

NATO Passes the Dual-Track Decision (December 12, 1979)

Abstract

After the Soviet Union stationed SS-20 medium-range nuclear missiles in Eastern Europe, NATO reacted with the so-called Dual-Track Decision, which on the one hand provided for disarmament negotiations, but on the other hand gave the U.S. the option of stationing medium-range missiles in Europe if the negotiations were not successful within four years. The government led by Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (SPD) approved the controversial Dual-Track decision, thus laying the political foundation for the subsequent stationing of medium-range nuclear missiles in West Germany. Mass demonstrations followed in many German cities. The NATO Dual-Track Decision became one of the points of contention that eventually broke up the social-liberal coalition in 1982.

Source

Translation of Transcription

December 12, 1979. Helmut Schmidt: We want our allies and treaty partners in the world to know: we will continue to actively contribute to maintaining the balance of power that is necessary for peace.

Speaker: Chancellor Helmut Schmidt sees this nuclear balance as being endangered by the stationing of Soviet SS-20 missiles in Central Europe. On December 12, 1979, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization passed the so-called Dual-Track Decision. It combines a willingness to start negotiations with the readiness to deploy medium-range nuclear missiles in Central Europe, including in the Federal Republic. The peace movement in the Federal Republic alone mobilized hundreds of thousands of people who opposed the decision.

In 1981, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt even tied his political fate to the SPD's approval of the NATO Dual-Track Decision. But protests against rearmament continued and also became one of Helmut Kohl's first critical challenges.

Helmut Kohl: We want disarmament and détente negotiations, but they must be balanced, they must be measured. In November 1983, the German Bundestag approved the deployment with a majority of votes from the CDU-CSU and the FDP.

Source: 12 December 1979 – NATO Passes the Dual-Track Decision. History Vision ([history-vision.de](https://www.history-vision.de)), Clip-ID: JHT000306D (1973).

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