

NATO's & Cruise and Pershing Nuclear Weapons

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The 22nd Congress of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 31 July - 6 August 1983 in Göteborg, Sweden:

The deadline for the first deployment of NATO's new ground launched Cruise and Pershing II missiles is upon us. By the end of this year, the announced time of deployment, tensions will be running high. Violence and bloodshed may be inevitable if there is no agreement in Geneva talks on the limitation and the reduction of nuclear weapons in Europe.

There is no sign of an agreement or a breakthrough in the talks. There is growing resentment in Europe because the NATO agreement of 1979 allowed four years in which negotiations would be carried out. But the United States delayed the start of the talks for many months. A postponement of the deployment would allow negotiators to compensate for this lost time.

The secrecy of the talks encourages rumours and distortions of positions.

There is an undeniable logic to the idea of including in the balance the French and the British nuclear missiles targeted the Soviet Union. The principle that the negotiating parties should suspend the deployment of the weapons under discussion is a reasonable one.

A further problem is the separation of negotiations for the limitation and reduction of medium-range missiles from those of long-range missiles.

In light of the above, WILPF appeals to the two major nuclear powers and the entire arms control and disarmament community with the following proposals:

WILPF, meeting at its twenty-second Triennial Congress, is agonisingly aware that a nuclear catastrophe is both possible and increasingly likely. Such a disaster is preventable — and we must see that it is prevented.

The introduction of first-strike nuclear systems anywhere in the world is a dangerous escalation of the arms race and a mockery of good faith negotiations on disarmament. As the first step to genuine and complete disarmament, the NATO decision must be cancelled to deploy the dangerous new generation of ground-launched Pershing II and Cruise missiles and carry out negotiations in good faith for the reduction in nuclear medium-range missiles of the NATO and Warsaw Treaty Organizations. We advance the following plan:

1. The United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic shall immediately suspend the production and deployment of the medium-range nuclear systems under negotiation in Geneva. The US will suspend the production and deployment of the Pershing

II and Cruise missile systems, and the Soviet Union will suspend further deployment of the SS-20 missiles. The Soviet Union will reduce its medium-range land based systems to the number of French and British warheads targeted on the Soviet Union.

2. Since the Pershing II missiles would assure a strategic potential once deployed in the FRG, the rationale for holding separate talks on medium range nuclear forces and strategic arms disappears. Therefore, the two sets of talks should be merged. Integration should be facilitated by the good offices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The United States and the Soviet Union shall periodically submit full reports to the Secretary General on the progress of the talks so developments may be monitored and publicised.