

Reply by the WEU Council to Assembly Recommendation 323 on disarmament (London, 7 June 1979)


Caption: On 7 June 1979, the Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) circulates the reply by the WEU Council to Assembly Recommendation 323 on disarmament. The Council confirms its undertaking to support all efforts to further progress towards general and complete disarmament under international control. But it notes that, despite its determination, it appears to be impossible to set a precise term for the conclusion of universally acceptable agreements.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General's note. Assembly Recommendation 323. London: 07.06.1979. C (79) 83. 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: 1979, 01/06/1979-30/11/1979. File 202.413.25. Volume 1/1.

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URL:
http://www.cvce.eu/obj/reply_by_the_weu_council_to_assembly_recommendation_323_on_disarmament_london_7_june_1979-en-293ce6c5-e202-4b7d-b8e8-c7c1b956681c.html

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WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

W.E.U. UNCLASSIFIED

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7th June, 1979

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Assembly Recommendation 323

(C (78) 154)

The Secretary-General circulates herewith the Council's reply to Assembly Recommendation 323.

This reply, adopted by the Council at their meeting on 7th June, 1979, has been forwarded to the Assembly (CR (79) 6, IV, 1).

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

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Reply to Recommendation 323
on disarmament

1. The Council take the opportunity of confirming their frequently repeated undertaking to support all efforts to further progress towards general and complete disarmament under close and effective international control.

In this context and in line with the results of the Special Session on Disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly, member States will continue to work for the definition of a series of priority measures for adoption as a matter of urgency.

However, while this undertaking still holds good, there would seem to be no possibility of setting a precise term for the conclusion of universally acceptable agreements on all the specific points listed by the Assembly, although some are now sufficiently advanced to offer the hope and possibility of achieving this goal in the near future.

Furthermore, disarmament and arms limitation are usually understood to cover agreements aimed at preventing inter alia the use or introduction of specific types of weapons when they have been identified in concrete terms. Mention should, therefore, be made of the success not only of the Convention on Biological Weapons but also of other agreements of undoubted significance and value such as the ENMOD (Convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques).

a.-b. Negotiations are now in progress between three nuclear powers for the complete banning of nuclear tests.

As regards the prohibition of chemical weapons, it is hoped that the Committee on Disarmament will in due course produce a draft Treaty.

c. Strong nuclear non-proliferation arrangements are among matters of vital concern to the member countries of W.E.U. They are one of their primary objectives in the appropriate fora and are no obstacle to international co-operation in the field of peaceful applications of the atom.

/d. ...

d. No practical opportunity will be neglected by the members of the Alliance participating in the Vienna negotiations on M.B.F.R. of strengthening stability in Europe by mutual balanced force reductions to achieve a common collective ceiling.

e. The problem of limiting transfers of conventional weapons should be dealt with through agreements worked out on a regional basis between purchasers and forming the subject of subsequent consultations with supplying countries; in this connection, mention should be made of the Mexican proposal for an agreement to limit the acquisition of conventional weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

f. Reinforcement of the confidence-building measures provided for in the Final Act of the C.S.C.E. undoubtedly constitutes a significant factor and its progress should match that of all the measures provided for in the Final Act of the C.S.C.E.

g. At the last session of the United Nations General Assembly, member countries sponsored a resolution, calling for consideration by all States of arrangements for appropriate confidence-building measures.

h. The chances of limiting the use of certain conventional weapons are to be assessed by a special United Nations Conference which will convene in Geneva in September this year and will take appropriate decisions arrived at by consensus.

i. The creation of nuclear weapon-free zones would unquestionably make a positive contribution to disarmament and non-proliferation. The Council and member States reiterate their undertaking to support the establishment of such zones, wherever nuclear weapons are not needed to maintain the balance and therefore to guarantee the safety of all States, and provided the countries in the region concerned agree.

/j. ...

j. Finally, as regards the establishment of an international disarmament agency under United Nations aegis, equipped with its own means of verifying compliance with international arms limitation agreements and peacekeeping arrangements, the Council and member States hope that it will be possible, in the future, to examine the substance of such a proposal, by such means as the United Nations may consider appropriate.

2. During the Special Session on Disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly, member States gave proof of their determination to set up a negotiating body in which all nuclear weapon powers and major military powers can take part, taking due account of the need to keep numbers small so that the proceedings do not become unwieldy. To this end, the existing members of the C.C.D. were re-appointed in order to ensure the continuity of work already started and the total number of participants was increased to make the negotiating body more representative without loss of efficiency.

In this context, the Council and member States are most anxious that all the States nominated and, in particular, the nuclear weapon powers should take up the seats reserved for them from the outset. As regards the agenda for the Committee there is nothing to prevent the negotiating body from discussing, by consensus and within the terms of its own standing orders, any question submitted to it and in particular, those listed by the Assembly.

3. The proposal for a European disarmament conference on conventional weapons with all participants in the C.S.C.E. attending is at present the subject of close study and of consultations between member States and all the countries concerned.

4. The member States of W.E.U. will make every effort to ensure that the objectives laid down by the 10th Special Session on disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly are fulfilled as far as possible before the next Special Session fixed for 1982 by the Thirty-third General Assembly for the purpose of reviewing the progress of work on disarmament, of reporting on its findings and possibly of setting new objectives.