

## Foreign Opinion Note

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### BRITISH PUBLIC WIDELY SUPPORTS NATO AND NARROWLY APPROVES INF DEPLOYMENT

A USIA-sponsored survey conducted in Britain and six other NATO countries between May and early July 1984 shows that confidence in U.S. ability to deal responsibly with world problems has risen dramatically among Britons since December 1983. Other key findings include the following:

#### Most Britons Support NATO and Current Defense Spending Levels

Three-quarters of the public characterize membership in NATO as "essential" to Britain's security -- a proportion largely unchanged since 1981. Most Britons feel the U.S. troop presence in Europe serves to deter rather than provoke a Soviet attack, and they want to keep U.S. forces at current levels. Confidence in the U.S. defense commitment is more widespread in Britain (52%) than in West Germany (27%), and is basically unchanged over the past year.

About half the British believe their own country and the United States are shouldering their fair shares of the burden of Western security, and want to see Britain's defense spending kept about at present levels. However, a majority (63%) say they would be willing to see spending on conventional forces increased if that would reduce NATO's dependence on nuclear weapons.

#### Most Britons Reject NATO First Use of Nuclear Weapons

Majorities in Britain believe NATO can prevent an attack on Western Europe (59%) and could defend Europe against an invasion (54%). Somewhat fewer in Britain (46%) than elsewhere in Europe are confident that a conventional attack could be stopped with conventional defenses. Despite this pessimism, however, Britons are about as reluctant as other Europeans to agree to a NATO first-use of nuclear weapons even against an overwhelming attack. But more in Britain and Norway (69%) than anywhere else in NATO would approve a nuclear defense in Europe if the Soviet Union used nuclear weapons first.

### British Public Narrowly Supports INF Deployment

Unlike the publics in the other four basing countries, more Britons support (53%) than oppose (42%) NATO's deployment of new medium-range missiles in their country in mid-1984. And those who oppose INF in Britain do so less often for ideological reasons and more often for strategic reasons than opponents in Germany or Italy. A narrow plurality of Britons (47 to 41%) believe that the American commitment to INF negotiations is genuine, and two-thirds are confident that in its negotiations the U.S. will protect Britain's interests.

### U.S., USSR Both Faulted on "Moral" Dimensions of Foreign Policy

Britons clearly credit the U.S. rather than the Soviet Union with promoting human rights in other countries, helping poorer nations, and being willing to negotiate most disputes. But only minorities consider the U.S. morally superior to the Soviet Union on issues such as intervening in the affairs of other countries, willingness to use chemical weapons, and spreading lies to attain their goals.

### Widespread Approval for ASAT and Chemical Weapons Ban

A majority of the British public has heard of proposals for anti-satellite weapons, and believes a treaty banning them is a good idea. About as many Britons say the U.S. is ahead (31%) as think the U.S. and USSR are equal (37%) in ASAT development.

An overwhelming majority in Britain (82%) favor a comprehensive ban on the production, possession and use of chemical weapons -- not just in Europe but worldwide. Similar majorities favor a non-aggression pact, a nuclear-free zone in East and West Europe, and an agreement against first use of nuclear weapons.

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