

split the defence of Europe from the defence of North America. European NATO members therefore requested the United States to introduce new weapons into Europe to counter the SS-20.

At a special meeting of Foreign and Defence Ministers on December 12, 1979, NATO members took two parallel decisions. Firstly, they agreed to deploy 108 Pershing II launchers and 464 Ground Launched Cruise Missiles each with a single warhead, to replace other shorter-range missiles. Secondly, they proposed negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States to limit land-based intermediate-range missile systems on both sides.

In 1981, NATO Ministers agreed that security for both sides would be best achieved through the elimination of all existing and planned Soviet and United States intermediate-range land-based nuclear missiles. The United States has since carried out negotiations in close consultation with its allies. At their most recent meeting in December 1982, NATO Ministers welcomed the United States' continuing commitment to serious negotiations and to consider carefully with its allies any serious Soviet proposal. Ministers confirmed their earlier decision to begin deploying the missiles at the end of 1983, unless there were concrete results from the negotiations.