

## 'WEU wants Atlantic nuclear force' from The Guardian (3 December 1964)

**Caption:** On 3 December 1964, the British daily newspaper The Guardian comments on the decision taken by the Assembly of Western European Union (WEU) in favour of the establishment of 'an Atlantic nuclear force on a multilateral basis', a formula resulting from an amendment by British Assembly member Lord Kennet, and outlines the main implications of such a force.

**Source:** ROBERTS, Nesta. "WEU wants Atlantic nuclear force" from The Guardian. London: Guardian Newspapers. 03.12.1964, p.11.

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**URL:** [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/weu\\_wants\\_atlantic\\_nuclear\\_force\\_from\\_the\\_guardian\\_3\\_december\\_1964-en-88e57b58-f0c1-49b1-9f00-641c1718570c.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/weu_wants_atlantic_nuclear_force_from_the_guardian_3_december_1964-en-88e57b58-f0c1-49b1-9f00-641c1718570c.html)

**Last updated:** 13/10/2016



# WEU wants Atlantic nuclear force

Paris, December 2

The assembly of the Western European Union here today declared itself in favour of "an Atlantic nuclear force on a multilateral basis." The vote was carried by 37-9, with 15 abstentions

The resolution called for the adoption by the North Atlantic Council of a single strategic policy, and for a NATO defence plan that will provide the political authority with the widest possible choice of forces of action. Political decision and control should govern any use of nuclear weapons, which should not be used against an attack which can be repelled by NATO conventional forces, and the statute of the MLF should be compatible with the resolution on the prevention of the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1961.

The formula "an Atlantic nuclear force on a multilateral basis" was the result of an amendment from Lord Kennet, who suggested that it might cover a force which might con-

From Nesta Roberts

tain many different kinds of weapons, whereas the term MLF had come to be associated with the concept of surface ships with Polaris missiles.

Mr Gresham Cooke (United Kingdom), speaking as a member of the Defence Committee, conceded the great difficulties of political control of a mixed manned force, or even more so, a multilateral fleet. Perhaps it might be possible to get round that by some experiment in the political control of a conventional force in Europe, leading to full European control. He had been alarmed at the suggestion that perhaps in the end every industrial nation would have to have its own missile, and that otherwise technological progress would be prevented.

He believed their aim should be to prevent the dissemination of nuclear weapons. The recommendation was, after all, only the extension of the present principle of NATO, where all sorts of troops, including Germans, now took part in the manning and indeed possible

firing of atomic missiles. The extension of that principle would lead eventually to a united European community.

Herr Ehrler (German Federal Republic) said the structure of the NATO Treaty remained so long as its members wished to retain it in its present form. If any partner wished to remove itself, the reason must be clearly stated, so that, if necessary, the treaty could be revised. Geography, technology, and economics all made it absolutely essential that the Atlantic Alliance should remain. Any mistrust of the US was wholly unreasonable. The credibility of the deterrent was vital, and only the support of the US made the threat of reprisal a credible one.

M. Housiaux (Belgium) said there was a contradiction in terms in an MLF in which neither Britain nor France was a participant. One of the best solutions was that of Britain in which she proposed possibly to hand over her nuclear armaments to NATO. This was the ideal which they should all aim at.