

ASSEMBLY OF WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

THIRTY-FIFTH ORDINARY SESSION

(First Part)

**Development of East-West relations
and Western European security**

REPORT

submitted on behalf of the General Affairs Committee
by Mr. Pontillon, Rapporteur

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Persons whom the Rapporteur met in Moscow

1. Adopted in committee by 13 votes to 0 with 2 abstentions.

2. *Members of the committee:* Mr. Ahrens (Chairman); MM. Burger, Martino (Vice-Chairmen); MM. Aarts (Alternate: *van der Werff*), Beix (Alternate: *Bassinet*), Caro (Alternate: *Pontillon*), Coleman, Collart, *Sir Geoffrey Finsberg*, MM. Forni, Foschi (Alternate: *Stegagnini*), Hill (Alternate: *Speed*), Hirschler (Alternate: *Zywietz*), Koehl, *Lord Mackie of Benshie*, MM. Mechttersheimer (Alternate: *Soell*), *Müller*, Natali, Péciaux, *Pieralli*, Reddemann, Ruet, van der Sanden, Sarti (Alternate: *Scovacricchi*), *Sir William Shelton*, Mrs. Staels-Dompas, Mr. *Stoffelen*.

N.B. *The names of those taking part in the vote are printed in italics.*

Draft Recommendation

on the development of East-West relations and Western European security

The Assembly,

- (i) Considering that the new policy of reforms started in the Soviet Union four years ago has now created conditions allowing decisive progress to be made towards a negotiated limitation of armaments, the opening and development of a sincere dialogue and a wide spectrum of co-operation between the countries of Eastern and Western Europe;
- (ii) Noting that, after the agreement on intermediate-range missiles, the opening of the conference on chemical disarmament and adoption of the mandate of the conference on conventional disarmament offer prospects of a general reduction in the level of armaments in Europe;
- (iii) Welcoming the Soviet Union's effort to base armaments reduction negotiations on greater openness by publishing accurate, detailed information on Soviet military strength and to prepare data that are effectively comparable with those provided by the western countries and also welcoming the first unilateral measures to reduce Soviet troop levels in Eastern Europe;
- (iv) Noting with satisfaction that many conflicts in the world calmed down in 1988;
- (v) Welcoming the exchanges started between the WEU Assembly and the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union;
- (vi) Taking into account the fact that the new Soviet concept of "reasonable sufficiency" has not yet been translated into specific measures and cannot therefore yet be considered irreversible, but hoping the Vienna negotiations on the reduction of conventional armaments will be successful;
- (vii) Noting further that the new deployment and reorganisation of Soviet forces are still far from complete and awaiting the implementation of the defensive strategy, the principle of which has been proposed by the Soviet Union;
- (viii) Welcoming the participation of the Soviet Union and its allies in all efforts by the international community designed to restore or strengthen peace in areas where it is threatened and to avoid nuclear proliferation,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

1. Follow closely the evolution of the strategy, organisation and deployment of Soviet forces and report to the Assembly on the conclusions it draws from its analysis;
2. Compare the tables of the two alliances' forces and arms published by NATO and the Warsaw Pact to explain existing differences between the figures quoted by the two sides;
3. For each of the negotiations on limiting or banning armaments in which member countries are participating, hold consultations between their delegations so as to co-ordinate their position on the basis of the principles defined in the platform of The Hague;
4. Hold close consultations with its American allies in order to:
 - (a) define ways and means of introducing a new security concept which ensures that no part of Europe has its security diminished or made inferior to that of others;
 - (b) define a security system based on the maintenance of conventional and nuclear means at the necessary level to avoid deterrence being circumvented;
 - (c) conduct a redefinition of burdens and responsibilities within the Atlantic Alliance with a view to a multilateral approach to security;
 - (d) determine the requirements for effective verification of the application of agreements on conventional and chemical armaments;
 - (e) take no steps contrary to commitments entered into or liable to jeopardise further progress in the negotiations on the limitation of conventional armaments;
5. Urge the earliest possible resumption of the START negotiations;
6. In the framework of the Council of Europe, promote an active dialogue on all matters for which it is responsible with all appropriate Eastern European countries fulfilling the conditions and expressing the desire to take part;
7. In all appropriate forums, promote the development of exchanges of all kinds between Western Europe and the Eastern European countries and a rapprochement between those countries and all organisations seeking to foster the free circulation of ideas, persons, currencies, services and goods.

Explanatory memorandum

(submitted by Mr. Pontillon, Rapporteur)

I. Introduction

1. Since 1947, Western Europe has been facing a major threat from a powerfully-armed Soviet Union which conveys a message radically hostile to pluralist democratic régimes, occupies half of Europe and encourages many subversive movements throughout the world. It pursued its external policy like a strategy designed to win a decisive victory over international capitalism. Periods of relative détente in East-West relations were merely tactical changes, i.e. changes in priorities in the use of various means to ensure this victory, but no one gave serious thought to transforming the ensuing peaceful coexistence into true peace based on each party's freedom to determine its own régime.

2. The existence of this permanent threat was a decisive stimulus to everything concerned with the building of Europe and led directly to the conclusion of the 1949 Washington Treaty, the subsequent establishment of NATO and serious efforts by all the western countries to ensure their security.

3. However, the policy pursued by the Soviet Union since 1986 shows that the shape of threats to Western Europe has changed to such an extent that it might now be wondered whether they still exist. A number of statements by Mr. Gorbachev and the Soviet authorities, including some spectacular measures, are intended to convince the West that the Soviet Union has renounced its previous political objectives, that it has profoundly changed its strategy and that the main aim of its external policy is now to organise lasting peace based on disarmament, the liberalisation of trade and individual freedom. Western Europeans who believe they can discern less disinterested and peaceful aims behind the Soviet attitude, in particular that of stirring up opinion in the West against the governments, Europe against the United States and European countries against each other so as to ruin the structures established in the West since the second world war are finding it increasingly difficult to make themselves heard. It is becoming more difficult to adopt defence budgets in parliament and, since 1986, the proportion of gross national product earmarked for defence has been falling each year in most western countries even before major arms limitation negotiations are concluded or even started.

4. Clearly the West cannot remain indifferent to Soviet initiatives, particularly when they produce results that conform to the aspirations of all and requests often made by the West in the

past. Reductions in the level of forces, unilateral disarmament measures, the settlement of many conflicts outside Europe and the evacuation of Afghanistan are undeniable facts. There can be no question of acting as if they have not taken place and should the governments decide to do so they would not secure public support. Nor must the West act as if there is no longer a threat, as if there has been significant disarmament and as if peace has been ensured throughout the world. On the one hand, there are still many ambiguous aspects to Soviet policy and it is, moreover, far from certain that it will last for very long. On the other hand, the Soviet Union is not the only source of threats to Europe's security and world peace.

5. Your Rapporteur will therefore first attempt to assess these threats in their present form. He will then examine what Europe can and should do to counter them, while contributing to peace, disarmament and the establishment of a fairer, more stable international order.

6. Your Rapporteur visited the Soviet Union from 17th to 21st April 1989 with a view to preparing the present report. He was received by the Supreme Soviet and met all the Soviet authorities he had asked to meet. He was able to hold detailed talks with them during which most of his questions were answered very frankly. He wishes to convey his warmest gratitude to everyone in the Soviet Union who helped to arrange and ensure the success of this visit, including officials who received him and who are listed at appendix to the report.

II. Transformations in the Soviet Union

7. Several Soviet authorities whom your Rapporteur met and who were very favourable to Mr. Gorbachev's reform policy stressed that the idea of perestroika was not due to one man but had arisen out of necessity. They believed Mr. Gorbachev to be a striking embodiment, to which they all paid tribute, of a decisive turning point in Soviet history but he was not the inventor of perestroika. It may be noted, moreover, that Mr. Gorbachev himself, in his book "Perestroika", shows himself to be more a bearer of a message for which he is not wholly responsible than the creator of a new régime. If justified, this remark is not without significance since it limits the speculation sometimes reported in the western press about the political risks of Mr. Gorbachev's career. Although risk there may be, it should not call in question many aspects of the reforms that have been started.

8. Nevertheless, it was the appointment of Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party in March 1985 that allowed the Soviet Union to show a different face to the one the entire world had hitherto known. As soon as he came to power, Mr. Gorbachev presented himself as the man of change who advocated a policy of far-reaching reforms in every aspect of Soviet policy.

9. In both substance and form, there is a Gorbachev style, but it was possible to use and express this style because of particularly favourable circumstances resulting from the conjunction of two factors: the general context of the aging leadership, on the one hand, and the will to remove the Soviet Union from the "pre-crisis" state into which it had been plunged by prolonged, attenuated forms of Stalinism that continued for thirty years after Stalin's death. The belief in the superiority of communism as a system of economic management, the base of Khrushchev's reforms, had disappeared long before. By 1985, the sole aim was to bring the Soviet economy and technology up to the same level as the modern countries. To this end, Mr. Gorbachev hinged his policy on two fundamental principles: perestroika, or restructuring, and glasnost, or openness, considered to be an instrument of restructuring.

10. Perestroika stemmed from realisation of the economic, social and cultural decline of the Soviet Union and the will to reverse this trend. Mr. Gorbachev therefore embarked upon a policy of radical reorganisation of the state machinery and the economy and adaptation of ideology to new circumstances.

11. The main aim of changes in the state machinery was to replace party officials by enlarging and rejuvenating the Politburo and also by replacing officials at every level, in particular in the republics, so that those who were elected were more representative of society and therefore had greater authority.

12. Naturally, this aspect of the reforms directly affects those occupying these posts and seems to be running into difficulties. Mr. Gorbachev seems to have made skilful use of circumstances in order to remove opposition to perestroika in various areas: for instance, the Chernobyl affair, the landing of a light aircraft in Red Square and the decision to reduce conventional forces led to sanctions or to resignations which facilitated the replacement of leaders. But ideological statements are difficult to interpret because they contain elements which seem contradictory to a western observer. On the one hand, there is reference to continuity with the work of Lenin, in itself ambiguous since Lenin, a statesman, spoke in different terms depending on whether revolution was necessary or the war economy had to be ended and economic activity

reactivated, but nevertheless his work was set in the context of continuing the process started by the 1917 revolution. On the other hand, principles of a market economy or even pluralist democracy are invoked in order to muster forces in favour of perestroika. The facts themselves are ambiguous. In January 1989, the freeing of prices was deferred. Was this merely because the many shortages meant that such action involved risks for the currency and social stability? Was it to silence political opposition? Similarly, giving the electorate some degree of choice of candidates at the elections to the Supreme Soviet held in April 1989 may just as well be a first step towards a multi-party system as a manoeuvre to save the single-party principle.

13. On 26th March, elections were held as planned for part of the People's Congress of Deputies. There was a searching public discussion about the candidature of Boris Eltsin, leader of the reformers, the popular choice of Moscow electors, and other progressives who presented themselves in many constituencies. These discussions and the accompanying popular demonstrations showed that a large proportion of Soviet public opinion was in favour of the reform policy. Clearly, therefore, this appeal to the public to face up to the reservations, criticisms or ill will of conservative elements still firmly ensconced in the state and party leadership was wanted and accomplished by Mr. Gorbachev under his responsibility.

14. It is admittedly too early to foresee all the consequences of these elections and to assert that there is a move towards a multi-party system. For the time being, it is merely a relative diversification within a political system based on a single party. However, it may be concluded that Mr. Gorbachev, following the example of western leaders, has consolidated his power by basing his authority on public opinion in order to challenge the conservative elements hostile to perestroika. Moreover, in his speech in London on 7th April, Mr. Gorbachev clearly described his interpretation of the choices of the Soviet people:

"The election of people's deputies of the USSR, which were held in a democratic atmosphere unprecedented in our entire history, has demonstrated that Soviet people are not going to turn off the path chosen four years ago... We launched perestroika with our eyes open... We realised that it would shake up thoroughly our entire society... We are convinced that only through democratisation is it possible to build a well-functioning, healthy and dynamic economy."

However, in the majority of electoral constituencies, there was nevertheless only one candidate, appointed by the local party organs, and the majority of the new Supreme Soviet might

remain under conservative control. There is thus a risk that, after elections showing a preponderance of reformers, the latter would be in a minority in parliament. There might therefore be a government of reform backed by a majority of the public opposite a Supreme Soviet that is, to say the least, reserved about government policy. In short, the very nature of Mr. Gorbachev's political planning and the possible effects of his action raise questions involving both internal matters and foreign policy.

15. Where economic changes are concerned, what is new is the depth of Mr. Gorbachev's diagnosis of the level of development in the Soviet Union and the way he has dramatised the country's economic setbacks: this was the rôle of glasnost. The purpose was to break with the practice of announcing to the people programmes designed to give them the products and housing they expected, showing off the Soviet Union to world public opinion as a model of economic efficiency but concealing the real statistics, bad management and even accidents, and turning a blind eye to corruption. Accelerated development is therefore now gaining a high degree of political, economic and social significance.

16. To do this, Mr. Gorbachev is therefore proposing to mobilise society, modernise the machinery of production and reorganise the system of economic administration. Company law, an essential cog in the new economic machinery, came into force on 1st January 1988 after being approved by the Central Committee in June 1987. This reform, which increases companies' margin for manoeuvre by freeing them from the cumbersome supervision of centralised bureaucracy, should allow purely administrative methods to be replaced by an economic concept of management. This reform also involves the rationalisation of the production cycle, the closure of less profitable firms, the development of small firms, co-operation with western firms abroad, the modernisation of equipment, the rationalisation of working methods and wages policy. Mr. Gorbachev's recent review of agricultural policy also revealed a disastrous situation and he expressed the firm wish to put an end to collective farming so as to make Soviet peasants "masters of the land".

17. Glasnost or openness, designed to convince the people of the need for change and then to release the creative potential that everyone has in him, is the keynote of a new information and cultural policy. It is therefore first an instrument of perestroika, but it is in itself a major political tool because it allows Mr. Gorbachev to reconcile his régime with intellectual circles which had been the main victims of repression under his predecessors and to make a sweeping appeal to public opinion to mobilise it against all those who are still attached to former practices either because they assimilate them with the com-

munist régime, or because they derive, or believe they derive, personal advantage from them or because they wish to protect themselves against the political risk of the opponents of perestroika returning to power.

18. In fact, perestroika seems to be encountering a multitude of difficulties and delays, the principal one being the abandonment in January 1989, in principle provisionally, of the freeing of prices, an essential part of any progress towards rational economic management. This is very probably due to the realisation that there was a shortage of goods that would have quickly led to inflation if the law of supply and demand had replaced state law. It is taking a long time for the expected results of perestroika to be felt. The new Soviet leaders obviously hoped that there would be a speedy improvement in the population's standard of living in order to stimulate enthusiasm for reform. In fact, decisions on reforms had to be delayed to allow the government to overcome opposition. Their application is inciting further opposition with resulting obstacles and delays. Results might take a long time to emerge and Soviet economists are now announcing that it will take several decades to improve significantly the living conditions of the people.

19. Conversely, glasnost, after a few incidents which made the authorities force the media to play their rôle, seems to have been imposed irrevocably because it brought immediate advantages for the people which are truly appreciated. Access to new topics of information and public discussion has become a reality. The veils have been lifted from natural disasters and human failings and many afflictions. Alcoholism, drugs, prostitution and corruption are the principal deviations that the state intends to fight. However, mistakes or excesses by the administration or army are reported in the press and on television. For instance, there has been strong criticism of those responsible for the unnecessarily brutal repression of the peaceful demonstrations in Tbilisi in April 1989 and the government has undertaken to take appropriate corrective action. Western Russian-language radio broadcasts are no longer jammed and previously banned works are being published, often in magazines that ensure a wide distribution. The whole cultural spectrum has been opened: there are exhibitions of works of painters such as Chagall, the songs and poetry of Vladimir Vyssotski can be heard and discussed, television programmes are better presented, new programmes are created, the works of Pasternak are published, the orthodox church has access to television and its leaders are consulted about the problems of society.

20. This opening, which acknowledges that intellectuals and artists have a vital rôle to play in arousing social awareness, breaks with a practice that had prevailed since Stalin, i.e. that

anything outside the control of the party and the authorities should not be mentioned in the press which was mainly intended to educate the masses. Glasnost also has to facilitate restructuring as a whole by fostering research and the emergence of solutions to the many problems.

21. Nevertheless, censorship has not been completely abolished. On 1st July 1988, it was confirmed at the nineteenth party conference that openness must not jeopardise the interests of the state, society and individual rights. In military matters, the notion of secrecy is still very extensive and the exact content of the defence budget remains difficult to grasp. The same is true of foreign policy of which there is little critical analysis; the writings of some authors are still not to be found in bookshops. Furthermore, glasnost is not accompanied by any institutional changes: there has been no change in procedure for appointing chief editors of newspapers; procedure for publishing and cultural matters is still under close party control.

22. One of the most significant aspects of this cultural openness, however, is the condemnation of Stalinist excesses. On 2nd November 1987, Mr. Gorbachev announced the formation of a commission of inquiry into Stalin's victims. Some of Lenin's companions have been rehabilitated and in June it was decided to erect a monument to the memory of Stalin's victims. Yet Trotsky has still not been rehabilitated. One way or another, official history is still being corrected but the door does not yet seem fully open for a free and critical historical work about the Soviet Union.

23. This reanimation of intellectual and cultural life is accompanied by a more conciliatory attitude towards dissidence. A number of dissidents have been freed and the existence of prisoners for their opinions has been recognised. The will to terminate such severe measures has been expressed. Emigration is no longer a crime: 8 000 Jews were authorised to leave the Soviet Union in 1987 and 7 600 in the first months of 1988, and, according to Israeli sources, the Soviet Union is believed to have undertaken to authorise hundreds of thousands of Jews to emigrate in the near future. Authorisation to emigrate has also been granted or promised to Germans and Armenians.

24. Certain spectacular actions, such as the press conference by Andrei Sakharov at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on 3rd June 1988 to emphasise progress achieved and yet to be accomplished in the free movement of persons, were intended to improve the Soviet Union's image in the world and have indeed effectively done so. Sakharov's election to the Supreme Soviet by Soviet Academicians confirmed this impression. It is clear that one of Mr. Gorbachev's main aims is to offer his country new drive in its external policy. The Soviet Union is

trying to strengthen and sometimes recover its positions, influence and contacts. In certain cases, it has not hesitated to take the first step, as in the case of Japan after ten years of an almost total break in relations. Mr. Gorbachev's visits to Poland, Hungary and the German Democratic Republic seem to have been intended to show that the Soviet Union no longer made its relations with those countries dependent on their internal policy. The major short-term priority, however, seems to be East-West relations.

25. In less than four years, this new policy has caused far-reaching changes in international relations and the Soviet Union's relations with the rest of the world. It will therefore be central to your Rapporteur's analysis and he will study changes in Soviet defence policy before tackling the more general aspects of the new policy and then drawing conclusions on what Europe can do to adapt itself to the new situation.

III. Soviet defence policy

26. Until recently, the military aspect of the Soviet threat attained disturbing proportions. It involved the deployment of large numbers of troops and tens of thousands of tanks, a fast-expanding fleet, unequalled machinery for intelligence and subversion, strategic parity with the United States, increasingly marked superiority at each level of theatre nuclear weapons and stocks of chemical weapons that had no equivalent. It now seems that, if the perception of the threat is losing its edge among western public opinion, this is primarily due to the publicity campaign that Mr. Gorbachev has been waging since he came to power rather than to actual deployment. His innumerable proposals relating to every aspect of disarmament and the limitation of armaments, the unilateral force and arms reduction measures that he has taken or encouraged his allies to take, the evacuation of Afghanistan, disengagement from most of the conflicts in which the Soviet Union had played a major rôle and concessions made to ensure that the Vienna conference on security and co-operation in Europe succeeded and the various arms limitation negotiations progressed are all signs of a deep-rooted evolution in Soviet defence policy.

27. The aims of this policy had not changed fundamentally since the 1917 revolution and were determined by the doctrine underlying all Soviet policy. To sum it up briefly, its main element, in the Stalinist era at least, was that, since a communist state had existed, the class struggle had become the leitmotif of international relations which were therefore inevitably dominated by the clash between capitalism and communism. The aim being to lead the entire world towards communism, it was first a question of safeguarding the communist sanc-

tuary, which the capitalist states could but wish to destroy, in order to establish the only true peace, that which would be inaugurated with the victory of the proletariat. Thus the will for peace merged with the will for revolution and its achievement would come only after victory. But it could also be a propaganda weapon since it could be opposed to the antagonism aroused by capitalist competition. The notion of peaceful coexistence during the Khrushchev era took nuclear deterrence into account by indicating that, if true peace was not possible, the struggle between the two sides could take on forms other than armed confrontation. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union had to remain strongly armed in order to be able to resist victoriously any offensive by its natural enemies. It also continued to use conflicts between capitalist countries or colonial wars to weaken the enemy camp.

28. This concept of inter-state relations resulted in the perpetuation of the Soviet Union's obsession of being surrounded that events between 1917 and 1941 and also the proliferation of American bases in the seas surrounding the Soviet Union could but strengthen, leading the instigators of Soviet military thinking to consider using their forces in the context of an offensive strategy. The arms policy pursued by the Soviet Union since 1945 aimed at giving it the means for such a strategy: absolute superiority in tanks, artillery and short-range missiles and the search for naval parity, with little account being taken of the West's deterrent capability. The main aim of Soviet strategy did not seem to be to avoid war but to place the Soviet Union in the best possible position for making Soviet interests prevail when what many considered to be an inevitable conflict broke out.

29. However, in May 1987, the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies announced that they had changed their military doctrine. Henceforth, Soviet strategy would be a defensive one aimed mainly at the prevention of war. According to certain Soviet analysts, this doctrine, based on "the new thinking", involved the rejection of war and recourse to force as the instrument of a policy.

30. Two fundamental concepts underly the Soviet Union's new strategic thinking:

- the concept of "reasonable sufficiency", copied from the West, according to which each country should have armed forces strong enough to repel an attack but not strong enough to conduct offensive operations;
- the concept of "mutual security" according to which the Soviet Union is secure only if the United States is too. This concept of course leads to an obligation to make joint efforts to ensure the success of arms limitation negotiations.

However, the concept of sufficiency is provoking much discussion in the Soviet Union.

31. Three schools of thought have emerged:

(a) *That of many in military circles* who consider that "sufficiency" is always needed. In this connection, they prefer to use the words "sufficient defence" which should ensure the security of the Soviet Union and at the same time not frighten other countries. According to General Tretyak, Commander of Soviet air defence forces, "the principle of defence sufficiency is unshakable. It is necessary to have as many forces as are needed to ensure the security of the Soviet Union and our allies". According to Mr. Yazov, the new Minister of Defence, "the limits of defence sufficiency are determined by the actions of the United States and NATO", which seems to imply that the Soviet commander would like the government to adopt a more dynamic attitude allowing advantage to be systematically taken of all technological and scientific knowledge derived from research for the purposes of defence against the West. In fact, such a doctrine could justify continued Soviet deployment at the cost of a few semantic sacrifices.

(b) *That of the reformists* who believe it possible to structure forces so that they are deployed in a defensive posture in accordance with the models of "sufficiency". They follow the Gorbachev military policy according to which strategy must be based on "reasonable sufficiency" and adopt a defensive orientation. Generally speaking, this school of thought includes members of peace committees such as the Committee of Soviet Scientists for Peace.

(c) *That of the unilateralists* for whom the Soviet Union should take unilateral steps to apply "reasonable sufficiency". According to this school of thought, the Soviet Union should give up the arms race and maintain a small number of forces so as to concentrate its efforts on strengthening the economy. The ensuing improvement in the Soviet economy would not only rectify the internal situation but should also increase Soviet power and prestige. However, this way of thinking is weakened by the Soviet refusal of the notion of "deterrence", which it assimilates to the threat of nuclear weapons, whereas the very reason for maintaining a small number of forces would be deterrence.

32. At present, it is the Gorbachev version of the defensive doctrine which seems in the lead subject to the promise to maintain forces at a level that precludes United States strategic superiority. This doctrine was expressed particularly clearly by General Mikhail Moiseyev, appointed Chief of Staff of the Soviet armed forces and First Deputy Minister of Defence of the Soviet Union in December 1988, in an interview