

Documentation

Western Europe responds to Pentagon

America's allies have responded to President Reagan's decision to produce the neutron bomb with near universal dissatisfaction and anger at not being consulted on the decision. The exceptions are the foreign minister in the government of French Socialist President François Mitterrand, and the Peking allies of U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig.

The Soviet Union called the decision a step "closer to nuclear catastrophe."

West Germany: Government spokesman Lothar Ruehl termed the decision "exclusively an American affair," adding that the United States has told Bonn the weapons are to be used "exclusively on U.S. territory."

Hans-Jürgen Wischniewski, deputy chairman of Chancellor Schmidt's Social Democratic Party (SPD), released a statement for the party expressing "deep disappointment in Europe" over the lack of consultations with the United States' allies before the announcement. The SPD's official position is that "The [Bonn] government is requested to insist during the necessary [NATO] alliance negotiations that a position be taken that this weapon not be brought to deployment in Europe."

Norway: Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland said on Norwegian television following the U.S. announcement: "We only received notice yesterday, when the decision in fact was already made. One would have expected important decisions like this one to have been discussed with NATO allies beforehand." The Norwegian government has lodged an official protest with the U.S. embassy in Oslo.

Holland: Similarly criticized lack of prior notice or consultation.

Denmark: Reported in the *Washington Post* as "openly critical" of the decision.

Great Britain: Although there has been no official comment to date from the Thatcher government or

the Tory Party, the London *Times* of Aug. 10 led with a warning that the decision "may seriously endanger allied cohesion."

Opposition Labour Party leader Michael Foote attacked the decision as "hardly to be expected to help the disarmament discussion." The Labour Party has declared itself "deeply hostile to the development of the neutron bomb" because it "lowers the nuclear threshold and could lead us further toward the maniacal idea of a form of so-called limited nuclear warfare."

France: Defense Minister Charles Hernu declared that France "cannot remain indifferent" to the decision, since "this weapon is a tactical theater weapon, and eventually a European theater weapon." But Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson said the decision was not a "surprise," and that it "would have been astonishing" had the United States decided not to develop the weapon. Cheysson also contradicted Hernu by saying the decision "does not directly concern us since the Americans announced that they would not deploy this weapon" in Europe.

Le Monde, an unofficial mouthpiece for Mitterrand, backed Cheysson with an editorial statement claiming the decision was no surprise. It then called on President Reagan to step up overtures in Europe for increased arms development.

China: Radio Peking welcomed the decision, saying it would hinder Soviet expansionism, according to reports from New Delhi, India.

Soviet Union: The official government news service, TASS, covered the decision as "designed to bring the world closer to nuclear catastrophe" and to "justify the 'admissibility' of a nuclear war and condition people to this horrible thought." It called U.S. denials that the weapon will be deployed on European soil a "subterfuge" contradicted by U.S. experts. "The Soviet Union cannot remain an indifferent bystander," to this situation, TASS asserted.