

Recommendation 345 of the WEU Assembly on new weapons and defence strategy – modernisation of theatre nuclear forces (Paris, 2 June 1980)

Caption: On 2 June 1980, as the Euromissiles crisis unfolds, the Assembly of Western European Union (WEU) adopts Recommendation 345 on new weapons and defence strategy – modernisation of theatre nuclear forces. The Assembly deplores the increased nuclear threat posed by the Soviet Union’s deployment of new nuclear weapons systems, including the SS-20 missile and Backfire bomber, and recommends that the WEU Council should call on the North Atlantic Council to seek to redress the balance between the forces of the Warsaw Pact and those of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). To counter the Soviet threat, the North Atlantic Council should rely on the whole range of existing weapons systems based in Europe, at sea and in the United States. But the Assembly also advises that efforts should be pursued to reach agreement on the limitation and the mutual and balanced reduction of nuclear weapons.

Source: Assembly of Western European Union. ‘Recommendation 345 on new weapons and defence strategy – modernisation of theatre nuclear forces (Paris, first sitting, 2nd June 1980)’ in Proceedings: Twenty-sixth ordinary session: First Part, Vol. II, Minutes: Official Report of Debates. Paris: Assembly of WEU. June 1980, p. 21.

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RECOMMENDATION 345***on new weapons and defence strategy – modernisation of theatre nuclear forces***

The Assembly,

- (i) Regretting the deterioration in the military balance resulting from the steady increase in levels of many Soviet weapons systems, and deploring in particular the increased nuclear threat posed by the deployment by the Soviet Union of new medium-range nuclear weapons – the SS-20 missile and Backfire bomber – and large numbers of battlefield nuclear weapons;
- (ii) Believing it essential for the Alliance to maintain and update whenever necessary a complete range of weapons systems to ensure a credible military capability in all parts of the triad of conventional, theatre nuclear and strategic nuclear weapons on which the strategy of deterrence through a capacity for flexible response is based;
- (iii) Believing further that political responsibility for and the risks of this policy must be shared by all countries of the Alliance, in particular, while recognising various national conditions, through readiness to accept the stationing on their territory of such weapons as may be necessary for its implementation;
- (iv) Believing the essential continuity between the three parts of the triad would be dangerously weakened if the threat posed by the Soviet SS-20 missiles and Backfire bomber were not to be countered by the Alliance's overall strategic capabilities;
- (v) Recalling moreover that the policy of the Alliance is to seek security through détente as well as deterrence, and that reliable arms control agreements and confidence-building measures can contribute as much to the establishment of military balance as the provision of adequate weapons systems;
- (vi) Noting therefore that Mr. Brezhnev's speech in East Berlin on 6th October 1979 may be a sign that the Soviet Union now understands that the NATO countries consider the deployment of the SS-20 a serious threat, and is prepared for negotiations on the whole question of medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe, although many points still have to be clarified,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

Call on the North Atlantic Council :

To seek to redress the military balance, now threatened in particular by the deployment of new Soviet nuclear weapons systems:

- (a) by taking the decisions necessary to ensure that the growing imbalance between Warsaw Pact and NATO long-range theatre nuclear forces is corrected in due course;
- (b) by accompanying these decisions by a firm offer to enter into arms control negotiations with a view to limiting long-range theatre nuclear force deployments on both sides;
- (c) by continuing to seek agreement on significant reductions in present numbers of Soviet medium-range nuclear weapons;
- (d) by relying meanwhile on the whole range of existing weapons systems based in Europe, at sea, and in the United States to counter the threat posed by present levels of Soviet weapons;
- (e) by seeking any opportunity for agreement on mutual and balanced reductions of central and theatre nuclear weapons and of conventional forces and weapons.