

SUPPORT GROWING FOR REMOVING U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS FROM EUROPE

Written by

Saturday, 11 June 2005 13:22 - Last Updated Saturday, 11 June 2005 13:22

A paper written for the National Resources Defense Council pieces together evidence from an array of sources to show that the United States is still deploying 480 nuclear weapons in Europe. Until now, most observers believed there were no more than half that many still left on the continent. The continuing presence of these weapons irritates relations with Russia, undermines global efforts to dissuade other nations from developing nuclear weapons, and impedes NATO's post-Cold War evolution. The Bush administration and the NATO alliance should address this issue as a matter of global nuclear security and remove all U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe. **SUPPORT GROWING FOR REMOVING U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS FROM EUROPE**

Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference Focuses on Action as Pressure Grows

Representatives from the more than 180 countries that have signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty met at the United Nations in New York City to review the treaty's status. During the month-long conference, many member countries called for reducing or eliminating tactical (short-range) nuclear weapons, including U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe.

Earlier this year, NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) published the report "U.S. Nuclear Weapons In Europe" which revealed that the United States still has approximately 480 nuclear bombs deployed in Europe.

The study was first reported by the New York Times and the International Herald Tribune. The papers reported that even the top U.S. military commander in Europe, General James Jones, supports withdrawing U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe.

Since then, there have been a number of important developments on this issue:

NRDC Briefs Members of European Parliaments

In late February and early March, the NRDC study's author, Hans M. Kristensen, briefed members of the parliamentary foreign policy committees in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands on U.S. nuclear deployments in their respective countries. The German Foreign Ministry showed an interest in the weapons being removed.

Belgium Senate Calls for Removing U.S. Nukes

On March 22, the Belgian Senate foreign affairs committee adopted a resolution calling for (among other things) the removal of U.S. nuclear weapons from Belgium and Europe. The resolution was approved unanimously by the full Senate on April 21.

German Liberal Party Calls for Removing U.S. Nukes

On April 14, the German Liberal Party (FDP) proposed a resolution calling for the removal of

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U.S. nuclear weapons from Germany. The parliament referred the resolution to the foreign affairs committee for further debate.

Top Norwegian Parliament Member Calls for Removing U.S. Nukes

On April 26, during a debate in the Norwegian parliament, Foreign Affairs Committee member Lars Rise of the Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig Folkeparti, part of the ruling government coalition) stated: "It is a problem that NATO countries themselves use nuclear weapons as a deterrent. We want the United States to remove its tactical nuclear weapons from the territory of other NATO countries."

Large Majority of Germans Want U.S. Nukes Removed

On May 2, the German magazine Der Spiegel published a public opinion poll that showed overwhelming support (76 percent) for removing U.S. nuclear weapons from Germany.

Top German Politicians Call for Removing U.S. Nukes

The developments cited above helped trigger a national debate in Germany. The German media quoted a number of prominent elected officials, including foreign and defense spokespeople from the Greens and Social Democrats, supporting a withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons.

German Foreign Minister Calls for Eliminating Nukes Worldwide

On May 2, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer stated in his address to the Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference in New York City that Germany favored reducing and eliminating all tactical nuclear weapons worldwide.

U.S. Diplomat Rejects Removing U.S. Nukes from Europe

On May 3, an unidentified U.S. diplomat told the International Herald Tribune that the United States will not withdraw its nuclear weapons from Europe. "The nuclear weapons will be maintained at a minimum level to preserve peace and stability. It is something all the NATO allies have agreed on. They are the essential military and political link between the United States and Europe."

FOR THE FULL NDRC REPORT, GO TO:

<http://www.basicint.org/nuclear/NPT/2005rc/nptngo-Naughton.pdf>

SEE ALSO THE NDRC PRESS ADVISORY ON THE JUNE 9 NATO DEFENCE MINISTERS'

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MEETING AT:

<http://www.basicint.org/pubs/Press/050607.htm>

(The Natural Resources Defense Council is a national, nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment. Founded in 1970, NRDC has more than 1 million members and online activists nationwide, served from offices in New York, Washington, Los Angeles and San Francisco.)