40 on the state of European security. London: 14.07.1960. C (60) 108. 4 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: 1959, 28/11/1959-30/09/1960. File 202.413.05. Volume 1/1.

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URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/reply_by_the_weu_council_to_assembly_recommendation_40_on_the_state_of_european_security_london_14_july_1960-en-aoe7e782-ob28-44a3-92e9-29af3639e365.html



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WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

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14th July 1960

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Recommendation No. 40 on the state of European security

At their meeting of 13th July 1960, the Council agreed **the** final text of their reply to Recommendation No. 40 on the state of European security and instructed the Secretary-General to convey it to the President of the Assembly (CR (60) 16, III, 2).

The Secretary-General circulates herewith the text of the reply as sent to the Assembly.

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REPLY TO RECOMMENDATION No. 40

I

The Council greatly appreciate the care and attention which the Defence Committee of the W.E.U. Assembly have devoted to the defence of W.E.U. countries in the present report presented by Mr. Mulley and in previous reports. They agree that informed and constructive criticism by the Assembly and its committees can be most helpful. Member Governments have therefore given a close study, not only to Recommendation No. 40 of the Assembly, but also to the Defence Committee's report on which it is based. These have also been transmitted to NATO.

2. The Council cannot accept that nuclear parity is leading to a threat of limited war in Europe. NATO doctrine precludes such a possibility. It is the accepted doctrine of the Atlantic Alliance, to which all member countries subscribe, that the NATO shield, to which they all contribute, should be strong enough to form a deterrent to all kinds of minor aggression and should be capable of opposing such aggression by whatever means seem most suitable. Nevertheless, the Council agree that the first aim should be comprehensive and controlled disarmament and hope that the meetings of the Ten-Power Disarmament Committee will prove fruitful.

3. The Council cannot, moreover, accept the premise in the Assembly's Recommendation that they should have a regional policy for European security within the North Atlantic Alliance. They do not agree that the full support of all members of NATO might not be forthcoming in the event of an attack on any one of them, and in particular that, as suggested in paragraph 13 of the report, the United States might not give its full support in the event of a limited attack on parts of Europe. On the contrary, the Council are convinced that NATO should be the organisation responsible for the collective defence in Europe and North America of member countries of W.E.U. which should be wholly organised within the framework of the North Atlantic Alliance. This has always been the basic doctrine of Western European Union.

4. The creation of a Joint European Strategic Nuclear Force under the control of W.E.U., as recommended by the Assembly, would be contrary to this basic principle, and hence unacceptable. There are also other objections:

- (a) The Recommendation suggests that this Force should be a complement to the U.S. Strategic Air Force Command and almost an alternative to it. This in itself would be wrong. But it also takes no account

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of the interests of the European members of NATO who are not members of W.E.U. All these countries have the status of equal partners in the Alliance. The Assembly's proposal could give them the conviction that they would not be fully supported in an emergency and could have a highly disruptive effect on NATO.

- (b) Any arrangement for the joint control of such a force, so that the necessary decisions could be taken effectively and swiftly, would be extremely difficult. W.E.U. has no military arm and no machinery capable of exercising this kind of control. The Council consider it undesirable to add further complications and difficulties, by introducing another international Organisation into this field.
- (c) A force of this kind would lead to much wasteful duplication in the American and European efforts. Twice as much work would be needed to mount a comprehensive deterrent which would be unlikely to bring greater security benefits than those already provided through the medium of the Atlantic Alliance.

5. Subject to the principle explained in paragraph 3 - namely that the Governments should act within the NATO framework - the Council agree in general with paragraph 1(b) of the Assembly's Recommendation. They naturally want to improve their ground, tactical air, air defence and naval forces in Europe and have taken careful note of the Defence Committee's recommendations in this sense.

6. NATO has already accepted the principle of balanced collective forces. In so far as this means that individual national forces should not be self-sufficient in the interest of contributing to balanced forces of the Alliance as a whole, only limited progress has been made. The reason is that neither the NATO military authorities nor national authorities have been able to propose any far-reaching and specific changes which would so greatly contribute to the effectiveness of the Alliance as a whole as to be worth the dislocation and other difficulties that would attend them.

7. Member countries are also all aiming at co-operative research development and production of armaments whether within the framework of NATO or of W.E.U. Experience has shown, however, that it is not in practice possible to make an overall plan for the common production of armaments and that the best way of making progress is on such individual projects as appear most suitable for co-operation.

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II

As regards the measures suggested in the second part of Recommendation No. 40, the Council wish to refer to paragraph 3 of their reply to the first part of the Recommendation, in which they state their reasons for being unable to accept the premise that they should have a regional policy for European security within the North Atlantic Alliance.

They have transmitted the Recommendation to NATO, which should have sole responsibility for the collective defence of member countries of W.E.U.

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