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WEST EUROPEANS STILL PREDOMINANTLY OPPOSE INF DEPLOYMENT; SOME DOUBT U.S. COMMITMENT TO NEGOTIATIONS

This is one of several reports based on USIA-commissioned surveys of public opinion in Britain, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway between late May and early July 1984. Each survey comprised 900 to 1200 personal interviews representative of the national population 18 and over. Earlier surveys, sponsored by USIA and other organizations, are used for trend comparisons.

Summary

Few Europeans -- less than 20 percent in any survey country -- would agree to a NATO first use of nuclear weapons. In this context:

- o Majorities in each survey country but Britain continue to oppose INF, six months after deployment commenced.
- o Europeans widely believe the USSR has reneged on the INF negotiations, and are deeply divided on whether the U.S. is still making a genuine effort. Only in Norway does a clear majority still credit U.S. efforts.
- o Upwards of three-quarters of the publics in Britain, West Germany and Italy approve U.S. insistence on verifiability in arms control agreements.
- o "Blue sky" arms control proposals such as a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons, a non-aggression pact, a European nuclear-free zone, and no-first-use of nuclear weapons are favored by very large majorities in all seven survey countries.
- o Those Europeans who support INF deployment continue to share a belief that the new NATO missiles will prevent rather than provoke a Soviet attack, and a confidence that the U.S. is committed to arms reduction negotiations. But -- with few exceptions -- they are no more likely than INF opponents to fear a Soviet attack or Soviet coercion of their country.

End Summary

NATO First Use of Nuclear Weapons Overwhelmingly Rejected

A majority of Germans and Italians, and a plurality of Britons, believe NATO could stop a conventional attack in West Europe with conventional weapons (Table 1). Very few Europeans -- less than 20 percent in seven countries -- would agree to a NATO first use of nuclear weapons, even if overwhelmed in a conventional attack. Predominant opinion in Norway and Britain is "only if the Soviets use them first," in Denmark it is "under no circumstances," and in Germany, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands it is divided between the two alternatives (Table 2).

College-educated opinion on use of nuclear weapons is about the same as that of the general public in Britain, Italy, Belgium and Denmark, but noticeably more "hawkish" than the general public in Norway and more "dovish" than the general public in the Netherlands.

There is no great enthusiasm for increased defense spending to reduce NATO's dependence on nuclear weapons. Majorities in Britain and Norway say yes, but opinion in other countries is no better than divided (Table 3).

Opposition to INF Still Predominates in 6 of 7 Countries

In all seven survey countries, NATO's new medium-range nuclear missiles are predominantly viewed as a deterrent rather than a provocation to Soviet attack (Table 4). Nevertheless, only in Britain do supporters of deployment clearly outnumber opponents, and then only by a slender 53-to-42 percent margin. In the other six countries majorities from 53 percent in Norway to 67 percent in Italy oppose deployment. Moreover, the margin of disapproval is wider now in Germany and Italy, and the margin of approval is narrower now in Britain, than it was in mid-1983. The opposition in Belgium and the Netherlands is more stable (Table 5).

In Germany and the Netherlands the college-educated publics disapprove INF deployment by even wider margins than do the general publics. But in Belgium and Norway the margin of disapproval is substantially narrower among the elite than among the general public, and in Denmark it is about the same for both publics. In Britain, where the general public approves deployment by a margin of 53 to 42 percent, the college-educated public disapproves by essentially the same margin.

INF Supporters Focus on Deterrence.

The belief that the new missiles will deter a Soviet attack is persuasive to far more European supporters of INF than the argument that the missiles have defensive value in an actual attack, or that deployment will force the Soviets to the negotiating table. Opponents of INF, on the other hand, believe "all nuclear weapons should be abolished" far more often than they cite any specific fears. But significant numbers also oppose INF because Americans rather than Europeans will control the missiles, because they may actually provoke a Soviet attack, or because they may somehow involve West Europe in a war between the superpowers.

College-educated Europeans tend to give the same reasons as their less-educated countrymen for supporting or opposing INF deployment, and in about the same proportions. A notable exception occurs in Belgium, where college-educated supporters of INF cite the "defense" argument significantly more often than INF supporters among the general public.

Large Minorities Question U.S. Commitment to INF Negotiations

Half the German public and majorities of up to 73 percent in six other countries condemn the Soviet Union for failing to make a genuine effort to negotiate a reduction of medium range nuclear missiles in Europe. Most of that credibility gap was evident in December 1983 -- a month after the Soviets broke off negotiations -- and has continued to widen in 1984 (Table 6).

U.S. credibility on INF negotiations is considerably higher. But a quarter of the Norwegian public, and a third or more of the Germans, Dutch, Belgians, Britons, Italians, and Danes doubt that the U.S. is making a genuine effort to negotiate with the USSR. In four countries more people still trust the U.S. than doubt U.S. efforts, but in both Britain and Germany there are significantly more doubters now than in mid-1983 (Table 7).

In every country but Norway the college-educated public credits U.S. efforts at negotiation by a smaller margin (or discredits U.S. efforts by a wider margin) than does the general public. In West Germany, for example, a clear majority of the general public (53 to 31%) but only half the college-educated public (47 to 49%) believes the U.S. is making a genuine effort to reach an agreement.

Europeans Overwhelmingly Support Verifiability

Majorities or pluralities of the publics in five European countries are confident that the U.S. would "keep its word" and observe any agreement on arms issues. Belgian and Dutch opinion is split, for and against the U.S. (Table 8). But there is no ambiguity in European opinions of the Soviet Union: majorities from 62 to 77 percent in all seven countries have little or no confidence that the USSR would observe arms agreements (Table 9). Not surprisingly, therefore, three-quarters of the Britons and Italians, and 92 percent of the West Germans, approve "U.S. insistence on adequate means of verification" in arms control agreements. College-educated publics in those countries agree in virtually identical proportions (Table 10).

"Blue Sky" Arms Control Proposals Almost Universally Endorsed

The overwhelming support (Table 11) for several rather idealistic proposals may reflect the European publics' fear of becoming a nuclear battleground between East and West, and the view that any agreement is better than continued East-West confrontation:

- Three-quarters or more in all seven countries favor a comprehensive ban on the production and use of chemical weapons.
- "A nonaggression pact renouncing the use of military force except in self-defense" is favored by majorities from 65 to 86 percent in all seven countries.
- Public support for a nuclear-free zone in both East and West Europe outweighs opposition by more than three-to-one in all seven countries.
- A no-first-use of nuclear weapons agreement has the support of 92 percent of the West German public and only slightly fewer in six other countries.

INF Supporters Share Confidence in Nuclear Deterrence

West Europeans who support NATO's deployment of medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe (a minority in each country but Britain) tend to share a definite viewpoint on several related security issues (Table 12). The strongest linkage appears between support for deployment and the belief that the new missiles will help prevent rather than provoke a Soviet attack on West Europe. This belief appears to be part of a broader confidence in NATO's ability to prevent attack, which is also strongly related to INF support.

Another attitude strongly linked to INF support is the belief that the United States is making a genuine effort to reach an arms limitation agreement with the Soviet Union. Though a minority view among the general public in several countries, it is the strong majority view among INF supporters in all countries surveyed.

Less striking but clear relationships also exist between INF support and the views (A) that NATO would be able to defend West Europe in the event of a Soviet attack, (B) that the United States would come to Europe's defense even at the risk of her own cities, and (C) that NATO should use nuclear weapons only if the Soviets use them first.

On the other hand, there appears to be little linkage between attitudes on INF deployment and fear of the Soviet Union. Neither concern about a Soviet military attack on West Europe nor concern about Soviet political coercion of their own country is significantly more prevalent among supporters than among opponents of INF, with two exceptions. In Denmark and Norway, supporters are somewhat more likely than opponents to express concern about Soviet nuclear blackmail.

This pattern of attitudinal linkages -- both the strong and the weak correlations -- has been quite stable over the past year.¹ In general, therefore, it appears that the attitudes most clearly linked to INF support continue to be those which lead to the conclusion that the new missiles enhance NATO's deterrence, and are unlikely ever to be used.

¹For a more detailed analysis, see R-7-84, "Comparative Effectiveness of Themes for Promoting Support for INF in Western Europe" (February 1984).

Table 1

WEST EUROPEAN OPINION ON STOPPING A CONVENTIONAL SOVIET ATTACK

If Western Europe were attacked with conventional, that is non-nuclear weapons, do you think NATO would be able to stop such an attack with its present conventional weapons, or would NATO have to use nuclear weapons to stop such an attack?

<u>Response Categories</u>	<u>Britain 5/84 (1131)</u>	<u>Germany 5/84 (1033)</u>	<u>Italy 5/84 (1040)</u>
Stop such an attack with its present conventional weapons	46%	53%	59%
NATO would have to use nuclear weapons to stop such an attack	35	19	20
Don't know	19	29	21

Table 2

WEST EUROPEAN OPINION ON USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS BY NATO

"There are different opinions about the use of nuclear weapons in Europe by NATO. Which one of the following is closest to your own?"

- A. NATO should not use nuclear weapons of any kind under any circumstances.
- B. NATO should use nuclear weapons only if the Soviet Union uses them first in attacking Western Europe.
- C. NATO should use nuclear weapons to defend itself if a Soviet attack by conventional forces threatened to overwhelm NATO forces."

	Britain		Germany		Italy	
	7/82 (967)	5/84 (1131)	7/82 (923)	5/84 (1033)	7/82 (1053)	5/84 (1040)
A. Not under any circumstances	30%	24%	38%	44%	38%	41%
B. Only if Soviets use them first	45	51	33	42	40	44
C. Against an overwhelming conventional attack	19	18	16	11	14	9
Don't know	6	7	13	2	8	5

	Belgium			Netherlands			Denmark	Norway
	10/81	7/82	5/84 (1018)	10/81	7/82	5/84 (1287)(1219)	5/84 (978)	5/84 (929)
A. Not under any circumstances	47%	51%	35%	50%	37%	36%	43%	30%
B. Only if Soviets use them first	26	28	34	31	32	30	35	48
C. Against an overwhelming conventional attack	16	14	14	11	16	16	7	11
Don't know	10	7	17	8	15	17	15	10

Table 3

WEST EUROPEAN OPINION ON STRENGTHENING NATO'S CONVENTIONAL FORCES

"Would you favor or oppose increasing [SURVEY COUNTRY'S] defense spending in order to strengthen NATO's conventional forces if that would reduce NATO's dependence on nuclear weapons?"

	Britain <u>5/84</u> (1131)	Germany <u>5/84</u> (1033)*	Italy <u>5/84</u> (1040)
Favor increasing	63%	21%	42%
Oppose increasing	23	11	49
Don't know	14	3	9
Not asked	-	65	-

	Belgium <u>5/84</u> (1018)	Netherlands <u>5/84</u> (1219)	Denmark <u>5/84</u> (978)	Norway <u>5/84</u> (929)
Favor increasing	30%	41%	36%	62%
Oppose increasing	44	35	41	17
Don't know	26	24	23	21

* Asked only of those who think it necessary to strengthen conventional forces in order to reduce NATO's dependence on nuclear weapons.

Table 4

WEST EUROPEAN OPINION ON EFFECT OF INF DEPLOYMENT ON THE SOVIET UNION

"All things considered, do you think that having (new medium-range nuclear) missiles in West European NATO countries will help prevent a Soviet attack on Western Europe or will make a Soviet attack on Western Europe more likely?"
 [In Britain 5/84: Do you think that having missiles in Western Europe NATO countries will help prevent an attack on Western Europe or will they make it more likely?] [In Britain 12/83: "All things considered" was omitted.]

	Britain			Germany			Italy		
	7/83 (2296)	12/83 (960)	5/84 (1131)	7/83 (2035)	12/83 (923)	5/84 (1033)	7/83 (1984)	12/83 (1095)	5/84 (1040)
Will help prevent a Soviet attack	66%	47%	49%	59%	33%	58%	48%	40%	46%
Will make a Soviet attack more likely	19	36	28	33	30	34	35	42	38
No difference (Vol.)	9	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know	6	17	9	8	37	7	17	19	16

	Belgium			Netherlands			Denmark	Norway
	4/83 (501)	6/83 (504)	5/84 (1018)	4/83 (939)	6/83 (1198)	5/84 (1219)	5/84 (978)	5/84 (929)
Will help prevent a Soviet attack	46%	32%	44%	30%	28%	37%	39%	51%
Will make a Soviet attack more likely	41	21	27	32	21	25	21	20
No difference (Vol.)	-	-	-	-	30	-	-	-
Don't know	13	47	30	38	22	37	40	30

Table 5

WEST EUROPEAN SUPPORT AND OPPOSITION TO INF DEPLOYMENT

"As you probably know, no agreement has been reached between the U.S. and the USSR to reduce the number of medium-range missiles in Europe. So, in keeping with a NATO decision, some new medium-range nuclear missiles have been stationed in Western Europe. Which of the following best describes your reaction to the stationing of these missiles in Western Europe?*

I strongly support the stationing of these missiles.
 I support the stationing, but I don't feel strongly about it.
 I oppose the stationing, but I don't feel strongly about it.
 I strongly oppose the stationing of these missiles."

	Britain			Germany			Italy		
	7/83 (2296)	12/83 (960)	5/84 (1131)	7/83 (2035)	12/83 (923)	5/84 (1033)	7/83 (1984)	12/83 (1095)	5/84 (1040)
Strongly support	26%	18%	16%	27%	19%	27%	11%	6%	7%
Support	38	27	37	14	10	12	25	19	24
Oppose	16	20	24	12	12	16	20	23	21
Strongly oppose	18	31	18	38	44	43	39	50	46
Don't know	3	3	6	9	15	2	5	3	3

	Belgium			Netherlands			Denmark	Norway
	4/83 (501)	6/83 (504)	5/84 (1018)	4/83 (939)	6/83 (1198)	5/84 (1219)	5/84 (978)	5/84 (929)
Strongly support	7%	8%	7%	10%	10%	15%	5%	18%
Support	26	17	24	24	22	22	19	20
Oppose	40	32	25	14	13	17	21	21
Strongly oppose	24	18	34	35	33	32	33	32
Don't know	3	25	10	17	17	14	22	9

*7/83: "If by the end of this year an agreement is not reached and our government does station these nuclear missiles in [Survey Country], which of the following would best describe your reaction?"

*12/83: "As you may know, no agreement has been reached between the U.S. and the USSR to reduce the number of medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe. As the result of a NATO decision, new medium-range nuclear missiles are now being stationed on British soil. Which of the following best describes your reaction to the stationing of these missiles in Britain?"

Table 6

WEST EUROPEAN OPINION ON SOVIET COMMITMENT TO NEGOTIATIONS

"[And what about the USSR?] Do you believe that the USSR is or is not making a genuine effort to reach an agreement with the U.S. that would reduce the number of medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe?"

	Britain			Germany			Italy		
	7/83 (2296)	12/83 (960)	5/84 (1131)	7/83 (2035)	12/83 (923)	5/84 (1033)	7/83 (1984)	12/8 (1095)	5/84 (1040)
Making a genuine effort	35%	19%	18%	39%	24%	25%	26%	17%	16%
Not making a genuine effort	45	64	68	31	46	50	57	69	73
Don't know	20	17	14	30	30	24	18	14	11

	Belgium			Netherlands			Denmark	Norway
	4/83 (501)	6/83 (504)	5/84 (1018)	4/83 (939)	6/83 (1198)	5/84 (1219)	5/84 (978)	5/84 (929)
Making a genuine effort	26%	21%	16%	31%	28%	20%	12%	25%
Not making a genuine effort	68	49	65	39	46	56	63	57
Don't know	6	31	19	30	26	24	25	19

Table 7

WEST EUROPEAN OPINION ON U.S. COMMITMENT TO NEGOTIATIONS

"Do you believe the U.S. is or is not making a genuine effort to reach an agreement with the Soviet Union that would reduce the number of medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe?"

	Britain			Germany			Italy		
	7/83 (2296)	12/83 (960)	5/84 (1131)	7/83 (2035)	12/83 (923)	5/84 (1033)	7/83 (1984)	12/83 (1095)	5/84 (1040)
Making a genuine effort	61%	42%	47%	55%	50%	53%	45%	40%	49%
Not making a genuine effort	29	46	41	22	26	31	40	49	42
Don't know	10	12	12	23	24	16	15	12	9
	Belgium			Netherlands			Denmark	Norway	
	4/83 (501)	6/83 (504)	5/84 (1018)	4/83 (939)	6/83 (1198)	5/84 (1219)	5/84 (978)	5/84 (929)	
Making a genuine effort	43%	36%	40%	46%	42%	41%	34%	62%	
Not making a genuine effort	53	37	43	29	36	37	42	24	
Don't know	5	28	17	25	22	21	23	13	

Table 8

WEST EUROPEAN CONFIDENCE IN U.S. TO OBSERVE ARMS AGREEMENTS

"And how much confidence do you have that the United States would keep its word and observe such agreements -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?"

	Britain 5/84 <u>(1131)</u>	Germany 5/84 <u>(1033)</u>	Italy 5/84 <u>(1040)</u>
A great deal	10%	6%	13%
A fair amount	51	48	49
Not very much	26	40	25
None at all	8	5	10
Don't know	5	1	4

	Belgium 5/84 <u>(1018)</u>	Netherlands 5/84 <u>(1219)</u>	Denmark 5/84 <u>(978)</u>	Norway 5/84 <u>(929)</u>
A great deal	4%	4%	8%	12%
A fair amount	39	40	39	46
Not very much	34	31	29	28
None at all	13	9	10	7
Don't know	9	16	14	7

Table 9

WEST EUROPEAN CONFIDENCE IN USSR TO OBSERVE ARMS AGREEMENTS

"How much confidence do you have that the Soviet Union would keep its word and observe such agreements -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?"

	Britain <u>5/84</u> (1131)	Germany <u>5/84</u> (1033)	Italy <u>5/84</u> (1040)
A great deal	3%	2%	5%
A fair amount	26	20	25
Not very much	46	59	43
None at all	20	18	23
Don't know	4	1	4

	Belgium <u>5/84</u> (1018)	Netherlands <u>5/84</u> (1219)	Denmark <u>5/8</u> (978)	Norway <u>5/84</u> (929)
A great deal	3%	3%	3%	2%
A fair amount	18	20	19	17
Not very much	37	41	39	44
None at all	30	21	26	30
Don't know	11	16	13	7

Table 10

WEST EUROPEAN OPINION ON VERIFIABILITY OF ARMS AGREEMENTS

"Lack of trust is one reason why the superpowers have not been able to reach an arms control agreement in recent years. The United States insists that any arms control agreement with the Soviet Union must include provisions for adequate means of verification. That is, provisions which will permit the U.S. to check that the Soviets are keeping the agreement. Do you approve or disapprove of this U.S. insistence on adequate means of verification of arms control agreements?"

	Britain 5/84 <u>(1131)</u>	Germany 5/84 <u>(1033)</u>	Italy 5/84 <u>(1040)</u>
Approve	78%	92%	78%
Disapprove	11	6	11
Don't know	10	2	11

Table 11

WEST EUROPEAN OPINION ON FOUR ARMS CONTROL PROPOSALS

"Here are some other proposals which might be introduced at a conference on disarmament. For each of these, please tell me whether you favor it strongly, favor it somewhat, oppose it somewhat, or oppose it strongly.

A comprehensive ban on the production, possession and use of chemical weapons?*

A non-aggression pact renouncing the use of military force except in self-defense?

Creation of a nuclear-free zone in East and West Europe?

An agreement that neither side will be the first to use nuclear weapons."

FAVOR SOMEWHAT OR STRONGLY

	Britain 5/84 (1131)	Germany 5/84 (1033)	Italy 5/84 (1040)	Belgium 5/84 (1018)	Nether- lands 5/84 (1219)	Denmark 5/84 (978)	Norway 5/84 (929)
<u>Chemical weapons ban:</u>	83%	81%	86%	85%	77%	84%	87%
<u>Nonaggres- sion pact:</u>	86	86	91	80	73	65	73
<u>Nuclear- free zone:</u>	75	84	69	74	65	76	73
<u>No first use agreement:</u>	88	92	90	83	75	74	85

*The chemical weapons question was asked as follows in Britain, Germany and Italy:

"There are different opinions about proposals to ban the production, possession, and use of chemical weapons. Some people say this is a good idea because chemical weapons are so horrible that all countries should agree to do away with them. Others say this is a bad idea because the existence of chemical weapons is hard to detect and some countries would probably not honor the agreement. Which of these two views is closer to your own?"

Table 12

RELATION BETWEEN INF SUPPORT AND OPINIONS ON OTHER INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

	BRITAIN		WEST GERMANY		ITALY		BELGIUM		NETHERLANDS		DENMARK		NORWAY	
	Support INF	Oppose INF	Support INF	Oppose INF	Support INF	Oppose INF	Support INF	Oppose INF	Support INF	Oppose INF	Support INF	Oppose INF	Support INF	Oppose INF
Those who support or oppose INF deployment also hold the following views:	(591)	(466)	(395)	(612)	(323)	(688)	(320)	(593)	(459)	(603)	(342)	(771)	(360)	(496)
(OPINIONS OF U.S. POLICIES)														
Great deal or fair amount of confidence in U.S. foreign policy	65	42	56	31	74	58	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
U.S. policies have done more to promote peace than to increase risk of war	NA	NA	53	21	65	33	50	23	27	7	48	13	61	17
U.S. policies have been more helpful than harmful to Survey Country's economy	12	7	13	8	38	21	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Very or fairly good general opinion of the United States	51	27	58	28	59	35	NA	NA	55	19	70	57	68	26
(PERCEPTIONS OF SOVIET THREAT)														
Very or somewhat concerned about Soviet coercion of Survey Country	NA	NA	8	7	39	35	34	35	47	36	54	35	55	36
Very or somewhat concerned about Soviet attack on Western Europe	NA	NA	33	25	16	18	31	35	21	15	31	29	46	35
(VIEWS ON DETERRENCE)														
Great deal or fair amount of confidence in NATO's ability to prevent attack	NA	NA	72	52	82	54	76	43	77	38	90	56	93	50
INF will help prevent rather than make Soviet attack on West Europe more likely	NA	NA	85	41	84	29	80	29	73	18	81	29	85	29
(VIEWS ON DEFENSE OF EUROPE)														
Great deal or fair amount of confidence that U.S. would defend Survey Country	NA	NA	61	34	72	52	60	40	61	34	31	29	79	48
Great deal or fair amount of confidence in NATO's ability to defend Western Europe	NA	NA	66	43	75	53	68	39	57	29	82	50	78	51
NATO can stop a conventional attack with its conventional defenses	NA	NA	50	55	64	58	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
(VIEWS ON NUCLEAR FIRST USE)														
Would approve NATO's use of nuclear weapons only if Soviets use them first	NA	NA	52	36	64	36	54	26	50	21	60	30	63	39
(VIEWS ON NEGOTIATIONS)														
U.S. is making a genuine effort to reach INF agreement with USSR	NA	NA	75	39	72	38	62	30	69	29	62	34	86	48

NA means the figures were not available for this analysis.