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TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS AT STAKE
ASPECTS OF NATO, 1956–1972

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Contents

Preface 5

Introduction

Christian Nuenlist and Anna Locher

Drifting Apart? Restoring the NATO Consensus, 1956–1972 9

Part I

Ralph Dietsl

Towards a European “Third Force”? Reflections on the European
Political and Security Cooperation, 1948–1964 23

Ine Megens

Interdependence in Principle and in Practice, 1957–1966 51

Bruno Thoss

Information, Persuasion, or Consultation? The Western Powers
and NATO during the Berlin Crisis, 1958–1962 73

Part II

David Tal

The Burden of Alliance: The NPT Negotiations and
the NATO Factor, 1960–1968 97

Mary Halloran

“A Planned and Phased Reduction”: The Trudeau Government
and the NATO Compromise, 1968–1969 125

Robin S. Gendron

The Domestic Cost of NATO Membership: Canada’s Commitment
to NATO Unity and the Growth of Separatism in Quebec, 1956–1967 145

Part III

Bruna Bagnato

NATO in the mid-1960s: The View of Secretary-General Manlio Brosio 165

Vincent Dujardin

Belgium, NATO, and Détente, 1960–1973 189

Oliver B. Hemmerle

Explaining NATO to the West Germans: Helmut Schmidt as
a Military Affairs Writer in the 1960s 215

Conclusion

Lawrence S. Kaplan

Reflections on the US and NATO in the 1960s 237

List of Contributors 251

Preface

On 26–28 August 2004, the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich organized and hosted a conference on NATO in the 1960s. Established Cold War historians and younger scholars elaborated on the expansion of NATO's political role, which came to complement or even exceed its military and force-planning functions. The CSS organized the conference as a partner in the *Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact* (PHP, www.isn.ethz.ch/php), a cooperative undertaking dedicated to providing new scholarly perspectives on contemporary international history by collecting, analyzing, and interpreting formerly secret governmental documents.

The volume at hand assembles articles covering the long decade of the 1960s in three sections. It focuses on rifts between Europe and the United States; on central issues including arms control, détente, and de Gaulle; and on the role of individuals in the transatlantic framework. In particular, the book offers an alliance perspective on issues including the Berlin crisis, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the Harmel report. Taking into consideration a wealth of newly available primary sources – of governmental, institutional, personal, and public origin – the authors paint a complex and nuanced picture of NATO's 'coming of age'.

We are delighted to publish these contributions and thank Christian Nuenlist and Anna Locher, senior researchers at CSS, for conceptualizing and organizing the 2004 conference and for their solid editorial work. We are also grateful to Christopher Findlay for proofreading the final chapters and to Fabian Furter for the layout of the book.

August 2006

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INTRODUCTION

Drifting Apart? Restoring the NATO Consensus, 1956–1972

Christian Nuenlist and Anna Locher

The Iraq War in 2003 and the related transatlantic strains have brought to the fore the long-standing debate about NATO's prospects in public, governmental, and academic circles. In 2002–2003, political commentators observed that there were “deep differences” between the US and Europe, that the “end of atlanticism” had been reached, or that NATO was “dead”.¹ Robert Kagan has claimed that, at the beginning of the 21st century, Americans and Europeans no longer agree on major strategic and international questions.²

In contrast, staunch Atlanticists have labeled the transatlantic split over Iraq a “false crisis”. Referring to the vast display of transatlantic solidarity after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 and the efforts to reduce transatlantic tensions in 2005 and 2006, they have pointed out that the breakdown of alliance solidarity over Iraq was an accident.³ Optimists thus emphasize the déjà vu character of the 2003 crisis, while pessimists feel that in the 21st century, the United States and Europe are irreconcilably drifting apart.

To a striking extent, today's mutual assessments on both sides of the Atlantic – and the language used – parallel the 1960s debates on the state

1 Francis Fukuyama, “The West May Be Cracking,” *International Herald Tribune* (9 August 2002); Ivo Daalder, “The End of Atlanticism,” *Survival* (Summer 2002), pp. 147–66; Charles Krauthammer, “Reimagining NATO,” *Washington Post* (24 May 2002).

2 Robert Kagan, “Of Power and Weakness,” *Policy Review* no. 113 (2002). See also Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Knopf, 2003).

3 See e.g. Anthony Blinken, “The False Crisis Over the Atlantic,” *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 3 (2001), pp. 35–48. See also Philip H. Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro, *Allies at War: America, Europe, and the Crisis over Iraq* (Washington: McGraw-Hill, 2004); Vincent Pouliot, “The Alive and Well Security Community,” *European Journal of International Relations* 12, no. 1 (2006), pp. 119–27.

of NATO affairs. For Cold War historians, bitter arguments across the Atlantic Ocean are nothing new – disputes have always been part of the history of the transatlantic alliance. The Cold War history of NATO has been described as a history of continuing conflict and crisis, or as a “troubled partnership” (Henry Kissinger, 1966). Philip Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro have noted that in the Cold War, the US and Europe engaged in intra-alliance disputes with little fear of causing permanent damage: “Each successive crisis, battle-hardened diplomats would casually say, was ‘the worst transatlantic crisis since the last one’.”⁴

Clearly, there are crucial differences between the post-9/11 world and the Cold War in the 1960s, and their specific effects on the Atlantic alliance. As one observer has noted, NATO today is not suffering from an identity crisis, but it lacks an identity as such.⁵ Apart from the similarities with regard to perceptions and a comparable use of language, the political and military environment facing NATO today is different from the one in the 1960s in three decisive ways. Institutionally, today’s NATO of 26 member states can hardly be compared to the organization’s previous 15-member incarnation any longer; the role and impact of today’s European Union far exceed the politically embryonic and militarily inexistent European Communities of the 1950s–1960s; and the contemporary global diffusion of power and threat has replaced the system of the East–West conflict.⁶

West–West Strains

This book is about NATO in the “long decade” of the 1960s, when differences over out-of-area issues clashed with starkly contrasting visions of the future security architecture of Europe. That decade lasted from the 1956 “Wise Men” report, which called for expanding the non-military role of NATO in the light of a first East–West “thaw” following Stalin’s death,

4 Gordon/Shapiro, *Allies at War*, p. 20. See also Timothy Garton Ash, *Free World: America, Europe, and the Surprising Future of the West* (New York: Random House, 2004), p. 11.

5 Alan L. Isenberg, “Last Chance: A Roadmap for NATO Revitalization,” *Orbis* 46, no. 4 (Fall 2002), pp. 641–59, 643.

6 John Peterson, “Is the Wolf at the Door This Time? Transatlantic Relations after Iraq,” *European Political Science* 5, no. 1 (2006), pp. 52–61, at 53f.

to the years 1969–1972, when NATO played the most active role in Western preparations for a European security conference. A major milestone formally establishing a role for the alliance in European détente was the Harmel report, adopted in December 1967.⁷

Nevertheless, the route from the Wise Men to Harmel was anything but straight. From 1956 through 1967, the transatlantic alliance was constantly at stake. Since the late 1950s, West–West rifts progressively added to the complexity of the East–West dispute. Not unlike today, these rifts resulted to a large degree from transatlantic divergences over out-of-area issues and the politico-military architecture of (Western) Europe. As will be seen in this volume, these divisions were exacerbated because of the diversity of views and policies in Western Europe and North America featuring a variety of states, actors, and political traditions.

NATO – the institutional core of the transatlantic relationship – was created in 1949 primarily in response to a perceived Soviet threat. However, from the early 1950s on, this uniform outlook fragmented due to divergent assessments among Western governments of out-of-area issues – including Korea and Indochina – and of chances for a relaxation of East–West tensions. In the context of the fragile East–West détente after Stalin’s death, policymakers and observers began to question the necessity of NATO. After the Geneva summit of July 1955, political commentator Walter Lippmann feared that the future of NATO was in doubt.⁸ US journalist Cyrus L. Sulzberger likewise criticized that the Western alliance had failed to adapt to the thaw in East–West relations and suggested that NATO should concentrate its efforts on diplomatic coordination rather than on military integration and war preparations.⁹

7 For recent studies exploring NATO’s political evolution during the Cold War, see Andreas Wenger, Christian Nuenlist, and Anna Locher (eds.), *Transforming NATO in the Cold War: Challenges beyond Deterrence in the 1960s* (London: Routledge, 2007); Christian Nuenlist, “Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Political Cooperation in NATO: Western Reactions to Khrushchev’s Foreign Policy, 1955–1963” (PhD thesis, University of Zurich, 2005); Anna Locher, “Crisis? What Crisis? The Debate on the Future of NATO, 1963–1966” (PhD thesis, University of Zurich, 2006).

8 Walter Lippmann, “The Vulnerability of NATO,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 22 August 1955.

9 Cyrus L. Sulzberger, “NATO’s Big Problem – And How to Solve It,” *New York Times*, 24 October 1955.

The Suez crisis in the fall of 1956 and the search for an appropriate response to the Sputnik shock in October 1957 aggravated the simmering intra-West tensions. West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer accused the United States of betraying its NATO allies and reacting to Sputnik in purely military terms. He called for new inspiration and close political consultation to avoid the “end of NATO”.¹⁰

After mid-1958, French President Charles de Gaulle became the most vocal critic of the state of the transatlantic alliance. Already in February 1958, even before reassuming power, he had said to Sulzberger: “If I governed France, I would quit NATO. NATO is against our independence and our interest.”¹¹ In September 1958, he summarized his demands for a reform of NATO in a famous memorandum to US President Dwight D. Eisenhower and British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. A US–UK–French tripartite directorate with the power to decide Western political and military strategy in the Cold War was supposed to replace the US-dominated NATO of the 1950s. De Gaulle’s demand, however, was officially rejected by the US and Britain and strongly opposed by smaller NATO allies in general.¹²

This refusal did not stop the French president from steering a headstrong course up to France’s withdrawal from NATO’s military command in 1966. Areas of disagreement between France and NATO and, indeed, broader West–West confrontations concerned military strategy, nuclear planning, force planning and deployment, and diplomatic and economic activities.¹³ In the face of de Gaulle’s challenge to coordinated Western policymaking, the *New York Times* in 1964 assessed NATO’s difficulties as being much graver than any that NATO had faced in the past. The paper appraised the situation as “no ordinary crisis” – and felt that the primary

10 For Adenauer’s criticism of 16 November 1956, see Jill Kastner, “The Ambivalent Ally: Adenauer, Eisenhower and the Dilemmas of the Cold War, 1953–1960” (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1999), p. 160. For his skepticism in 1957, see *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) 1955–57 IV, pp. 186f.

11 Cyrus L. Sulzberger, *The Last of the Giants* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), p. 198.

12 *Documents diplomatiques français* (DDF) 1958 II, p. 377. See also Maurice Vaïsse, *La grandeur: Politique étrangère du général de Gaulle 1958–1969* (Paris: Fayard, 1998), pp. 114–23.

13 See, e.g., Erin Mahan, *Kennedy, de Gaulle, and Western Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002); Frédéric Bozo, *Deux stratégies pour l’Europe: De Gaulle, les Etats Unis et l’Alliance atlantique, 1958–1969* (Paris: Plon, 1996).

problem facing NATO was its search for a purpose. It even asked, “Is NATO finished?”¹⁴

With regard to out-of-area issues, the crises in the Middle East in 1956 and in Vietnam in the 1960s were the most prominent, albeit very different cases in point. The Suez crisis split NATO into supporters of Britain and France – including West Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium – and supporters of the United States – including Italy, Canada, Norway, and Denmark –, which had intervened against the interests of Paris and London. In the shadow of the Suez crisis, French and West German interests converged and led to a crucial push for European integration.¹⁵ As for the war in Vietnam, US calls for military, financial, and first of all moral burden-sharing overwhelmingly went unanswered. The European states and Canada reacted with persistent reserve to US attempts to find support from NATO allies.¹⁶ The reference to the famous case of US President Lyndon B. Johnson desperately – and ultimately in vain – asking for at least a regiment of Scottish bagpipers to be sent to Vietnam may suffice here.¹⁷ Despite US efforts to make Vietnam a genuine NATO issue in the 1960s, it remained an issue out of the geographic area covered by NATO.

From the 1960s until today, the twin challenges of out-of-area activities and the framework of European policymaking have not fractured NATO, although they still persist. With regard to issues outside treaty coverage, the real test came with NATO’s first out-of-area mission in Bosnia after

14 Drew Middleton, “De Gaulle and NATO: His Challenge to the Alliance Poses Large Questions for its Future,” *New York Times*, 3 May 1964; id., “NATO’s Ailments: The Problems Which Beset Alliance Are a Long Way From Solution,” *New York Times*, 10 May 1964.

15 See e.g. Douglas Stuart and William Tow, *The Limits of Alliance: NATO Out-of-Area Problems since 1949* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1990), pp. 58–66; Elizabeth D. Sherwood, *Allies in Crisis: Meeting Global Challenges to Western Security* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 58–94.

16 Fredrik Logevall, “America Isolated: The Western Powers and the Escalation of the War,” in *America, the Vietnam War, and the World: Comparative and International Perspectives*, ed. Andreas W. Daum, Lloyd Gardner, and Wilfried Mausbach (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 175–96; Christopher Goscha and Maurice Vaïsse (eds.), *La guerre du Vietnam et l’Europe, 1963-73* (Brussels: Bruylant, 2003); Andrew Preston, “Balancing War and Peace: Canadian Foreign Policy and the Vietnam War, 1961–1965,” *Diplomatic History* 27, no. 1 (January 2003), pp. 73–111.

17 Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Europe since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 156f.

the Cold War had ended.¹⁸ With regard to the visions for the political, military, and economic design of transatlantic policymaking, NATO allies were increasingly able to absorb and even creatively transform the different internal views and positions toward the end of the 1960s. With the Harmel report of 1967, which came one year after de Gaulle's withdrawal from NATO's military command, NATO formally included the pursuit of détente among its foremost tasks, and started to plan for the use of nuclear weapons in a more democratic way. In terms of military strategy, the French withdrawal paved the way for NATO to implement the concept of Flexible Response.¹⁹

Themes and Structure of the Book

On 26–28 August 2004, the Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich organized and hosted a conference on NATO in the 1960s. Some 25 historians discussed the Atlantic alliance's "challenges beyond deterrence". Notable aspects of the conference were the focus on NATO's "soft power", the scope and limits of alliance consultation, and the variety of state, institutional, transnational, and individual actors involved in NATO's evolution during that crucial decade.²⁰

This book includes ten conference contributions reworked into articles. In a first section, the arguments between Europe and the US, focusing on transatlantic co-determination, are examined at the universal, bureaucratic, and political levels. In his contribution, **Ralph Dietl (Belfast)** reflects on European political and security cooperation from 1945 to 1964, focusing on the close linkage between the process of European integration and NATO reform. Attempts to create Europe as a 'Third Force' led to fierce struggles about the future defense architecture of Europe and the West. Starting after Stalin's death in 1953, the French took the lead in challenging

18 See Joyce P. Kaufman, *NATO and the Former Yugoslavia: Crisis, Conflict, and the Atlantic Alliance* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).

19 Helga Haftendorn, *NATO and the Nuclear Revolution: A Crisis of Credibility 1966–67* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Andreas Wenger, "Crisis and Opportunity: NATO's Transformation and the Multilateralization of Détente, 1966–1968," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 1 (Winter 2004), pp. 22–74.

20 See http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/conferences/PreviousEvents/2004_Zurich.htm.

the US concept of Europe. However, Dietl concludes, a European defense identity failed to emerge during these years because of the mutually exclusive US and French concepts of Europe, the first focusing on integration and control, the latter on cooperation and equalization.

Looking at the day-to-day implementation of decisions taken at the 1957 NATO summit in the field of collective forces, air defense, and research and development, **Ine Megens (Groningen)** concludes that the impetus of 1957 did not boost the coordination of defense within NATO. In December 1957, in response to the launching of the Soviet Sputnik satellite, NATO governments had gathered for a top-level summit for the first time since NATO's creation in 1949. Post-Sputnik fears triggered various ideas for closer defense cooperation within NATO beyond the established coordination of military forces. Why did NATO governments fail to put these ideas into practice in the years after the 1957 summit? Megens argues that, on the one hand, NATO military commanders and the Standing Group questioned the military value of some of the plans, thereby seriously impeding practical success. On the other hand, the limited authority of the NATO International Staff and the lack of prestige of the NATO secretary-general also prevented closer integration. Thus, the scanty implementation of the 1957 summit meeting results can best be explained by lack of political support, as evidenced at later ministerial meetings. With de Gaulle assuming power in France in June 1958, it seems in retrospect that military integration in NATO had already reached its apex in the mid-1950s.

Exploring the Berlin crisis (1958–1963), **Bruno Thoss (Potsdam)** discusses whether and how NATO was consulted on military contingency planning on Berlin by the three major Western powers with special responsibility towards the German question. Citing various incidents where the US administration, the US–UK–French three-power working group at the ambassadorial level, the three-power LIVE OAK staff, or the US NATO supreme commander failed to inform NATO about decisions with serious potential consequences, Thoss concludes that the three Western powers in general informed their 12 allies only after a decision and to win them over. The US feared that continuous discussion of military aspects of the Berlin crisis within NATO would risk the fragile consensus among the

US, UK, and France, with the UK usually adopting a softer line than the US and France.

The second section of the book focuses on the following central issues: arms control, détente, and de Gaulle. **David Tal (Tel Aviv)** examines the “NATO factor” in slowing down the process toward the Non-Proliferation Treaty and analyzes the reasons why it took until July 1968 to reach an agreement that both Washington and Moscow favored. He argues that intra-bloc relations mattered in this bargaining process as much as did conflicting inter-bloc interests. Two problems resulting from issues tabled by NATO members prevented an earlier conclusion of the treaty: the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Atom Agency (Euratom), with the major stumbling blocs being the issues of inspection and safeguards. West Germany aspired nuclear sharing in the context of the planned Multilateral Force (MLF), while the Euratom members demanded that their organization be granted equal status to that of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Mary Halloran (Ottawa) studies the reevaluation of Canadian defense policy after Pierre Elliott Trudeau took office in 1968, and notably Ottawa’s intention to achieve a reduction of the size of its forces in Europe. The government’s decision was preceded by an in-depth debate involving different government branches, and amounted to a compromise between NATO defenders and critics. Instead of letting the alliance define Canadian defense policy priorities, Trudeau aimed at defining Canada’s defense policies according to genuinely national foreign policy priorities. NATO allies resented the lack of consultation leading to the decision, and partly came to doubt Ottawa’s future commitment to NATO. Yet at the same time, they welcomed the fact that Canada would ensure its military presence in Europe, albeit at a lower level.

In his chapter, **Robin Gendron (Halifax)** investigates the link between the Ottawa government’s NATO policies and the rise of the separatist movement in Quebec in the first half of the 1960s. Given its interest in a smooth relationship with France and in the preservation of NATO unity, Ottawa submitted independent Canadian interests to the interests of Paris in French-speaking Africa up to de Gaulle’s 1966 withdrawal from NATO’s integrated command. For Quebec nationalists, this asymmetry

was evidence that only an autonomous or independent Quebec could be a true promoter of French Canadian interests.

The third section of this volume deals with the views and the impact on NATO of individual personalities – Secretary-General Manlio Brosio, Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel, and West German military writer Helmut Schmidt. **Bruna Bagnato (Florence)** examines Brosio’s views on the alliance in what he judged to be a critical time. Her close reading of the unpublished diary of the NATO secretary-general for the years 1964–1968 reveals not only deep-rooted concerns about the French stance in NATO, but even more so about the US push for *détente*. Brosio considered the latter to be a potentially more detrimental danger to NATO, since it discounted German interests. Therefore, Brosio remained very critical throughout the Harmel exercise of 1966–1967 and adamantly opposed a Nonproliferation Treaty. Brosio criticized that NATO governments had not made clear whether the Harmel proposal aimed at precipitating a showdown with de Gaulle and pushing France to leave NATO, or at preventing West Germany from searching a direct compromise with Moscow, or at establishing Atlantic control over the policy of *détente* as a whole.

Vincent Dujardin (Louvain) explores the contribution to East–West *détente* in the 1960s by Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel, with particular focus on the dialog between Harmel and Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki in 1966–1968. Dujardin discusses Harmel’s role in the preparation of NATO’s important Reykjavik Signal of June 1968, his reaction to the Soviet intervention in Prague in August 1968, and his strong support for the CSCE from 1969 to 1973. Harmel was reluctant to consult with NATO in advance of his initiatives *vis-à-vis* Eastern Europe for fear that such soundings would seriously slow down progress towards an East–West rapprochement. In 1966–1967, Harmel believed that bilateral talks were more efficient than bloc-to-bloc discussions. Interestingly, the latter were codified in the landmark 1967 NATO report defining the alliance’s twin tasks as defense and *détente*, which became known as “Harmel report”.

Oliver B. Hemmerle (Mannheim) focuses on Helmut Schmidt as a military affairs writer in the 1960s who “explained NATO to the (West) Germans”. Within the Social Democratic Party, Schmidt was second to none in his writings on defense and foreign policy. Schmidt’s publications

of the 1960s, less known than his books on NATO strategy of the late 1970s and early 1980s, paved the way for an understanding of the role of a democratic controlled Bundeswehr within NATO and enabled the West German public to critically debate defense policy.

The book concludes with “Reflections on the United States and NATO in the 1960s” by the doyen of US NATO historians, **Lawrence S. Kaplan** (Washington, DC). Kaplan offers thoughts on the perception and realities of US loss of power and status in the 1960s, sharing his insights on the US and NATO from Sputnik and the missile gap to protests against the US war in Vietnam in the late 1960s. While the perception of US decline seemed more valid at the end of the decade than at its beginning, Kaplan concludes that a close look at the state of the US exposes also remarkable strengths in its international position.

New Sources, New Perspectives, New Approaches

This volume reflects a resurgent interest in the Atlantic alliance among historians. Building on the pioneering work of Norbert Wiggershaus and the comprehensive multi-volume *History of NATO* edited by Gustav Schmidt²¹, the authors seek to expand the previous focus of NATO historians on the origins of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949 and on NATO’s military aspects in the 1950s. Today, the availability of formerly classified sources both in the newly opened NATO Archives in Brussels and in Western national archives, combined with new perspectives opening up since the end of the Cold War, allows for a renewed scholarly engagement with the “entangling alliance”.²²

In addition, historians have started to approach familiar episodes of NATO history with new and original research questions. Rather than

21 Norbert Wiggershaus, “Einführung: Zur Konzeption einer Geschichte der Nato,” in *Das Nordatlantische Bündnis 1949–56*, ed. Klaus A. Maier and Norbert Wiggershaus (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1993), pp. 9–13; Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, *Entstehung und Probleme des Atlantischen Bündnisses*, vols. 1–6 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998–2005); Gustav Schmidt (ed.), *A History of NATO: The First Fifty Years*, 3 vols. (London: Palgrave, 2001).

22 See Vojtech Mastny, “The New History of Cold War Alliances”, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4, no. 2 (2002), pp. 55–84; Andreas Wenger, Christian Nuenlist, and Anna Locher, “New Perspectives on NATO History,” in *NATO’s Transformation in the Cold War*, pp. 3–12.

retelling the well-known story of the US–French rift in the 1960s, the authors of this volume enrich the historiography on de Gaulle and NATO by focusing on how officials within the NATO bureaucracy outsmarted French opposition to military integration with regard to allied air defense (Megens), on how the French–Canadian movement fell victim to Ottawa’s policy of appeasement towards de Gaulle (Gendron), or on how the NATO secretary-general reevaluated the French challenge by emphasizing other intra-alliance threats to NATO unity (Bagnato).

Thus informed about NATO’s history in the 1960s in a broader sense, readers concerned about today’s state of transatlantic affairs may want to consider the assessment of Harlan Cleveland, Washington’s NATO ambassador in the mid-1960s: “In NATO, ‘disarray’ is sometimes another way of saying ‘alliance at work.’”²³

23 Harlan Cleveland, *NATO: A Transatlantic Bargain* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 7.

PART I ARGUMENTS BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE US

Towards a European “Third Force”? Reflections on the European Political and Security Cooperation, 1948–1964

Ralph Dietl

The Cold War is a prime example of a bipolar conflict. This paradigm unites the orthodox, revisionist, and post-revisionist historiographies of the Cold War. There are differing explanations, however, as to the genesis of the bipolar order. The geopolitical explanation offered by the post-revisionists has gained wide acceptance today. For “neo-realist” post-revisionists, the East-West conflict was inevitable due to the power vacuum in Europe that could only be filled by the superpowers – the US and the Soviet Union. Bipolarity had therefore existed *de facto* since the capitulation of Nazi Germany in 1945, and was formalized by the formation of NATO in 1949.¹ As a consequence, NATO Europe was interpreted as essentially “an American military protectorate”.²

Ten years after the end of the Cold War, Marc Trachtenberg’s *Constructed Peace: the Making of the European Settlement* challenged this interpretation.³ His thesis amends a purely systemic explanation of the Cold War. Trachtenberg does not dispute US preponderance of power; he disputes, however, the notion of “Empire”. According to Trachtenberg, US power was not used to create an American protectorate, but to transform “Europe” into a strategic unit capable of balancing the USSR on her own. This scheme faltered with the advent of the Kennedy presidency. Kennedy tightened NATO’s central command and control, instead of continuing to foster the development of a European defense force. He turned away

1 Klaus Larres and Ann Lane (eds.), *The Cold War: The Essential Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), chapter 1.

2 Marc Trachtenberg, “A Military Coalition in Time of Peace: America, Europe and the NATO Alliance, 1949–1962,” <http://www.polisci.ucla.edu/faculty/trachtenberg/cv/AFACAD.rtf>.

3 Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945–63* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

from a policy of “building Europe” and “opted instead for a system based on American power”.⁴ Did Kennedy finally revert to the norm, i.e., did he pursue a policy of ‘imperial’ domination? This assumption, too, is rejected. According to Trachtenberg, it was the lack of European unity and the danger of nuclear forces under German command that prevented a transfer of nuclear weapons to European political control and bound the US to continue its military presence in Europe. Stuck with an obligation to guarantee European security, the Kennedy administration started to look for a resolution of the German problem, which lay at the heart of the Cold War. Kennedy aimed at a real East-West accommodation. The result was a political structure that “rested on the twin pillars of American military presence in Europe and Germany’s non-nuclear status.”⁵

Does Trachtenberg’s thesis offer a valid characterization of US motives? Did the US indeed support the formation of a European defense system? Is the German problem the key to an understanding of the revolution of 1963? This article revisits the Western bloc formation, reviews the political and security cooperation among the European powers up to 1963, the “watershed year” of the Cold War,⁶ and scrutinizes the US attitude towards European integration in the field of defense. It challenges the notion of US “structural” exceptionalism underlying Trachtenberg’s thesis. The article rejects the assumption that US support for bipolarity emerged in 1962, but maintains that the maintenance of bipolarity formed a basic element of the US reconstruction of Europe up to 1963 and beyond.

The following discussion is divided into two distinct but complementary sections: a concise re-examination of the Western ‘bloc formation’ in the years 1945 to 1955 is followed by a more elaborate study of the intra-alliance relations of the years 1956 to 1959 and especially the early 1960s – years that witnessed a lively debate on alliance architecture, years that highlight the close linkage of the processes of European unity and NATO reform, years that witnessed the greatest challenge to NATO structures – if not bipolar-

4 Marc Trachtenberg, H-Diplo Roundtable Review: Author’s Response, 14 August 2000, <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/>

5 Trachtenberg, “Military Coalition”, p. 11.

6 Jennifer W. See, “An Uneasy Truce: John F. Kennedy and Soviet–American Detente, 1963”, *Cold War History* 2, no. 2 (2002), pp. 161–94, 162.

ity – before the end of the Cold War. It is the argument of this chapter that the recurring challenge to bipolarity was finally mastered by super-power détente, by the formation of an East-West regime to stabilize bipolarity. The year 1963, therefore, witnessed the transformation of the Cold War from an East-West conflict into a system of managed bipolarity.

Bloc Formation: Loss and Reclaim of a European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI)

Since 1978, the year in which Donald C. Watt appealed in an open letter to British historians to critically review the genesis of the Cold War on the basis of British archival material, British historiography has re-established Great Britain as an actor in her own right.⁷ The historiography of the 1980s and 1990s revealed British blueprints to form a European power bloc. More importantly, however, it revealed as well the dedication of the British Labour Government to act upon those plans and to create what could be termed a European “Third Force”. The Attlee government therefore tried to fill the power vacuum in Europe in order to maintain a multi-polar world order.⁸ Traditional Cold War historiography largely overlooks the Brussels Pact, or simply interprets the 1948 treaty as “mackerel to catch a whale”⁹ – as a well-planned stepping-stone towards the formation of an Atlantic alliance. The works of what could be termed the “John Kent/John Young School” contest this interpretation. They maintain that the Brussels Treaty Organization (BTO) was the foremost expression of a European “Third Force” movement. The British did not plan for the Atlantic alli-

7 Donald C. Watt, “Rethinking the Cold War: A Letter to a British Historian”, *The Political Science Quarterly* 49 (1978), pp. 466–56.

8 John Baylis, “British Wartime Thinking About a Post-War European Security Group”, *Review of International Studies* 9 (1983), pp. 265–81; Sean Greenwood, *Alternative Alliance: Anglo-French Relations Before the Coming of NATO, 1944–48* (London: Minerva Press, 1996); idem, “Ernest Bevin, France and Western Union”, *European History Quarterly* 14 (1984), pp. 319–38; John Kent and John Young, “British Policy Overseas: The ‘Third Force’ and the Origins of NATO – in Search of a New Perspective”, in *Securing Peace in Europe, 1945–1962: Thoughts for the Post-Cold War Era*, ed. Beatrice Heuser and Robert O’Neill (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 41–61.

9 Elizabeth Barker, *The British between the Superpowers, 1945–50* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1983).

ance to supersede the Brussels Pact, but to complement it. The alliance was planned as a stopgap measure to cope with a temporary emergency until “Europe” – a rather ill-defined group of European nation-states – had regained the necessary strength to stand on her own.¹⁰

The British were therefore looking for a guarantee pact that would keep the Brussels Pact intact; they invited the US to back the development of a European security architecture.¹¹ The US was uncertain. It was not so much the fear of an entangling alliance that made the US government hesitate, but its proposed form. A mere guarantee pact would abet the revival of a Europe of the nation-states and lead to the formation of a European power bloc. The US, however, preferred an Atlantic security architecture. They envisaged a multi-purpose Atlantic alliance to ease a progressive reconstruction of Europe.¹² Those contrasting visions of Europe notwithstanding, a common denominator emerged after protracted negotiations. The founding charter of the Atlantic alliance – the Washington Treaty – was signed on 4 April 1949.¹³

- 10 Records of a Private Conversation Between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the UK, France, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg at the Belgian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 17 March 1948, Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, The Hague [B-Z], Archief WEU Periode 1947–54, Inv. Nr. 14, 99.1 oprichting 1947-1949 WEU; Records of the Second Meeting of the Consultative Council, held at the Hague, 19–20 July 1948; B-Z, DNW-Archief, WEU, omslag 32, doos 8, 999.21 metric/geheime besprekingen consultatieve raad.
- 11 Minutes of the Second Meeting of the US–UK–CAN Security Conversations, 23 March 1948, FRUS 1948 III, 64; Records of the Second Meeting of the Consultative Council, held at the Hague, 19–20/7/1948, B-Z, DNW-Archief WEU, omslag 32, doos 8, 999.21 metric/geheime besprekingen consultatieve raad.
- 12 “[J. Foster Dulles:] the agreement [Atlantic Pact] should also be designed to further the basic concept of ERP to the end of ultimate union or fusion among the Western European countries.” Memorandum of Conversation by Undersecretary of State Lovett, 27 April 1948, Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Washington Exploratory Talks on Security, 7 July 1948, The Acting Secretary of State to the United States Special Representative in Europe Harriman, 3 December 1948, FRUS 1948 III, 106, 155–60, 300–310; Second Meeting of the Consultative Council, 19–20 July 1948, Metric Doc. No. 98, United Kingdom National Archives (UKNA): DG 1/1/1 p. 8.
- 13 The UK Representative on the Brussels Treaty Permanent Commission Jebb to the Director of the Policy Planning Staff Kennan, 7/4/1949, FRUS 1949 IV, 289f.; Irwin M. Wall, “France and the North Atlantic Alliance” in *NATO: The Founding of the Atlantic Alliance and the Integration of Europe*, ed. Francis H. Heller and John R. Gillingham (Basingstoke: Palgrave 1992), pp. 45–56.

Two years later, the Western Union (WU), the military organization of the Brussels Treaty, had been dissolved and replaced by the integrated command and control structure of NATO.¹⁴ The drive towards a European “Third Force” had run out of steam, and European integration had emerged as a sub-set of the Atlantic alliance. The US reconstruction of Europe had taken precedence over European concepts to shape Europe as an independent force. In other words, bipolarity had been institutionalized. These structural changes were favored by, if not due to, a rapid increase in East-West tensions in the years 1949/50. The successful testing of an atomic bomb by the Soviet Union, the “loss of China”, and the outbreak of the Korean War in quick sequence had changed the threat perception entirely. As a result, the focus of attention shifted eastward from Germany to the Soviet Union. The “Communist threat” had a major impact on the construction of Europe. It forced Great Britain to agree – grudgingly – to a streamlining of Western defense structures that disbanded the WU.¹⁵ The results were the formation of a Western bloc and bipolar Cold War structures. Those structures, however, remained contested throughout the Cold War.

14 Resolution by the Consultative Council of the Brussels Treaty Organisation of 20th December 1950 on the Future of the Organisation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Military Structure, 20/12/1950, UKNA DG 1/11/56.

15 “In view of the more comprehensive and greater strength of collective defensive planning on the scale of NATO it is desirable that the Western Union gradually lose its identity [...]” Brussels Treaty and the Atlantic Pact, 15/5/1950, United States National Archives and Record Administration (USNA) RG 59 Lot 55D258, Records of the Bureau of European Affairs, Subject files Relating to European Defense Arrangements 1948–54, box 4, NAP–Brussels Pact; Draft Summary of the Procedure of the Ministers of Defense of the Five Powers of the Brussels Treaty, 20/7/1950, UKNA: DG 1/11/56; Integrated Forces in Europe, United States Position, [n.d.], LC *Averell Harriman Papers*, Special Assistant, Subject File, European Defense Force, box 302; Chiefs-of-Staff Committee, Joint Planning Staff, Reorganization of NATO in Europe, 4/10/1950, UKNA FO 371/90022; Report by the North Atlantic Military Committee to the North Atlantic Defense Committee, 12/12/1950, The United States Deputy Representative on the North Atlantic Council Spofford to the Secretary of State, 12/12/1950, The Secretary of Defense Marshall to the Secretary of State, 16/12/1950, The United States Delegation Minutes of the First Meeting of the Sixth Session of the North Atlantic Treaty Council With the Defense Ministers, 18–19/12/1950, FRUS 1950 III, pp. 548ff., 564ff., 582, 585ff., 595ff.; Sir J. Rougetel to Foreign Office, Future of the Brussels Treaty Defence Organization, 20/12/1950, UKNA FO 371/89875.

The Western security architecture was built on fear, and therefore started to crumble with the first signs of *détente*. After Joseph Stalin's death in 1953 priorities shifted. Great Britain and France now started to recall their respective national visions of Europe; on both sides of the Channel – but especially in France – politicians remembered that the transatlantic alliance had been planned as a stopgap measure. The existing hierarchical security architecture – featuring Europe as a subset of the Atlantic alliance – now seemed largely incompatible with the ambitions of the European nation-states.¹⁶ The fact that Great Britain had successfully tested a nuclear device in 1952 made bloc politics even more unwieldy. The nuclear breakthrough seemed to offer the British a realistic option to replace the hierarchical Western security architecture with a two-pillar system in the foreseeable future without running a grave security risk.¹⁷

As could have been expected, voices emerged calling for a return to the lost ESDI of 1948; more common were pleas for a rebalancing of the Atlantic alliance. The French were the first to realize that in an age of nuclear energy, self-determination and political independence were utterly dependent on the control of nuclear power. From 1953 on, the French showed a keen interest in reviving the BTO. They started to court Great Britain with the aim of building a European nuclear weapons capacity. Simultaneously, France launched a national nuclear program to avoid a

- 16 “Stikker quoted a statement by French Foreign Minister Schuman made at the Six-Power Meetings of Foreign Ministers in Paris, 27–30.12, to the effect that the EDC would be the lasting defense organization for Europe whereas NATO was only transitory and ‘essentially ephemeral’, footnote 3, The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France, 15/1/1952, FRUS 1952–1954 V, pp. 580f., 585ff.; Klaus A. Maier, “The Anglo-Saxon Triangle, the French and Western European Integration” in *NATO: The Founding of the Atlantic Alliance*, ed. Heller and Gillingham, pp. 403–12; John W. Young, *Winston Churchill's Last Campaign: Britain and the Cold War 1951–55* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
- 17 The United States Deputy Special Representative in Europe Anderson to the Department of State, 16/10/1952, FRUS 1952–1954 V, pp. 335f.; John Baylis and Alan Macmillan, “The British Global Strategy Paper of 1952”, *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 16 (1993), pp. 200–26; Andrew W. Johnston, “Mr. Slessor Goes to Washington: The Influence of the British Global Strategy Paper on the Eisenhower New Look”, *Diplomatic History* 22 (1998), pp. 361–98; Ian Clark/Nicholas Wheeler, *The British Origins of Nuclear Strategy 1945–1955* (Oxford: OUP, 1989), pp. 146–59.

situation that would replace US tutelage in NATO with British patronage in the Brussels Pact.¹⁸

In the first place, however, the French stood up against an Atlantic alliance in which “Europe” featured as a mere subset. In 1954, France started to openly challenge the US concept of Europe. The US envisaged a European Community that was economically integrated to safeguard prosperity and to stop national rivalries, but denuclearized and militarily dependent on NATO, and that would allow the US to conclude an all-European settlement of the German question. The latter was to be guaranteed by the nuclear powers. The US accordingly tried to restrict the European community to the conventionally armed countries of the continent by embracing Great Britain. It was this vision of Europe that the US tried to permute with the help of the Treaty for the Establishment of a European Defense Community (EDC).¹⁹ It was this vision of Europe that France rebelled

18 J.C.W. Bushell Minute, 2/4/1954, J.C.W. Bushell, The Weygand Plan, 7/4/1954, Viscount Hood on Weygand Plan, 14/4/1954, UKNA FO/113338; P.O. Lapie, La Communauté Européenne de l’Armement, *Revue des deux Mondes*, 1/9/1953, PA-AA Referat 211, Bd. 65; Pierre Guillen, “Frankreich und die NATO-Integration der Bundesrepublik”, in *Vom Marshallplan zur EWG. Die Eingliederung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in die westliche Welt*, ed. Ludolf Herbst, Werner Bühner, and Hanno Sowade (München: Oldenbourg, 1990), pp. 427–45; Jean Delmas, “Naissance et développement d’une politique nucléaire militaire en France 1945–56”, in *Das Nordatlantische Bündnis 1949–56*, ed. Klaus A. Maier and Norbert Wiggershaus (München: Oldenbourg, 1993), pp. 263–72; Dominique Mongin, “Forces armées et genèse de l’armement nucléaire français”, *Relations internationales* 59 (1989), pp. 301–15; Georges-Henri Soutou, “Die Nuklearpolitik der Vierten Republik”, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (VfZ) 37 (1989), pp. 605–10.

19 “Concerning the question of a political authority for an integrated Europe, it was thought that the jurisdiction of such an authority should be very narrow indeed and there should be no authority for the conduct of foreign policy. For this latter, the North Atlantic Council should be used.” Major Charles Norberg, Report on European Trip, 22/8–8/9/1952, Harry S. Truman Library, *Papers of Harry S. Truman*, SMOF: PSB Files, box 11, 0.91.4 Europe File # 2 (2 of 2); Heads of Government Meeting, Mid Ocean Club, 5/11/1953, Bermuda Hagerty Notes, box 1, International Series, *Dwight D. Eisenhower Papers*, DDEL; Klaus A. Maier, “Amerikanische Nuklearstrategie unter Truman und Eisenhower”, in *Das Nordatlantische Bündnis*, ed. Maier and Wiggershaus, pp. 225–40; idem, “Die Auseinandersetzung um die EVG als europäisches Unterbündnis der NATO 1950–1954”, in *Die Europäische Verteidigungsgemeinschaft: Stand und Probleme der Forschung*, ed. Hans-Erich Volkmann and Walter Schwengler (Boppard: Boldt, 1985), pp. 447–73; S.J. Ball, “Military Nuclear Relations between the United States and Great Britain under the Terms of the McMahon Act, 1946–1958”, *The Historical Journal* 38, no. 2 (1995), pp. 439–54; Thomas U. Schöttli, *USA und EVG: Truman, Eisenhower und die Europa-Armee* (Bern: Lang, 1994); Brian R. Duchin, “The ‘Agonizing Reappraisal’: Eisenhower, Dulles, and the European Defense Community”, *Diplomatic History* 16, no.2 (1992), pp. 201–21;

against. A ratification of the EDC treaty by France would have implied the abdication of the European nation-states, if not of Europe, from international relations. The French policy “[de] *faire l’Europe sans défaire la France*”²⁰ was diametrically opposed to the US concept. For France – as for most Europeans, including the British – Europe was a pooling of resources in order to afford the “emancipation” of the European nation states. Most European decision-makers therefore envisaged a strong and independent Europe, able to command her own destiny.²¹

The conflicting visions of Europe were mirrored in a conflicting outlook on nuclear deterrence, nuclear strategy, and nuclear non-proliferation among the NATO partners. The history of the alliance of the 1950s and 1960s is therefore a constant struggle between two conceptions of Europe, the US concept based on integration and aiming at control, and the French concept based on co-operation and aiming at equalization.

Two forms of “emancipatory” politics can be distinguished: on the one hand, attempts to “liberate” Europe from NATO domination by forming

Ronald W. Pruessen, “Cold War Threats and America’s Commitment to the European Defence Community: One Corner of a Triangle”, *Journal of European Integration History* 2, no. 1 (1996), pp. 51–69; Robert A. Wampler, “Conventional Goals and Nuclear Promises: The Truman Administration and the Roots of the NATO New Look”, in *NATO: The Founding of the Atlantic Alliance*, ed. Heller and Gillingham, pp. 353–80; Ralph Dietl “‘Une Déception Amoureuse?’ Great Britain, the Continent and European Nuclear Co-operation, 1953–57”, *Cold War History* 3, no. 1 (2002), pp. 29–66.

20 Pierre Pfimlin, *Itinéraires d’un Européen* (Strasbourg: Nuée Bleue, 1989), p. 138.

21 “He [Churchill] said that he had always wanted a European army, that maybe EDC was not exactly the way to get it, maybe a Grand Alliance or a NATO type organization was the best way, but that EDC after all was a French invention.” Hagerty Diary, 26/6/1954, Attachment: Notes by the Press Secretary to the White House Hagerty on a Congressional Luncheon, 26/6/1954, FRUS 1952–1954 VI, 1101ff.; Sir Gladwyn Jebb to Sir Anthony Eden, 14/5/1954, UKNA: FO 371/113341; Paul-Henri Spaak to Sir Anthony Eden, 7/9/1954, UKNA: FO 371/113356; M. Mendès-France aux Représentants Diplomatiques, 18/9/1954, DDF 1954 II, p. 193; M. Massigli à M. Mendès-France, 9/9/1954, M. Parodi à M. Massigli, 9.9.1954 Annex DDF 1954 II, nos. 152, 154; Claude d’Abazac-Epezy and Philippe Vial, “In Search of a European Consciousness: French Military Elites and the Idea of Europe 1947–54”, in *Building Postwar Europe: National Decision-Makers and European Institutions, 1948–63*, ed. Anne Deighton (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 1–20, Georges-Henri Soutou, “France and the German Rearmament Problem 1945–55, in *The Quest for Stability: Problems of West European Security 1918–57*, ed. Rolf Ahmann, Adolf Birke, and Michael Howard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 487–512; Ralph Dietl, “Die Westeuropäische Union – ‘A Return to the Dark Ages?’” in *Begegnungen zweier Kontinente: Die Vereinigten Staaten und Europa seit dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. Ralph Dietl and Franz Knipping (Trier: wvt, 1999), pp. 67–86.

an independent European deterrent based on a European Political Union, and on the other hand, measures to reform NATO nuclear structures to give Europeans a say in the command and control of the Western deterrent, aiming at the creation of NATO Nuclear Forces (NNF). Ideas to create European Nuclear Forces first surfaced in France in 1954/55 during the epic EDC battle. They were under consideration in France, Italy, the Federal Republic and Britain in 1956/57 during the Suez Crisis, and resurfaced in 1962/63 during the unsuccessful British attempt to enter the EEC. Reform plans, on the other hand, aimed at “emancipating” Europe within the alliance while maintaining the Atlantic structures. The most important proposals were de Gaulle’s directorate plan of 1958, the Norstad Plan to form a NATO Nuclear Force of 1957–9, and the Multilateral Force (MLF)/Atlantic Nuclear Force (ANF) project of 1960–5.

The Battle of the Concepts

From the Rescue of the Nation-State to a Europe des Patries

Emboldened by the “rescue of the nation state” that resulted from the collapse of the EDC project and its replacement by the Paris Treaties; encouraged by the “loss of the cement of fear” nurtured by the Geneva Summit of 1955²² and Khrushchev’s policy of peaceful co-existence;²³ and driven by the growing discontent over Alliance co-operation,²⁴ the members of the Western European Union, i.e., of the revised Brussels Pact, united to question the US reconstruction of Europe.²⁵ The Anglo-French military

- 22 Dietl, “Une Déception Amoureuse”, pp. 35ff.; Bruno Thoß, “Der Beitritt der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zur WEU und NATO im Spannungsfeld von Blockbildung und Entspannung (1954–56)”, in *Anfänge der westdeutschen Sicherheitspolitik 1945–56*, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (MGFA), vol. 3 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1993). Rolf Steininger, “Zwischen Pariser Verträgen und Genfer Gipfelkonferenz: Großbritannien und die deutsche Frage 1955”, in *Die Doppelte Eindämmung: Europäische Sicherheit und Deutsche Frage in den Fünfzigern*, ed. Rolf Steininger (Mainz: Hase & Koehler, 1993), pp. 177–211; Günther Bischof and Saki Dockrill (eds.), *Cold War Respite: The Geneva Summit of 1955* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2000); Antonio Varsori, “The Western Powers and the Geneva Summit Conference 1955”, in *Europe 1945–90: The End of an Era?*, ed. Antonio Varsori (New York: St Martin’s Press 1995), pp. 221–48.
- 23 Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1996).
- 24 Telegram from the United States Delegation at the North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting to the Department of State, 11/5/1955, FRUS 1955–1957 IV, pp. 19ff.; Questions Involved in the Implementation of the Paris Agreements, including Relationship between NATO and WEU, NATO Council Meeting, 10/5/1955, C–R (55)21, NATO Archives Brussels, PDN(96)7; Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Paris, 4–5 May 1957, UKNA: FO 371/124794; Graf von Baudissin, Zeichnung betr. Amerikanische Haltung zur Ausgestaltung des Artikels 2 des Nordatlantikpakts, 26.3.1956, Botschaft der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Washington D.C., Amerikanische Haltung zum Ausbau der NATO gemäß Artikel 2 des NATO-Vertrages, 7.3.1956, PA-AA, Referat 301, Bd. 1; Verbatim Record of the 22nd Meeting of the Council, 5 May 1957, BA NL Blankenhorn, N1351, Bd. 72b, 97ff.; “Die NATO als einzig reale und schon durch ihre Existenz wirksame Organisation der freien Völker der Welt verliert an Bedeutung. Es war bisher nicht gelungen, aus der NATO mehr zu machen als ein Verteidigungssystem, eine Organisation also, die in erster Linie militärische und strategische Aufgaben zu erfüllen hatte. Die Atlantische Gemeinschaft auch zu einer politischen Organisation auszubauen und im Rahmen dieser Gemeinschaft auch die Außenpolitik der Mitglieder zu koordinieren, war bisher nicht gelungen.” Bundesminister des Auswärtigen von Brentano an Bundeskanzler Adenauer, 28 March 1956, in *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Frankreich: Dokumente 1949–63*, ed. Horst Möller and Klaus Hildebrand, vol. 1 (München: Sauer 1997), no. 155.
- 25 “[Spaak] makes no secret that his own political aim is the third force, a concept which we regard as misguided.” Note by Alan Edden, cited in Liz Kane, “European or Atlantic Community? The

intervention in Suez in 1956 represented no less than an open rebellion against a bipolar global order. The endeavor ended in a fiasco. The superpowers to the east and west of the Iron Curtain collaborated to consolidate the blocs of the Cold War.²⁶ The forced retreat of France and Great Britain from Suez triggered an architectural debate within the WEU. Just weeks after the Suez Crisis, plans emerged in Britain, Italy, and the Federal Republic of Germany to develop the potential for political-military co-operation within the WEU. The WEU member states agreed that only institutionalized political co-operation among the European nation-states could stop a further erosion of the power of "Europe".²⁷ Britain toyed with the idea of a thorough rationalization of Euro-Atlantic organizations. The British concept ascribed to the WEU the role of today's European Council as a directing council, overseeing all of the other European organizations. Simultaneously, the WEU was to act as the European pillar in NATO. Britain's Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd even envisaged the formation of a WEU Nuclear Force. Two concepts emerged: (1) British nuclear trusteeship, and (2) the common development, production, and deployment of nuclear arms and their delivery systems. The project collapsed, however,

Foreign Office and Europe 1955–57", *Journal of European Integration History* 3, no. 2 (1997), pp. 83–98; Straub, Aufzeichnung über die Unterredung zwischen Bundeskanzler Adenauer und dem italienischen Verteidigungsminister Taviani, Rom, 5.7.1956, Stiftung Bundeskanzler Adenauerhaus, Rhöndorf [STBKAH], III/4; Conversation entre MM. Faure, le chancelier Adenauer et Hallstein, 17/9/1956, DDF 1956 II, no. 188.

26 Dietl, "Une Déception Amoureuse", pp. 40ff.; Procès-verbal de l'entretien du 6 novembre 1956 entre le président Guy Mollet et le chancelier Adenauer, DDF 1956 III, no. 138.

27 "Die Regierung der USA scheint darüber beunruhigt zu sein, dass die europäischen Regierungen eine Intensivierung der WEU planen. Nach amerikanischer Auffassung würde dies eine Distanzierung von der NATO bedeuten." Aufzeichnung der Botschaft der Bundesrepublik in Luxemburg betr. US-Amerikanische Europapolitik, 2.11.1956, Dr. Carstens, Aufzeichnung betr. Ausbau der Westeuropäischen Union in Richtung auf eine europäische Föderation, 18.10.1956, Dr. Halter, Aufzeichnung betr. Ausbau der Westeuropäischen Union, 28.11.1956, PA-AA Referat 201, Bd.101; Sir Anthony Eden an Adenauer, 13.11.1956, STBKAH III/2; Straub Aufzeichnung über Unterredung des Bundeskanzlers mit Staatspräsident Gronchi, 6.12.1956, BANL *Brentano* N 1351, Bd. 70; 68th Meeting of the Council of the Western European Union, 10/12/1956, CR (56) 34, part 1, UKNA: DG 1/71; Aufzeichnung über Gespräch zwischen Bundeskanzler Adenauer und dem Generalsekretär der italienischen christlich-demokratischen Partei Fanfani, 21.12.1956, STBKAH III/54; Gustav Schmidt, "'Tying' (West) Germany into the West – But to What? NATO? WEU? The European Community?", in *Western Europe and Germany: The Beginning of European Integration 1945–60*, ed. Clemens Wurm (Oxford: Berg 1995), pp. 137–73; Winfried Heinemann and Norbert Wiggershaus (eds.), *Das internationale Krisenjahr 1956: Polen, Ungarn, Suez*, (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999), pp. 573–88.

on 7 January 1957. The British cabinet rejected Selwyn Lloyd's European Grand Design. It called instead for a policy of Anglo-American reconciliation.²⁸ Harold Macmillan, who replaced Sir Anthony Eden as prime minister, acted accordingly. The successful recreation of the Anglo-American "special relationship" after Suez at the summit meetings in Bermuda and Washington ended in a direct challenge to the US reconstruction of Europe.²⁹ The separation of Britain from the continent made the formation of a European defense organization with a capacity of detaching itself from NATO virtually impossible. With the recreation and institutionalization of the Anglo-American special relationship in 1957, the importance of the WEU faded, co-operation among the continental countries blossomed, and esteem for Britain on the continent plummeted.³⁰

The Anglo-American realignment speeded the integration process on the European continent. Obstacles that so far had hindered an agreement on EURATOM and the European Economic Community (EEC) were quickly overcome to create a European power basis with the help of the Rome Treaties.³¹ The development was actively supported by the US, which envisaged complementing the continental European integration

- 28 "While avoiding, as one would hope, by reason of its close Atlantic connection the neutralist dangers of a Third Force, it would establish a real Power between the two giants of the USA and the Soviet Union", Gladwyn Jebb, Reorganization of the Western World, a Possible Programme, 20/12/1956 annex to Gladwyn Jebb to Viscount Hood, 21/12/1956, UKNA: FO 371/124822; Dietl, "Une Déception Amoureuse", p. 44; idem, "Die Westeuropäische Union. Rüstungskoooperation und europäische Integration in den fünfziger Jahren", *Historische Mitteilungen* 12, no. 1 (1999), pp. 90–112, 104f.
- 29 Donald C. Watt, "Großbritannien und Europa 1951–1959: Die Jahre konservativer Regierung", in *VfZ* 28, no. 4 (1980), pp. 389–409, 400; John Baylis, "Exchanging Nuclear Secrets: Laying the Foundations of the Anglo-American Nuclear Relationship", *Diplomatic History* 25, no. 1 (2001), pp. 33–5; Matthew Jones, "Anglo-American relations after Suez, the Rise and Decline of the Working Group Experiment, and the French Challenge to NATO, 1957–59," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 14, no. 2 (2003), pp. 49–79; Dietl, "Une Déception Amoureuse", pp. 47, 51.
- 30 Ralph Dietl, "The Genesis of a European Security and Defence Policy", in *The Blackwell Companion to Europe since 1945*, ed. Klaus Larres (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006) [forthcoming].
- 31 Paul M. Pitman, "'Un Général qui s'appelle Eisenhower': Atlantic Crisis and the Origins of the European Economic Community", *Journal of European Integration History* 6, no. 2 (2000), pp. 37–59; Peter Weilemann, *Die Anfänge der europäischen Atomgemeinschaft: Zur Gründungsgeschichte von EURATOM 1955–1957* (Baden-Baden: NOMOS, 1983), p. 138; Ginevra Andreini, "EURATOM: An Instrument to Achieve a Nuclear Deterrent? French Nuclear Independence and European Integration during the Mollet Government (1956)", *Journal of European Integration History* 6, no. 1 (2000), pp. 109–128; Dietl, "Une Déception Amoureuse", p. 45.

with a military capacity through the formation of NATO Nuclear Forces (NNF).³² The US reconstruction of Europe and the formation of an economically integrated continent under a NATO umbrella seemed to be bearing fruit.

Yet again, the US project faltered. De Gaulle rejected French membership in NATO nuclear forces without proper representation in a political control council. He demanded the formation of a trilateral political-military global directorate – comprising France, Britain, and the US.³³ As an amendment to this design, de Gaulle foresaw the formation of a Continental European Union on whose behalf France would act in the trilateral political-military directorate. The French proposal, and especially its European amendment, gained the support of the Federal Republic of Germany with the advent of the Berlin Crisis. German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was beginning to fear a *pax atomica*, a settlement of the German question that would freeze Germany’s unequal status once and for all times. The German chancellor pushed to enhance European unity in order to establish “Europe” as an independent power factor before an agreement among the superpowers could emerge. A central tenet of his policy was to enhance Franco–German co-operation, in order to preclude a common approach of the Western powers in East–West negotiations. De Gaulle was happy to reciprocate; Franco–German co-operation strengthened de Gaulle’s hand in his negotiations with the “Anglo-Saxons”.³⁴ Furthermore,

32 Jan Melissen, “Nuclearizing NATO, 1957–9: the ‘Anglo-Saxons’, Nuclear Sharing and the Fourth Country Problem”, *Review of International Studies* 20 (1994), pp. 253–75; Conversation between the Secretary of State and SACEUR, Marnes-la-Coquette, 10/4/1957, UKNA: FO 371/31078; Weber, Aufzeichnung über ein Gespräch des Herrn Bundeskanzlers mit General Norstad, 21.5.1957, STBKAH III/69; A.J. Goodpaster, Memorandum of Conference with the President, 29/10/1957, State Department 1957 August/October (7), box 2, State Department Sub-series, Subject Series, Office of the Staff Secretary, WHO, DDEL, Abilene/KS; Summary Record of Ministerial Meetings of North Atlantic Council, 13–21/12/1957, Afternoon Session, December 16. Heads of Government Meeting; First Plenary Session, UKNA: FO 371/137911 US Presentation at the First Plenary Session of NATO Heads of Government Meeting, 16/12/1957, NATO Meeting, 6–20 December 1957, box 2, *Neil McElroy Papers*, DDEL, Abilene/KS.

33 Burkard Schmitt, *Frankreich und die Nukleardebatte der Atlantischen Allianz 1956–66* (München: Oldenbourg, 1998), pp. 65ff.; President de Gaulle to President Eisenhower, 17/9/1958, FRUS 1958–60 VII/2, pp. 81ff.

34 Georges-Henri Soutou, “Le général de Gaulle et le plan Fouchet d’union politique Européenne: Un projet stratégique”, *Revue d’Allemagne et des Pays de langue allemande* 29, no. 2 (1997), pp.

de Gaulle shared Adenauer's geopolitical vision. Both statesmen agreed that the unification of Germany should lead to the unification of Europe and thereby end the bipolar order of the Cold War. To be precise, de Gaulle envisaged a three-step approach towards creating a Europe from the Atlantic to the Ural. Step one was the formation of a European Political Union of the Six. Having achieved this, an enlarged union under Franco-British leadership was foreseen that would form the foundation for the envisaged all-European structure from the Atlantic to the Ural.³⁵

The first-ever EEC summit, convened in February 1961 by the French government, took the first hurdle towards an implementation of the French vision. The EEC member-states agreed to the formation of a Study Committee on European Political Union, chaired by the French diplomat Christian Fouchet. The ensuing discussions on the institutionalization of a Common European Security and Defense Policy (CESDP) were further boosted by the Bonn Summit of 18 July 1961, where the EEC member states reiterated their support for a harmonization of their foreign and security

211–20; idem, *L'alliance incertaine: Les rapports politico-stratégiques franco-allemands 1954–96* (Paris: Plon, 1996); Wilfried Loth, "Franco-German Relations and European Security, 1957–63," in *Widening, Deepening and Acceleration: The European Economic Community 1957–63*, ed. Anne Deighton and Alan Milward (Baden-Baden: NOMOS, 1999), pp. 41–53; Cyril Buffet, "De Gaulle, Berlin and the Bomb (1958–62) Or: How to Use a Political Weapon", *Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali* 13, no. 1 (1998), pp. 215–34; Hanns Jürgen Küsters, "Adenauers Deutschland- und Nuklearpolitik in der Berlinkrise 1958–62", in *Deutschland und der Westen: Internationale Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert: Festschrift für Klaus Schwabe zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Guido Müller (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998); Jacques Bariéty, "Les entretiens de Gaulle-Adenauer de Juillet 1960 à Rambouillet", *Revue d'Allemagne et des Pays de langue allemande* 29, no. 2 (1997), pp. 167–75; Ralph Dietl, "'Sole Master of Western Nuclear Strength? The United States, Western Europe and the Elusiveness of a Western Defence Identity, 1959–64", in *Europe, Cold War and Coexistence 1953–65*, ed. Wilfried Loth (London: Frank Cass, 2004), pp. 132–72.

35 Entretiens Franco-Allemand, 1–2/12/1959, DDF 1959 II, 263; Hans-Dieter Lucas, *Europa vom Atlantik zum Ural? Europapolitik und Europadenken im Frankreich der Ära de Gaulle* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1992); Ernst Weisenfeld, "Europa vom Atlantik zum Ural. Eine magische Formel – Eine Vision – Eine Politik", in *De Gaulle, Deutschland und Europa*, ed. Wilfried Loth and Robert Picht (Opladen: Leske+Budrich, 1991), 71–79; Hermann Kusterer, *Der Kanzler und der General* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1995), pp. 172, 295f.; Ralph Dietl, "Kontinuität und Wandel – Zur Geschichte der europäischen Zusammenarbeit auf dem Gebiet der Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik 1948–2000", in *Gemeinsam sicher? Vision und Realität europäischer Sicherheitspolitik*, ed. Reinhard C. Meier-Walser (Neuried: ars una 2004), pp. 19–86, 51f.

policy “so as to promote the political union of Europe”.³⁶ Just days later, Britain announced its application to join the EEC. The British decision to join the EEC soon overshadowed the EPU negotiations.³⁷

The Fouchet proposals aimed at an intergovernmental European Political Union (EPU) of the EEC Six. The Benelux states, however, preferred a supranational structure to check the natural weight of France and Germany; as an alternative, they forwarded a proposal for an intergovernmental EPU including Britain – within the framework of either the EEC or the WEU. Despite the differences, a compromise solution for an EPU of the Six was on the cards due to Italo–German brokerage.³⁸ But French hopes to successfully conclude the EPU negotiations were shattered on 10 April 1962. In a statement made by the Lord Privy Seal Sir Edward Heath to the Council of the WEU, he stressed that following Britain’s accession to the EEC, a “European point of view on defense will emerge”, which would alter “the balance within the Atlantic alliance”. He even spoke of the formation of “two great groupings in the West”: Europe and North

36 Aufzeichnung betr. Treffen der Staats- bzw. Regierungschefs und der Außenminister der EWG–Staaten vom 10./11.2. in Paris, 15.2.1961, PA–AA Referat 201, Bd. 372; Dépêche d’Information Politique (61) 10, 15/2/1961, *Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Brussels* [A.E.–B.Z.] dossier 18684 I; Notes sur la réunion des ministres des affaires étrangères, 5/5/1961, Le Secrétaire Général, Note au Ministre. Consultations politiques des six ministres des affaires étrangères, Bonn, 5 mai 1961, 9/5/1961, Note pour M. le Ministre des affaires étrangères, 10/5/1961, A.E.–B.Z. dossier 18684 II; Réunion des Chefs d’Etat ou de gouvernement des Six, Bonn, 18/7/1961, DDF 1961 II, no. 36; Erklärung der Staats- und Regierungschefs der Sechs auf ihrer Konferenz am 18.7.1961, PA–AA Referat 201, Bd. 372; Hartmut Mayer, “Germany’s Role in the Fouchet Negotiations”, *Journal of European Integration History* 2, no. 2 (1996), pp. 39–59.

37 Ministerial Meeting of the Council of Western European Union, 1/8/1961, UKNA: FO 371/167114; Acting Secretary of State, Memorandum for the President, Subject: Certain Implications for American Policy of Prime Minister Macmillan’s Statement on the EEC, 7/8/1961, JFK, National Security Files, box 170, UK General, 8/21/61–9/5/61; N. Piers Ludlow, “Le Paradoxe Anglais: Britain and Political Union”, *Revue d’Allemagne et des Pays allemande* 29, no. 2 (1997), pp. 259–72.

38 Yves Stelandre, “La Belgique et le Plan Fouchet”, *Revue d’Allemagne et des pays de langue allemande* 29, no. 2 (1997), pp. 221–29; Bernard Bouwman, “‘Longing for London’: The Netherlands and the Political Co-operation Initiative, 1959–62”, in *Building Postwar Europe: National Decision-Makers and European Institutions, 1948–63*, ed. Anne Deighton (Basingstoke: Macmillan 1995), pp. 141–58; Antonio Varsori, “The Art of Mediation: Italy and Britain’s Attempt to Join the EEC, 1960–1963”, in *Widening, Deepening and Acceleration*, ed. Deighton and Milward, pp. 241–55; Antonio Varsori, “La classe politique italienne et le couple franco-allemand”, *Revue d’Allemagne et les Pays de langue allemande*, 29, no.2 (1997), pp. 242–57; Cyril Schweitzer, “Le gouvernement Italien et le projet d’union politique de l’Europe, 1961–62”, in *Revue d’Allemagne et des Pays de langue allemande* 29, no. 2 (1997), pp. 231–41.

America.³⁹ Britain's obvious support for a gradual transformation of the Atlantic alliance towards a two-pillar security structure now made the Benelux countries insist on an immediate British EPU membership. France and Germany, however, who intended to consolidate the continent before admitting Britain to the European community, made participation in the EPU negotiations dependent on EEC membership. At this point, the EPU negotiations arrived at an unbridgeable gap and broke down.⁴⁰

France did not reject British EPU membership *per se*, but feared that a premature and unconditional admission would allow Britain to dominate the future Europe. Wedded to the three-step approach to European Union, de Gaulle now intensified Franco–German co-operation in order to form a power bloc that would be able to dictate Britain's terms of admission.⁴¹ Simultaneously, Franco-British negotiations about the structures of the anticipated “double headed alliance” set in. In talks with the French ambassador, Macmillan proposed the creation of a European pillar within NATO that would be capable of “matching the United States.” Assuming that only a Franco–British program of nuclear sharing might ease the entry negotiations, he even floated the idea of a Franco-British Nuclear trusteeship group.⁴²

Grand Design, Grand Strategy, or Grand Dessin?

The Anglo-French talks about the future European defense architecture alarmed the US. The European schemes seriously endangered NATO's supremacy, the bedrock of US hegemony in Europe. The US ambassador

39 Statement made by the Lord Privy Seal to the Council of Western European Union, 10/4/1962, UKNA: FO 371/167114.

40 Oppler an AA, Interview Außenminister Spaaks über das Ergebnis der Pariser Außenminister-Konferenz a 17.d. Mts., 25.4.1962, PA-AA, Referat 201, Bd. 374; Blankenhorn Tagebuch, 18.4.1962, BA, NL *Blankenhorn* N 1351, Bd. 130a; Martin Koopmann, *Das schwierige Bündnis: Die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen und die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1958–65* (Baden-Baden: NOMOS, 2000), pp. 173ff.

41 Blankenhorn an AA, 28.5.1962, BA NL *Blankenhorn* N 1351, Bd. 133; Hermann Kusterer, “Intention und Wirklichkeit. Von der Konzeption zur Ratifikation des Deutsch-Französischen Vertrages”, *Revue d'Allemagne et des Pays de langue allemande* 29, no. 2 (1997), pp. 195–200.

42 Conversation between the Prime Minister and M. Chauvel, 19/4/1962, Record of a Conversation between the Prime Minister and M. de Courcel, 9/5/1962, UKNA: PREM 11/3793; Philip de Zulueta to A. Aclant, 3/5/1962, UKNA: 371/166999; Entretiens du Général de Gaulle et de M. Macmillan à Champs, 2–3/6/1962, DDF 1962 I, no. 172.

to NATO, Thomas Finletter, urged John F. Kennedy to act. “[The] US cannot adopt wait-and-see attitude about these moves for European unity in political and military fields.”⁴³ President John F. Kennedy responded to the challenge by publicly pronouncing a renewal of the Atlantic partnership.⁴⁴ Although interpretations of the *Grand Design* vary, Kennedy proposed anything but a blueprint for an equal partnership. It was far more “a cleverly concealed maneuver to keep the Europeans dependent on America” – as Sir Pierson Dixon observed.⁴⁵ In the field of security and defense, the core feature of the *Grand Design* was the formation and later Europeanization of multilateral NATO nuclear forces (MLF). The *State Department* proposed to hand over political control of the MLF as soon as the Europeans had succeeded in establishing a supranational EPU. The *Grand Design* appealed to the conventionally armed European powers, France and Britain, however, rejected the project. They rightfully suspected that the *Grand Design* aimed at a centralization of nuclear decision-making, instead of proliferating it.⁴⁶

43 Finletter to Secretary of State, 5/7/1962, France 1960-1962(1), box 48, *Norstad Papers*, DDEL

44 “[...] the further we permit the Continentals to go it alone [...] the less likely they are to develop their nuclear force in an Atlantic framework.” Walt Rostow to Dean Rusk, 17/4/1962, USNA RG 59 Lot 67D 496, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Politico-Military Affairs, Combined Policy Committee, Subject Files 1961–1966, box 2, Nuclear Role of France, United Kingdom and Germany.

45 Sir Pierson Dixon to Patrick Reilly, 13/9/1962, UKNA: FO 371/167024.

46 “Atlantic partnership, however, when applied to the defense field, had a profound different conceptual and practical meaning. In defense matters, partnership had always in fact meant an integrated Atlanticist approach characterized not by separate US and West European organizations and decisional bodies, as in the economic sphere, but by a unified strategy and command organization represented by NATO.” William C. Cromwell, *The United States and the European Pillar: The Strained Alliance* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p. 17; Frank Costigliola, “The Failed Design: Kennedy, de Gaulle, and the Struggle for Europe”, in *Diplomatic History* 8, no. 3 (1984), pp. 227–51; Eckart Conze, *Die gaullistische Herausforderung: Die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen in der amerikanischen Europapolitik 1958–1963* (München: Oldenbourg, 1995), p. 227; Dietl, “Kontinuität und Wandel”, pp. 61ff.; Pascaline Winand, “United States-European Relationships 1961–1963”, in *Widening, Deepening and Acceleration*, ed. Deighton and Milward, pp. 17–30. “Le secrétaire d’état a déclaré que son gouvernement serait disposé, l’union politique de l’Europe une fois réalisée, à mettre à la disposition de cette Europe une force nucléaire propre.” M. Alphand à M. Couve de Murville, 11/2/1962, DDF 1962 I, no. 6 ; “The indivisibility of the nuclear defense of the West is fundamental. This is a harsh reality.” Dean Rusk to Adenauer, Memorandum of Conversation, 22/6/1962, FRUS 1961–63 XIII, pp. 419ff.

The Cuban missile crisis made things worse. The quick resolution of the crisis made Konrad Adenauer suspect – rightly, as we now know – a far-reaching deal between the superpowers.⁴⁷ The chancellor now interpreted the MLF project as a nuclear control mechanism disguised as a nuclear sharing program. The threat of a *pax atomica* now seemed real and imminent.⁴⁸ To face the danger for Europe’s emancipation, the Six had to come to terms with Britain. London and Paris, however, were not able to agree on a procedure. Britain made EEC membership a prerequisite for an agreement on the future European defense structures, while de Gaulle insisted that EEC membership should follow such an agreement.⁴⁹ John F. Kennedy, who was beginning to fear being confronted with a *fait accompli* by the Europeans, now used the cancellation of the Skybolt missile program to force Britain to draft a bilateral agreement on European security, to be presented to NATO before the final deliberations on Britain’s EEC application.⁵⁰

Kennedy offered Britain the Polaris missile instead of the Skybolt. By doing so, he offered a continuation of the special-relationship. Kennedy must have been fully aware that “the continental reactions to this discrimination will do great – perhaps decisive – damage to the EEC negotiations”.⁵¹ He nevertheless proceeded to forestall the development of a

47 Adenauer to de Gaulle, 20.11.1962, StBKAH III/3; Message from Chairman Krushchev to President Kennedy, 28/10/1962, FRUS 1961–63 XI, pp. 279ff.; Philip Nash, *The Other Missiles of October: Eisenhower, Kennedy and the Jupiters 1957–1963* (Chapel Hill: Chapel Hill UP, 1997), pp. 141ff.

48 Adenauer an de Gaulle, 20.11.1962, StBKAH III/3.

49 Record of a Conversation at Rambouillet, 15/12/1962, UKNA: FO 371/173297; Prime Minister’s Meeting With General de Gaulle at Rambouillet on December 15/16, 1962, [n.d.] UKNA: PREM 11/4230; Entretiens entre le général de Gaulle et M.Macmillan à Rambouillet, 15–16/12/1962, DDF 1962 II, no. 200; Richard Davis, “‘Why Did the General Do It?’ De Gaulle, Polaris and the French Veto of Britain’s Application to Join the Common Market”, *European History Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (1998), pp. 373–97, 384f.

50 Last Conversation with the President before NATO Meeting of December 1962, 13/12/1962, JFK, National Security Files, Meetings and Memoranda, box 317, Meetings with the President, General 6/6–12/62; Telegram from Secretary of State Rusk to the Department of State, 15/12/1962; Kennedy-Macmillan Nassau Meeting, 19–20 December 1962, Current Political Scene in the United Kingdom, 13/12/1962, JFK, National Security Files, Trips and Conferences, box 238, Presidential Trips, Nassau Macmillan Talks 12/62, Briefing Book.

51 Owen to Acting Secretary, 16/12/1962, Annex: Memorandum, Subject Nuclear Aspects of Macmillan Visit, 15/12/1962, JFK, National Security Files, Regional Security, box 227, NATO, Weapons, Cables, Skybolt.

European defense organization. For Macmillan, it was a choice between Scylla and Charybdis. To reject the offer and opt for nuclear co-operation with the European continent would win him the respect of de Gaulle and ensure the success of Britain's EEC application, but risked a break with the US; acceptance of the offer, however, did not necessarily imply a blow to Britain's application to join the EEC. It all depended on the strings attached to the rocket deal. British participation in MLF, or any other measure that seriously questioned the development of a CESDP, would certainly provoke a veto by de Gaulle.⁵²

Clever diplomacy at Nassau saved the situation. Macmillan managed to chart a middle ground, by paying tribute to Trilateralism. The Nassau agreement foresaw the creation of two separate nuclear forces: the Inter-Allied Nuclear Forces (IANF) composed of the national nuclear forces of France, Britain and the United States and a multi-manned element, the MLF.⁵³ It was a pyrrhic victory, however. The official interpretation of the Nassau agreement by the US, given by Under Secretary of State George Ball on 11 January 1963, left no doubt that the IANF were nothing but a temporary measure, while the future NATO Nuclear Forces (NNF) would be the MLF.⁵⁴ Three days later, in his infamous press conference, de Gaulle announced his rejection of the Nassau agreement, followed by his veto to British EEC membership.⁵⁵

The French *Grand Dessin*, the formation of a full-fledged European Union topped by a Franco-British nuclear trusteeship group, faltered, as the Fouchet negotiations had before. Adenauer and de Gaulle now decided to form a nucleus for an EPU by bilaterally implementing the concept underlying the Fouchet proposal of the Six. On 22 January 1963, France

52 Telegram from the Mission to the European Communities to the Department of State, 16/12/1962, FRUS 1961–1963 XIII, pp. 131ff.

53 Record of Meetings held at Bali-Hai, The Bahamas, 19–20/12/1962, UKNA: FO 371/173292.

54 Statement by the Hon. George W. Ball, Under Secretary of State before the North Atlantic Council, 11/1/1963, UKNA: FO 371/173396; Weber Aufzeichnung über Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers mit George Ball, 14.1.1963, StBKAH III/45.

55 Press Conference by Charles de Gaulle, 14 January 1963, in M. van der Stoep, *The British Application for Membership of the European Communities 1963–68* (Paris: WEU Assembly, General Affairs Committee, 1968), pp. 8ff.; Memorandum. Conversation with François de Rose, 11/1/1963, Conversation with Couve de Murville, 12/1/1963, *Declassified Documents Reference System*, Microfiche 479 (1998).

and the Federal Republic of Germany signed the Elysée Treaty, which led to an institutionalized harmonization of the foreign and security policies of the two countries.⁵⁶ The US was extremely alarmed by the creation of a Franco-German Defense Council. A European “Third Force” based on a Franco-German alliance would be able to challenge US control of European affairs and, by extension, its leeway in East-West negotiations. The formation of such a “Europe” would even allow Charles de Gaulle to try to come to terms with the Soviet Union on German unification and on a new pan-European order.⁵⁷

Bipolarity or European Unity?

To forestall the development of a CESDP, i.e., an ESDI threatening bipolarity, the Kennedy administration focused first and foremost on Bonn. It applied considerable pressure on the Federal Republic to revise the Franco-German treaty to make it conform to NATO.⁵⁸ Simultaneously, the US assured the Federal Republic of its willingness to act upon the planned NATO reform and to translate the MLF project into public policy. Washington even agreed on a Europeanization of the MLF force, just to keep

- 56 Entretiens Franco-allemands de Paris, 21–23/1/1963, Tête-à-tête du Général de Gaulle et du chancelier Adenauer, 21/1/1963, DDF 1963 I, no. 38; Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Adenauer mit Staatspräsident de Gaulle, 21.–22.1.1963, Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland [AAPD] 1963 I, Nr. 37, 43; Entretiens Franco-allemands de Paris, 21–23/1/1963, Georges-Henri Soutou, “Les problèmes de sécurité dans les rapports franco-allemands de 1956 à 1963”, *Relations internationales* 58 (1989), pp. 227–51; Per Fischer, “Der diplomatische Prozeß der Entstehung des deutsch-französischen Vertrags von 1963”, *VfZ* 41, no. 1 (1993), pp. 101–16; Jacques Bariéty, “Les entretiens de Gaulle–Adenauer de Juillet 1960 à Rambouillet”, *Revue d’Allemagne et des Pays de langue allemande*, 29, no. 2 (1997), pp. 167–75; Daniel Kosthorst, “Die Unerwünschte Liaison. Thesen zur Vorgeschichte des deutsch-französischen Vertrags vom 22. Januar 1963”, *Revue d’Allemagne et des Pays de langue allemande*, 29, no. 2 (1997), pp. 177–94; Kusterer, “Intention und Wirklichkeit”, pp. 195–200.
- 57 Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting, 25/1/1963, FRUS 1961–63, XIII, pp. 487ff.
- 58 “Falls der Bundestag das Abkommen unverändert ratifiziert, bedeute dies das Ende Berlins”, General Clay, 27/1/1963, Botschafter Knapstein an das Auswärtige Amt, 28.1.1963, AAPD 1963 II, Nr. 58; Memorandum of Conversation, Franco-German Treaty, 5/2/1963, JFK, National Security Files, box 80, Germany Subject Carstens Visit 2/63; Gespräche des Bundeskanzlers Adenauer mit dem französischen Botschafter de Margerie, 4.2.1963, AAPD 1963 I, Nr. 73.

the Federal Republic from subscribing to a Europe formed around the French *force de frappe*.⁵⁹

Britain – by contrast – rejected both the Franco-German treaty and Washington's advocacy of the MLF project. Determined to rally the Europeans behind British leadership, Britain worked on a blueprint offering a genuine alternative to a Gaullist Europe. London envisaged the development of an ESDI within the WEU. London argued for the formation of a truly two-pillared structure of NATO, it rejected, however, a decoupling that might threaten bipolarity. In parallel, but closely coordinated with Britain, the Benelux states – under the leadership of Paul-Henri Spaak – and Italy drafted a solemn declaration that foresaw a transformation of the WEU into the leading economic and political organization of Europe. The program discussed and envisaged not only a transfer of the structures of the Franco-German treaty to the WEU, but a WEU administration of the Inter-Allied Nuclear forces of the Nassau Agreement.⁶⁰ The initiative failed, however. The Federal Republic and France rejected the involvement of the WEU. Bonn objected to the existence of the arms control regime of the WEU; Paris objected to the use of a sub-organization of NATO. The final blow, however, came from Washington. The plan to make the IANF answerable to the WEU was anathema to the US.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Dietl, "Sole Master", p. 149; Bruce Report, 9/2/1963, JFK, National Security Files, Meetings and Memoranda, box 314, National Security Council Meeting 1963, no. 509, 3/13/63; Memorandum for Mr. McGeorge Bundy, Memoranda of Conversation between the President and German Minister of Defense von Hassel, 28/2/1963, JFK, National Security Files, box 80, Germany, Subject, Von Hassel Visit 2/63 2/29/63-3/3/63.

⁶⁰ Record of First Meeting at the Palazzo Chigi, 1/2/1963, UKNA: FO 371/173297; Sir P. Dixon to Foreign Office, 30/1/1963, UKNA: FO 371/173340; Foreign Office to Brussels, 6/2/1963, UKNA: FO 371/173341; Note de travail, 6.2.1963, Nederlands-Belgische samenwerking inzake de Europese problemen, 11/2/1963, B.-Z., WEU Archief, Inv. Nr. 18; Political Co-operation in WEU. Comments on the Spaak Plan, 14/2/1963, UKNA: FO 371/173484; Future Policy in Europe, 19/2/1963, UKNA: FO 371/173302; Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh to FO, 20/3/1963, Foreign Secretary's Draft Speech at the North Atlantic Council, 20/3/1963, UKNA: FO 371/173373; Ludlow, "Le Paradoxe Anglais", 260, 279; Rolf Steininger, "Großbritannien und de Gaulle: Das Scheitern des britischen EWG-Beitritts im Januar 1963", *V&Z* 44 (1996), pp. 87–118; Richard Davis, "The Problem of de Gaulle: British Reactions to General De Gaulle's veto of the UK Application to Join the Common Market", *Journal of Contemporary History* 32, no. 4 (1997), pp. 453–64.

⁶¹ Memorandum of Conversation, Owen-Thomson, 1/3/1963, JFK, National Security Files, box 171, UK General 2/12/63–3/5/63; Summary Record of a Conversation at Admiralty House, 4/3/1963, UKNA: FO 371/173292; Record of a Conversation at Admiralty House, 4/3/1963,

This left the Europeans with the choice of either merging their destiny with that of France and working towards the formation of an autonomous Europe, or to place their destiny into the hands of the US, which had repeatedly attested the willingness to Europeanize the planned MLF forces. The precarious political situation of Germany made the Federal Republic opt for the latter, hoping to be able to initiate a movement which would serve Germany, Europe and the preservation of the Atlantic alliance. The Federal Republic and Italy now pushed for a Europeanization of the MLF. They drafted a European clause that foresaw European political control of the MLF after the successful formation of a European Political Union.⁶² Italy – still dedicated to the Anglo-Italian project – pleaded for British membership in the MLF, and for Britain to furnish the nuclear warheads. This plan was meant to assure a European deterrent without strings attached.⁶³

The US rejected a Europeanization of the MLF. The Kennedy administration, however, concealed this very fact from her allies in order to keep the Europeans aligned with NATO. The prospect of a European MLF kept the Europeans from gravitating towards France. Furthermore, the MLF-project bought Washington time to find a way to consolidate the Western bloc. As David Bruce put it in the spring of 1963 – “we cannot accept the prospect of the US and Europe going their separate ways.”⁶⁴ In other words – the US was determined to uphold NATO’s unified command and control structure in order to uphold bipolarity.

UKNA: PREM 11/4735; Minutes of the Meeting with the President, 13/11/1963, FRUS 1961–1963, XIII, pp. 525ff.

- 62 Gespräch des Bundesministers Schröder mit dem französischen Außenminister Couve de Murville, 9.4.1963, Bundeskanzler Adenauer an Präsident Kennedy, 30/4/1963, Gespräch des Bundesministers Schröder mit dem britischen Außenminister Lord Home in Ottawa, 21.5.1963, AAPD 1963 I, Nr. 143, 156, 179; Entretiens entre M. Couve de Murville et M. Schröder au ministère des Affaires étrangères, 9/4/1963, DDF 1963 I, no. 133; Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Germany, 2/5/1963, FRUS 1961–1963 XIII, pp. 565f.; Vermerk, betr. Atomare Verteidigung Europas und namentlich der Bundesrepublik, 12.11.1963, BA NL *Hallstein* N 1266, 1115; Gespräch des Staatssekretärs Carstens mit dem französischen Außenminister Couve de Murville, 24.10.1964, AADP 1964 II, Nr. 297.
- 63 Record of a Conversation between the Lord Privy Seal and the Italian Ambassador, 10/6/1963, UKNA: FO 371/173345.
- 64 Bruce Report, 9/2/1963, JFK, National Security Files, Meetings and Memoranda, box 314, National Security Council Meeting 1963, No. 509, 3/13/63; Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Adenauer mit dem französischen Botschafter de Margerie, 11/6/1963, AAPD 1963 II, Nr. 192.

The US now took to East-West negotiations to consolidate bloc stability. The diplomatic contacts between the super-powers had markedly increased since the Cuban missile crisis. A community of interests had emerged to stabilize the Cold War structures. Both the US and the Soviet Union feared polycentrism. Both superpowers looked with unease at a further proliferation of nuclear weapons. Since the successful Harriman-Hailsham mission to Moscow, which paved the way to the limited Test-Stop agreement of 4 August 1963, the US and the Soviet Union had worked towards a controlled freeze of all nuclear weapons. The superpowers aimed at closing the door to the exclusive club of the nuclear powers.⁶⁵

In order to ease this task – and thereby to consolidate bipolarity –, the Kennedy administration even considered the formation of an informal trilateral nuclear directorate of NATO. France, however, rejected a “nuclear special relationship” – along the lines of the Anglo-American “special relationship” – due to the strings attached. The US asked Paris to adhere to the Test Stop treaty, to assign the *force de frappe* to a NATO Nuclear Force, and to support a non-proliferation policy. French compliance would have ended the threat to bipolarity and led to an unchallenged Cold War regime of the superpowers. Compliance would no doubt have stabilized Europe, but would have entailed the abdication of “Europe” from International Politics. De Gaulle, faithful to his vision of Europe, chose to safeguard French nuclear autonomy, hoping that the Federal Republic

65 Draft Message to Mr. Khrushchev, in: Message Prime Minister Macmillan to President Kennedy, 3/4/1963, FRUS 1961–1963 VII, pp. 663ff.; Memorandum of Conversation, Rusk–Dobrynin, Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 7/2/1963, FRUS 1961–1963 VII, pp. 640ff.; Kennedy to Macmillan, 5/7/1963, Harold Caccia Minute, 8/7/1963, UKNA: FO 371/173294; Georges Henri Soutou, “De Gaulle’s France and the Soviet Union from Conflict to détente” in *Cold War and Co-existence*, ed. Loth, pp. 173–89, 175; Vojtech Mastny, “Détente, the Superpowers and their Allies, 1962–64”, *ibid.*, pp. 215–35, 222f.; Christian Nünlist, *Kennedys rechte Hand: McGeorge Bundys Einfluss als Nationaler Sicherheitsberater auf die amerikanische Außenpolitik 1961–63* (Zürich: CSS, 1999), p. 178; Per Fredrik Isaak Pharo, “A Precondition for Peace: Transparency and the Test-Ban Negotiations, 1958–63”, *International History Review* 2, no. 3 (2000), pp. 505–756; Ilse Dorothee Pautsch, “Im Sog der Entspannungspolitik: Die USA, das Teststopp-Abkommen und die Deutschland-Frage”, in *Von Adenauer zu Erhard. Studien zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1963*, ed. Rainer A. Blasius (München: Oldenbourg, 1994), pp. 118–53.

and other European powers would gravitate towards France as soon as the MLF nuclear sharing exercise collapsed.⁶⁶

In 1964, the MLF became an obstacle to US-Soviet negotiations on nuclear non-proliferation. The European clause in the MLF endangered an agreement with the Soviet Union, for the latter banned the transfer of control of nuclear weapons to states that did not possess them.⁶⁷ The British therefore tabled a new nuclear arrangement that was tailored to foster superpower *détente*. The proposed Atlantic Nuclear Force (ANF) did entail a clause prohibiting the nuclear powers from passing on nuclear weapons into the ownership and control of individual countries, or a group of such countries. The ANF thereby prevented the creation of a future independent European nuclear force.⁶⁸ With agreement on the ANF, the project to create a European Defense Identity finally fell prey to the policy of non-proliferation. The ANF foreshadowed the conclusion of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty of 1968 and the replacement of a hardware solution to nuclear sharing with a consultative arrangement – the Nuclear Planning Group of NATO.⁶⁹

66 A.D.F. Pimberton-Pigott Minute, 8/7/1963, Sir A. Rumbold to Foreign Office, 6/8/1963, UKNA: FO 371/173308; Telegram from the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State, 12/7/1963, Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 12/7/1963, FRUS 1961–1963 VII, pp. 796f., 797f.; W.J. B. Ledwidge, French Attitude to Nuclear Test Ban, 18/7/1963, Viscount Hood, Possible Anglo-American Nuclear Offer to France, Amended by Ministry of Defence, 20/7/1963, UKNA: FO 371/173309; Macmillan an de Gaulle, 23/7/1963, UKNA: FO 371/173368; Kennedy to de Gaulle, 25/7/1963, FRUS 1961–1963 VII, pp. 851ff.; Cabinet, French Nuclear Policy, 4/10/1963, UKNA: FO 371/173310.

67 Dietl, "Sole Master", p. 151; Schmitt, *Nukleardebatte*, pp. 198ff.; Carlo Masala, "Deutschland, Italien und die Nukleare Frage 1963–1969: Das Problem der nuklearen Mitsprache im Rahmen der Atlantischen Allianz", in *Militär-geschichtliche Mitteilungen* 56 (1997), pp. 431–70. "Staatssekretär Carstens schilderte die Bemühungen der Sowjetunion, die MLF auf der Genfer Abrüstungskonferenz als Abweichung von dem angestrebten Grundsatz der Nichtverbreitung von Kernwaffen hinzustellen. Dies hätte bereits einige neutrale beeindruckt. Es sei damit zu rechnen, dass diese Versuche in den UN fortgesetzt würden; sogar eine UN-Resolution gegen die MLF liege im Bereich des Möglichen." Deutsch-niederländische Regierungsbesprechungen, 30.9./1.10.1964, AAPD 1964 II, Nr. 266.

68 Aufzeichnung für Präsident Hallstein, betr. Zusammentreffen mit Staatssekretär Ball, 14.11.1964, BA NL *Hallstein* N 1266, Bd. 1184; Gespräch de Bundesministers Schröder mit dem britischen Außenminister Gordon Walker, 11.12.1964, Gespräch des Bundesaußenministers Schröder mit Premierminister Wilson, 11.12.1964, AAPD 1964 II, Nr. 382, 383.

69 "In short, the ANF was a tight non-proliferation treaty disguised as an offer for nuclear sharing on the basis of equality." Susanna Schrafstetter/Stephen Twigg, "Trick or Truth? The British

The US had come to terms with its Soviet antagonist to stabilize bipolarity. With this deal, the Cold War changed from a conflict into a managed system. A *pax atomica*, the feared superpower settlement of the German question, however, was averted. This was due to the Elysée Treaty and the fact that France had reasserted her national independence. French *Ostpolitik* even laid the foundation for a European *détente* that offered Moscow an alternative to superpower *détente* – namely the possibility to overcome the Cold War instead of managing it. Adenauer’s and de Gaulle’s vision to combine the settlement of the German question with the formation of an autonomous Europe – a sort of “European Third Force” – remained the guiding principle of French and German foreign policy. The means to achieve this aim, however, changed drastically. France and the Federal Republic had realized that in 1963/64, fear of an autonomous Europe, and especially the perspective of a German finger on the nuclear trigger, had pushed Moscow to choose superpower *détente*, and therefore the maintenance of bipolarity, instead of supporting a split in the Western bloc. European *détente* or *Ostpolitik* aimed to ease Soviet fears of Europe, and to highlight the possible advantages of multi-polarity over bloc consolidation.⁷⁰

Conclusion

Wilfried Loth once asserted “that a striving for European autonomy and self-assertion from the Soviet Union and the USA has been one of the main forces of European integration.”⁷¹ The drive for a European “Third Force” is ingrained in the movement for European unity. It antedates the formation of NATO and continued thereafter. The Atlantic alliance was perceived as a stopgap measure to guarantee and ease the formation of Europe in time of emergency. NATO structures shaped by the guarantor power, the US,

ANF Proposal, West Germany and US Nonproliferation Policy, 1964–8”, *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 11, no. 1 (2000), pp. 161–84; Schmitt, *Nukleardebatte*, pp. 215ff.

70 Franz Josef Strauß, *Entwurf für Europa* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1966); Beatrice Heuser, “The European Dream of Franz Josef Strauss”, *Journal of European Integration History* 4, no. 1 (1998), pp. 75–101; Soutou, “France and the Soviet Union”, pp. 176f.; Ernst Weisenfeld, *De Gaulle sieht Europa: Reden und Erklärungen, 1958–66* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1966); Richard Davy, *European détente: A Reappraisal* (London: Sage, 1992).

71 Loth, “European Security”, p. 41.

however, did not exclusively meet the security needs of the Europeans. Surely, deterrence was not the only task of the Atlantic alliance. Beyond deterrence, NATO served the reconstruction of Europe. In other words, NATO served both the security of Europe and US regulatory policy.

With the advent of the NATO framework, “Europe” turned into a sub-set of an Atlantic alliance. A clear division of labor between “Europe” and NATO, as envisaged by the US, never materialized, however. With the easing of East-West tensions after 1953, the European powers started to reclaim the ESDI they had lost in 1950. The most serious attempt to create Europe as a “Third Force” was undertaken in 1958–64. Although this did not produce an institutionalization of European political co-operation, and although no EPU or CESDP emerged, Europe has never before or since witnessed a fiercer struggle for the future defense architecture of Europe and the West. Never during the Cold War was Europe closer to duplicating NATO defense structures; never was it closer to forming a Transatlantic alliance based on two separate pillars; never was bipolarity challenged more strongly. So why did a European Defense Identity fail to emerge?

It failed to emerge because of the mutually exclusive concepts of Europe pursued by the US and France, respectively. The Europeans had to choose between two ways to achieve a European Defense Identity: supranationally, by integration within the Atlantic framework, or intergovernmentally, by the formation of a “Third Force” outside of NATO. The first model – NNF answerable to a supranational EPU – was rejected by nuclear powers France and Britain. The intergovernmental concept, however, lacked the support of the US. The latter was further hampered by the fact that France and Britain were competing for the leadership of Europe. Both tried to utilize their nuclear potential to achieve a dominant position in Europe. That potential was a necessary precondition for offering Western Europe an alternative to the existing security architecture; nuclear proficiency was the basis of power and influence. France, therefore, was bound to insist on nuclear sharing as a prerequisite for Britain’s admission to the EEC in order to secure an equal status of Britain and France. If nuclear sharing was not an option, France’s leadership in Europe could only be maintained by blocking EEC enlargement. On the other hand, Britain – whose nuclear status was largely dependent on US co-operation – needed US backing

and therefore an Atlantic framework to guarantee its own predominance in Europe. US support, however, could only be expected if Britain honored the Anglo-American nuclear special relationship, and thus observed a policy of nuclear non-proliferation. This prevented Britain from pursuing Macmillan’s *Grand Strategy*, namely the formation of a two-pillared structure of NATO.

The alternative intergovernmental solution, the formation of a “Franco-German Europe”, lacked the support of the Benelux countries and Italy. It was opposed by Britain, the US, and the Soviet Union, which feared Franco-German nuclear co-operation. The latter speeded the formation of an international non-proliferation regime. The resulting superpower *détente* opened an avenue for the US to forego any hardware solution for nuclear sharing, and therefore the formation of a possible building block for any European Third Force.

The nuclear technological expertise of the US, as well as the need of the European nation states for nuclear weapons to be able to shape and defend Europe, empowered Washington to implement an atomic diplomacy in defense of bipolarity. It was the nuclear special relationship that enabled the US to follow a classic policy of *divide et impera* to make European integration work, and to cause the development of a “Third Force” to falter. US regulatory policy went far beyond the importance of a settlement of the German question, which Marc Trachtenberg has highlighted; it aimed at a consolidation of the *status quo* in Europe and an adjustment of US power to the emerging struggle at the periphery. The US aimed at the preservation of the twin pillars of systemic stability: nuclear non-proliferation and the hierarchical security architecture instituted in the early 1950s.

Bipolar structures are created, maintained and defended by a hegemonic power in order to reinforce and defend the bipolar distribution of power among states. A polarization of the world into competing blocs eases the task of a hegemonic power to fend off possible challenges to its standing in the world. A hegemonic power can manage its bloc or power structure in two ways: On the one hand by providing security to its clientele, and on the other by a policy of preferences that pits bandwagoning client states against states that refuse to fall in line – in order to prevent the formation of an independent power center. The formation of such a power

center would allow other client states, or even states outside the sphere of influence of the hegemonic power, to gravitate towards this center. This would undermine the bloc structure, the distribution of power between the two poles and herewith systemic stability.

Attempts to maintain systemic stability and hence international order by community building faltered due to a lack of unity of purpose. This lack of communality is reflected in the preservation of the multi-layered security architecture of the West.

Interdependence in Principle and in Practice, 1957–1966

Ine Megens

The heads of state of the NATO members met in Paris in December 1957 for the first time since the signing of the North Atlantic treaty. This high-level meeting was meant to give new vigor to the alliance in the wake of the Soviet Sputnik satellite launch. The meeting was initiated by US President Dwight D. Eisenhower and British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. They had urged the nations of the “free world” to combine their resources and operate jointly in many fields. To that end, the declaration issued after their meeting invoked the principle of interdependence between the members of NATO.¹ Incentives to stimulate further cooperation and reaffirm NATO’s basic principles came from other countries as well. The Canadian government, for example, stated its desire to reawaken an interest in the concepts of collective security and self-defense among NATO nations.²

The declaration of the allied heads of government expressed a similar sentiment. It referred to the willingness of the Atlantic partners to cooperate closely, first and foremost as a prerequisite for meeting the costs of defense without sacrificing other objectives such as economic welfare. It was important to combine the defense efforts in order to better use resources. Therefore the alliance must “organize its political and economic strength on the principle of interdependence”, the communiqué stated.³ Taking this principle into account, they called for more scientific and technical cooperation as well as increased political consultation. In the field of defense closer coordination within NATO was deemed necessary as well.

- 1 Declaration of common purpose by President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Macmillan, October 25, 1957. *US Department of State Bulletin* 37, no. 959 (1957), pp. 739–41; E. Bruce Geelhoed and Anthony O. Edmonds, *Eisenhower, Macmillan and Allied Unity, 1957–61* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 21–5.
- 2 Telegram Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Jules Léger, to Permanent Representative to NATO, L.D. Wilgress, DL-959, 5 November 1957; Telegram Wilgress to Léger, 2207, 6 December 1957. *Documents on Canadian External Relations* vol. 24, no. 2, nos. 244 and 250.
- 3 Declaration and communiqué North Atlantic Council (NAC) Paris, 16–19 December, 1957 NATO Final communiqués 1949–1974 (Brussels: NATO Information Service, n.d.), pp. 108–16.

The immediate result of the meeting was the decision to establish stockpiles of nuclear warheads and to deploy the intermediate range ballistic missile systems Thor and Jupiter in the near future. Furthermore, with reference to the principle of interdependence, the communiqué mentioned several fields in which a higher degree of standardization and integration would be necessary. New ideas for further cooperation had been brought up for discussion during the meeting, and several national delegations submitted suggestions on how to improve these issues.⁴

This chapter discusses the follow-up to the December 1957 meeting in the field of defense. I will first discuss the idea of interdependence and the concept of collective balanced forces. Thereafter, I will analyze some of the proposals to improve defense coordination. In the 1950s, NATO had developed primarily as a military organization. The alliance did not meet the idealized picture of a fully integrated organization, but looking back, results in the military field were striking. The establishment of an allied international headquarters was a major achievement of international cooperation among sovereign nations. NATO military authorities issued strategic guidance and operational devices, and provided technical advice or assistance as well. NATO member states attuned their defense policies by means of the Annual Review procedure. The allies also established funds for common infrastructure and collaborated in military technical matters. This chapter examines whether this trend continued in the 1960s, or whether NATO military integration had reached its limits at the end of the 1950s.

Interdependence and Balanced Collective Forces

International defense cooperation had been on the agenda since the establishment of the alliance, but the term interdependence had not been previously used in official NATO statements. The notion of interdependence became very fashionable during the 1970s, when its focus quickly shifted to economic and welfare issues. Following Keohane and Nye's *Power and*

4 Working papers submitted by delegations, Annex B Expanded NATO cooperation in the military field – Item III of the agenda. RDC(57)428 (final), 5 December 1957 and RDC(57)449, 12 December 1957. NATO Archives, Brussels, NATO Civil Organization Records, 1952–1965.

Interdependence (1977), many authors pointed to a growing sense of inter-relationship between actors on the world political stage. The term did not yet have this connotation in 1957; the phrase was brought up only in passing during the bilateral talks between Eisenhower and Macmillan. It was by no means an elaborate concept, and no papers on the subject had been prepared in advance. The statements published at that time, as well as the minutes of the meetings that have been released since, show that the British in particular were keen to emphasize the necessity of bringing about closer cooperation. Membership in the alliance meant a commitment to provide the best for the alliance as a whole, they argued. The British aimed for a better use of available resources, greater efficiency, and cost reduction. Interdependence provided a general principle to this end, implying “a voluntary combining of the efforts and skills of the nations of NATO in order to make the most efficient and effective use of the military potential of the Alliance.”⁵ The British gave priority to an increase in scientific research and development cooperation.

At the same time, the British government once again took the initiative in advocating the adoption of the principle of collective balanced forces.⁶ This principle called for the coordination of national forces in order to obtain, by the most economical means, a total balanced force to serve the requirements of NATO as a whole. In deciding upon the size and composition of its defense forces, member nations were to make their national contributions to NATO their primary task and see to it that their forces complemented each other.⁷ The idea of balanced collective forces had been introduced to the alliance as early as 1950, but all attempts to put the principle into practice had been fruitless.

In Britain, this idea was under discussion for two main reasons. The British Chiefs of Staff brought it up for discussion in 1957 because NATO

5 Report by the British Chiefs of Staff on the concept of balanced collective forces, COS (58)97, 2 April 1958. Public Records Office, Kew (PRO), Records of the Ministry of Defence (DEFE) 5/83.

6 “Balanced Collective Forces” (UK), Working paper submitted by delegations to the December ministerial meeting, RDC(57)428 (final), 5 December 1957, B4. NATO Archives.

7 Standing Group guidance to regions and nations on the collective balancing of NATO forces, SGM-267-50, 19 August 1950; Standing Group memorandum on NATO military terms and definitions, SGM-669-58, 14 October 1958. NATO Archives.

was undertaking a major revision of its minimum force plans. As Britain had overseas commitments and contributed to the nuclear deterrent as well, the British Chiefs of Staff wanted these burdens to be taken into account. They argued that both tasks supported the alliance inasmuch as these efforts also prevented further encroachment by the Soviets. It was necessary to retain a certain versatility within NATO in order to meet British overseas commitments. Additionally, the Foreign Office emphasized the need to accept the principle of collective balanced forces, for then the allies could agree upon the need to review basic NATO political directives and strategic concepts. They suggested appointing a small group of distinguished military as well as civilian experts to study this matter further.⁸

The US seriously objected to the British plan, however. On 26 November 1957, British Permanent Under Secretary of Defense Richard Powell met US officials at the Pentagon, where he outlined British thinking. His US hosts did not dispute the basic reasoning of the British, but Powell was told in no uncertain terms that his plan for a new committee was not a good idea. They wanted the December meeting of NATO to result in concrete plans and new initiatives to demonstrate the alliance's will and determination to defend itself. The US believed that the prospect of a new committee could frustrate their sense of urgency.⁹ US officials at NATO headquarters thought it would upset the structure of allied military planning organizations, impose a delay on the military build-up, and postpone agreement on NATO's defense posture.¹⁰

After the December meeting, all military proposals were sent to NATO military authorities for advice and comment.¹¹ In April, the Standing Group issued an interim report on collective balanced forces which

8 Chiefs of Staff Committee, Balanced collective forces, COS(57)255, 21 November 1957. PRO, DEFE 5/79; Telegrams Foreign Office to Washington, 4989, 19 November 1957 and 5045, 21 November 1957. PRO, Foreign Office (FO) 371/131102; Memorandum by the minister of defence to the Cabinet Defence Committee regarding the brief on balanced collective forces, D.(57)26, 12 November 1957. PRO, Cabinet Office (CAB) 131/18.

9 Telegram from Sir Harold Caccia, British ambassador in Washington, to Foreign Office, 2494, 25 November 1957, with attached minutes. PRO, FO 371/131102.

10 Telegram from Sir Frank Roberts, British ambassador to NATO to Foreign Office, 396, 22 November 1957. PRO, FO 371/131102.

11 Note by the secretary-general on coordination of defense, C-M(58)59, 8 April 1958; Record of NAC meeting 17 April 1958, C-R(58)25. NATO Archives.

concluded that a fuller application of the concept of balanced collective forces was feasible. They also drew attention to the fact that any measures in this field were essentially political. Member states had to be convinced of the economic and military advantages, as further progress in this field would otherwise be unlikely. In its final report of October, therefore, the Standing Group stated that progress was most likely to be achieved in local areas and limited fields. The tone of the report was rather reserved; it was obvious that the military authorities did not have high expectations and did not want to press the issue.¹²

In London, Richard Powell was disappointed by this report. He believed that individual nations could not come up with proposals which required detailed information on other nations' military planning. Member states would be reluctant to introduce measures that would effect both their own and other nations' military forces. Supreme commanders need not concern themselves with political problems, he argued. Military guidance was needed to make headway, preferably even firm military recommendations. Powell urged British Ambassador to NATO Frank Roberts to press the issue once more, as the concept of collective balanced forces might help to overcome the gap between military requirements and forces committed by the member nations. Roberts agreed, but pointed out that the members of the Standing Group – the US, Britain, and France – could not contribute very much to collective balanced forces themselves because of their obligations outside NATO. He noted some apprehension from other nations regarding British and US motives behind this concept.¹³ The British, in particular, had brought suspicion on themselves. Other nations suspected that Britain had come forward with the idea of collective balanced forces in order to justify its own naval reductions. Thereafter, it seems, the British abandoned their efforts to promote the principle of collective balanced forces.

12 Report Standing Group on balanced collective forces, MC 81, 26 May 1958, adopted by the Military Committee on 2 October 1958. NATO Archives.

13 Letter by Sir Richard R. Powell to Sir Frank Roberts, WUN 11914/29, 20 April 1959; Internal memos of Department of Foreign Affairs and telegram from Ministry of Defence to British Joint Service Mission, Washington regarding International Planning Team paper on collective balanced forces (IPT 235/10 1st draft), SECWAS 28, 7 August 1959. PRO, FO 371/146424.

The Belgian and the Dutch ministers of defense, Arthur Gilson and Simon H. Visser, brought up the principle once again at the North Atlantic Council meeting in December 1959. For small nations in particular, it was neither economical nor efficient to make the same independent contributions to all military fields, they argued. In response to their remarks, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General Lauris Norstad recognized that the problems of large and small nations were indeed different, because larger countries could achieve a certain balance within their own requirements. At the same time, Norstad displayed some reserve in pressing for more integration and pointed out that as SACEUR he lacked authority. He continued:

I for my part would be very pleased to be given responsibility for developing a NATO force on the basis that there were no nationalities, no national pride, no national traditions, no national prejudices, no particular national interests. I am sure that I could save you a tremendous amount of money and do the job far more efficiently and effectively than it is being done at the present time.¹⁴

As the Netherlands and Belgium were in the best position to achieve a collective balance of forces, given their geographic proximity, and had a history of close association, Norstad suggested that the two states initiate such measures.

A year later, the discussion was repeated with more or less the same arguments. The Military Committee submitted a revised version of document MC 81/I, which reaffirmed the basic assumption that any action leading to national specialization of efforts was a political decision. The revised report nevertheless went further in suggesting certain areas in which progress could be made. Certain naval forces, maintenance facilities, and air defense forces were mentioned as examples, as were the two regions of Central Europe and the Mediterranean. NATO's military authorities would keep the subject under constant review and make specific recom-

14 NAC ministerial meeting 16 December 1959, C-R(59)47, 7-10 and C-VR(59)48, 22-3. NATO Archives.

mendations wherever possible.¹⁵ In discussing the report, representatives of the smaller nations in the Military Committee, in particular Belgian Major-General Antoine del Marmol, argued against the idea that the initiative in this area should be left to national authorities. Del Marmol thought that specific proposals by the Supreme Commanders were very important, because only they could overcome national reluctance. Other representatives, however, thought that the report was realistic and that the Standing Group would probably not change its mind either.¹⁶ The Annual Review Committee, too, had stated quite frankly that there was an impasse, as NATO military authorities found it difficult to put forward proposals due to a lack of political support, while individual nations were apparently reluctant to take the initiative. The North Atlantic Council agreed that no further action should be taken and invited both the member nations and NATO military authorities to keep the principle of collective balanced forces in mind while preparing force requirements.¹⁷

With this decision in November 1960 the idea of collective balanced forces, which by then had been floating around for more than a decade, died a slow death. The dearth of appealing results over the first decade made most nations unresponsive to attempts to reopen the debate. NATO's military authorities, and General Norstad in particular, displayed similar aloofness. They had more enthusiasm for real cooperative projects.

15 Report Military Committee on balanced collective forces, MC 81/1 (revised), 14 March 1960. NATO Archives.

16 Summary record of the 44th meeting of the Military Committee, MC/PS 44, 18 February 1960. NATO Archives.

17 NAC meeting 16 November 1960, C-R(60)43; Report Annual Review Committee concerning the second report by the Military Committee on balanced collective forces, 10 November 1960, C-M(60)96. NATO Archives.

Interdependence in Practice: Integration of Air Defense

Several ideas to further cooperation in military matters had been brought forward at the meeting in December 1957. Proposals included integration of logistical support, further standardization, extension of common funding, pooling of transport, and coordination of research and development.¹⁸ Further coordination was welcomed by the military commanders who briefed the ministers of defense at their meeting in April 1958. General Lauris Norstad argued that more cooperation in peacetime would facilitate the transfer of command from national authorities to allied military commanders in times of war. He emphasized the importance of air defense integration in particular.¹⁹

As early as 1953, the overall weakness in air defense had been reported and noted with concern. A thorough review of the situation by the military authorities revealed serious shortfalls and a lack of coordination. The NATO system was organizationally antiquated and technically outdated, while the flight times of Soviet jet-powered long-range bombers from base to target had been reduced to mere minutes. The most urgent problem was the absence of an overall early-warning system. Most systems were only operational for eight hours a day, during daytime and only during weekdays. Acting SACEUR Alfred M. Gruenther considered the lack of adequate air defense the most important weakness of his command. In the mid-1950s, he received authority to coordinate allied air defense.²⁰ It fell upon his successor, General Norstad, to implement further measures in this field.

Norstad soon discovered that the coordinating system was insufficient and introduced a new concept, integrated air defense. In his opinion, NATO needed a unified system in which SACEUR would assume opera-

18 Working papers submitted by delegations to the December ministerial meeting, RDC(57)428 (final), 5 December 1957; Note by the secretary-general on coordination of defense, C-M(58)59, 8 April 1958. NATO Archives.

19 Briefing by General Norstad, C-R(58)21, 15 April 1958. NATO Archives.

20 Air defense command and control in NATO Europe, MC 54, 11 October 1954; NAC meetings 17 February 1954, C-R(54)5, 24 March 1954, C-R(54)9, 15 September 1954, C-R(54)33, 11 October 1955, C-R(55)43, 14 December 1955, C-R(55)57, 15 December 1955, C-R-C(55)59. NATO Archives.

tional command and control in order to be effective in war and peace. Norstad underlined the difficulty and complexity of this new task. He urged the Military Committee and the Council to approve the principles on which to proceed. "If the spirit and the will is not behind it, if the necessary authorities cannot be turned over, then I am afraid that the task cannot be carried out."²¹ Before detailed plans could be developed, Norstad had to await the approval of the principle of integrated air defense. Despite the sense of urgency and pressure by Norstad, the Danish, British, and French representatives expressed reservations when the issue was discussed in the Council. British Ambassador Roberts said that his government accepted the concept of integrated air defense in principle. The British merely required some safeguards before they delegated their forces to SACEUR, such as agreement on the rules of engagement and provisions for safeguarding national interests.²² The French representative, Geoffroy de Courcel, raised many objections, including the delineation of the inter-regional boundaries and the inclusion of certain sea areas, as well as the methods of equipment and financing. But, he proceeded,

the real problem lay in the fact that countries were asked to endorse a system of air defense based on missiles which were not yet in place, early warning which was not yet installed and a doctrine for the use of aircraft and missiles which had not yet been elaborated.²³

These objections were more of a political than of a technical nature. It was obvious that this point of view had been coordinated at a high level within the French government, and that de Gaulle would probably not give in. Given the French reservations, the recommendations in MC 54/1 could

21 SACEUR's 26 November statement on MC 54/1 to the Military Committee, Enclosure A to US Position paper NATO ministerial meeting, 16–18 December 1958 on the integration of air defense in NATO Europe, PNM D-3/12a, 14 December 1958. US National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (NARA), RG 59, Conference files 1949–963, CF 1163, box 163A, briefing book III.

22 Memorandum by British minister of defence on integration of NATO air defense, 5 December 1959, D.(58)77. PRO, CAB 131/20; Minutes of the 27th meeting of the Defense Committee 20 November 1958, D.(58). PRO, CAB 131/17; Minutes of the 29th meeting of the Defense Committee 9 December 1958, D.(58). PRO, CAB 131/19.

23 NAC meeting 5 December 1958, C-R(58)58. NATO Archives.

not be accepted – at least for the time being. The British then submitted a short draft resolution that followed the NATO document closely as regards content, but was phrased in more general terms.²⁴

At the next Council meeting, Dutch Ambassador Jan A. de Ranitz noted on behalf of the Belgian and Netherlands delegation that fourteen nations were in favor of adopting this draft resolution. He also recalled that there were some urgent technical problems to be solved. In this regard he referred to a letter from General Norstad to nine ministers of defense informing them of the preparatory military steps which should be completed prior to his assumption of full responsibility for integrated air defense. De Ranitz thought a formal decision on the draft resolution should be avoided and suggested instead that the nations in support of integration should give approval to the implementation of the measures proposed by SACEUR. This would permit them to take steps that the majority of nations were prepared to adopt. The Council only had to agree to keep the matter on its agenda and invite SACEUR to submit a progress report as soon as was useful. The procedure suggested by the Dutch ambassador was accepted, although some delegations were not very happy with it and emphasized that it should not constitute a precedent, as the cohesion of the alliance was at stake.²⁵ Nevertheless, this “temporary working arrangement” provided an elegant way out of a difficult problem at the highest level within the alliance and gave SACEUR room for maneuvering.

Norstad devoted himself to this task with great energy. He quickly solved the problems with the Danes and the British, entered into bilateral talks with the French authorities, and took action to improve both coordination and unification simultaneously.²⁶ Yet this ambiguous policy had its limitations. When the military authorities could make no further headway, General Norstad applied pressure. In December 1959 he once again urged the ministers of defense to come to a decision on the integration of air defense. The French minister of Defense Pierre Guillaumat then

24 Draft resolution as enclosure to Memorandum by British minister of defence on integration of NATO air defense, 5 December 1959, D.(58)77. PRO, CAB 131/20.

25 NAC meetings 28 January 1959, C-R(59)4 and 6 February 1959, C-R(59)5. NATO Archives.

26 Memorandum, Military Council on air defense in NATO Europe, 8 December 1959, MCM-173-59. NATO Archives.

met him part of the way and reported that the French government was prepared to take some necessary steps and solve major technical problems. They were also prepared to cooperate with SHAPE in combat zones in order to enable allied air defense forces to intervene immediately, if necessary. Allied cooperation would not extend over the rear combat zones, however, as only French troops were deployed in that area. Nevertheless, Guillaumat stated, he expected that the necessary measures would be taken to ensure maximum efficiency here too.²⁷ It took nine more months to work out an arrangement with the French. In September 1960, the principle of integrated air defense system along the lines recommended by the Military Committee in MC 54/1 was finally adopted by the North Atlantic Council.²⁸ Air defense forces were consequently assigned to SACEUR for use in war and peace. The implementation of this decision would take years, because the establishment of the early warning and detection systems, the air defense zones, and a unified control system all required major infrastructure investment. Major steps included the replacement of the manual plotting and tracking equipment by a new air warning and control system and the establishment of a network of radar stations and control centers.²⁹

The integration of air defense was made possible by constant pressure and personal intervention by Supreme Allied Commanders Generals Gruenther and his successor Norstad. Coordination of air defense was SHAPE's highest priority, and the supreme commanders carried it out meticulously. This support from the military commanders proved to be indispensable for the completion of this project. Air defense integration was an exception, however. Most of the issues introduced under the heading of coordination and integration in December 1957 made little progress. The civilian side of NATO criticized the military authorities for their approach to a number of subjects. As reports issued by the Standing Group invariably announced further studies, officials labeled this as a lack of support.

27 NAC meeting of defense ministers 16 December 1959, C-R(59)48. NATO Archives.

28 NAC meeting 21 September 1960, C-R(60)35. NATO Archives.

29 J. H. Knoop, "Evolution de la defense aérienne dans le commandement allié en Europe", in *Le SHAPE et le commandement allié en Europe: Vingt ans au service de la paix et de la sécurité, 1951–1971* (Brussels : NATO information service, 1971), pp. 111–25.

It is true that the military officials were not particularly receptive to most of the proposals. A case in point was the extension of the principle of common funding. Infrastructure was the only area in which common funding had been introduced. Despite the backlog in expenditures, difficult negotiations on cost-sharing arrangements, and complex procedures to invite international tenders for construction work, the program was looked upon as a political success. The military authorities, however, considered the complexity of the procedures designed to control common expenditures a disadvantage. The main advantage, and at the same time the only advantage, was that NATO interests took precedence over national interests. To apply the principle of common funding in other areas would only increase problems within the alliance, the Standing Group argued.³⁰

The Standing Group blamed the member states to explain the slow progress in specific areas. In October 1959, for instance, the Standing Group reported that progress in the study on the integration of training resources was extremely slow due to the unwillingness of national authorities to go beyond coordination and agree to centralized training.³¹ The pooling of transport capabilities and the integration of training resources should be managed on a bilateral or regional basis, they argued. The allied military authorities considered most of these issues to be political and thought it was incumbent upon the member states to lead in these matters.³² That is to say, political leaders should steer the process of increased integration. Of all the ideas brought up in December 1957, the coordination of research and development could count on receiving the maximum degree of political support.

30 Memorandum, Standing Group on the extension of common funding, SGM-119-58; Note by the secretary-general on coordination of defense, 8 April 1958, C-M(58)59. NATO Archives.

31 Memorandum, Standing Group on integration of training resources, 5 October 1959, SGM-556-59. NATO Archives.

32 Record of a meeting of the Standing Group with the Standing Group representative, 30 March 1959, SG-428-58. NATO Archives.

Coordination of Research and Development in NATO

Encouraging cooperation in research and development of military equipment turned up in several memoranda submitted at the December 1957 meeting. Several nations expressed an interest in increased cooperation in this field, given the growing complexities of military equipment and the long time span involved in its development, not to mention the high cost. Military assistance provided by the US government during the 1950s resulted in military equipment of US origin being used by European armies on a large scale. Moreover, apart from some British factories, no European firm was able to produce major military equipment in large quantities at that time. With a view to fostering economic recovery in Europe, ending US military assistance programs, and developing a modern arms industry in several European nations, it was only natural that the allies wished to decrease their dependence upon US equipment. While the alliance had some experience in common production of military equipment, cooperation in the field of research and development was new to the organization.³³

The British and German note referred to certain areas in which cooperation could be profitable, while both the German and French memos contained general observations and principles to enhance cooperation.³⁴ A few months later, France, Italy, and Germany announced their willingness to enter into trilateral cooperation and submitted a list of seven new weapons to develop.³⁵ Meanwhile, the Production and Logistics Division of the International Staff identified the types of new missiles suitable for

33 Elliott Vandevanter jr., *Co-ordinated weapons production in NATO: a study of alliance processes* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, RAND memorandum RM-4169-PR, November 1964); Robert Rhodes James, *Standardization and common production of weapons in NATO* (London: Institute for Strategic Studies, July 1967); Keith Hartley, *NATO arms co-operation: a study in economics and politics* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1983); James A. Huston, *NATO strategy and logistics through the formative period* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1984).

34 Working papers submitted by delegations, Annex B Expanded NATO cooperation in the military field – Item III of the agenda. RDC(57)428 (final), 5 December 1957. NATO Archives.

35 NAC meetings 18 February, C-R(58)10 and 14 March 1958, C-R(58)12; Note by deputy secretary-general regarding Franco-German-Italian cooperation in defense production, 11 April 1958, C-M(58)64; Communication by the defense ministers of the French Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Italian Republic to NATO and the WEU, 16 April 1958, C-M(58)65. NATO Archives.

production in Europe and established a production plan.³⁶ After discussions within the Defense Production Committee and further consultations among the interested nations, a surface-to-air missile of US origin, the HAWK, was selected as a pilot project for cooperated production. Five nations indicated their willingness to participate in the production of the missile: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. Together with the US, they created a working group to discuss coordination and establish production plans.³⁷

These developments caused anxiety in Britain. London favored an increase in allied cooperation, but preferred case-by-case agreements over specific items of equipment. Their attitude towards multilateral cooperation in NATO was reticent.

We believe in multilateral consultation about the nature of requirements and in bilateral consultation about means of satisfying them. [...] In this way we hope to proceed from the actual to the possible, broadening down from precedent to precedent and extending European cooperation on the basis of experience gained with particular projects.³⁸

The British side thought that some project overlap was not a serious obstacle. At a meeting of the Western European Union, the British came up with a list of common research projects for fourteen new weapons. Their proposals explicitly ruled out production. The British were neither interested in common ownership of nor common financing for projects.³⁹ In London, a committee of civil servants estimated it would cause grave economic difficulties if Britain were to purchase military equipment in Europe. The

36 Note by the secretary-general on coordinated production of new weapons, 28 January 1958, C-M(58)17; NAC meeting 5 February 1958, C-R(58)8. NATO Archives.

37 Report by the assistant secretary-general for production and logistics, E. H. Meili, on coordinated production of new weapons, 28 July 1958, C-M(58)112. NATO Archives.

38 Letter from J. T. Williams, Ministry of Defence, to A. D. F. Pemberton-Pigott, Foreign Office, 7 February 1958. 116/47. PRO, FO 371/137874.

39 US Mission to NATO and European Regional Organizations (USRO), Memorandum for the record by J. H. Hooper on WEU Standing Armaments Committee meeting, 21 April 1958. NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Records relating to NATO 1957–1964, box 1, Coordinating advanced weapons production in Europe.

report mentioned in particular the prospect of losing the military export market and a consequent decrease in foreign exchange payments.⁴⁰

The North Atlantic Council welcomed the formulation of collective plans by any group of nations within NATO, assuming proper provision was made to ensure that any interested NATO member was given the opportunity to associate itself with such a plan.⁴¹ At the same time, it was decided to establish an ad-hoc working group to structurally reorganize cooperation in research, development, and production of military equipment. This decision was made at Germany's insistence.⁴² The British believed that no additional administrative machinery was needed, but they agreed to the establishment of an ad-hoc committee because they did not always want to be out of step and because Washington liked the idea of grand coordinated planning. The establishment of an ad-hoc committee also guaranteed a delay of at least another year.⁴³ The organizational arrangements for coordination of research and development within NATO, and in particular the granting of powers to a central agency within the alliance, would be the cause of major disagreement among member states.

The joint working group submitted a report that was adopted by the Council on 4 November 1959.⁴⁴ This document – C-M(59)82 – would be the basis for cooperative efforts over the next seven years. The procedure consisted of seven steps in the development of new military equipment,

40 Report by the Policy Committee on Interdependence in research and production. Attachment to memorandum by Minister of Defence Duncan Sandys to the Cabinet Defence Committee, 16 June 1959, D(59)16. PRO, CAB, 131/21.

41 NAC meeting 17 April 1958, C-R(58)25, 6–7. NATO Archives. On behalf of the FIG countries [France, Italy, Germany, see above], the Italian representative sent a statement on the coordinated production of the Fiat G-91 lightweight strike fighter to the Armaments Committee of NATO.

42 Note by the German delegation regarding cooperation within NATO in the armament area, 24 April 1958, C-M(58)74; Joint note by the delegations of France, Germany, the Netherlands and the US on NATO co-operation in research, development, and production of military equipment, 11 July 1958, C-M(58)107; NAC meeting 23 July, C-R(58)46. NATO Archives.

43 Memorandum by British Minister of Defence Duncan Sandys to the Cabinet Defence Committee, 16 June 1959, D(59)16. PRO, CAB, 131/21.

44 Note by the chairman of the Joint Working Group on Cooperation in the Field of Armaments on NATO co-operation in research, development, and production of military equipment, AC/142, 31 August 1959, C-M(59)82. NATO Archives. Apart from this final report, no documents of ad-hoc working group AC/142 have been declassified.

ranging from research and the formulation of basic military requirements, over testing and evaluation, to a production program. The procedure became known as the NATO basic military requirement (NBMR) approach. A basic military requirement was “an indication in general terms of the kind and type of equipment required, and also of the quantities needed and the date when it was desirable that the equipment should be in service.”⁴⁵ Proposals for an NBMR could originate from national as well as NATO authorities. After evaluation and consultation by the Military Committee, the Standing Group (SG) would formulate the final statement.⁴⁶ This was then passed to the Armaments Committee, which would create an ad-hoc working group to formulate operational characteristics of the military equipment required. In the later stage of prototype testing and evaluation, the Standing Group would again play a part in the decision-making process.

Disagreement remained on how much authority military authorities should be assigned. The SG, supported by the US, argued they should have primary responsibility at the stage of military testing and evaluation. Other members of the ad-hoc working group did not agree to this approach – first of all, because it was inefficient as the SG could not actually carry out tests, and second, because the procedure already included adequate guarantees to ensure NATO requirements were being fulfilled. Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Britain preferred the responsibility to be shared between the interested nations and the SG. In the autumn and winter of 1959/60, the council repeatedly discussed this issue.⁴⁷ On account of these disagreements, the alliance made no progress with coordination on research and development.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁶ From June 1961, the major NATO commanders were charged with commenting on draft NBMRs that were of particular importance to their command. The major burden fell upon SACEUR, who appointed a military advisor for every project under study.

⁴⁷ NAC meetings of 16 September 1959 (C-R(59)31), 4 November 1959 (C-R(59)37), and 20 January 1960 (C-R(60)2). The discussion was rendered more difficult because the NBMR procedure was not in keeping with an earlier paper on the role of the NATO military authorities in coordination of research, development, and production of military equipment for NATO. A revision of the latter document by the Military Committee, dated 12 May 1960, MC 82/2 (2nd revised) (military decision) was only accepted by the Council on 15 June 1960, C-R(60)26. NATO Archives.

At the same time, political pressure continued. In December 1960, German Minister of Defense Franz Josef Strauß once again pleaded for accelerated integration of research and development within NATO and urged other ministers to give serious consideration to how to increase the effectiveness of the alliance in this respect. He also repeated his earlier suggestion to set up an integrated techno-military agency within the alliance.⁴⁸ Once again, Strauß got nowhere, and his proposal was brushed aside. To meet the demand for some new initiatives, British Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation Harold A. Watkinson suggested that the Armaments Committee draw up a list of approximately 20 projects, at either the research and development or production stage. This pragmatic approach prevailed, and the British proposal to initiate 20 projects was accepted.⁴⁹

After the initial proposals submitted by individual nations had been studied, a preliminary list of 16 projects was drawn up for which ad-hoc mixed working groups were created.⁵⁰ The number of projects was later increased to 23. As there were no NATO basic military requirements upon which to base their work, the ad-hoc working groups proceeded to draft them themselves. The joint formulation of operational characteristics and the establishment of cooperative research and development projects, to which the working groups should have devoted their time, were hampered by this. By the spring of 1962, only nine items were either being produced or were at the stage for which coordinated production could be started. Most of these weapon systems, however, had already been under development, and all but one were of US origin. The production of the F-104G Starfighter aircraft is a good example. This project was only made a NATO program in June 1961 after the German, Belgian, and Dutch governments had already

48 NAC ministerial meeting 17 December 1960, C-R(60)51. NATO Archives; Position paper of US government on research, development, and production, NATO ministerial meeting, 16–18 December 1960, NPA D-3/9a. NARA, RG 59, Conference files 1949–1963, CF 1807 NATO ministerial meeting December 1960, box 241, briefing book.

49 NAC meeting of defense ministers 31 March 1960, C-R(60)12, C-R(60)13, and Conclusions, 1 April 1960, C-M(60)33. NATO Archives. In the end, the British remained aloof from most allied production programs because their needs were met by their own equipment and NATO's common production programs were based on US models.

50 Report by the Armaments Committee on cooperation in research, development, and production, 1 December 1960, C-M(60)110. A second report was submitted to the Council on 24 August 1961, C-M(61)77, and the final report on 27 March 1962, C-M(62)31. NATO Archives.

placed orders. The list also included the first common production project (the HAWK missile), two more missiles – the AIM-9 Sidewinder and the AGM-12 Bullpup –, and the production of the US Mark-44 torpedo. At that time, there was only one success, NATO's Breguet Atlantique maritime patrol aircraft, a project in which five nations participated. Several other projects awaited decisions.

At their March 1962 meeting, the ministers of defense set a deadline for the selection of two projects and established a working group to investigate the difficulties that had delayed progress and make recommendations.⁵¹ This working group of high-ranking national representatives held three rounds of discussions and sent a report to the Council in November.⁵² According to the report, factors that caused difficulties or delays were inherent to the organization of NATO as an alliance of sovereign states. NATO had no supranational authority, and the choice of equipment rested with national authorities. Economic and commercial interests therefore often prevailed. Mere procedural changes would be ineffective; only a strengthening of the political will to cooperate on research, development, and production could overcome these problems. Compared to the political problems, other factors were less significant, but nevertheless changes in organization and procedure could improve results. The working group cited the NBMRs as a major problem, because they were not developed in a systematic manner or based on a common strategic and tactical doctrine.⁵³

By 1963, it had become clear that realizing cooperative efforts in research, development, and production was very difficult. Expectations were lowered, and cooperative efforts only continued at a slow pace. Although some successes could be reported, the overall results were disappointing. The main obstacle was the diversity in national interests. Individual nations were unwilling to abandon their own plans and commit

51 NAC meeting of defense ministers, 3 May 1962, C-R(62)20. NATO Archives.

52 Report by the High Level ad-hoc Working Group on Cooperation in Research, Development, and Production, AC/216, 14 November 1962, C-M(62)114. NATO Archives.

53 NAC meeting of defense ministers 15 December 1962, C-R(62)63. NATO Archives.

themselves to international projects.⁵⁴ The NATO NBMR procedure was a major cause of problems, as well. To the allied military commanders, an NBMR was only a statement of military needs to fulfill alliance operational requirements. Whether this requirement was accomplished by national or multinational production did not matter to them.⁵⁵ In the early years, however, the NBMRs had mainly been regarded as initial steps leading to further cooperation in research, development, and production. The continuous adjustment of military equipment requirements complicated research, caused great delay in production, and was a source of friction between different branches of the alliance.

Three years later, the NBMR procedure was finally ended. This decision was based on another report by yet another ad-hoc working group.⁵⁶ This working group recommended – and the Council adopted – new general principles, a new procedure to supersede the NBMR procedure, and far-reaching organizational revisions. The main change was that primary responsibility for initiating and carrying out common projects devolved to the individual member states. The International Secretariat and NATO's military authorities could offer advice upon request, but cooperation would only be supported and no longer directed by the alliance. It should come as no surprise that cooperation did not improve hereafter. After all, the alliance had hit a rocky patch: The French withdrawal from the military part of the organization prevented any new multilateral cooperation initiatives.

54 Report by the secretary-general to defense ministers on action taken in connection with subparagraph 21(3) of C-R(62)63 on cooperation in research, development, and production, 2 December 1963, C-M(63)125; NAC meeting of defense ministers 17 December 1963, C-R(63)76. NATO Archives.

55 Memorandum, Standing Group for the secretary-general on NATO cooperation in research, development, and production of military equipment, 20 August 1965, SGM-336–65. NATO Archives.

56 Final report of the Exploratory Group on the study of NBMRs, AC/253, 18 May 1966, C-M(66) 33 (revised). NATO Archives.

Conclusion

At the December 1957 North Atlantic Council meeting, the heads of government emphasized in unison that it was essential to broaden cooperative efforts and go beyond the coordination of forces that had been the primary focus in earlier years. They wanted to take cooperation one step further in order to make more efficient use of the alliance's military potential as a whole. Recognizing that they already relied on each other, the heads of government wanted to extend this interdependence. In practice, it proved very difficult to put their ideas into action. Despite frequent references to the principle of interdependence, as well as the proposals put forward by national delegates in December 1957, the meeting did not give a new impetus to the coordination of defense within the alliance. An analysis of discussions within the North Atlantic Council and their subsequent actions reveals three main reasons for this lack of progress.

First, NATO commanders and the Standing Group questioned the military value of some of the plans and were very skeptical of the concept of collective balanced forces. They wanted to be assured of political backing beforehand and had little interest in developing new initiatives themselves. Integration of air defense was the exception that proves the rule, because allied commanders considered this project to be of paramount importance. To accomplish air defense integration, generals Gruenther and Norstad dedicated all their effort and prestige to it. While military backing was indispensable to success, a lack of enthusiasm seriously impeded results.

Second, the international staff's limited authority and the secretary-general's lack of prestige were also a hindrance. Whereas military commanders overcame objections from member nations to their plans, civil servants within the alliance were unable to assert adequate influence and promote integration. Coordination of research and development offers a good case in point. Repeated attempts by German Minister of Defense Franz Josef Strauß to assign greater authority to NATO and to establish a central agency within the alliance failed. Committees of national representatives remained in control of decision-making during every stage of research and development projects. If they were unable to reach agreement on basic military requirements for equipment, its operational require-

ments, or technical specifications, projects fell behind or were cancelled altogether.

Lack of political support is the decisive factor that explains the meager results of the December 1957 meeting. At the time, proposals to encourage cooperation on research and development could still count on widespread support. Initial recommendations were followed by more detailed plans, but repeated discussions at NATO's ministerial meetings reveal that member states were deeply divided on the best approach to further cooperation. These differences, as well as the diverging national interests of member states, stood in the way of improvement.

As a result, progress on most issues related to defense cooperation in the 1960s was rather slow. Nobody wanted to turn back the clock or discontinue the existing joint efforts, and well-established procedures like the Annual Review continued. At the same time, it was obvious that military integration within NATO had reached its limits. The existing situation consolidated, but the time was not ripe for new initiatives. At the national level, defense budgets were being decreased. Within the alliance, disagreements on nuclear policy predominated, and the growing tensions with the French, which eventually led to their withdrawal from the military organization, cast their shadow on every issue under discussion within the organization.

Information, Persuasion, or Consultation?

The Western Powers and NATO during the Berlin Crisis, 1958–1962

Bruno Thoss

In late November 1958, immediately after Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev had issued his Berlin ultimatum, Soviet soldiers stopped three vehicles of a US convoy at the Babelsberg highway. In accordance with their instructions, the US crews refused to have their vehicles checked and were prevented from going on for ten hours.¹ The US commander of Berlin regarded this action as a serious test for the capability of the Western powers to keep open their access to the city. He asked for a military counter-action to free his detained vehicles. The US headquarters in Heidelberg also supported taking strong countermeasures. Continuing up the chain of command, the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, General Lauris Norstad, in his function as commander-in-chief of US forces in Europe, made similar recommendations to the Pentagon, should a “strong protest” prove fruitless.² However, US President Dwight D. Eisenhower did not follow his advice to test the Soviet intentions by military means. The recommendations of the State Department and Pentagon followed suit: “We should not take a line which might lead to shooting.” Secretary of State John Foster Dulles criticized Norstad’s military recommendations, which had prompted even the Joint Chiefs of Staff to adopt “rather extreme views”. The official line was that if it should be necessary to react to a new Berlin blockade, the US government would “stand firm”; but Washington would not overreact with use of force to the incident at Babelsberg. There appeared to be an incal-

1 The incident is described by Robert S. Jordan, *Norstad: Cold War NATO Supreme Commander. Airman, Strategist, Diplomat* (New York, 2000), pp. 136–7 and Rolf Steininger, *Der Mauerbau. Die Westmächte und Adenauer in der Berlinkrise 1958-1963*, (Munich, 2001), pp. 26–7.

2 Telegram USCOB to USAREUR and USCINCEUR Paris to Secretary of Defense, November 15, 1958, National Archives Washington (NA), Record Group 218 Central Decimal File, Box 72 CCS 381 (8-20-43), Secto 41.

culable risk that the local crisis might escalate, and could ultimately lead to a nuclear exchange due to a lack of other adequate military means.³ To this day, there is no evidence to show whether SACEUR informed NATO of US deliberations on possible military action at this early stage of decision-making. At any rate, the Soviet soldiers might also respond militarily to a US use of force, and this could trigger an escalation of events. After a very short period, US and NATO forces on West German soil would be involved in such a confrontation. As regards the connection between the Berlin issue and consultations within the alliance, the Babelsberg incident suddenly revealed two things: the security of the city was and should remain a matter of the four occupying powers; but military reactions would instantly involve NATO as a whole. The problem of Berlin was thus also an issue for the alliance as a whole.

Eastern Pin-pricks and the Limits of Western Defense Plans

A discussion of the issue of free access to Berlin, and the corresponding plans of the Western powers to secure their rights, requires a brief historical retrospective. The geostrategic position of Berlin on the forefront of NATO was a result of the agreements reached at the end of World War II that provided for occupation sectors and the necessary access to each of these.⁴ After the outbreak of the Cold War, the Soviet Union had challenged the idea of any further stationing of Western forces in the city. In contrast, the Western powers regarded the status of Berlin as being governed by the original occupation law of 1945.⁵ In the course of the foundation of the two

3 See memorandum of telephone conversation between Dulles and Secretary of Defense Neil McElroy, as well as a detailed chronology of the whole Babelsberg incident from the US Mission at Berlin, 17 November 1958, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)* 1958–60, vol. VIII, pp. 81 and 69, footnote 1.

4 With respect to the Berlin Crisis, see Joachim Arendt, *Der Westen tut nichts! Transatlantische Kooperation während der zweiten Berlin-Krise (1958–1962) im Spiegel neuer amerikanischer Quellen* (Frankfurt/Main, 1993); John C. Ausland, *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Berlin-Cuba Crises 1961–1964* (Oslo, 1996); Christian Bremen, *Die Eisenhower-Administration und die zweite Berlin-Krise 1958–1961* (Bremen, 1998); John P. S. Gearson, *Harold Macmillan and the Berlin Wall Crisis: The Limits of Interests and Force* (New York, 1998); Lawrence Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos and Vietnam* (New York, 2000).

5 Cf. Helga Haftendorn, "Im Anfang waren die Alliierten: Die alliierten Vorbehaltsrechte als Rahmenbedingung des außenpolitischen Handelns der Bundesrepublik Deutschland", in

German states, the Soviets argued that from now on, “Berlin was situated in the Soviet occupation zone and was economically part of it”.⁶ During the Berlin blockade of 1948/49, the Western powers were able to assert their position. But at the outbreak of the Korean War, they were confronted with a more far-reaching request by German Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer to guarantee, as part of the common Western aims, the security of both Western Germany and West Berlin as prerequisites for a German defense contribution to NATO.⁷ NATO complied with this request in its New York decision of principle in autumn of 1950: In future, any attack on the Federal Republic of Germany as a whole or against the access roads to West Berlin would be regarded as an attack on NATO itself.⁸ To ensure that this position was validated by international law, the Allied powers and the German government agreed to secure it both in the Treaties on a European Defense Community of 1952 and in the Paris Agreements relating to the German accession to NATO of 1954. The “legal construct”⁹ of a continuing four-power responsibility for Germany as a whole and for Berlin was maintained. In accordance, the NATO partners included West Berlin in the zone of protection of the Western alliancero.

When in late 1955, the Soviets enhanced the status of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) as a sovereign state, the pin-pricks against the Western entrances to Berlin became more frequent. The Pentagon became alarmed that the GDR might feel encouraged to remove this Western outpost permanently. Its growing armed forces were sufficient to

Regieren in der Bundesrepublik, vol. V: Souveränität, Integration, Interdependenz – Staatliches Handeln in der Außen- und Europapolitik, ed. Hans-Hermann Hartwich and Göttrik Wewer (Opladen, 1993), p. 54.

- 6 Statement of the Soviet Representative at the removal from the Allied Headquarters, 16 June 1948, quoted by Gerd Langguth, “Innerdeutsche und internationale Aspekte der Berlin-Politik”, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 33-34/1986, p. 36.
- 7 Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, *Anfänge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik 1945–1956* (AwS), vol. 1: *Von der Kapitulation bis zum Plevan-Plan*, ed. Roland G. Foerster, Christian Greiner, Georg Meyer, Hans-Jürgen Rautenberg and Norbert Wiggershaus (München, 1982), pp. 372–3.
- 8 Final communiqué of the NATO meeting, 27 September 1950, *ibid.*, p. 378.
- 9 Haftendorn, “Im Anfang waren die Alliierten”, p. 41.
- 10 For a detailed evaluation of this “twin nature” of the Paris treaties, see Werner Abelshausen und Walter Schwengler, *Wirtschaft und Rüstung, Souveränität und Sicherheit*, AwS, vol. 4 (München, 1997), pp. 306–21.

invade West Berlin by surprise at a suitable opportunity, and thus create accomplished facts.¹¹ Even if Soviet and/or GDR forces should stop half-way in an international crisis and only blocked the entrances to Berlin, the Western powers would face problems that were nearly insurmountable by military means. In such a case, the US wanted to test the Soviet intentions with limited military force. This was to be accompanied by diplomatic protests, economic embargo measures, and preparations for general mobilization. Should all this be fruitless, an ultimatum would threaten a general war, if the blockade continued, since it was impossible to defend West Berlin with only the forces stationed there. The option to supply the city from the air, as had been done in 1948/49, no longer seemed feasible. The Soviets' improved technical capabilities to seriously interfere with radio communication for all aircraft had already caused big problems during the last blockade.¹²

But in a crisis, the West could neither give up West Berlin (for reasons related to NATO and German policies), nor could it defend the city militarily. So from the US point of view, the Western powers had to prepare for an attempt to open the blocked entrances on the ground. The British, however, did not regard this as a promising approach. The Eastern side could stop such armed convoys well in advance of Berlin by simple traffic obstacles.¹³ If these attempts failed, the Western powers would be forced to either give up their operations for lack of ground forces, or incur the risks of a nuclear war.¹⁴ Due to this omnipresent danger of escalation, it was

- 11 Memorandum G-2 to G-3 U.S. Army regarding the situation at Berlin, 9 December 1955, NA, Record Group 3/9 Records of the Army Staff, G-3, 1955, Box 44.
- 12 NSC-5404/1 U.S. Policy on Berlin, 26 January 1954, William Burr, "Avoiding the Slippery Slope: The Eisenhower Administration and the Berlin Crisis, November 1958–January 1959", *Diplomatic History* 18 (1994), pp. 181–2.
- 13 Regarding the American-British talks at Washington, 30 January to 2 February 1956 see Daniel Gossel, *Briten, Deutsche und Europa: Die Deutsche Frage in der britischen Außenpolitik 1945–1962* (Stuttgart, 1999), 135; Report of the British Mission at Washington, 8 February 1956, and statement of the British Chiefs of Staff Committee (BCOS), 16 March 1956, Public Record Office London (PRO), DEFE 5/64, COS (56) 53, and DEFE 5/66, COS (56) 110.
- 14 Reiner Pommerin, "Von der 'massive retaliation' zur 'flexible response': Zum Strategiewechsel der sechziger Jahre", in *Vom Kalten Krieg zur deutschen Einheit. Analysen und Zeitzeugenberichte zur deutschen Militärgeschichte 1945 bis 1995*, ed. Bruno Thoß (Munich, 1995), p. 531, argues that in case of a serious blockade of the Berlin accesses, there would have been a "near-automatic" escalation from a Berlin crisis to all-out nuclear war.

essential to build up a common front within NATO over time, in addition to the detailed Berlin contingency planning.¹⁵ But to what extent would the Big Three be prepared to discuss their real intentions at the alliance level? To prevent another crisis of confidence like in autumn 1956, more information was required about possible NATO counter-measures and the military risks involved. This had to be combined with a strategy of persuasion in order to endure the anticipated war of nerves as a collective, despite all temptations to opt for national expediency. The NATO allies had the right to insist on the principle of full intra-alliance consultations for all matters of general security relevance, based on the report of the “Committee of the Three Wise Men” in 1955/56. But already then – and even more so during the Berlin crisis of 1958/61 – the alliance had only been able to meet its commitment to consultations by offering general “recommendations” instead of mandatory common “decisions”.¹⁶

The Soviet Ultimatum and Political Counter-measures of the West

When in November 1958, Moscow’s ultimatum demanded a time limit on the presence of Western troops in the city, Washington was faced with a situation it had already anticipated: “The loss of this position would have incalculable consequences in undermining the Western position in Germany and the world at large”.¹⁷ A military defense of Berlin was not part of the NATO defense plans for Central Europe, as the city came under the responsibility of the three Western powers. But 6,000 US, 3,000 British, and 2,000 French soldiers were given the militarily impossible task of defending a city of 2 million inhabitants, facing one East German and four

15 Deputy Under Secretary of State Robert Murphy to General Nathan F. Twining, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, regarding Current Berlin status and access problems, 8 November 1957, NA, Record Group 218 Central Decimal File, Box 72, CCS 381 (8-20-43), Secto 40.

16 Bruno Thoß, “Bündnissolidarität und Regionalkonflikt. Die Suche der NATO nach einem System gegenseitiger Konsultation und die Suez-Krise (1955–1956)”, in *Acta* no. 14, ed. Commission Internationale d’Histoire Militaire: *Montreal 16–19 VIII 1988* (Ottawa, 1989), pp. 691–710, 706–7 and Winfried Heinemann, *Vom Zusammenwachsen des Bündnisses. Die Funktionsweise der NATO in ausgewählten Krisenfällen 1951–1956* (Munich, 1998), pp. 256–60.

17 NSC-5803 U.S. Policy Toward Germany, 7 February 1958, Burr, “Avoiding the Slippery Slope”, p. 180.

Soviet divisions in their immediate vicinity.¹⁸ In accordance with NATO's retaliation strategy, a permanent closure of the access roads would have necessitated an "almost immediate resort to nuclear war".¹⁹ Before risking such a unilateral escalation, the adversary's real intentions had to be tested by conventional means. Small motorized convoys, accompanied by an infantry platoon and reinforced with tanks, were to attempt a breakthrough via the Helmstedt-Berlin highway. US soldiers were told to open fire only if they came under fire themselves. In a step-by-step escalation, the size of the forces would be increased from company to battalion strength. By employing these meager military means, NATO consciously accepted the risk that "such countermeasures might lead to general war".²⁰

This approach seemed practicable because the West supposed that the Russians did not really mean "business", but were only "probing", and thus the stronger nerves would prevail.²¹ Lest their own ultimatum should be perceived wrongly in the West, the Soviets had hinted to Washington as early as January 1959 that they did not intend to launch a general war over Berlin.²² These messages went down well, not only in Washington, but also in London and Paris. But there were serious doubts – not only in Bonn – as to whether the US would be prepared to risk more than nuclear brinkmanship for the defense of such a limited purpose. The British Chiefs of Staff Committee (BCOS) believed that an escalation to nuclear war would not occur until US forces in Europe had come under general full-scale attack. The mere opening of the entrances to Berlin would hardly

18 Sean M. Maloney, "Notfallplanung für Berlin. Vorläufer der Flexible Response 1958–1963", *Militärsgeschichte*, NF 7 (1997), p. 3; figures in: Geoffrey McDermott, *Berlin. Success of a Mission?*, (New York, 1962), pp. 23–4.

19 See footnote 18.

20 *Annual History United States Army, Europe (U), 1 July 1958–30 June 1959*, Headquarters United States Army, Europe, G3 Division, 1960, 25.

21 Dulles-Herter telephone conversation, 13 November 1958, quoted from Detlef Felken, *Dulles und Deutschland: Die amerikanische Deutschlandpolitik 1953–1959* (Bonn, 1993), p. 482; report of the British ambassador to Moscow, Reilly, 11 November 1958, Heather Yasamee, "Britain and Berlin, 1958–1962", in *International Cold War Military Records and History: Proceedings of the International Conference on Cold War Records and History Held in Washington, D.C. 21–26 March 1994* (Washington, D.C., 1996), p. 135; with respect to the continuing analysis of de Gaulle, see Frédéric Guelton, "The French Army During the Second Berlin Crisis (November 1958–August 1961)", *ibid.*, pp. 164–6.

22 The key Soviet documents are published by Vladislav M. Zubok, "Khrushchev and the Berlin Crisis (1958–1962)", *CWHP Working Paper* no. 6, (1993), p. 9.

have been a sufficient reason for such an escalation.²³ Such skepticism was confirmed by a secret speech of Secretary of State Dulles, who specifically demanded more limited alternatives to military options, “because the reality is [...] that we would not in fact use retaliatory striking power if there were what appeared to be a relatively minor incident.”²⁴ That is why he now informed his diplomats in Bonn and the German ambassador to Washington that “nobody in West would believe avoiding recognition of GDR is worth a war.” The Western powers could not incur an incalculable risk by escalating this crisis simply because of a “formal legal dispute” over whether Soviet or East German border guards should be in charge of the access roads. Only actions that were identified “unambiguously as an attack on Berlin and the Western forces stationed there and on their supply lines” would be considered a *casus belli* by Washington and – to a lesser degree – London.²⁵

To find a common line – as urgently demanded by NATO Secretary-General Paul-Henri Spaak – the Western powers raised their policy to alliance level at the December NATO session. In Washington, the priority question had been whether to seek a military test of the Soviet intentions – even unilaterally, if the British and French refused the Pentagon’s request for assistance – or to pursue a political reaction that was “firm” in substance, but “in a friendly tone”, as the president preferred.²⁶ The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff argued that a war against the Soviet Union was inevitable sooner or later, while Secretary Dulles asked what to do with those NATO partners “who want to take a weaker position”.²⁷ The British were very skeptical about any military test because of the risks

23 77th meeting of the BCOS regarding nuclear sufficiency, 3 September 1958, PRO, DEFE 4/111, COS (58) 77.

24 Speech by Dulles at the National War College, 23 November 1958, Felken, *Dulles und Deutschland*, pp. 390–1.

25 Telegram from the Department of State to the US embassy in Germany and conversation of Dulles with German Ambassador Wilhelm Grewe in Washington, 17 November, and telegram from the US embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State regarding a secret British memorandum, paper, 19 November 1958, FRUS 1958–60, vol. VIII, pp. 86–8, and Wilhelm G. Grewe, *Rückblenden 1976–1951* (Frankfurt/Main-Berlin-Vienna, 1979), pp. 364–5.

26 Memorandum of conference with President Eisenhower, 11 December 1958, FRUS 1958–60, vol. VIII, pp. 172–7.

27 Memorandum of conversation of the US delegation preparing for the ministerial meeting of NAC, 13 December 1958, *ibid.*, pp. 194–5.

of an escalation into general war and the lack of military and political preparedness of NATO – and the French supported them.²⁸ That is why, during the NATO conference, Secretary Dulles only discussed the necessity to be prepared for a “war of nerves”. The possible consequences of a war in the case of actual military confrontations over the blocked access roads remained unspoken. NATO was merely consulted regarding the political response, since the US was aware that there was no support for real military counter-measures. It was in this context that NATO signaled that the Western powers would be supported if they exercised their right to station armed forces and to preserve free access to Berlin. The US regarded this as “a great success” since they had enforced their demand for a firm attitude.²⁹ For permanent consultations regarding further Berlin planning, a three-power working group at the ambassadorial level was set up in Washington, supported by a consultation group on a four-power basis that included Germany.³⁰ The other members of the alliance were generally kept informed on this and future occasions.

In the meantime, Germany’s Chancellor Adenauer demanded more firmness: “He believes three occupying powers Berlin must use force [...] Highly unlikely Soviets would risk hot war, but if European faith in U.S. pledges and determination were shaken it would be fatal blow to Europe and NATO.”³¹ But Washington had to accept that the readiness for a hard military response was extremely fragile among the European allies. The opinion of the Chief of the British Defence Staff, Lord Louis Mountbatten, made the rounds that it would not be acceptable to risk one’s own nuclear destruction for the sake of Berlin. Despite urging for a hard-line approach, not even the leaders in Bonn could be sure that the Germans would really be ready to use their curtailed armed forces for a drive on

28 Telegram from the US delegation regarding the tripartite meeting before the NATO conference, 15 December 1958, *ibid.*, pp. 200–3.

29 Diary entry by US Ambassador to Germany David Bruce, 19 December 1958, FRUS 1958–1960, vol. VIII, p. 220.

30 Maloney, “Notfallplanung für Berlin,” 4; Gregory W. Pedlow, “Allied Crisis Management for Berlin: The LIVE OAK Organization, 1959–1963”, in *International Cold War Military Records and History: Proceedings of the International Conference on Cold War Records and History Held in Washington, D.C. 21–26 March 1994* (Washington, D.C., 1996), p. 88.

31 Telegram from the US embassy in Germany to the Department of State, 13 January 1959, FRUS 1958–60, vol. VIII, pp. 253–5.

Berlin in the case of an emergency. As for the rest of NATO, a “lack of enthusiasm”³² prevailed. Therefore, it was very important to stay credible and demonstrate the alliance’s determination to stick to a hard line vis-à-vis the Soviets in order to stabilize the hesitant public opinion in Western Europe. The danger of a general war was small, unless a wrong signal gave Moscow a false perception of indecisiveness on the part of NATO. If the Soviet Union could question the alliance’s readiness to engage in brinkmanship, the whole NATO concept of deterrence would be subject to a “drastic review”.³³

On this basis, Dulles was able to reach a consensus with Paris and London that stationing and access rights were not to be given up. The British, however, continued to be the soft flank in this united front.³⁴ The other NATO partners were not fully informed, since it was feared that the plans for military action to open the access roads “would be more frightening” to them than they “would be to the Russians”.³⁵ In his discussions with Adenauer, Dulles adopted the most realistic standpoint about the military consequences. Bonn demanded a hard line on Berlin, but at the same time would “under no circumstances” condone the use of nuclear weapons. The US secretary of state “demolished the unreality of it in a clear and [...] devastating statement”.³⁶ Prevention of war by deterrence was not possible without the willingness to incur the full risk of using nuclear weapons. If the chancellor thought that was too high a price to pay, this was the time to say so. And if Adenauer did not want to seem weak, he could not but

32 Memorandum on the substance of discussion at a Department of State-Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting and memorandum from Secretary of Defense McElroy to Secretary of State Dulles, 14–15 January 1959, *ibid.*, pp. 259–65 and 269–70.

33 Memorandum from Secretary of State Dulles to US President Eisenhower: “Thinking out loud”, undated [January 26, 1958], *ibid.*, pp. 292–4; see also Dulles’ conversation with NATO Secretary-General Manlio Brosio, 26 January 1959, Felken, *Dulles and Deutschland*, p. 499.

34 Telegram from Secretary of State Dulles regarding his conversations with the French government, 6 February and Eisenhower’s remark with respect to the British during his telephone call with Dulles, 8 February 1959: “They want to handle it with a soft hand,” *ibid.*, p. 503.

35 Telephone call by Dulles to Secretary of Defense McElroy, 27 January 1959 quoted in Burr, “Avoiding the Slippery Slope”, p. 200.

36 Diary entry by the ambassador to Germany, 7 February 1959, Felken, *Dulles and Deutschland*, p. 501..

agree with this hardheaded approach and all its inevitable consequences.³⁷ Dulles was thus able to report after his return to Washington that he was “completely satisfied” with the results of his trip to Europe.³⁸

Berlin Contingency Planning: LIVE OAK

In the meantime, after another incident in which a US convoy was detained for more than 50 hours, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had agreed to Norstad’s proposal to establish a special staff for matters regarding Berlin. In early March 1959, the British and French accepted his invitation for cooperation. On this basis, a three-power staff for joint military planning named LIVE OAK was founded and closely connected to NATO headquarters at Fontainebleau, France. For coordination purposes, German specialists could be invited; a permanent German participation was not yet intended.³⁹ Thus, at least at SHAPE, it was possible to switch from political consultations to military action in case that the situation in Berlin became more aggravated. In addition, the Joint Chiefs of Staffs urged that world opinion and, in particular, Western European public opinion be prepared for the seriousness of the situation. Simultaneously, they asked the staff of the new LIVE OAK planning group to accelerate the military preparations, since “the loss of Berlin would be a political and military disaster.”⁴⁰ At the same time, CIA assessments confirmed the concerns of the political leadership that it would be very difficult to convince the NATO partners as well as the neutral states of the necessity of hard military responses to such local actions. Nevertheless, they, too, recommended that the US president stick

37 Conversations between Adenauer and Dulles, 7–8 February 1959; Konrad Adenauer, *Erinnerungen 1955–1959* (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 476–81 and Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Adenauer: Der Staatsmann 1952–1967*, (Stuttgart, 1991), pp. 492–4; see also memorandum of conversation, 8 February 1959, FRUS 1958–60, vol. VIII, pp. 345–8.

38 Memorandum of discussion at the 396th meeting of the National Security Council, 12 February 1959, *ibid.*, pp. 358–9.

39 Telegram from SACEUR Norstad to Chairman JCS Twining, 17 March 1959, FRUS 1958–1960, vol. VIII, pp. 495–7, and acceptance of his demand, History of the Office of the Secretary of Defence, vol. 4: Robert J. Watson, *Into the Missile Age, 1956–1960* (Washington, D.C., 1997), pp. 607–9; see also Pedlow, “Allied Crisis Management”, pp. 88–90.

40 Memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense McElroy, 11 March 1959, FRUS 1958–1960, vol. VIII, 455.

to a hard line. Only a credible readiness to use force would convince the Soviet Union to find a solution by negotiation⁴¹.

Although it was not included in the more detailed consultations, the Bundeswehr leadership came to similar results. For the US, the trial of strength and nerves in Berlin was a matter of prestige with far-reaching importance. Since NATO lacked sufficient forces for a serious ground operation to open the access roads, and as a new airlift would not be successful enough, there was no other course of action than the threat of war and the unmistakable intention of waging it in the last resort. The danger of war would increase if signals of hesitation led the Soviet Union to a faulty perception of Western weakness.⁴² During the meeting of the Western powers' foreign ministers in spring 1959, a minimum consensus was reached that in case of a blockade, the intentions of the Soviets should be tested in a limited military engagement. It was intended that a Western convoy, once the Soviets tried to stop it by force, would continue to proceed until the other side opened fire. For this purpose, the British side wanted these convoys to be accompanied by reconnaissance vehicles, but under no circumstances by tanks, to avoid the appearance of a provocation.⁴³

Thus, a political decision was taken in favor of limited military action on a three-power basis. The LIVE OAK staff began its work in April 1959. The planning was to be carried out with a degree of secrecy that would avoid causing public alarm in the NATO countries, but that would allow the operation to be discovered by the Soviet secret service, in order to convince Moscow of NATO's determination.⁴⁴ The central issue was to identify the thrust of the adversary's intentions in case of a new Berlin blockade by using first unarmed and then armed convoys. In parallel, world opinion should be mobilized against the Soviet violations of international

41 CIA memorandum "Soviet and other reactions to various courses of action in the Berlin crisis, 27 March 1959", in *On the Front Lines of the Cold War: Documents on the Intelligence War in Berlin, 1946 to 1961*, ed. Donald P. Steury (Washington, DC, 1999), pp. 474–88.

42 FÜ B III: Militärische Beurteilung der Lage, 12 March 1959, Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv Freiburg (BA-MA), BW 17/42.

43 Memorandum of conversation of the tripartite-quadrupartite meeting at Washington, 31 March 1959, FRUS 1958–1960, vol. VIII, pp. 546–53.

44 A declassified KGB report proves that this calculation was right: David Murphy, Sergei A. Kondrachev, George Baily, *Battleground Berlin: CIA vs KGB in the Cold War* (New Haven, 1997), pp. 368–9.

law, and the three NATO heavyweights would gradually intensify their own military preparations. This included measures for a temporary aerial supply and plans for Western blockades at sensitive points of Eastern maritime traffic. The options for military counter-strikes at the Berlin access points were to be the subject of joint staff studies within the LIVE OAK planning group.⁴⁵ The other NATO states were consciously kept out of these preparations, since the US did not want to risk the fragile consensus being diluted through permanent discussion within the alliance.⁴⁶ But the joint military planning remained under strict political and national supervision. Despite the strong position of the commander-in-chief, US Armed Forces in Europe, the US chain of command did not dominate within LIVE OAK; the British and French staff officers remained tied to their national general staffs. The overall co-ordination of Berlin measures was the prerogative of the Tripartite Ambassadorial Group of the Western powers in Washington.⁴⁷ The commander-in-chief, British Army of the Rhine (BAOR), who was also the commander of the Northern Army Group of NATO (NORTHAG), would have to back up any military test actions, because the starting point for allied convoys at the Helmstedt-Berlin motorway was situated in his command area. And he would not risk a military conflict before NATO had agreed to the proposal and had placed the alliance's forces under the command of SACEUR.⁴⁸

In the summer of 1959, the political situation eased considerably after the Soviet Union did not carry out its threat to conclude a separate peace treaty with the GDR. Consequently, the British concerns that plans for military operations were too far-reaching gained weight in LIVE OAK planning. London still doubted the effectiveness of a serious military breakthrough to Berlin. NATO simply did not have enough conventional armed forces to be successful without crossing the nuclear threshold, if the worst case happened. If the Soviet Union really meant business, the only

45 Paper prepared by the Department of State regarding Berlin contingency planning, 4 April 1959, *ibid.*, pp. 584–9, and Report of the Joint Planning Staff to the BCOS, 4 April 1959, PRO, DEFE 4/117, JP (59) 36 (Final).

46 Maloney, "Notfallplanung für Berlin", p. 4.

47 Pedlow, "Allied Crisis Management", pp. 90–1.

48 British demands regarding BAOR's role within NORTHAG: 24th and 26th meetings of the BCOS, 7 and 14 April 1959, PRO, DEFE 4/117, COS (59) 24 and COS (59) 26.

alternatives were a political solution by negotiation or an escalation to all-out war. But for Norstad, it was not acceptable to let the opposite side get away with a successful bluff due to fear of such an escalation. He believed NATO's military options should at least hold out to the point where the Soviets were forced to stop an armed Western convoy by opening fire. Then they would have to take responsibility for all military complications in the limelight of global public opinion.⁴⁹ This was the point where the British and US positions differed continually. The British did not share the US risk assessment, which concluded that the Soviets would break off a military confrontation over Berlin for fear of nuclear escalation. But if Moscow was prepared to accept this risk, the US was obviously ready to take the last step to general war – and whether it would then be possible to get Britain or even the majority of the other NATO states to follow the US into a nuclear spread of a local clash was a matter about which the British chiefs of staff had considerable doubts.⁵⁰

So Washington had to admit that the British were reluctant to go beyond test operations with more than lightly-armed forces. Lord Mountbatten described the “fundamental difference” regarding an escalation between the two sides of the Atlantic in a nutshell: “Such a step would involve the destruction of our land, while for the United States [...] global war might only involve the destruction of a few cities”. The British would hardly be able to excuse themselves completely from such scenarios, since in case of an escalation they would have to bear the main burden of the operation at the NORTHAG level, despite their reservations.⁵¹ Norstad made it very clear to the LIVE OAK staff that all possibilities had to be considered: from the acceptance of a Soviet act of violence to an escalation into general war. No one intended to second-guess the political decision-making that all these staff plans were predicated upon.⁵² But with their demand that armed action should only be taken after alerting NATO as a

49 Memorandum from Norstad to the British chief of staff/LIVE OAK, 26 June 1959, *ibid.*, DEFE 5/92, COS (59) 155.

50 42nd meeting of the BCOS, 7 July 1959, *ibid.*, DEFE 4/119, COS (59) 42.

51 Memorandum of discussion at the 413th meeting of the NSC, 16 July and 48th meeting of the BCOS, 28 July 1959, FRUS 1958–60, vol. VIII, pp. 1000–1, and PRO, DEFE 32/6, COS (59) 48.

52 Pedlow, “Allied Crisis Mangement”, pp. 93–4.

whole, the British exposed themselves in Washington and at SHAPE to the suspicion of looking for an “escape clause”. Thus, London risked having to accept unilateral US measures, or even seriously jeopardizing alliance solidarity, in the case of a crisis. The British, however, retained their skepticism as to whether the alliance in general would really support military solutions that might easily result in a nuclear war. Nevertheless, they accepted further military planning at LIVE OAK, but with the proviso that any action would require prior political approval.⁵³ A military participation of German forces was not yet accepted, since Berlin was regarded as a matter of special Allied responsibility. The German allies would be kept informed through a liaison officer at LIVE OAK, although the officer would not be supplied with documents. It was not until autumn 1960, when the Headquarters Allied Land Forces Central Europe (LANDCENT) investigated the issue of access to Berlin in a study of its own, that at least the German commander-in-chief, General Hans Speidel, was more thoroughly informed of LIVE OAK verbally and on a strictly personal basis.⁵⁴

The Berlin Wall Crisis and its Consequences

Such was the situation in January 1961, when the newly elected US President John F. Kennedy began to look for a fundamental change of NATO strategy that would reduce its dependence on nuclear weapons. This coincided with a new hardening of East-West relations after the breakdown of the Paris Summit of 1960, which had caused the Soviet leaders to return to their previous considerations of a separate peace with the GDR, with all that would entail for the status of Berlin.⁵⁵ The new US government knew as well as the previous administration that it would not be possible to defend the city in an emergency “except by the decreasingly credible

53 Regarding the gradual acquiescence of the British to the US position, in spite of continuing fundamental reservations, see the meetings of the BCOS, 28 August, 15 September, and 26 November 1959, PRO, DEFE 4/120, COS (59) 52, DEFE 32/6, COS (59) 57 and DEFE 4/122, COS (59) 73.

54 Report of the Joint Planning Staff, 12 August and meeting of the BCOS, 16 August 1960 regarding a German participation on Berlin contingency planning, *ibid.*, DEFE 4/128, COS (60) 51; Speidel’s successful intervention is documented at the 73rd meeting of the BCOS, 29 November 1960, *ibid.*, DEFE 4/130, COS (60) 73.

55 For the development in 1960/61, see Zubok, “Khrushchev and the Berlin Crisis”, pp. 13–16.

threat of general war". But since the credibility of the entire US-dominated alliance system was linked to guaranteeing the security of Berlin, the city was "no place for compromise".⁵⁶ On the other hand, the British and French had little desire to escalate militarily the event of a coming crisis. The option of a direct involvement of the emerging German armed forces was regarded with skepticism, as before. So the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, in contrast to their new political leadership, continued to opt for a quick change from a conventional test to a nuclear response.⁵⁷ The threat of a nuclear war was regarded as the only effective means of holding Berlin in an emergency. This view was supported by German Minister of Defense Franz Josef Strauß. Chancellor Adenauer, however, was very restrained in his answer to Kennedy regarding an early use of nuclear weapons.⁵⁸

In these circumstances, US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara demanded a revision of the Berlin plans. The new strategy was to be based mainly on an opening move with conventional forces and – despite all reservations in London and Paris – on a participation of the Bundeswehr. Meanwhile, an agreement had been reached at LIVE OAK regarding options for operations at a force level of up to division strength; the US forces were already working on a unilateral plan for the advance of an army corps on the city. Contrary to McNamara, SACEUR was "extremely concerned" about the idea of a German participation, since a Bundeswehr advance on GDR territory would be considered an aggravation of the crisis.⁵⁹ But the BAOR, as the force responsible for the deployment of LIVE

56 NSC paper "Key national security problems", 10 February 1961, and memorandum of the new security advisor McGeorge Bundy to Kennedy, 4 April 1961, quoted from Harald Biermann, *John F. Kennedy und der Kalte Krieg: Die Außenpolitik der USA und die Grenzen der Glaubwürdigkeit* (Paderborn, 1997), pp. 102–3.

57 Lawrence S. Kaplan, "The Berlin Crisis, 1958–1962: Views from the Pentagon", in *International Cold War Military Records and History. Proceedings of the International Conference on Cold War Records and History Held in Washington, D.C. 21-26 March 1994* (Washington, D.C., 1996), 68–9; Kennedy-Adenauer conversation, 13 April 1961: Schwarz, *Adenauer*, pp. 636–7.

58 Meeting between Franz Josef Strauß and security experts at the Department of State, 10 May 1961, and conversation Adenauer-Kennedy, 13 April 1961, *Declassified Documents Reference System* (DDRS) 1997, item 3477, and Schwarz, *Adenauer*, p. 637; for the British and French positions in the spring of 1961, see Christof Münger, *Kennedy, die Berliner Mauer und die Kubakrise: Die westliche Allianz in der Zerreißprobe 1961-1963* (Paderborn, 2003), pp. 72–4.

59 32nd meeting of the BCOS, 30 May 1961, PRO, DEFE 4/135, COS (61) 32; see also Gossel, *Briten, Deutsche und Europa*, p. 219.

OAK units, had not yet received any instructions from London regarding the training of such forces at the divisional level.⁶⁰ The alternative British ideas were received very critically in Washington. Nevertheless, the BAOR continued to delay all preparations, despite Norstad's warning "that the time for a show-down with the Russians was at hand".⁶¹

What really worried SACEUR was the hardening of the Soviet position. Lieutenant-General Friedrich Foertsch, the inspector-general of the Bundeswehr, reported from the SHAPEX 61 staff exercise that the NATO secretary-general had warned the alliance not to appear unprepared in an imminent new Berlin crisis.⁶² President Kennedy had occasion to experience how justified such concerns were during his meeting with Khrushchev in Vienna.⁶³ The Soviet party leader completely returned to his position of November 1958, demanding a US-Soviet agreement on a peace treaty with Germany as a whole, as otherwise the Soviet Union would conclude a separate peace treaty with the GDR in December 1961. This, of course, would terminate all of the Western powers' rights of access to Berlin. Since the US, in the meantime, had become a target for nuclear weapons due to the Soviet successes in missile research, Khrushchev regarded their warnings about a possible war over to Berlin as a "mere bluff". In responding, Kennedy tried to explain that he would not be able to abandon Berlin without a fight for the sake of the US' international credibility. The Soviet leader countered that he did not want a war, either, but he would not shy away from it if Washington was not willing to compromise. Thereupon the Joint Chiefs of Staff proposed that the president declare a national state of emergency that would permit immediate mobilization measures to reinforce US troops in Europe. They were strongly supported by Dean Acheson, Kennedy's special representative on NATO matters. But with such an aggravation of the crisis, the president feared domestic panic reactions and

60 Ibid.

61 Meetings of the BCOS, 6 and 20 June and 4 July 1961, *ibid.*, DEFE 4/136, COS (61) 34, 38, and 42.

62 Short report about SHAPEX 61, 29 May 1961, BA-MA, BW 2/2229.

63 The 4–6 June 1961 Kennedy-Khrushchev meeting in Vienna is described in detail in Michael R. Beschloss, *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev 1960–1963* (New York, 1991), pp. 193–225; see also Biermann, *John F. Kennedy*, pp. 114–21 and Münger, *Kennedy*, pp. 74–81.

damage to the US reputation abroad.⁶⁴ And even from the military point of view, these measures could not be adopted without an overwhelming risk, since the Berlin contingency plans might leave Kennedy “very little choice as how to face the moment of thermo-nuclear truth”.⁶⁵

To prepare NATO for a new Berlin crisis, the Kennedy administration briefed its allies at a meeting of the NATO Council on the dramatic course of the president’s talks in Vienna. In the eyes of the French and Germans, this seemed to be a clear hint that the US ally was trying to undermine their demands to maintain a firm position.⁶⁶ This was all the more necessary since in the spring of 1961, in particular, the Germans had displayed more and more alarm about what they thought were too far-reaching compromises. In the Military Committee of NATO, its first German chairman, General Adolf Heusinger, had demanded a “very firm position of the West [...] i.e., the determination to use the deterrent if necessary”. The same thoughts were voiced by his minister of defense, who asked for a serious test: “We must risk the poker game.” The Germans would be ready to commit themselves to real burden-sharing if the unnatural situation was finally ended in which, up to now, the Federal Republic had been excluded from the military planning for a Berlin contingency.⁶⁷ With the consent of SACEUR, a permanent German observer was admitted at LIVE OAK from early August 1961.⁶⁸ After the building of the Berlin Wall, US Secretary of State Rusk pleaded that NATO as a whole be fully informed about LIVE OAK, since all forces of the alliance would be needed in the case of an escalation.⁶⁹ But to this day, it is impossible to say when this intention was put into practice, since the LIVE OAK documents have not been fully declassified.

64 Kaplan, “The Berlin Crisis”, p. 70, and Biermann, *John F. Kennedy*, pp. 122–7.

65 Bundy to Kennedy, 7 July 1961, quoted from Biermann, *John F. Kennedy*, p. 126.

66 Against Münger, *Kennedy*, pp. 81–5, who argues that NATO was informed incompletely and in a manipulatory fashion about the Vienna summit, Christian Nuenlist gave a useful reference to the author about Dean Rusk’s briefing at NAC, 5 June 1961.

67 Statement by the chairman, NATO MC, 6 July 1961, BA-MA, BW 2/20.373 and talks between Strauß and McNamara, 14 July 1961, NA, RG 218 Central Decimal File 1961, Box 177 CCS 9165/5420 Germany (West).

68 Pedlow, “Allied Crisis Management”, p. 101; see also Inspector-General Foertsch to NATO MC Chairman Heusinger, 17 July 1961, BA-MA, BW 2/20.373.

69 Maloney, “Notfallplanung für Berlin”, p. 6.

Against all this, there was increasing skepticism in Bonn about the plans for opening operations with conventional forces. The Bundeswehr inspector-general had grave doubts about the “idea that a conflict could be limited to the corridor along the motorway”. If the weak NATO probing forces got stuck, as was to be assumed, a “deployment of 8 to 10 divisions on both sides of Helmstedt” would be necessary, which would in turn require a reduction of NATO troops in other areas of the theater of operations. Hence, the British wanted to reduce all conceivable military operations to force levels below battalion strength, and instead emphasized the option of supplying the city from the air.⁷⁰ Since the West was still in a position of strength, London considered a solution by negotiation a better option than costly military actions with unforeseeable results.⁷¹ Finally, this was also the guideline of the Kennedy administration that the president laid out in his address to the nation on 25 July 1961, having previously informed London, Paris, and Bonn about it. The US position in Berlin should not be given up, but it should be cut down to three “essentials”: a continuing presence of Allied troops, free access, and the right to self-determination of Berlin’s inhabitants – but all this was expressly limited to *West Berlin*: “The endangered frontier of freedom runs through divided Berlin.” To lend military weight to this course, Kennedy linked his intention to gradually reduce NATO’s dependence on a nuclear-based strategy with an application to Congress to increase the budget for additional conventional forces.⁷² It is now generally acknowledged that Kennedy’s speech and subsequent remarks by Senator James Fulbright about the inevitability of blocking off East Germany to prevent the GDR from bleeding white were final triggers for the erection of the Wall. However, it is not possible to conclude from these statements the definite date of the decision taken in Moscow and East Berlin.⁷³

70 On the German position, see correspondence from Foertsch to Heusinger, 17 July 1961, BA-MA, BW 2/20.373; for the British considerations, see: 45th meeting of the BCOS, 18 July 1961, PRO, DEFE 4/137, COS (61) 45.

71 47th and 49th meetings of the BCOS, 25 and 31 July 1961; 45th meeting of the British Cabinet, 28 July 1961, *ibid.*, COS (61) 47 and 49 and CAB 128/35, C.C. (61) 45.

72 Biermann, *John F. Kennedy*, pp. 127–32, and Münger, *Kennedy*, pp. 92–9.

73 Gerhard Wettig, “Die sowjetische Politik während der Berlinkrise 1958 bis 1962: Stand der Forschung”, *Deutschland Archiv* 30 (1997), pp. 383–98; Bernd Bonwetsch/Alexei Filitow, “Chruschtschow und der Mauerbau: Die Gipfelkonferenz der Warschauer-Pakt-Staaten vom 3.-5.

The three Western powers reacted with barely-concealed relief, since this measure was considered to be a defensive step that would help avert a possible military aggravation of the crisis⁷⁴. General Norstad nevertheless emphasized that the necessity of risking the use of nuclear weapons still remained if a blockade of the city – which was still conceivable – could not be broken by diplomatic or economic pressure. Secretary of Defense McNamara wanted to avoid such a scenario by improving the chances for non-nuclear alternatives, but for the time being there had not yet been sufficient progress towards stronger conventional armament in the armed forces of the US or its allies. Under these circumstances, the British finally saw no other possibility than to accept the original LIVE OAK plans, even if “once again a British Commander-in-Chief would be required to prepare plans which did not enjoy the support of Her Majesty’s Government.”⁷⁵ In September 1961, the US chiefs of staff were still expecting more offensive Soviet measures in and around Berlin. In order to present a supposedly more effective military option to their president, who still attached high priority to the maintenance of the US position in West Berlin, they suggested a possible option for a “pre-emptive strike” against the Soviet Union.⁷⁶ Plans were to be made for carrying out a limited nuclear first strike against Soviet intercontinental missiles in the specific case of an otherwise uncontrollable Berlin crisis, as soon as indisputable information of an immediate strategic attack of the adversary were available. When the Soviet leadership recognized that these nuclear attacks were directed “counter-forces” and not “counter-cities”, this option should prevent a general nuclear overkill and be just sufficient to deter Moscow from waging a general nuclear war as a result of a Berlin crisis. But these discussions were already no more

August 1961”, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 48 (2000), pp. 155–98; Heiner Timmermann, ed., *1961 – Mauerbau und Außenpolitik* (Münster 2002); Matthias Uhl and Armin Wagner (eds.) *Ulbricht, Chruschtschow und die Mauer* (Munich 2003).

74 Münger, *Kennedy*, pp. 102–3.

75 56th meeting of the BCOS, 28 August 1961, PRO, DEFE 4/138, COS (61) 56. This had been preceded by a statement of Norstad’s regarding the Berlin contingency planning, 23 August 1961, and its evaluation by McNamara for Kennedy, 25 August 1961, Jordan, 184 and NA, RG 200 McNamara Papers, Box 113.

76 The corresponding documents are described by Fred Kaplan, “JFK’s First Strike Plan”, *The Atlantic Monthly* (October 2001), and published by William Burr, “First Strike Options and the Berlin Crisis, September 1961: New Documents from the Kennedy Administration”, *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book*, no. 56, 25 September 2001.

than rearguard skirmishes. Instead, the US government went along with McNamara's idea of building up NATO's conventional armament and thus providing real alternatives to a premature nuclear escalation. Apart from a decrease of military risks, it was hoped that this would deter the Soviet Union from unilateral military measures in Berlin and bring its leadership to the negotiating table.⁷⁷

To prepare for the worst-case scenario of a new Berlin crisis combined with hesitation on the part of the allies, Norstad tried to get unilateral command authority in his function as US Commander-in-Chief, Europe at least over the US component at LIVE OAK to be able to react more quickly in the case of a Soviet surprise attack against West Berlin. But this only caused additional mistrust on the part of the British. They were afraid that their partner underestimated the danger of potential "chain reactions" leading to far-reaching military consequences.⁷⁸ Therefore, President Kennedy was not willing to pursue this option unless it was possible to reach a prior consensus with the British, French, and German governments; and the British, especially, could not be convinced of this idea.⁷⁹ In late October 1961, internal US deliberations about possible reactions to a future Berlin crisis came to an end for the time being. The president issued a new directive on the political and military options of the US. Pursuant to this, the use of nuclear weapons was only permitted at the fourth level of escalation, i.e., after three non-nuclear phases: diplomatic negotiations, economic embargoes, and conventional military probing operations that would have absolute priority over the nuclear option.⁸⁰

The next steps would no longer be determined by the ongoing planning activities at LIVE OAK. In 1962, a general agreement was reached in

77 Report by the foreign minister at the 49th meeting of the British cabinet on the foreign ministers' meeting of the Western powers at Paris, 5 September 1961, PRO, CAB 128/35, C.C. (61) 49.

78 Pedlow, "Allied Crisis Management", pp. 77–8 and the 62nd and 65th meeting of the BCOS, 19 and 27 September 1961, PRO, DEFE 4/138, COS (61) 62 and COS (61) 65, respectively.

79 McNamara to Secretary of State Rusk, 30 September 1961 and to the JCS, 2 October 1961, NA, RG 200 McNamara Papers, Box 113; see also Pedlow, "Allied Crisis Management", p. 76.

80 NSAM No. 109 „Berlin contingency planning“, undated, is enclosed in a letter from Kennedy to Norstad, 20 October 1961, FRUS 1961–1963, vol. XIV, 521–3 and analyzed in: Biermann, *John F. Kennedy*, pp. 149–51; see also the skeptical British attitude on this question (19 January 1962), arguing especially against military plans beyond battalion strength: 7th meeting of the BCOS, 21 January 1962, PRO, DEFE 4/142, COS (62) 7.

this respect. The Germans and British maintained their skepticism, arguing that a purely conventional military solution was not possible.⁸¹ More important than these military plans was the fact that the Soviet Union, by erecting the Wall, had sent a convincing signal of its future acceptance of the status quo in Berlin. During the Cuban Crisis of October 1962, the US crisis management group had always considered the possibility that Moscow could shift the confrontation from the Caribbean to the more favorably situated Berlin,⁸² but Washington never informed Bonn about the extent of these fears.⁸³ Apprehensions to this effect among the LIVE OAK staff proved to be unfounded.⁸⁴ During the decisive week, Khrushchev adamantly rejected a proposal from his foreign ministry to shift the focus to Berlin.⁸⁵ It is still unclear whether it was awareness of the LIVE OAK plans, which were communicated to the Soviets through a French NATO official, that acted as a deterrent. Regardless, the value of these plans was assessed as high enough, even if only for psychological reasons, to keep them in force until the end of the Cold War.⁸⁶

Conclusion

To return to the original question of how far consultations within NATO progressed during the Berlin crisis, the answer will be ambiguous. There was a permanent danger that a local hardening of positions in the city could escalate over a regional military aggravation to a general nuclear war. Based on the principle of four-power responsibility, the Western powers generally informed their allies to win them over. This was especially true during the Cuban Crisis of 1962, but the experiences gained by the Kennedy admin-

81 The route to such an agreement can be traced through the meetings of the BCOS, 15 March, 17 April, and 25 September 1962, PRO, DEFE 4/143, COS (62) 20, DEFE 4/144, COS (62) 28 and DEFE 4/147, COS (62) 58.

82 Discussed in detail in Biermann, *John F. Kennedy*, pp. 158–202, and Bruno Thoß, “Beding abwehrbereit: Auftrag und Rolle der Bundeswehr als NATO-Mitglied während der Kubakrise”, in *Vor dem Abgrund. Die Streitkräfte der USA und UdSSR sowie ihrer deutschen Bündnispartner in der Kubakrise*, ed. Dimitrij N. Filippovych and Matthias Uhl (Munich, 2005), pp. 65–84.

83 Report of the German embassy in Washington, 22 October 1962, BA-MA, BW 4/469.

84 Pedlow, “Allied Crisis Management”, p. 106.

85 Zubok, “Khrushchev and the Berlin Crisis”, p. 26.

86 For the so-called “motorway crisis” of autumn 1963, see Pedlow, “Allied Crisis Management”, pp. 106–10.

istration with this exercise in brinkmanship proved a salutary shock for alliance policy. If the US wanted to free NATO strategy gradually from its complete dependence on an early use of nuclear weapons, it had to offer improved and real consultations regarding concrete US military plans. But even so, a tug-of-war ensued that lasted years; the final failure of a Multilateral Force (MLF) of NATO between 1960 and 1964 revealed the extent to which the path towards a satisfactory solution was one of trials and tribulation. It took the French exit from NATO's military structure in 1966 to implement the overdue strategy of "Flexible Response". Only then and within this framework would the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) provide a forum for consultations, at least as far as operational planning for nuclear weapons in Europe was concerned.⁸⁷

87 The repercussions of the Cuban missile crisis on nuclear consultation in NATO are analyzed in: Münger, *Kennedy*, pp. 201–40, and Thoß, "Bedingt abwehrbereit", pp. 82–4.

PART II ARMS CONTROL, DETENTE, DE GAULLE

The Burden of Alliance: The NPT Negotiations and the NATO Factor, 1960–1968

David Tal

The Cold War history is the story of the conflict between two blocs and two alliances: the eastern and the western blocs, and NATO and the Warsaw Pact, respectively.¹ However, of no less importance to an understanding of the history of the Cold War is the weight of intra-alliance considerations in the shaping of Cold War policy. There are many studies on relations between the US and its allies, either within the NATO context, or between the US and one member of the alliance, be it Britain, Germany or France.² These studies teach us that NATO was not only an alliance of consent and agreement, but also an alliance afflicted with differences and controversy, and while the US was the senior partner, its ability to shape the alliance's policies and direction was not unlimited. The negotiations on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which took at least seven years, are yet another example of the impact of intra-alliance politics that was just as significant and influential as the impact of the relationship between the two rivaling Great Powers, if not more so. The NPT debate is a good example for the influence of intra-alliance politics on the shaping of the Cold War, because intra-alliance complexities were more influential throughout the negotiations than inter-bloc politics.

In fact, if the fate of the negotiations had been decided only on the basis of the bilateral US-USSR talks, there is a good probability that the negotiations would have concluded faster than they did. An NPT agreement served the interests of both the US and the Soviet Union, as neither

1 The literature on the Cold War is extensive. One example of the prevalence of the inter-bloc approach to the study of Cold War history can be found in the literature cited in Melvin Leffler, "The Cold War: What Do 'We Now Know?'" *American Historical Review* 104, no. 2 (1999), pp. 501–24.

2 Examples include: Frank Castigliola, *France and the United States* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992); John Charmley, *Churchill's Grand Alliance* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995).

country wanted to see other states acquiring nuclear capability. Apparently, representatives of the two powers thought that an NPT agreement would be easy to conclude.³ That feeling was also based on the realization that the governments concerned were already practicing a de-facto policy of non-proliferation.⁴ Nevertheless, seven years passed between the UN's endorsement of an Irish resolution to ban the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the signing of the final agreement.⁵ Why, then, did it take so long to reach to an agreement that both sides considered desirable? One reason was the nature of the process. The NPT negotiations were conducted in various forums: by the Eighteen Nations Disarmament Committee (ENDC), bilaterally between the US and the Soviet Union, and internally among the respective members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. And so, committees sat, conferences were held, memos were exchanged, and opinions were heard; international negotiations are a time-consuming matter. In addition, the NPT was only one of many subjects on the agendas of these various forums. Other issues that were discussed concurrently included the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABM), a Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty (SALT), and general and comprehensive disarmament (GCD), which had been on the agenda since the early 1950s. Within this spectrum, the NPT was not always given the highest priority. In fact, serious negotiations on the NPT had only started in 1964, and then again, the matter was discussed alongside the other topics. Last but not least, and this aspect touches upon the main theme of this paper: both the US and the Soviet Union had to answer to their allies, who introduced various demands and conditions that from time to time stalled the talks until a satisfactory compromise formula was

- 3 Memorandum of Conversation, 20 March 1962, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston (JFKL), NSF, Departments and Agencies, ACDA Disarmament, Subjects General, 18-Nation Committee on Disarmament; Memorandum of Conversation, 8 August 1962, FRUS 1961–1963, VII, pp. 541–7; Memorandum of Conversation, 23 August 1962, *ibid.*, pp. 556–9; Memorandum from Secretary Rusk to President Kennedy, 21 September 1962, JFKL, NSF, Departments and Agencies, ACDA Disarmament, Non-Diffusion of Nuclear Weapons.
- 4 British Embassy, Washington, D.C., to Pemberton-Pigott, Esq., Atomic Energy and Disarmament Department, Foreign Office (FO), 20 December 1963, IAD 1032/46, UK National Archive, Kew, London (UKNA), FO 371/171149.
- 5 UN General Assembly Resolution 1664 (XVI), 4 December 1961, *Documents on Disarmament*, 1961, p. 694.

found. This happened in the Warsaw Pact camp,⁶ and could be witnessed in the NATO camp as well. The most controversial issues that delayed the negotiations were NATO's Multilateral Force (MLF) and the Western European nuclear program under the auspices of the Euratom agency. It was not until US President Lyndon B. Johnson gave up the former, and firmly insisted on the latter, that the negotiations were concluded successfully. This chapter investigates why these concessions were necessary, and how they facilitated the path toward the NPT agreement.

The Origins of the Nuclear Sharing Debate

Discussions on the prevention of the spread of nuclear bombs had been part of the discussions on the use of nuclear energy since the technology was first introduced. And so the attempts to create an international control organization for nuclear energy, a matter that had preoccupied the Truman administration since 1946, were aimed at preventing the dissemination of nuclear weapons. However, serious discussions on this matter only began in 1961, with the endorsement of the United Nations General Assembly in its Resolution 1665 of December 1961, submitted by the Irish delegation, which called for an international agreement whereby nuclear states would not relinquish nuclear weapons to non-nuclear states, while the latter would undertake not to manufacture or accept these weapons. However, that was not the only proposal on the non-dissemination of nuclear weapons that was approved by the General Assembly. There was another Swedish proposal that was also approved at the same session. The difference between the two proposals related to what became a major source of contention between the US and the Soviet Union. The Irish proposal called for a ban on the transfer of nuclear know-how to non-nuclear states, but allowed for the creation of a NATO multilateral force as was being discussed at that time. The "Swedish resolution" precluded this type of transfer as well.⁷

6 Douglas Selvage, "The Warsaw Pact and Nuclear Nonproliferation, 1963–1965," *Working Paper* No. 32, Cold War International History Project, Washington, D.C., April 2001.

7 UN General Assembly Resolution 1664 ("Swedish Resolution") (XVI), December 4, 1961, Documents on Disarmament, 1961, p. 693; UNSC Resolution 1665 ("Irish Resolution") (XVI), 4 December 1961, *ibid.*, p. 694.

The MLF was conceived in 1960, and its rationale was strategic, but at the same time it was about control. Its purpose was to strengthen the Western alliance, to give its members access to nuclear weapons, to give an incentive to NATO members, and especially to France, not to develop their own national nuclear capability, and to leave the US in full control on the operation of the nuclear bomb. At the same time, it would prevent German participation in the operational decisions about the use of nuclear weapons. The MLF was also aimed at improving NATO's capability to launch nuclear war in the European theatre independently of the situation in the US, in response to the increasing Soviet nuclear launch capabilities. US Secretary of State Christian Herter introduced the plan at the NATO Ministerial Meeting in 1960. It called for the establishment of a submarine force equipped with Polaris nuclear missiles under the control of then Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) General Lauris Norstad, with crews drawn from at least three NATO nations. The idea was to create a force that would allow NATO countries a share in the operation of nuclear weapons, thereby inducing them not to build their own nuclear devices. At the same time, the final control over the force and over the nuclear weapons would remain in US hands.⁸

These plans were made without linkage to the disarmament talks that were underway at that time, and did not even make reference to the talks on the non-dissemination of nuclear weapons. However, the UN's endorsement of the Swedish and Irish proposals on non-dissemination of nuclear weapons gave new meaning to the MLF and established a close connection between the two issues. The reason was that the Irish proposal allowed the establishment of the MLF, while the Swedish plan ruled it out. In any case, the linkage between the MLF and the issue of non-dissemination was not made until the contradiction between the two became evident in mid-1962. US President John F. Kennedy did not encourage the idea of an MLF, and the negotiations on non-dissemination had not started yet. In what was probably sheer coincidence, both issues came to head in mid-1962. Kennedy approved the US offer to NATO, "if they

8 McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival* (New York: Random House, 1988), pp. 488–9; J. P. G. Freeman, *Britain's Nuclear Arms Control Policy in the Context of Anglo-American Relations, 1957–1968* (London: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 158–9.

wished” (*italics in original*), to develop the MLF with an arsenal of about two hundred missiles.⁹ At about the same time, US Permanent Representative to the UN Adlai Stevenson sent a letter to Kennedy urging him to respond in the affirmative to the Soviet proposal to start talking about measures to prevent the dissemination of nuclear weapons. The same feeling prevailed in the Department of Defense, where Secretary McNamara estimated that without a non-dissemination agreement, 16 more states would acquire nuclear capability within a decade, in addition to the current four. Kennedy agreed with Stevenson that the matter should be pursued, and work was done on this issue at the State Department.¹⁰ Following a meeting with Soviet officials, the State Department felt that the Soviets would not object to a non-dissemination agreement that would allow the MLF, and it prepared a draft declaration on non-proliferation stipulating that the governments of France, Britain, the US, and the Soviet Union solemnly declared that they would not “transfer any nuclear weapons directly or indirectly through a military alliance, into the national control of individual states not now possessing such weapons, and that they will not assist such other states in the manufacture of such weapons.”¹¹ The language used in the draft was meant to indicate that the transfer of nuclear weapons to nations that did not already possess them was prohibited, but that the deployment of nuclear weapons in conjunction with the national forces of member nations of NATO and Warsaw Pact was permitted, even if those members did not themselves possess nuclear weapons, as long as the arrangements were such that the US and the USSR had control over the weapons’ deployment or use.¹²

9 Glen Seaborg, *Stemming the Tide* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1987), pp. 84–5.

10 Letter From the Permanent Representative to the United Nations (Stevenson) to President Kennedy, 10 May 1962, FRUS 1961–1963 VII, p. 450–2; Letter From President Kennedy to the Permanent Representative to the United Nations, 23 May 1962, *ibid.*, p. 458f.; Memorandum of Meeting With President Kennedy, 30 July 1962, *ibid.*, p. 520–4.

11 Memorandum of Conversation, 20 March 1962, NSF, Departments and Agencies, ACDA Disarmament, Subjects General, 18-Nation Committee on Disarmament, JFKL; Memorandum of Conversation, 8 August 1962, FRUS 1961–1963, VII, pp. 541–47; Memorandum of Conversation, 23 August 1962, *Ibid.*, pp. 556–59; Memorandum from Secretary Rusk to President Kennedy, 21 September 1962, JFKL, NSF, Departments and Agencies, ACDA Disarmament, Non-Diffusion of Nuclear Weapons.

12 Minute for Use in Discussion with Draft Non-Transfer Declaration, 21 September 1962, JFKL, NSF, Departments and Agencies, ACDA Disarmament, Non-Diffusion of Nuclear Weapons.

The foreign ministers of Britain, France, and West Germany approved that formula.¹³ However, the apparent consensus within the Western camp was just a thin layer covering deep rifts. Like the rest of the UN delegates, the French representative raised his hand in favor of the non-proliferation resolution. However, France had no interest in the NPT for security, political and ideological reasons. Not only did France intend to acquire nuclear weapons, but the French government also did not rule out nuclear dissemination in principle. The treaty would discriminate against non-nuclear states, and France, which suffered from nuclear discrimination, was opposed to such a measure.¹⁴ The French also felt that they needed nuclear arms for security reasons, as Europe would carry the main burden of the fighting in case of a war, and hence required the utmost security, was the nuclear bomb. The French did not trust the US to fight for them in time of need, as they did not believe that “one nation would risk nuclear war to respond to aggression against another country”, and hence, “the only fully credible deterrent [...] was one which a nation, not subject to a veto by another nation, could use in its own defense.”¹⁵ The French also argued that the agreement would only serve the interests of the Soviets, who wanted to prevent the introduction of nuclear weapons in certain areas in Europe, foremost in Germany.¹⁶ Further more, the assumption in Paris, as articulated by de Gaulle, was that the Soviets would not sign a non-dissemination agreement as long as the US pressed for the MLF. French Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville also argued that the declaration would be “an anti-Chinese manifesto”, strengthening British suspicions that the French were slowly expanding their new relations with Communist China.¹⁷

13 Atomic Energy and Disarmament Department: “Non Dissemination of Nuclear Weapons”, 19 October 1964, IAD 1052/48, UKNA, FO 371/176386.

14 Frederic Bozo, *Two Strategies for Europe* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), pp. 199–200.

15 Memorandum from the Secretary of State: Non-Transfer of Nuclear Weapons, 10 March 1962, IAD1052/43, UKNA, FO 371/171149; Memorandum of Conversation, 3 July 1962, US National Archives and Record Administration (USNA), RG 59, 600.0012/7-362.

16 Memorandum of Conversation, 4 December 1962, USNA, RG 59, 600.0012/12-462.

17 From Washington to FO, 6 May 1964, IAD 1052/33, UKNA, FO 371/176384; From Paris to FO, 7 May 1964, IAD 1052/35, UKNA, FO 371/176384 Thomas A. Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 41–2.

Britain also disapproved of the US draft, or at least part of it. The British objections related to the question of who would be in charge of nuclear weapons that would be stationed in a non-nuclear state. The British demanded that the US draft include the provision that the nuclear power would have right of veto over the use of the nuclear weapon. The alternative, which was implied by the US draft, was that the decision to use nuclear weapons would be made by majority vote, even if the nuclear power was opposed. To the British, that meant giving Germany at least indirect control of nuclear weapons, an eventuality that the British forcefully objected to.¹⁸ The problem was that this was exactly what the Germans wanted. When the Federal Republic gained sovereignty and joined NATO in 1954, West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer pledged that the country would not produce nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons on its soil.¹⁹ However, in return, the Germans expected to see the creation of a NATO-led multilateral nuclear force. Such a force, they argued, should be operated without giving the nuclear power a right of veto on the use of nuclear weapons, and German politicians from different political circles threatened that they would not sign the NPT unless it gave Germany at least some influence on the use of nuclear weapons within the alliance.²⁰ US officials were concerned about the debate over the nature of control of the multilateral nuclear force because it was conducted in the wider context of the debate that flared in Germany between those who wanted to see the country associated more closely with NATO and the US, and those who wanted to put more emphasis on relations with France and de Gaulle. The Atlantiker-Gaullisten-Kontroverse that shook the Western alliance was only resolved when Adenauer and members of his administration

18 Note by Shepherd: "Non Dissemination of Nuclear Weapons", 12 February 1963, IAD 1052/10, UKNA, FO 371/171147; Foreign Office to Geneva, 15 February 1963, IAD 1052/15, UKNA, FO 371/171147.

19 Roland J. Granieri, *The Ambivalent Alliance: Konrad Adenauer, the CDU/CSU, and the West, 1949-1966* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), p. 82.

20 Note by H. B. Shepherd: "Non Dissemination of Nuclear Weapons", 12 February 1963, IAD 1052/10, UKNA, FO 371/171147; Foreign Office to Geneva, 15 February 1963, IAD 1052/15, UKNA, FO 371/171147; Mays, British Embassy, Bonn to Foreign Office, 2 March 1963, IAD 1052/18, UKNA, FO 371/171147. See also note on "The West German Attitude to Non-dissemination", 13 February 1964, IAD 1052/10, UKNA, FO 371/176383.

assured Kennedy that the German-French treaty of friendship (signed in January 1963) was aimed to put relations between the two states on a new basis, but within the wider context of NATO, and with Germany's full commitment to the alliance.²¹

At this stage, the US government learned that there were also problems with the Soviets. It turned out that Washington's optimism that the Soviets would accept the distinction between forbidden "transfer" and permitted "deployment" was groundless. While Kennedy explained to Khrushchev that the MLF would enhance US control over the nuclear weapons in Europe, Khrushchev argued that to the contrary, it meant placing nuclear arms at the disposal of the NATO countries, and most worryingly, in the hands of Germany.²² However, the US had misinterpreted the Soviet intentions: Khrushchev did want to sign an agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, even at the cost of accepting West German access to nuclear weapons through the MLF. East Germany and Poland strongly opposed any policy that would grant West Germany access to nuclear weapons and to the MLF, forcing Khrushchev to back off and to reject what he had initially been ready to accept.²³ In any case, at the time, the negotiations on the nuclear test ban treaty seemed to be the more promising track. The British and US governments agreed that this agreement should be pursued first, and that agreement on the NPT would be sought later.²⁴

21 Frank A. Mayer, *Adenauer and Kennedy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), pp. 93–4.

22 Message from President Kennedy to Chairman Khrushchev, 11 April 1963, FRUS 1961–1963, VII, pp. 672–73; Aide-Memoire, 9 May 1963, JFKL, NSF, ACDA Disarmament Subjects, Non-Diffusion of Nuclear Power; Memorandum of Conversation, 18 May 1968, *ibid.*, pp. 704–05; FO Minute, 17 May 1963, IAD 105/38, UKNA, FO 371/171148. See also Oral Statement Made under Instructions by Ambassador Dobrynin to Secretary Rusk, 7 February 1963, FRUS 1961–1963, VII, pp. 642–43.

23 Selva, "The Warsaw Pact and Nuclear Nonproliferation", pp. 7–13.

24 British Embassy, Moscow to Foreign Office, 5 September 1963, IAD 1052/33, UKNA, FO 371/171148; Foreign Office to the British Embassy, Moscow, 18 September 1963, *ibid.*

MLF vs. NPT

Johnson remained committed to what had become Kennedy's heritage. In a speech to the UN, the new president declared in January 1964: "The US wants to prevent the dissemination of nuclear weapons to nations not now possessing them."²⁵ These words were followed by a new proposal introduced by a team from the National Security Council via the US delegation to the ENDC in Geneva. The proposal consisted of two points: Nuclear Containment, which in practical terms meant non-dissemination of nuclear weapons, and Immediate Reduction or Limitation of Arms, which was a measure towards comprehensive disarmament. Each would be negotiated separately, which meant that the NPT was not necessarily linked to the negotiations on general and comprehensive disarmament (GCD).²⁶ The distinction between the NPT and the GCD introduced by the NSC team made it possible to achieve the former, despite all the problems along the way. Despite the countless difficulties during the negotiations on the NPT, the underlying assumption of the negotiating parties was that agreement was desirable and achievable. That was not the case with the GCD talks: The concept had been discussed since 1946, but not the slightest progress had been achieved since then; neither party really wanted a disarmament agreement of any kind.

The new initiative launched by a new administration did not remove the old problems; specifically, it did not lead to a change in the attitude of France and West Germany. The US and France were locked in competition over influence on the continent in general, and – as already mentioned above – over Germany's affiliation in particular. The MLF was therefore not only a military plan, but also a political one, aiming to tighten Germany's relations with the US.²⁷ For de Gaulle, the possession of independent nucle-

25 Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971) p. 464.

26 Memorandum from the President's Special Assistant for NSC to Secretary of Defense, 14 January 1964, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc.2. Citations from FRUS volumes for the years 1964–1968 refer to their electronic versions as they appear in the US Department of State website. Vol. XI is available at http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/history/vol_xi/index.html; Vol. XIII is at http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/history/vol_xiii/index.html. The documents themselves are cited by document number.

27 From Paris to FO, 7 May 1964, IAD 1052/35, UKNA, FO 371/176384.

ar force – the force de frappe – would allow France to act independently of Washington, thus ensuring French national security. The MLF threatened to take away that independence, as France’s ability to use nuclear weapons in time of need would depend on US consent. De Gaulle’s ultimate goal was to create a European “third force” led by France and Germany that would be based on the French nuclear power. The MLF posed a direct threat to de Gaulle’s Eurocentrism, and he therefore sharply objected to it. It also threatened to give to Germany access to nuclear weapons that were not part of the French-controlled nuclear arsenal, an eventuality that might stimulate rather than assuage Germany’s nuclear appetite, according to Couve de Murville.²⁸

The MLF was therefore also a tool in a vested competition between France and the US. It was a struggle over the nature of NATO and the Western alliance. Hence, it was important to embrace Germany and to respond favorably to its needs as much as possible, and the Germans considered the MLF to be a vital security measure. The Germans, for their part, emphasized their commitment to the Atlantic alliance in communications with Washington.²⁹ The problem, though, was that Germany made the MLF a precondition for signing a non-dissemination agreement. They warned that they would only sign the NPT after the establishment of the MLF. The German government dismissed the Soviet warning that Moscow would not sign the NPT if a MLF was created. The German government claimed that this was only a sham threat. The head of the disarmament section of the Federal Foreign Ministry argued that the Soviets were using the non-dissemination debate as a means to prevent the MLF from coming into force, but once the MLF was established, the Soviets would accept the *fait accompli*. It would also be possible to prove to the Soviets that the

28 Susanna Schrafstetter and Stephen Twigge, *Avoiding Armageddon* (Westport: Praeger, 2004), pp. 143–4; From Paris to FO, 7 May 1964, IAD 1052/35, UKNA, FO 371/176384; Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*, pp. 41–2.

29 Cf. Memorandum of Conversation Between President Johnson and Chancellor Erhard, 12 June 1964, Lyndon B. Johnson Library, Austin, TX (LBJL), NSF, Country File, Germany, Erhard Visit, June 1964; Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Germany, 8 July 1964, FRUS 1964–68, XIII, doc. 61; Telegram From the Mission in Berlin to the Department of State, 7 August 1964, *ibid.*, doc. 64; Telegram From the Embassy in Germany to the Department of State, Bonn, 11 January 1965, *ibid.*, doc. 83; Telegram From Secretary of State Rusk to the Department of State, 10 May 1964, *ibid.*, doc. 23.

MLF was compatible with the idea of non-dissemination, rather than the two being mutually exclusive, as the Soviets were now insisting.³⁰ German Defense Minister, Kai-Uwe von Hassel said Germany primarily wanted the MLF to tie the US to Germany. If the MLF failed, Germany would either seek tighter bilateral agreement with the US or develop a national nuclear capacity. Only the prospect of a US nuclear shield, regardless of its form, would prevent Germany from signing a non-proliferation agreement.³¹

To add to the confusion, the Soviet position was that the MLF was incompatible with a non-proliferation agreement, and that the two were mutually exclusive. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko made it clear that the Soviet Union would not sign a non-dissemination agreement unless the plans for the MLF were abandoned.³² The US now had to decide what was more important: the MLF or the non-dissemination agreement. The US State Department still insisted that the Soviets would eventually comply with the act, but the stakes were too high. It would take time to first establish the MLF, and then to approach the Soviet Union to discuss the non-dissemination, and time was running out. A Chinese nuclear test was imminent, and afterwards the dam might be broken, with other non-nuclear countries being enticed to develop their own nuclear program. The non-proliferation agreement seemed to be more important and urgent. The US would not give up the MLF, but it would state its intention to establish the MLF in a non-binding manner as a supplement to a draft non-dissemination agreement. That way the Soviet Union could proceed with the non-dissemination talks without implying that they had agreed to the MLF.³³ The US embassy in Moscow encouraged the administration to take that course of action, reporting that the Soviets had a stronger interest in non-dissemination than the West, and that despite its

30 From Washington to FO, 6 March 1964, IAD 1052/13, UKNA, FO 371/176383; British Embassy Bonn to the FO, 1 April 1964, IAD 1052/22, UKNA, FO 371/176384; From UK Delegation to NATO to Atomic Energy & Disarmament Department, FO, 28 January 1965, UKNA, FO 371/181380.

31 "Guidelines for Discussions on the Nuclear Defense of the Atlantic Alliance", 1 December 1964. LBJL, NSF, National Security Action Memorandums, NSAM 322; Memorandum of Conversation, 7 January 1965, LBJL, NSF, Committee File, Committee on Nuclear Proliferation, Minutes of Meetings.

32 From Moscow to FO, 29 July 1964, IAD 1052/45, UKNA, FO 371/176835.

33 Draft Position Paper, August 14, 1964, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 44.

objection and fears vis-à-vis the MLF, Moscow would eventually accept it and would carry on with the talks on non-proliferation.³⁴

While the Johnson administration might be able to overcome Soviet objections to the MLF, the problem was that the proposal for a collective nuclear strike force also threatened to tear up NATO, with the main voices of dissent coming from Europe. While the British Foreign Office stressed the political advantage of taking part in the MLF and the price that Britain would pay for not participating in it, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) dismissed the efficiency and utility of that force. Macmillan's government decided, as Susanna Schrafstetter and Stephen Twigge put it, to adopt a policy of "delay and uncertainty [that] would dissipate political momentum resulting in the eventual cancellation of the project."³⁵ Other NATO members such as Norway, Canada, Portugal, and Denmark also refused to participate in the MLF.³⁶ To this was added the French opposition, which remained as strong as it had been in the past.³⁷

As a result, US policy gradually shifted towards the abandonment of the plan for the multilateral force. On 17 December 1964, Johnson signed National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 322, which in practical terms meant that in the face of growing opposition to the idea in Europe, the US would not insist on the establishment of the MLF. Before the US took any action, Rusk asserted, the Europeans had to sort out their differences, as it was essential to present the MLF to Congress as a measure that would unify the alliance.³⁸ The US was thus effectively withdrawing from the MLF program, but would not say so. Washington was not prepared to

34 From the US Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State, 31 July 1964, USNA RG 59, DEF(MLF).

35 Schrafstetter and Twigge, *Avoiding Armageddon*, pp. 139–40.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 141.

37 On the French campaign against the MLF, see: From the Department of State to the Embassy in France, 23 October 1964, USNA RG 59, DEF (MLF); Circular Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in France, 15 November 1964, FRUS 1964–1968, XIII, doc. 47.

38 Memorandum of Conversation, 6 October 1964, USNA RG 59, DEF(MLF); "Guidelines for Discussions on the Nuclear Defense of the Atlantic Alliance", 1 December 1964. LBJL, NSF, National Security Action Memorandums, NSAM 322; Memorandum of Conversation, 7 January 1965, LBJL, NSF, Committee File, Committee on Nuclear Proliferation, Minutes of Meetings.

divide NATO over that issue, but still hoped to find an alternative formula that the French would feel comfortable with, as the reasons that had led to the introduction of the MLF plan in the first place were still there.

That did not happen immediately, though, and the struggle over the MLF continued even in the aftermath of Johnson's NSAM 322. With the stepping down of Adenauer and the election of his successor Ludwig Erhard in October 1963, the course of the *Atlantiker-Gaullisten-Kontroverse* had been changed. Erhard was a fervent supporter of the Atlantic bloc,³⁹ and by implication, a passionate advocate of the MLF. The new German government wanted to see the MLF established and thus to gain access to the decision-making process relating to the use of nuclear weapons. The German also wanted to see a nuclear European entity to which they would be party, and which would provide them with a nuclear umbrella, but wanted decisions on using nuclear weapons to be made by majority vote. This amounted to a rejection of the British demand that the nuclear power within a European nuclear entity – regardless of its form or name – would retain the right of veto over the use of nuclear weapons.⁴⁰ German Foreign Minister Gerhard Schröder made a public announcement in favor of the establishment of the MLF, an act that German commentators interpreted as indicating that the German government would no longer accept silence, delays, or vetoes on the part of its allies in response to the question how a big country like Germany, facing a threat from the east, could feel secure without possessing the same weapons that it was threatened with from the east. Either Germany would establish an independent nuclear force, or Germany's allies would have to provide another, more

39 Granieri, *The Ambivalent Alliance*, pp. 191–3.

40 Minutes, 12 March 1964, IAD 1052/50, UKNA, FO 371/181387; "Non Dissemination of Nuclear Weapons," 21 April 1965, IAD 1052/57, *ibid.*; FO Minute, 20 May 1965, IAD 1052/68, UKNA, FO 371/181388; United Kingdom Draft on Non Dissemination Treaty [undated], IAD 1052/92, UKNA, FO 371/181388; From the FO to British Embassy, Bonn, 15 June 1965, IAD 1052/101, UKNA, FO 371/181388; The Department of State to the Mission of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and European Regional Organizations, 11 July 1965, USNA RG 59, DEF 18; Record of Meeting of the Committee of Principals, 22 July 1965, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 87.

acceptable answer.⁴¹ The British did not back down from their refusal to give Germany control over nuclear weapons. To justify this position, the British government argued that first, the Soviet Union would not allow German nuclear armament,⁴² and secondly, that the refusal was not a discriminatory one, as the British plans did provide an answer to Germany's security problems.⁴³

In view of the growing opposition to the MLF within NATO, but also on the Soviet side, and still supporting the German demand for access to nuclear arms, Johnson instructed the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) in June 1965 to prepare a new program of arms control and disarmament, including measures for preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons.⁴⁴ The new plan made no reference to the MLF, but implied the establishment of a European nuclear entity where decisions would be made by majority vote, and which would give Germany a role in the decision-making process on nuclear issues. The British made their own draft, which was different from the one made in Washington in that it granted the nuclear power within the European nuclear force the right of veto over the use of nuclear weapons.⁴⁵ The British proposal was, of course, aimed at denying Germany access to the decision-making process

41 From British Embassy, Bonn to the FO, 21 June 1965, IAD 1052/91, UKNA, FO 371/181388; From Bonn to FO, 5 July 1965, IAD 1052/97, UKNA, FO 371/181388; From Bonn to FO, 6 July 1965, IAD 1052/97, UKNA, FO 371/181388. The Schröder interview is in: From Bonn to FO, 10 July 1965, IAD 1052/109, UKNA, FO 371/181389.

42 From Geneva to FO, 20 July 1965, IAD 1052/123, UKNA, FO 371/181388; From FO to Washington, 21 July 1965, IAD 1052/124; British Ministry of Defence to FO, 21 July 1965, IAD 1052/133, UKNA, FO 371/181389.

43 Minutes, "Non Dissemination and the ANF", 13 July 1965, IAD 1052/121, UKNA, FO 371/181389.

44 National Security Action Memorandum No. 335, 28 June 1965, LBJL, NSF, Subject File, Disarmament, Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee, Vol. I; Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*, pp. 55–7.

45 Minutes, 12 March 1964, IAD 1052/50, UKNA, FO 371/181387; "Non Dissemination of Nuclear Weapons," 21 April 1965, IAD 1052/57, *ibid.*; FO Minute, 20 May 1965, IAD 1052/68, UKNA, FO 371/181388; United Kingdom Draft on Non Dissemination Treaty [undated], IAD 1052/92, UKNA, FO 371/181388; From the FO to British Embassy, Bonn, 15 June 1965, IAD 1052/101, UKNA, FO 371/181388; The Department of State to the Mission of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and European Regional Organizations, 11 July 1965, USNA RG 59, DEF 18; Record of Meeting of the Committee of Principals, 22 July 1965, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 87.

on the use of nuclear weapons as foreseen under the US proposal. The US responded sharply to the British rejection. Rusk warned his British colleague, Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart, that the British draft, if proposed to the ENDC, would lead to open schism in the Western camp, as the US and West Germany at least would vote against it. It also “would present a heaven-sent opportunity to the Soviets both to exploit allied differences and to rebuff United Kingdom efforts as unacceptable in view of the provision that would still permit some form of nuclear sharing within NATO.” That would deal a heavy blow to Britain and NATO, and furthermore, such an act would “inevitably raise further doubts about the effectiveness of the NATO alliance” in the US.⁴⁶ Stewart gave up and agreed to reopen the matter, and US, British, Canadian, and Italian representatives to the ENDC met in late July 1965 in an attempt to find an agreed formula.⁴⁷ The discussions were concluded with the agreement that the US would sponsor an agreed text that would be tabled at the ENDC meeting in August. The Western Four agreed to a revised text in the spirit of the US proposal, but the British Foreign Office identified the need to move from a “hardware” solution, which entailed the buildup of MLF or a similar framework, to “a consultative solution.”⁴⁸

The US success in having its draft passed within NATO was a short-lived achievement, as it became obvious that in the face of the Soviet firm refusal to any arrangement that would give Germany an access to nuclear weapons, Washington could either comply with Germany’s demand for a Western nuclear force in which Bonn would have a say in the operation of nuclear weapons, thus postponing the negotiations on non-proliferation, or comply with the Soviet demands, at the risk that Germany could side with France and join the French nuclear project. Such a measure would effectively mean Germany deserting the Anglo-Saxon camp in favor of the French-inspired European axis. The Johnson administration decided

46 Telegram From the Department of State of the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 22 July 1965, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 88.

47 Message From Foreign Secretary Stewart to Secretary of State Rusk, 23 July 1965, LBJL, NSF, Subject File, Disarmament, ENDC, Vol. I; From Geneva to FO, 27 July 1965, IAD 1052/140, UKNA, FO 371/181389.

48 Editorial Note, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 95; Further Discussion on a Non Proliferation Treaty, January 1966, IAD 1052/54, UKNA, FO 371/187460.

in favor of the non-proliferation negotiations track, and made two decisions to stave off potential damage: first, it accepted the British demand that a nuclear power should retain the veto right. US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara offered to rectify the language of the US draft treaty in such a manner that would make clear that the US and other nuclear powers would each maintain a veto over their weapons.⁴⁹ His proposal was accepted, and Johnson decided to inform Erhard that the US would not meet its previous commitment to the MLF program.⁵⁰

Second, Johnson's White House moved from "Hardware" to "Consultation" and from there to the Nuclear Planning Group. McNamara introduced the idea to NATO "out of the blue sky"—in the words of Andrew Priest—in May 1965. McNamara proposed to create a "Select Committee of Defense Ministers" that would "examine [...] possible means of improving and extending Allied participation in planning for use of nuclear forces, including strategic nuclear forces." It would also "work out technical means for fast and secure communications among NATO governments so that consultation is practical possibility in event of crisis in which use of nuclear weapons may be contemplated."⁵¹ George McGhee, the US ambassador in Bonn, defined the task of the new body: To replace the multilateral nuclear weapons system, and to assist the US president as well as SACEUR in planning and use concerning US nuclear weapons deployed for the defense of Europe.⁵² There was domestic opposition to the idea, mainly from the State Department, and from without, mainly on

49 From FO to Dean, Washington, May 20, 1966, IAD 1052/99, UKNA, FO 371/187465; Aide-Memoire From the British Embassy to the Department of State, 1 June 1966, USNA, RG 59, DEF 18; Street, "Talking Paper", 5 June 1966 IAD 1052/104, UKNA, FO 371/187464; Letter From Secretary of Defense McNamara to Secretary of State Rusk, 7 June 1966, LBJL, Bator Papers, Non-Proliferation, 3 August 1965 – 29 July 1966.

50 Message From President Johnson to Prime Minister Wilson, undated, FRUS 1964–1968, XIII, doc. 198; the revised US proposal is contained in: UK Delegation to the ENDC, Geneva, 1 March 1966, IAD 1052/60, UKNA, FO 371/187463.

51 Circular Telegram From the Department of State to the Posts in the NATO Capitals, 2 June 1965, FRUS 1964–1968, XIII, doc. 87; Andrew Priest, "From Hardware to Software: The End of the MLF and the Rise of the Nuclear Planning Group", in *Transforming NATO in the Cold War: Challenges beyond Deterrence in the 1960s*, ed. Andreas Wenger, Christian Nuenlist, Anna Locher (London: Routledge, 2007), 148–61.

52 Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Germany, 18 February 1966, FRUS 1964–1968, XIII, note 2.

the part of Germany and Britain. However, McNamara was determined to put the new body into operation, and eventually succeeded in 1966, when the NPG was in operation.⁵³

The remaining obstacle was the reaction of the German government. Reports that the MLF idea might be abandoned did not surprise Erhard, but they placed him under great domestic political pressure. He told Johnson that an alternative solution was necessary to relieve the pressure. A successful resolution would leave Germany secure and embedded in the Anglo-Saxon sphere of influence, even as more and more opposition voices in Germany were calling for a shift towards France and demanded that Germany rely on the French nuclear arsenal. Erhard warned Johnson that without firm US action on this matter, his government might fall, to be succeeded by a government that “may not show the same loyalty and determination to cultivate close ties with the United States.” Erhard did not anticipate that such a government would turn its back on NATO, but warned it might at least contribute to a moral loosening of the NATO ties.⁵⁴

Erhard fears regarding the domestic reaction were well-founded. When it became known that the MLF had been abandoned, the opposition reacted with fierce criticism of the NPT, which was considered – and with good reason – to be the cause of the MLF’s failure, and thus for preventing direct German access to NATO’s nuclear weapons. Former chancellor Adenauer led the attack, and the NPT was likened to the Morgenthau Plan, named after US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s secretary of the treasury, who proposed harsh measures against Germany in 1944 including the country’s partition, political decentralization, and demilitarization. Others compared the NPT to the Versailles Treaty. The attacks led Erhard’s successor, Chancellor Kurt Kiesinger, to denounce the US-USSR “complicity” on NPT. “It was one thing for Germany to declare among its allies that it renounced the manufacture of atomic weapons,” said Kiesinger, “but quite another thing to ask Germany to enter into a binding agreement with its major adversary, limiting even further its capabilities in the nuclear

53 Lawrence S. Kaplan, *The Long Entanglement* (Westport: Praeger, 1999), pp. 133–4; Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*, pp. 52–3.

54 Memorandum of Conversation, 26 September 1967, FRUS 1964–1968, XIII, doc. 207.

field. This took more doing, and public opinion should be prepared for it.”⁵⁵ The situation became worse as the US-USSR negotiations advanced, and especially as progress was made on the safeguards article (see below). The domestic political outrage in Germany led Walt Rostow, the president’s special assistant, to believe that there was a strong possibility that the German government would not ratify the NPT even if (as seemed likely) they grudgingly signed it. Attitudes towards the NPT among top German politicians and officials ranged from total hostility, to grudging acceptance. The former were represented by people like German Finance Minister Franz Josef Strauss and the right-wing press. Strauss and his followers, who belonged to the former Gaullist opposition section within the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union, capitalized on the fundamental German dissatisfaction with the treaty, propagating the view that the NPT represented a US-Soviet “deal” made behind Germany’s back at her expense, and consequently Strauss could be expected to try to inflate the treaty into a nationalist issue. The “grudging acceptance” faction was represented by Kiesinger and Brandt. The problem was that German adherence was vital to the success of the treaty. Yet Rostow thought that the US could not afford to put pressure on the Kiesinger government without risking attacks on German-US ties from German nationalists.⁵⁶ Despite the domestic political storm, the German government eventually complied with the transit from “hardware” to “consultation”. German Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister Willy Brandt said that the hardware issue could be set aside, though he mentioned that there had been disagreement within the German government on this question. Brandt did not believe that the Germans would obstruct any non-proliferation agreement, despite the expected dissension within the German government.⁵⁷

55 “Kiesinger Points To Ties With U.S.; Complains of Stress Given to Disagreement on Policy”, David Binder, *The New York Times*, 28 February 1967. p. 2; Telegram From the President’s Special Assistant for National Security Affairs to President Johnson, 6 March 1967, LBJL, NSF, Agency File, NATO, General.

56 Memorandum From the President’s Special Assistant to President Johnson, 7 November 1967, LBJL, NSF, Rostow Files, Meetings with the President, July – December 1967.

57 Record of Meeting With President Johnson, 17 December 1966, LBJL, NSF, Files of Walt W. Rostow.

On the main front of US-USSR consultations, the transfer from a “hardware solution” to “consultation” proved to be a success. While the Soviets did not state flatly that they would sign the NPT if the hardware solution was abandoned, Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin told ACDA Director William C. Foster that Moscow was not concerned about present US weapons in Germany, or about the possibility of more substantive consultation between the US and its allies on the use of nuclear weapons, but about the prospect of German direct or indirect control of nuclear weapons.⁵⁸ The Soviet draft reciprocated the US agreement by banning the transfer of nuclear weapons to individual non-nuclear states under any circumstances, and by affirming nuclear states’ control over their nuclear weapons, even when such weapons had been physically transferred to a group or association. This was a clear statement that the right of veto would remain with the nuclear power within NATO; consequently, the Soviets no longer insisted on preserving the highly restrictive wording of their original draft treaty, nor did they object to existing bilateral arrangements or to consultative arrangements for nuclear defense within an alliance. Moscow also accepted that a non-proliferation treaty could not limit wartime arrangements.⁵⁹

International Safeguards

Sacrificing the MLF concept facilitated progress, but the final barrier was the problem of inspections, a long-time obstacle to nuclear disarmament negotiations. The US side insisted on agreeing on a comprehensive inspections regime before disarmament negotiations could be concluded, while the Soviets consistently rejected that demand. This was one reason why negotiations on a nuclear test ban were concluded with only partial agree-

58 Memorandum From Spurgeon M. Keeny, Jr., of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant, 9 June 1966, LBJL, NSF, Subject File, U.S. Draft on Non-Proliferation Treaty; Record of Meeting of the Committee of Principals, 17 June 1966, LBJL, NSF, Subject File, Disarmament, Committee of Principals, Vol. 3.

59 Secretary of State, “A Non Proliferation Treaty”, 28 November 1966, IAD 1052/315, UKNA, FO 371/187474; FO to Rome, 22 December 1966, IAD 1052/366, UKNA, FO 371/187475.

ment.⁶⁰ Now the inspection issue became a problem, but not because of the Soviet attitude: The difficulty lay with the US allies. The core of the issue was not about inspections, but about the safeguards that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) could provide. The IAEA, established in 1957, is responsible for preventing the misuse of nuclear material transferred from one country to another, and hence for preventing proliferation. The IAEA safeguards, therefore, were to be applied only to non-nuclear countries that wished to develop nuclear plants for peaceful purposes.⁶¹ The US wanted to see the NPT enforced by an elaborate inspection system, but were aware that such an arrangement would be “so extensive and intrusive as to be politically unacceptable,” a notion that the British Foreign Office concurred with. Instead, the US called for IAEA safeguards to be applied, and in order to set an example to the other nuclear powers placed several of its nuclear reactors under IAEA inspection. Britain was unwilling to follow the US example, as its nuclear program had been designed from the start as an integrated project linking both military and civilian components, and the British government was afraid that the safeguard article concerning non-military installations would infringe on its military programs. Britain also felt that many countries would object to the article on IAEA safeguards, and that some might even reject the non-dissemination agreement because of that article. For all of these reasons, Whitehall argued, the IAEA safeguards issue should be withheld for the time being, as a treaty without a safeguards article would be better than no treaty at all. Another idea was to detach the verification article from the non-proliferation agreement and to deal with it separately, thus eliminating an obstacle that would severely hamper the chances of success in discussions over a non-proliferation treaty.⁶² Accordingly, the British draft did not refer to verification mechanisms.

60 Kendrick Oliver, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Nuclear Test Ban Debate, 1961–1963* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 192–3.

61 Informal Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the Committee on Nuclear Weapons Capabilities, Washington, 25 September 1964, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 48.

62 Minutes, “History of Safeguards” [undated], IAD 1052/46, UKNA, FO 371/181387; Minutes, 12 March 1964, IAD 1052/50, UKNA, FO 371/181387; Street: “International Safeguards in a NPT”, 26 October 1966, IAD 1052/260, UKNA, FO 371/187472.

The US side insisted that the article should be present in the draft, and argued that the Soviets' views on the matter remained to be seen. Ironically, it remained to be seen what the Soviet position on this matter was. The news from Moscow was encouraging from the point of view of the British, who agreed with the Soviet negotiators that the safeguards article in the NPT should apply only to non-nuclear states. The US wanted to see some reference to the nuclear states as well, causing an embarrassing situation for the British, who were thus prevented from pursuing their chosen course of action, namely to adopt the Soviet proposal while acting against US interests on this matter. It was therefore necessary to find convincing arguments to justify British opposition. This had to be achieved before the US-USSR talks advanced too far, and certainly before an agreement was struck.⁶³ Apparently, the combined, although uncoordinated, pressure from both Britain and the USSR bore fruit, and in a revised version of Article III, the safeguards and verifications would be applied only to non-nuclear countries.⁶⁴

The more controversial issue was the status of the European nuclear agency Euratom as compared to that of the IAEA. The five members of Euratom that intended to participate in the NPT,⁶⁵ as well as Britain, which wanted to become a Euratom member, insisted that the IAEA should not apply safeguards to them directly, but only verify the effectiveness of Euratom safeguards system. An agreement on the procedures was to be negotiated between the IAEA and Euratom as an organization distinct from its members.⁶⁶ Secretary of State Dean Rusk accepted the European demand, and he recommended modifying Article III in a way that would allow for such an arrangement. In the words of the secretary, safeguards should be applied either by the IAEA or by its equivalent, i.e., Euratom. The members of the ACDA group were against this scheme, as they claimed that the Soviets would not agree. It was only logical to expect that the same rules would apply to the allies on either side: the Soviets'

63 J.E.D. Street to the FO, 12 December 1966, IAD 1052/358, UKNA, FO 371/187475.

64 Memorandum From the Acting Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (Adrian Fisher) to Secretary of State Rusk, 4 March 1967, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 188.

65 France was also a Euratom member, but did not take part in the NPT negotiations.

66 Ronald C. Hope-Jones to Sir John Rennie, FO, 30 November 1967, AD 7/1/1, UKNA, FCO 10/77.

Eastern European allies would be subjected to inspection by the IAEA, and US allies – particularly Germany – should undergo the same international IAEA inspection. The Soviets stated plainly that unless the US presented an article they could agree to, the safeguards article should be omitted – to Foster, the latter was an undesirable outcome. He thought that the US should not miss what seemed to be a unique chance for US-Soviet agreement on an article applying safeguards to all non-nuclear countries. The alternative would be to comply with the anticipated concerns of certain Euratom members and to settle for a treaty lacking any meaningful safeguards provision, thus abandoning one of the major arms control objectives. The non-proliferation treaty could provide one of the best chances to achieve the stated US goal of a single, effective system of nuclear safeguards applied worldwide. On the other hand, argued Foster, a treaty lacking a meaningful safeguards provision would encounter strong criticism in US Senate when it became known that deference to Euratom had prevented US-Soviet agreement on such a provision.⁶⁷

Rusk, who was not completely convinced by Foster's arguments, did two things. First, he sent Foster to visit several European capitals in early March 1967, including Bonn, Rome, The Hague, and Brussels, to convince them to accept Foster's ideas on the need to establish a worldwide and universal system of safeguards that would be based on the IAEA, and which would also include Euratom.⁶⁸ Second, while Foster was explaining his position to the Europeans, the US presented to the Soviets in late April 1967 a draft of the NPT that reflected the secretary of state's opinion. In the draft, the safeguards would be provided either by the IAEA or another international monitoring agency such as Euratom. The Soviets rejected

67 Memorandum From the Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (William C. Foster) to Secretary of State Rusk, 11 January 1967, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 172; Memorandum From the Acting Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (Adrian Fisher) to Secretary of State Rusk, 5 March 1967, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 189.

68 Memorandum From the Acting Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (Adrian Fisher) to Secretary of State Rusk, 4 March 1967, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 188; From the Department of State to the Mission in Geneva, 8 March 1967, USNA RG 59, DEF 18–6.

that demand on the grounds that inspection by Euratom amounted to self-inspection.⁶⁹

The outbreak of the Six-Day War in the Middle East in June 1967 affected the views of those NATO members that still opposed the NPT for various reasons. A NATO Ministerial Meeting was held in Luxemburg shortly after the war was over, and the attendees could not help thinking what could have happened if the defeated party had had a nuclear bomb. The need for the NPT seemed to be urgent more than ever, and both Germany and Italy, who were among the more emphatic opponents of the NPT, expressed support for the submission of the treaty.⁷⁰ Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko also agreed that an agreement should be concluded, and when Secretary of Defense McNamara set October 1967 as the target date for signing the NPT, the Soviet minister concurred. The main remaining problem was the Soviet objection to the application of the regional Euratom safeguards, and Moscow's insistence that the safeguard system must be international, and applied only by the IAEA.⁷¹ Consequently, the ACDA members increased their attempts to convince the Europeans to accept the IAEA safeguards and not to insist on Euratom. Acting ACDA Director Adrian Fisher thought that would be a difficult task, and he pondered several possible solutions that would convince the Euratom members to accept IAEA safeguards.⁷²

A solution seemed to come from the other side of the table, though. The Soviet representative to the ENDC, Alexei Roshchin, expressed his understanding for the US' special Euratom problems, and he introduced a new draft of Article III that permitted arrangements under which IAEA could make use of the Euratom system in performing the task of "verification" under Article III. The new draft also allowed Euratom countries to negotiate with the IAEA through Euratom. Roshchin told Foster that

69 Minute from Statham, FO, to Burton, FO, 15 May 1967, AD/7/1/1, UKNA, FCO 10/76; NATO Ministerial Meeting, Luxemburg, 13 – 14 June 1967, AD 7/1/1, *ibid*.

70 Telegram From the Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and European Regional Organizations to the Department of State, 17 June 1967, FRUS 1964–1968, XIII, doc. 258.

71 Memorandum of Conversation, 23 June 1967, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 198.

72 Memorandum From the Acting Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (Adrian Fisher) to Secretary of State Rusk, 24 June 1967, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 199.

he had prepared the draft without notifying Moscow, but he was hoping that his superiors would agree to the revised version. Now it remained to be seen how US allies would react to the Soviet compromise.⁷³

The Europeans were not happy with the draft. Although it was obvious that the Soviets had made a significant step in an attempt to meet the West half-way, they felt that the status of Euratom in the revised Soviet draft was still vague, and that it still allowed the IAEA to impose its will on Euratom. The Soviet draft contained articles that put restrictions on the peaceful development of nuclear programs, as well as on the control of peaceful nuclear explosions. It did not address also the fear from commercial espionage. However, the European objections were limited, as a British paper mentioned: “[T]he draft [...] is not perfect, but if we demand perfection we shall never get a treaty.”⁷⁴ The US, however, took note of the Europeans’ reservations. and in early November, Foster presented to Dobrynin a revised text of Article III that included notes made by US allies concerning the status of Euratom and its relations with the IAEA. The British were not worried that the new US draft would re-open the gap that had ostensibly been narrowed by Roshchin’s draft. They assumed that a compromise formula would be found, as on the one hand both the US and the Soviet Union wanted to see the agreement concluded, and on the other hand, the Euratom members were not united in their demands. While Germany and Italy insisted that the changes must be made, the Dutch and the Belgians were ready to compromise. It was unlikely that Germany and Italy would retain their opposition at all cost, especially in harsh light of public opinion on an issue over which they could expect little sympathy from the rest of the world.⁷⁵

73 Memorandum From the Acting Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (Adrian Fisher) to Secretary of State Rusk, 5 September 1967, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 208. The Soviet draft is in: Telegram From the Mission in Geneva to the Department of State, 1 September 1967, USNA RG 59, DEF 18-6.

74 Visit of the West German chancellor to London, October 1967, “NPT, Brief by the FO”, 16 October 1967, AD 7/1/1, UKNA, FCO 10/76.

75 Memorandum of Conversation, 2 November 1967, USNA, RG 59, DEF 18-6; Ronald C. Hope-Jones to Sir John Rennie, FO, 3 November 1967, AD 7/1/1, UKNA, FCO 10/77; Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Posts, 11 November 1967, USNA, RG 59, DEF 18-6.

The situation became even more complicated when Moscow rejected the article relating to Euratom in Roshchin's draft. The Soviet government insisted that the Euratom safeguards should be subordinated to those provided by the IAEA. Rusk urged Gromyko to reconsider this position, but the Soviet foreign minister refused. A deadlock seemed inevitable, unless one party backed off.⁷⁶ The German attitude, and to a lesser extent, the Italian position, would determine whether it would be possible after all to submit an agreed draft to the ENDC, which had already extended its session to 14 December 1967. Kiesinger was well aware of that the situation. Foreign Minister Brandt publicly described Johnson's announcement that the US would place its civilian nuclear program under IAEA controls when the NPT took effect as a "significant step" toward resolving the problem of safeguards under an NPT. Ambassador McGhee believed that the US should give the Germans clear assurances that it would not ratify the NPT unless Euratom could negotiate a satisfactory agreement with the IAEA. The Department of State and ACDA, on the other hand, did not want to go beyond stating that the US would "take into account" the status of IAEA/Euratom negotiations as part of the ratification process.⁷⁷

At this time, Germany was fighting a lost battle against the NPT. Its opposition to the treaty was no longer rooted in the military sphere, but was based on political and economic/industrial considerations. Brandt said that the Germans wanted to see the NPT strongly linked to a general disarmament agreement, as they were concerned about nuclear blackmail. That was a problem with which non-nuclear states would have to deal with, as the treaty gave the nuclear powers the ability to interfere with the programs of the non-nuclear states, even if these programs were for peaceful purposes. Similarly, Brandt was concerned that the NPT would be used to discriminate against the Federal Republic of Germany in the peaceful development of atomic energy. In this connection, he mentioned a German firm that had been on the verge of selling a reactor to another country, but was told by the prospective customer that a US firm had raised

76 Memorandum From Secretary of State Rusk to President Johnson [undated], USNA, RG 59, DEF 18-6.

77 Letter From the President's Special Assistant to President Johnson, 5 December 1967, LBJL, NSF, Rostow Files, Meetings with the President, July – December 1967.

doubts about Germany's ability to guarantee an adequate supply of reactor fuel. By contrast, the US could guarantee delivery. In Brandt's mind, this example raised the specter of unfair competition. Günther Diehl, director of planning at the West German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, mentioned on another occasion the German concern that the treaty would prevent the German industry from staying up to date on modern technology. In addition, Brandt was concerned about industrial espionage. He said that to the best of his understanding, the USSR would not accept Euratom controls and would seek to strengthen the role of the IAEA (this issue will be discussed further below). If the IAEA controls were expanded to cover civilian research as well, any advances in German technology would be exposed.⁷⁸

Secretary Rusk dismissed Brandt's fears of civil espionage, and wondered how realistic the notion of technological benefits flowing from weaponry really was. Director Foster added that he saw little danger of a leak of industrial secrets, citing the example of a US reactor in Massachusetts that had been subjected to voluntary inspection four times. A concurrent meeting of the Atomic Industrial Forum had concluded that there was no danger of industrial secrets being exposed. He added that a country could refuse to admit an undesirable individual inspector if it wished.⁷⁹

Rusk remained unconvinced, and as far as he was concerned, he would accept the Soviet formula. He assumed that the damage to Euratom's status was a risk and a price that the US should accept, as the NPT was in the long-term US interest as far as the countries outside of Euratom were concerned.⁸⁰ The US had to choose, so it seemed, between the NPT and keeping Germany as an ally. President Johnson decided against the advice of his aides when he accepted the German point of view. In what amounted to a reversal of the US position on the matter of safeguards and the relationship between the IAEA and Euratom, Johnson decided to return to the US draft of 2 November 1966, which stipulated that the IAEA should not apply

78 Memorandum of Conversation, 26 January 1967, USNA RG 59, DEF 18-6; Memorandum of Conversation, 8 February 1967, USNA RG 59, DEF 18-6.

79 Memorandum of Conversation, 8 February 1967, USNA RG 59, DEF 18-6.

80 Memorandum From Secretary of State Rusk to President Johnson, [undated], USNA, RG 59, DEF 18-6.

safeguards to Euratom directly, but would only verify the effectiveness of the Euratom safeguards system, and that this would be achieved through negotiations between the IAEA and Euratom as an organization distinct from its members. “I am assured that these key principles are consistent with the German position,” Johnson wrote to Kiesinger.⁸¹

When Foster introduced the new/old policy, it was Roshchin’s turn to ask if there was a room for changes and compromise. Regardless of what he thought on the subject, the only answer Foster could give was that the US was firm in its insistence on preserving Article III in the version proposed by the US on 2 November, even if that meant standstill, as Roschin had implied.⁸² Washington’s insistence paid off, and the Soviets agreed to the US draft of Article III of 2 November, although they registered minor reservations, which the US delegation accepted. In January 1968, Fisher submitted to the ENDC a revised draft treaty of the NPT, which included a slight modification of the 2 November version of Article III. The Germans did not like those changes, but Fisher argued that this was the price for the Soviet agreement to the US draft of Article III, and that the price was worthwhile. In any case, argued Fisher, even if the changes requested by Kiesinger’s government were made, they were unlikely to satisfy Strauss, who was apparently Kiesinger’s main antagonist in the matter of the NPT.⁸³

With these last-minute arrangements, all major obstacles to the successful conclusion of the NPT had been removed. For reasons that go beyond the scope of the current discussion, the final signing of the agreement was not until several months later. On 1 July 1968, representatives from 56 nations attended a signing ceremony in the East Room of the White House, and President Johnson made a statement endorsing the

81 Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Germany, 11 December 1967, USNA, RG 59, DEF 18; PMV (M) (68) 3, 11 January 1968, AD UKNA, FCO, 10/77. The draft of 2 November is in Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Posts, 11 November 1967, USNA, RG 59, DEF 18-6.

82 Telegram From the Mission in Geneva to the Department of State, 15 December 1967, USNA, RG 59, DEF 18-6. See also: Memorandum of Conversation, 26 December 1967, LBJL, NSF, Country File, USSR, Dobrynin Conversations, Vol. I, 11/63-4/68.

83 Memorandum From the Acting Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (Adrian Fisher) to Secretary of State Rusk, 28 January 1968, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 225.

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was opened for signature that day in Washington, London, and Moscow.⁸⁴

Conclusion

It took several years to conclude an agreement, despite the strong interest of its main proponents in seeing it signed. The delay was not only the result of natural causes, and working out a treaty, even in the most cordial atmosphere, can take quite some time. In this case, however, in addition to the obvious conflicting interests of the US and the USSR, Western intra-alliance considerations turned out to be stumbling block. The two major problems were Germany's position and Euratom. Germany sought nuclear protection in the context of the planned MLF, a stance that proved to be an impassable barrier. Progress was only achieved after the abandonment of the MLF and the retention of veto powers for the nuclear powers in a European entity that would not be a unified political unit. The second obstacle – the Euratom members' demand that their organization be granted equal status to that of the IAEA – was not met, but nevertheless, nearly all of their demands were fulfilled. It seems as if Johnson had adopted a quid-pro-quo approach when he insisted that Euratom would negotiate the terms of the safeguard arrangements with the IAEA, rather than being simply subjected to it. The US had made a concession to the Soviet Union on the MLF/ANF, and demanded a similar concession regarding Euratom. The NATO factor, therefore, was a major reason, although not the only one, why the negotiations on NPT slowed down. After the issues that had been tabled by NATO were resolved, it was possible to make progress and eventually to reach agreement on signing the treaty.

84 Editorial Note, FRUS 1964–1968, XI, doc. 250.

“A Planned and Phased Reduction”: The Trudeau Government and the NATO Compro- mise, 1968–1969¹

Mary Halloran

On 3 April 1969, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau issued his government’s long-anticipated statement on Canadian defense policy. It began unremarkably enough, with a reaffirmation of Canada’s commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD). But the rest of the two-page document left no one in doubt that the new policy would differ substantially from its antecedents. Whereas peacekeeping had once held pride of place in Canadian defense priorities, it would henceforth be relegated to fourth place, behind the protection of Canadian sovereignty and the defense of North America. The North Atlantic alliance, once the other cornerstone of Canada’s defense policy, was now ranked third. But the crux of Trudeau’s statement was to be found in the announcement of the government’s intentions with regard to the country’s military role in the alliance. “The Canadian Government,” the prime minister’s statement read, “intends, in consultation with Canada’s allies, to take early steps to bring about a planned and phased reduction of the size of the Canadian forces in Europe.”²

The announcement of the government’s decision marked the climax of a year-long debate at the political level and deep within the bureaucracy. It signified a compromise between those ministers and their officials, principally those charged with shaping foreign and defense policy, who preached the importance of NATO for Canada and for the security of Europe and North America, and their colleagues, who, at their most extreme, questioned the very need for its continued existence. What the statement did

- 1 The opinions expressed are the author’s and not necessarily those of Foreign Affairs Canada.
- 2 “A Defence Policy for Canada”, 3 April, 1969, Canada, Department of External Affairs (DEA), *Statements and Speeches* (SS), 69/7.

not achieve was to end the debate: still to be determined in the months that followed was the extent of the troop reductions in Western Europe. Nor did its promise of “consultation” mollify the other members of the alliance, as the Canadian ministers would soon learn in a series of tense encounters with their opposite numbers. The process by which the government arrived at its decision to halve its military contribution to NATO, and its impact both within government and on Canada’s relations with its allies, is the subject of the following pages.

The question of Canada’s future role in NATO had been one of the lead issues on Trudeau’s agenda when he succeeded Lester Pearson as leader of the Liberal party and prime minister in April 1968. Trudeau chose to deal with this issue as part of a sweeping review of foreign and defense policy. In the campaign leading up to the general election he had called for June of that year, he announced that his government would undertake an examination of “the fundamentals of Canadian foreign policy to see whether there are ways in which we can serve more effectively Canada’s current interests, objectives and priorities.”³ By the time of Trudeau’s decisive victory at the polls on 25 June, the policy review was well underway.

In seeking to re-define its own role in NATO, the Canadian government was also looking at the larger question of NATO’s contribution to western security. In this it was not alone. The approach of the organization’s twentieth anniversary in April 1969 was a reminder that the world had changed considerably since the late forties. This was recognized in an important study conducted by NATO itself, under the chairmanship of the Belgian foreign minister, Pierre Harmel. The Harmel Report, published in 1967, defined NATO’s future role as one of détente and deterrence, and placed a particular emphasis on the need to resolve east-west tensions through political settlement. Other signs of détente appeared as the 1960s drew to a close. The year 1969 saw the opening of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) between the US and the Soviet Union. There was also a proposal from the Warsaw Pact countries for a conference on European security in a further bid to resolve areas of conflict, and a NATO resolution in 1968 to pursue mutual and balanced force reductions in tandem with

3 “Canada and the World”, 29 May 1968, SS, 68/17.

the Soviet Union. Moreover, the countries of Western Europe were now solidly back on their feet, and there was a gathering consensus that they were perhaps now better able to assume more responsibility for the defense of the continent.⁴ All these factors, taken together, prompted a re-evaluation of the role of NATO, and in Ottawa, of Canada's role within it.

Closer to home, other forces militated in favor of change. The Vietnam War was having a profound impact on the way many Canadians viewed the US and Canadian-US relations. Anti-war sentiment increasingly gave rise to criticism of the US in general and caused many Canadians to question their country's participation in the US-dominated alliances. That criticism was echoed by the opponents of nuclear weapons, who continued to protest Canada's endorsement of NATO's nuclear capability.⁵ Nowhere were the critics louder than on university campuses, where student demonstrations were becoming commonplace, and faculty members grew more pointed and outspoken in their assessments of government policy.⁶

Their concerns were shared to varying degrees within government itself, and at the highest levels. Pierre Trudeau had been one of a handful of ministers in the cabinet of Lester Pearson who believed that the country's foreign policy had become the handmaid of its alliance obligations, and was in fact largely determined by Canada's membership in NATO and NORAD. Trudeau was keen to see the relationship inverted. As he later put it, he wanted to "stand the pyramid on its base", so that defense policy flowed from previously established foreign policy goals.⁷ For the new prime minister, all aspects of the country's foreign and defense policy must first and foremost serve the country's national interests, and he was plainly

4 John English, "Problems in Middle Life", in *Canada and NATO: Uneasy Past, Uncertain Future*, ed. Margaret O. MacMillan and David S. Sorenson (Waterloo, Ont.: University of Waterloo Press, 1990), pp. 58–9, 61; and David Sorenson, "Canadian Military Forces in the Federal Republic of Germany", *ibid.*, p. 68.; Bruce Thordarson, *Trudeau and Foreign Policy: A Study in Decision-making* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 10–4.

5 Greg Donaghy, *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963–1968* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), pp. 113–14, 166–68.

6 The criticism of Canadian intellectuals, and the views of Trudeau, are discussed in Michel Fortmann and Martin Larose, "An emerging strategic counter-culture: Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Canadian intellectuals and the revision of Liberal defence policy concerning NATO (1968–1969)", *International Journal* 59, no. 3 (2004), pp. 541–47. See also Thordarson, *Trudeau and Foreign Policy*, pp. 28–33.

7 "The Relations of Defence Policy to Foreign Policy", 12 April 1969, SS, 69/8.

unconvinced that continued membership in NATO met that standard. Some of Trudeau's own ministers went far beyond their leader's uncertainty on the issue, as would soon become apparent in the course of the defense review, and thought the country's interests would be best served by a complete withdrawal from the organization. Others leaned toward the conclusion, shared to some extent by officials in the Department of Finance, that, given the economic pressures the country faced in the late 1960s, Canada simply could not afford to equip its forces in Europe at current levels. In their view, too, the time was ripe for some adjustment in policy.⁸

Indeed, there was a consensus on the need for reassessment, even across party lines, as the Liberals' main political rival, the Progressive Conservative Party, demonstrated in promising a review of its own during the election campaign.⁹ But although the climate seemed propitious for changes in emphasis in Canada's foreign policy options, there was by no means a majority in favor of quitting NATO. In one of the few public surveys on the issue taken in the period, the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion found in the fall of 1968 that 64 per cent of respondents supported Canada's continued military presence in Europe.¹⁰ Even the left-leaning New Democratic Party (NDP), by far the most outspoken of the three major parties in its criticism of the NATO alliance, continued to support Canadian participation until the end of the 1960s; when it did officially begin to advocate withdrawal from NATO in 1969, some of the most prominent party members dissented from that view.¹¹

The critics of NATO may have been ambivalent about Canada's future in the alliance, but among its most avid supporters in Ottawa there were no such doubts. For the Department of External Affairs (DEA), which along with the Department of National Defence (DND) was principally responsible for conducting the policy review, withdrawal was unthinkable. Under Secretary of State for External Affairs Marcel Cadieux and his sen-

8 Jack L. Granatstein and Robert Bothwell, *Pirouette: Pierre Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 10, 22–3.

9 John Saywell (ed.), *The Canadian Annual Review (CAR) for 1968* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 219.

10 Bruce Thordarson, *Trudeau and Foreign Policy: A Study in Decision-Making* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 34.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 41–2.

ior staff were unswerving in their belief in the continued existence of the Soviet threat, the new emphasis on détente notwithstanding. It followed, then, that NATO was still a cornerstone of European and world stability. Moreover, diplomatic experience showed them that Canada's interests continued to be served by their military contribution to European defense. Simply put, membership in NATO gave Canada a voice in international affairs it would not otherwise have had. With this conviction went a sense of duty, in this case a duty to do everything necessary through advice and persuasion to prevent the new government from adopting policies the department viewed as wrong and even dangerous.¹² It was a task that would consume the department for the better part of a year.

It had been the prime minister's intention to settle the country's foreign policy objectives before tackling the vexed question of Canada's role in NATO. But as the review process unfolded, it became clear that the country's obligations under the North Atlantic treaty would in fact set the timetable: Canada, along with its allies, was obliged to state its force commitments for the coming year at the annual review of NATO, to be held in April 1969. Therefore the government was left with no choice but to give priority to that part of the review that dealt with defense, and leave the broader foreign policy framework aside until the review had been completed. The only foreign policy area that was immediately addressed was that of Canada's relations with Europe, because of its direct relevance to the NATO question. The cabinet appointed a Special Task Force on Europe, known as STAFEUR, co-chaired by two of the country's leading diplomats, Robert Ford and Paul Tremblay, and staffed by the DEA.

The review of defense policy began in mid-May. It was to be, as the cabinet directed, a "comprehensive review" of the country's armed forces, under the supervision of the DND, with the collaboration of the Treasury Board and the departments of External Affairs and Defence Production. But the lion's share of the work was actually done by a small contingent of officers from DND and DEA. National Defence had long relied on the defense experts at External Affairs to provide the political rationale for its

12 Granatstein and Bothwell, *Pirouette*, pp. 16–7; Thordarson, *Trudeau and Foreign Policy*, pp. 25–7.

advice to cabinet on military affairs, and the review of 1968–69 was no exception. Three officers were involved in the drafting of the preliminary report, J.F. Anderson, director of finance at DND, and two members of the Defence Liaison (1) Division at External Affairs, Michael Shenstone and Charles Marshall. They worked closely with their superiors, General F.R. Sharp, the vice-chief of the defense staff at DND, and H. Basil Robinson and Jim Nutt, respectively the deputy under secretary of state for external affairs and the director-general of political-military affairs at DEA. This team also drew heavily on the work of STAFEUR, whose chairman, John Halstead, was the director of European affairs at DEA. It was STAFEUR which argued the case for Canada's continuing role in Europe.¹³

Within six weeks, the defense review was completed. The report submitted to cabinet in July 1968 was a cogent, well-written argument for maintaining Canadian forces in Europe at existing levels. But it was not what the cabinet wanted to hear. The ministers rejected the findings, and insisted that the defense review team start all over again. What they demanded was options. The reviewers were to provide a report in which all of the policy alternatives, including neutrality and complete withdrawal from NATO, were explored. With these new specifications, the work of the defense review team began again.¹⁴

The officials were stunned. Although they knew that the new cabinet comprised many members critical of NATO, they had not anticipated such a complete rejection of their proposals. How had they so badly misjudged the reaction of their political masters? Much of the answer lies in their failure to understand the demands of the new prime minister, and the extent of his skepticism about NATO. There had been some ominous signals. Both in public statements and in private meetings with visiting dignitaries, duly reported through the proper channels at DEA, Trudeau had stressed the need for "drastic reassessment" of the Canadian role in NATO, because Europe was no longer dependent on Canadian forces for

13 Michael Shenstone to H.H. Carter, comments on "Defence Review 1968–69: Paper by Geoffrey Murray," GAP-107, 23 April 1981, Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) Historical Section; Granatstein and Bothwell, *Pirouette*, p. 14.

14 Minutes of cabinet meeting no. 56–68, 19 July 1968, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Records of the Privy Council Office (RG 2), vol. 6338.

its defense.¹⁵ But though the warnings were taken seriously at DEA and DND, they only added to the reviewers' determination to persuade the prime minister otherwise, and never seemed to raise doubts as to their ability to do so. There was also a failure on the part of the officials to come to terms with his insistence on process. Trudeau, possessed of a first-class mind honed at Jesuit schools in his native Montreal, took office determined to impose order on what he viewed as an undisciplined and haphazard method of policy-making. He set about reorganizing the cabinet committee structure to ensure thorough debate on all aspects of policy proposals as they made their way through the drafting process to the cabinet table. He insisted that departmental officials provide policy options to inform the discussions of the ministers.¹⁶ His reaction to the one-sided argument of the defense review, however well-reasoned, therefore reflected his distaste for the methodology employed as much as for the conclusions reached.

Cabinet's rejection of their findings also opened the eyes of the reviewers to the depth of opposition to NATO at the political level. Among Trudeau's ministers were several who had shared his inclination to question the thrust of defense policy in the government of Lester Pearson. These included his two oldest political allies and confidantes, Jean Marchand and Gérard Pelletier, whom Pearson had recruited along with Trudeau in 1965 to bolster federal representation from the province of Quebec. Even more determined opponents of existing policy were Donald Macdonald, the government house leader and president of the Privy Council, and Eric Kierans, the postmaster-general. A newcomer to cabinet, Macdonald was clearly a politician on the rise, and his arguments at the cabinet table for the complete withdrawal of troops from Europe were forceful and persuasive.¹⁷ Kierans, for his part, chose a more public forum in which to air his critique of NATO at a later stage in the defense review. In a speech in British Columbia vetted by the prime minister's office, Kierans urged that the money spent on NATO, "a self-justifying deterrent against a non-existent

15 Quoted in Geoffrey Murray, "The Foreign Policy Review Process, 1967–1972", FAC, Historical Section, chap. 3, 4–5; note for file, "Les Vues du Premier Ministre au Sujet du Re-examen du notre Politique étrangère", 10 May 1968, LAC, Records of the Department of External Affairs (RG 25), vol. 10064, file 20-1-2-1968.

16 George Radwanski, *Trudeau* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 140–51.

17 Granatstein and Bothwell, *Pirouette*, p. 22.

ent military threat,” be used instead in support of the country’s foreign aid program.¹⁸ The presence of such vocal and determined critics of NATO in cabinet sessions made the task of its defenders all the more difficult, particularly those responsible for the defense review. Mitchell Sharp and Léo Cadieux, ministers respectively of external affairs and national defense, were both well-regarded veterans of the Pearson government. Neither had supported or anticipated fundamental changes to Canadian policy toward NATO at the outset of the review process, and both shared the unpleasant surprise of their officials at the fate of their initial efforts.

The divisions in the cabinet were mirrored at the bureaucratic level. During the course of the first, and abortive, review exercise, senior staff at the External Affairs and National Defence ministries found themselves increasingly at odds with their colleagues from the Privy Council Office (PCO) and the Treasury Board, who complained that DEA and DND were making the case for conclusions already endorsed by the departments, rather than examining alternatives to existing policy on NATO.¹⁹ What made this disagreement more troubling for the defenders of the status quo was that these members of the central agencies were more and more inclined to have the ear of the prime minister, even on those matters once thought exclusively to be the domain of External Affairs and National Defence. This environment did not inspire confidence in the review team as it took up its task for a second try.

The defense review committee, along with their collaborators from STAFEUR, returned to their work in August 1968. This time they were armed with a list of nine policy options prepared by PCO, covering every alternative from neutrality to an expanded role in NATO, which they set about to address individually and in depth. Their work would carry them through to February 1969, at which time the ministers would consider the redrafted review as well as the STAFEUR report in preparation for the decisive cabinet meeting in March.

Just as the defense team was gearing up for its second effort, news came of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia on 20 August 1968. Canada issued

18 Jamie Swift, *Odd Man Out: The Life and Times of Eric Kierans* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1988), pp. 206–7.

19 Murray, “The Foreign Policy Review Process”, chap. 3, pp. 5–6.

a statement critical of the “flagrant breach of the principle on non-intervention”, while its representative at the United Nations, George Ignatieff, spearheaded efforts in the Security Council for a resolution condemning the Soviets’ actions, in due course vetoed by the Soviets themselves. NATO took steps, with the concurrence of the Canadian government, to curtail social contacts with the USSR, but neither Canadian-Soviet relations, nor the broader alliance efforts in search of détente, were hampered in the long term by the events of August 1968.²⁰ Although the crushing of the “Prague Spring” offered ample proof to some of NATO’s continuing relevance, and of the imprudence of relying exclusively on détente, the incident had no discernible impact on the ultimate outcome of the defense review. The fact that the defense review was ongoing, however, and that so much of the country’s defense policy was still to be determined, did have an influence on cabinet reactions to the Soviet incursions. In September, immediately following the invasion, Sharp and Cadieux reported to their cabinet colleagues on an aide-memoire from the US government in which it exhorted its NATO colleagues to adopt “concerted measures in various fields” in order to send a strong signal to the Warsaw Pact countries. In a separate note, the US asked the Canadian government to maintain the present level of six squadrons of CF-104s, or 108 aircraft, in Europe, rather than reducing the level to four squadrons, or 88 aircraft. This posed a difficulty for the government. Before the Soviet invasion, it had informed its allies about its intention to make the cut, tantamount to a 20 per cent reduction. In the days following the crisis, the US, along with West Germany, Britain, and Norway, had adopted the policy of making no reductions in their NATO force levels for the present. For Canada to proceed with its own cuts would set it apart from its allies, and might be interpreted as undermining NATO’s response. But Trudeau was one of many in the cabinet equally concerned that to reverse the decision on the reduction might be seen as deliberate escalation in the NATO commitment, and more to the point, could be seen as prejudicing the defense policy review. Trudeau himself was inclined to proceed with the cuts. As he put it, “the government should

20 Granatstein and Bothwell, *Pirouette*, pp. 191–2.

not be interested in adopting measures just for show and there was a need for a basic re-assessment of the role of the middle power.”²¹

The debate continued in the weeks leading up to the NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels in mid-November 1968. In the end, cabinet agreed to postpone the cut for one year, thus leaving the number of CF-104s at 108, on the proviso that the necessary CAN\$1.5 million could be found in the existing budget of National Defence.²² But the meeting itself did not reflect well on the Canadians. In part this was because the prime minister had stirred some controversy with his public remarks to the effect that the situation in Europe concerned him less than did the incendiary conditions prevailing in some American cities. He also, unwittingly or not, set the tone for the Canadian delegation in Brussels by telling Parliament that Canada had not made up its mind about the need for a NATO response to Czechoslovakia but would wait and see what its allies had to say.²³ There was also confusion surrounding the announcement of Canada’s decision to maintain its level of 108 aircraft, and to fulfill an earlier commitment to provide four modern destroyers and two support ships. Some of the allies misinterpreted these as an escalation of Canada’s alliance commitment, which Trudeau in Ottawa and his ministers in Brussels moved quickly to deny. An additional blow to Canada came with the publication of remarks attributed to Canada’s ambassador to NATO, Ross Campbell, describing the government’s performance as “disgraceful.” Although the comment was repudiated, the incident pointed to the difficulties created for the Canadian delegation by Ottawa’s seeming uncertainty in the direction of its defense policy. Back in Ottawa after the meeting, Léo Cadieux also acknowledged the deleterious effect the ongoing uncertainty was having on morale in the armed forces, and urged that the defense review be brought to an early conclusion.²⁴

21 Minutes of cabinet meetings nos. 72–68, 26 September, 78–68, 31 October, 79–68, 1 November 1968, RG 2, vol. 6338.

22 Minutes of cabinet meeting no. 83–68, 21 November 1968, RG 2, vol. 6338.

23 CAR, 1968, pp. 246–7.

24 Marcel Cadieux, diary memorandum, 17 November 1968, LAC, Marcel Cadieux Papers, vol. 4; Ross Campbell interview, Ottawa, 18 June 1982; CAR 1968, p. 247; minutes of cabinet meeting no. 83–68, 21 November 1968, RG 2, vol. 6338.

But that was not likely to happen. The review was about to take a new twist, as a result of decisions taken earlier in the process. One of principal criticisms leveled at the foreign policy inherited by Trudeau, particularly by the academic community, was that it was made within the confines of government, without public discussion or consultation. Indeed, it had been one of Trudeau's complaints that even within cabinet, the subject had been the exclusive domain of Pearson and his external affairs minister, Paul Martin, Sr. Broadening the scope of debate on foreign policy issues had been part of his plan in setting out the parameters of the review. It was at the prime minister's insistence, therefore, that those in charge of both the foreign and defense policy reviews solicited expert opinion from outside government in carrying out the various sectoral studies. Trudeau himself held informal meetings with academics to discuss a range of foreign policy questions during his first year in office, once in Toronto and later at his official residence in Ottawa. Several of his ministers, including Mitchell Sharp, followed suit. Although not all of these encounters were regarded as particularly fruitful by the participants, they did at least open the lines of dialog between the politicians and some of their sternest critics.²⁵

Canadian policy toward NATO was the main topic addressed at a large meeting of academics and government officials in early January 1969. The seminar, in Hull, Quebec, was organized by the Special Task Force on Europe to meet the demands for public consultation. Although Marcel Cadieux, the under-secretary, was privately dubious about its usefulness, he duly attended with the minister and gave the opening address. To facilitate discussion, STAFEUR had distributed background papers on various aspects of Canada's relations with Europe, but it was plain that the academics had come to discuss NATO. The seminar was not considered to have been particularly successful. For one thing, the academics present complained that they were heavily outnumbered by the bureaucrats; for another, each side was more intent on making its case – the academics for quitting NATO, the officials for maintaining the Canadian troops in Europe – than in listening to opposing ideas. Although the most significant contribution of the seminar may have been in teaching DEA, as the

25 Thordarson, *Trudeau and Foreign Policy*, pp. 123–4.

minister put it, “how not to do it,” it did not deter its officers from holding later and more profitable discussions with academic and other specialists from the private sector as the foreign policy review took shape.²⁶

Meanwhile, as the defense review and STAFEUR reports were being finalized, the senior officers at DEA grew more worried about the ultimate decision. Increasingly, their concerns focused on the prime minister. Each minister would be entitled to a voice in the cabinet deliberations, but Trudeau’s views would carry the day. As early as September, Sharp admitted that he could not predict whether or not his leader would support Canada’s continuing participation in the alliance, and contemplated the possibility of his own resignation in the event of a decision to withdraw.²⁷ Trudeau’s musings in the presence of a senior official from DEA before the NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels indicated his persistent skepticism about NATO’s contribution to East-West stability, and the relatively greater importance he appeared to attach to the defense of North America.²⁸ Their uncertainty as to Trudeau’s intentions made both Sharp and his senior officials nervous and defensive as the NATO decision loomed.

By late February, the text of the defense policy review and the report of STAFEUR were ready for submission to the Cabinet Committee on External Policy and Defence. The authors of the defense review, all too aware of the perceived shortcomings of their first effort, had set about to give the ministers the policy options they demanded. Each was scrutinized in detail, with particular attention given to the implications of adopting a policy of nonalignment, but the authors were careful to make no recommendations. The report of the task force, on the other hand, argued forcefully that Canada’s economic, political and defense interests would be best served by continuing its military commitment to Europe.²⁹

Even before the cabinet met to discuss the documents, the DEA had a foretaste of Trudeau’s reaction. An early draft of the STAFEUR report was the lead item on the agenda for a meeting of the European heads of

26 Cadieux, diary memorandum, 30 October, 1968, Cadieux papers, vol. 5; interview with John Holmes, Grand Bend, Ont., 2 September, 1982; Thordarson, *Trudeau and Foreign Policy*, pp. 125–7.

27 Cadieux, diary memorandum, 24 September 1968, Cadieux Papers, vol. 4.

28 H.B. Robinson to SSEA, 9 November 1968, RG 25, vol. 10271, file 27-1-1.

29 Cadieux to SSEA, “Defence and European Policy Reviews,” with attachment, 27 February 1969, LAC, Michael Shenstone Papers, Vol. 1.

mission in London in January 1969. For most of the 24 senior diplomats present, it was to be their first encounter with the prime minister, who was in London to attend a Commonwealth Heads of Government conference. Not surprisingly, the ambassadors, many of whom had contributed to the work of STAFEUR, endorsed its conclusions. In their eyes, the case for continued participation in NATO was all the more compelling in the aftermath of the USSR's invasion of Czechoslovakia. But they found themselves at odds with Trudeau. In words that some of those present found patronizing, the prime minister made no attempt to hide his dissatisfaction with the STAFEUR exercise, in particular its failure, in his view, to look at alternatives to Canada's existing policy toward Europe. The uneasy exchange worried the department, as it realized that once again it had failed to meet the prime minister's expectations.³⁰

More telling evidence of Trudeau's dissatisfaction arrived on the very eve of the pivotal cabinet meeting at the end of March. When the ministers of external affairs and defense met with their senior staff to go over the briefing material supplied by the PCO, they saw for the first time a cabinet document entitled "Canadian Defence Policy - A Study". It was the work of Ivan Head, who served as the foreign policy advisor in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), and a small group of officials from the PCO and Treasury Board. Unhappy with the results of the defense review, Trudeau had asked them, in secret, to come up with alternative proposals. The result was the document that took Sharp and Cadieux so much by surprise. The report of the "Non-Group," as Head and his co-authors were known, proposed a radical re-allocation of Canada's military resources, the bulk of which would be assigned to domestic defense, leaving only a small contingent in Europe. It also argued for the phasing out of Canada's nuclear role.³¹

The distribution, with Trudeau's blessing, of a document that so roundly contradicted the advice of his own ministers implied a lack of confidence

30 Gordon Brown, "Closing a Mission," in *Special Trust and Confidence: Envoy Essays in Canadian Diplomacy*, ed. David Reece (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1996), pp. 51–2; Ivan Head and Pierre Trudeau, *The Canadian Way: Shaping Canada's Foreign Policy, 1968–1984* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), pp. 68–9.

31 "Canadian Defence Policy: A Study", RG 25, vol. 10272, file, 27-1-1; Head and Trudeau, *The Canadian Way*, 84; a full account of the impact of the Non-Group report is found in Granatstein and Bothwell, *Pirouette*, pp. 1–6, 20–1.

in their policies, and Cadieux and Sharp were quick to react. Adjourning the meeting, they called Trudeau and angrily demanded an explanation. Cadieux went so far as to threaten resignation. The prime minister denied that he was trying to undercut their advice, and had the Non-Group report withdrawn from cabinet consideration.³² But the document had already been circulated among the ministers, and its proposals no doubt helped to shape the ensuing debate.

But even before the appearance of the Non-Group report, the defenders of current NATO policy had concluded that their position was untenable. Years after the event, Sharp wrote that he and Léo Cadieux had come to recognize that “it would be virtually impossible to convince our colleagues to increase defense expenditures by the hundreds of millions of dollars necessary to equip for the tasks assigned to them the 10,000 men in our NATO contingent in Europe.” Domestic fiscal pressures, together with the economic prosperity of a revived Europe, had prepared them for the inevitability of a “substantial reduction”.³³ Nevertheless, the ministers went to the cabinet meeting on Saturday, 29 March prepared to defend the recommendations of their officials.

This they did throughout the weekend. As expected, Donald Macdonald led the attack on the defense review, calling into question the objectivity of the officials responsible for it. With Trudeau’s permission, he also read a statement urging his colleagues to end the country’s membership in NATO. This led to lengthy debate that touched on the some of the fundamental principles of Canadian defense policy. By the end of the second day, a consensus had emerged that Canada should continue to pursue a policy of alignment, and that NATO contributed positively to the stability of Europe. What was left undecided on Sunday night was the extent of Canada’s future participation in the alliance. Trudeau put to the ministers four propositions, but the session ended without agreement on the most contentious of these, which signaled the government’s intention “to reduce and at the earliest possible date, end, the stationing of forces

32 Mitchell Sharp, *Which Reminds Me...The Memoirs of Mitchell Sharp* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 174. Head and Trudeau refer to a telephone conversation the same evening in which it was not Cadieux, but Sharp who threatened to resign. Cf. *The Canadian Way*, p. 82.

33 Sharp, *Which Reminds Me...*, p. 174.

in Europe.” Trudeau adjourned the meeting until Tuesday to allow the Privy Council Office, in conjunction with External Affairs and Defence, to prepare a draft position paper reflecting the thrust of the previous two days’ debate.³⁴

The statement that was released on 3 April reflected the hard-won compromise achieved after three days of interdepartmental wrangling and two more sessions at the cabinet table. The weekend deliberations had shown the inevitability of force reductions. The efforts of External Affairs therefore focused on minimizing the damage to the country’s relations with its allies. Sharp argued that the announcement should indicate Canada’s intention to withdraw troops only as part of a balanced force reduction of NATO and Warsaw Pact forces, and not as a unilateral move. This Trudeau rejected out of hand, although the final draft did state that Canada’s decision would be taken “in consultation with” its allies. The major concession won by the defenders of the NATO commitment was the removal of any reference to Canada’s intention to end its military presence in Europe. To prevent Léo Cadieux’s resignation, Trudeau agreed that the statement would announce the “planned and phased reduction” of Canadian troops, rather than their complete withdrawal.³⁵

That the statement was deliberately vague as to timing and other details was in part the work of External Affairs, which persuaded the prime minister to defer any decision on the specifics of troop reductions until after the NATO consultations in May. At the cabinet’s behest, a task force of senior civil servants, drawn from External Affairs, National Defence, and the central agencies, met in April to draw up recommendations for future force levels. To the consternation of the DEA representative, Jim Nutt, it soon became apparent that his counterparts from the PCO and Treasury Board persisted in the belief that the “planned and phased reduction” was intended to lead to the complete withdrawal of Canadian troops. Nutt

34 Minutes of cabinet meetings no. 16–69, 29 March, and no. 17–69, 30 March 1969, RG 2, vol. 6340.

35 Cadieux to SSEA, “Defence Policy,” 1 April 1969, RG 25, vol. 10272, file 27-1-1; Shenstone, “Draft Outline of Account of Defence Policy Review Discussions...”, 30 July 1970, p. 8, Shenstone Papers, vol. 3, diary file; see also Granatstein and Bothwell, *Pirouette*, p. 24; Cadieux, “Memorandum for the Minister (in Cabinet)”, 3 April 1969, RG 25, vol. 10272, file 27-1-1; Granatstein and Bothwell, *Pirouette*, p. 25.

succeeded in preventing the task force from adopting that interpretation. His efforts, in concert with those of National Defence, were also necessary to ensure that the recommended troop levels allowed Canada to maintain a viable force in Europe. It was eventually decided to reduce the total number of personnel in the Canadian armed forces from 98,000 to 82,000, of which 5,000 were to remain in Europe as part of the NATO contingent. That figure was substantially higher than the 3,500 originally favored by the other task force members, but still represented a reduction of 50 per cent.³⁶

The NATO decision had the predicted effect on the other members of the alliance. In public, their reactions were at first restrained, with the various foreign offices, including the US State Department, choosing to comment favorably on Canada's decision to remain a member of NATO.³⁷ It was left to Mitchell Sharp and Léo Cadieux to deal with the blunter criticisms in private gatherings with their NATO counterparts. At the ministerial meeting in Washington in April to mark the twentieth anniversary of the alliance, Sharp did his best to present the decision in as positive a light as possible, but the reaction of the other foreign ministers was unequivocal. They did not appreciate the lack of consultation, nor were they firmly convinced of Canada's continuing commitment to the alliance.³⁸ Interestingly, however, the reaction of the US was muted in comparison with that of the Europeans. The tone of the US response was apparently set by President Richard Nixon when Trudeau met with him in Washington in March. At that time, the president made no strong objection to the prospect of some reduction in Canada's military commitment to Europe, possibly because, as he acknowledged privately to Trudeau, he hoped to bring about a similar redistribution of US forces.³⁹

36 "Minutes of first meeting of Task Force - Phase 2- Defence Review," 11 April 1969, with attached guidelines; memorandum to cabinet, S 3120-24 (CDS), "Defence Policy Review - Phase 2, Report by the Interdepartmental Working Group," 30 April 1969, RG 25, vol. 10272, file, 27-1-1; confidential interview; Granatstein and Bothwell, *Pirouette*, p. 28.

37 CAR 1969, 235.

38 Sharp, "NATO: Reviewed, Revised and Renewed", *Bout de papier* (vol. 6, no. 1), pp. 28-9.

39 Minutes of cabinet meeting no. 17-69, 30 March 1969, RG 2, vol. 6340; Robert Bothwell, "Small Problems': Trudeau and the Americans", in *Trudeau's Shadow: The Life and Legacy of Pierre Elliott Trudeau*, ed. Andrew Coyne and Jack L. Granatstein (Toronto: Random House Canada, 1998), p. 212.

There was more trouble in store for Léo Cadieux in Brussels when he reported to opposite numbers on the NATO Defense Planning Committee in late May on the projected size of the Canadian contingent, which then stood at 3,500. From five of the Europeans, Cadieux encountered “very heavy and unanimous condemnation” of the proposals. Their criticism centered on the unilateral nature of the decision, and on the additional burden which any reduction in Canada’s contribution would place on the other allies. Emotions ran high. That Canada, in view of the instrumental role it had played in the founding of the alliance, was now seemingly turning its back on it, reduced at least one of the European ministers to tears.⁴⁰ The longer-term impact of the decision would become evident some years later, when Trudeau’s government, in an effort to diversify Canada’s political and economic relations, sought to establish a contractual link with the European Economic Community. Although an accord was eventually signed in July 1976, the negotiations were prolonged and difficult, and the results disappointing. Still later, before leaving office in 1984, Trudeau tried with limited success to enlist the support of European governments for his much vaunted “peace initiative”. Mitchell Sharp was among those who later blamed the “mishandling of the NATO decision” for subsequent difficulties with the European allies.⁴¹

The domestic reaction varied. Robert Stanfield, the leader of the opposition, said that the announced cuts undermined both NATO and Canada, while the NDP’s defense critic called them a “compromise” that would please no one. Although some editorial opinion was sharply critical of the government for its perceived renegeing on commitments, the response on the whole was relatively muted. The advocates of change seemed to accept it as a step in the right direction, while the staunch supporters of NATO took comfort in the fact that a contingent remained in Europe.⁴² The long delay in finding a new policy, together with the very public nature of the debate, helped to create an expectation of change.

40 Marcel Cadieux to SSEA, “Defence Review – Discussions in Brussels,” 28 May 1969, RG 25, vol. 10272, file 27-1-1.

41 Sharp, *Which Reminds Me...*, pp. 175–6.

42 Political and editorial reaction is discussed in CAR, pp. 240–1, 264.

By April 1969, a change in policy also seemed inevitable to the prime minister and his advisers. In explaining the rationale for rejecting the recommendations of the defense review some years after the event, Trudeau acknowledged the care and thought with which they had been prepared. But having argued the need to adapt policy to changing circumstances, Trudeau “knew how outraged his reformist cabinet colleagues would be, and sensed how disappointed a large segment of the Canadian public would be, should the recommendations be accepted without challenge.” After so much public discussion, and a review process that had gone on, under various guises, for a year, acceptance of the status quo would have signified “that the advocates of change were misguided, that ministers were in error, that public servants were not to be challenged, that a lengthy review process was apparently a charade.”⁴³ The challenge to the public service was in itself an important aspect of Trudeau’s approach to the review, and the wish to shake up External Affairs in particular no doubt colored his reaction to their reports.⁴⁴ That the decision also reflected the convictions of the prime minister was made clear in a speech in Calgary, shortly after the new policy was announced, in which his extemporaneous remarks revealed the depths of his doubts about NATO, and his resolve not to let the alliance determine Canada’s foreign policy.⁴⁵

The defenders of NATO in External Affairs and National Defence did not share the prime minister’s doubts. In fact, they had become even more convinced of the justification for NATO and Canada’s contribution to it in the course of the defense review. But it could be argued that they, too, accepted the inevitability of the outcome. The impossibility of maintaining Canada’s military contribution to NATO at current levels had been brought home to them early in the review process. After the failure of the first draft of the defense review, the goal had become to secure the cabinet’s commitment to a continued role in NATO, even if on altered terms. This they had done, in spite of bureaucratic infighting, influential opposition at the cabinet level, and a prime minister who at times seemed determined to

43 Head and Trudeau, *The Canadian Way*, pp. 79–80.

44 Trudeau’s attitudes to the department before becoming prime minister and some of his controversial remarks early in his tenure are discussed in Thordarson, *Trudeau and Foreign Policy*, pp. 91–2, and Granatstein and Bothwell, *Pirouette*, pp. 11–2.

45 CAR, 1969, p. 236.

ignore departmental advice in favor of that of his own advisers in the PMO and PCO. The result was a compromise that ensured Canada's continuing military presence in Europe for the next two decades.

The Domestic Cost of NATO Membership: Canada's Commitment to NATO Unity and the Growth of Separatism in Quebec, 1956–1967

Robin S. Gendron

In the years from the creation of NATO in 1948/9 through the 1960s, Canada was one of its most committed members. Because the alliance had the potential to offset Canada's military, political, and economic dependence on the US, and also represented values that united North America and Western Europe, its importance to Canada transcended the principle of collective security against attack that was its basic *raison d'être*. As a result, support for NATO became and remained one of the pillars of Canadian foreign and defense policies in the 1950s and 1960s. These were difficult years for the alliance, however, as different conceptions of NATO's scope, role, and leadership as well as competing national interests led to increasingly tense relations between some of the alliance's members. Given the importance that it placed on NATO, the growing fissures in the alliance's unity, and the antagonism between France and the US and Britain in particular, worried the Canadian government. True to its middle power and helpful fixer instincts, the Canadian government's response was to attempt to heal the rifts between the allies. In practice, this goal compelled the Canadian government to demonstrate a heightened degree of deference to French sensitivities with the intent of minimizing or even reversing France's gradual alienation from the alliance.

This deference manifested itself in Canadian support for the efforts to preserve France's interests and influence in its dependencies in Africa before, during, and after their independence in the 1950s and early 1960s. Intended to help preserve the solidarity of the Atlantic alliance, this support had unanticipated domestic consequences for Canada. Because of it, Canadian governments deliberately downplayed Canada's own political, economic, and cultural interests in French Africa in the years prior to the

withdrawal of French forces from the NATO unified command in 1966. The slow growth of Canada's relations with the French-speaking states of Africa, however, contributed to the growing belief among French Canadian nationalists, especially in Quebec, that Canada's federal government was neglecting their interests. They, in turn, increasingly argued that the provincial government in Quebec City needed to exercise greater powers, including the right to conduct its own international relations, in order to protect and advance French Canadian interests. During the 1960s, this point became a key battleground between separatists who hoped and federalists who feared that an autonomous international identity for Quebec would ultimately lead to Quebec's complete independence from Canada. In effect, nationalists in Quebec exploited conditions created by the Canadian government's concern for and commitment to NATO unity to demand greater autonomy for the province of Quebec, an indirect yet important contribution to the separatist challenge that engulfed Canada in the 1960s and beyond. This, then, is not an article about Canada's involvement in NATO per se. Rather, it examines some of the unintended domestic political consequences of Canada's membership in and concern for the Atlantic alliance.

Nationalism to Separatism in Quebec

French Canadian nationalism was not a new phenomenon in Canada. Up until the 1950s, however, mainstream French Canadian nationalism had been, with a few exceptions, largely concerned with protecting French Canadian culture and the status of the French-speaking minority within Canada as a whole. Though French Canadian nationalism often clashed with competing visions of the country, the resulting periodic crises typically involved attempts to define Canada rather than to subvert or destroy it. Quebec's Royal Commission of Inquiry on Constitutional Problems reflected this dimension of French Canadian nationalism in its conclusions, known as the Tremblay Report, published in 1956. Harshly critical of the centralization of power within Canada by the federal government, the Tremblay Report advocated re-balancing the responsibilities of the federal and provincial jurisdictions according to the Compact Theory of Con-

federation, the late 19th century argument that the provincial and federal governments were equal in status and sovereignty. In addition to restoring Quebec's lost powers and autonomy vis-à-vis the federal government, however, the Report also sought for the province a special role or place within the federation as the representative and voice of one of Canada's founding peoples.¹ As the historic home of the French Canadian people and the only jurisdiction within Canada that had a French Canadian majority, the Tremblay Report argued that Quebec had a responsibility for protecting French Canadians and their culture. In this, it echoed another version of the old Compact Theory of Confederation, which held that Canada itself had been the result of an agreement, a compact, between its French- and English-speaking peoples. The Tremblay Report was thus firmly grounded in the late 19th and early 20th century intellectual and constitutional traditions of French Canadian nationalists like Honoré Mercier and Henri Bourassa. It also reflected a mainstream sense of French Canadian nationalism that challenged the status quo in Canada in the 1950s, but did not threaten the fundamental existence of the country itself.

The onset of the Quiet Revolution brought to the fore a different – and for Canadian unity, more sinister – manifestation of French Canadian nationalism. In the early 1960s, a more narrowly defined sense of nationalism emerged from the ethno-cultural version of French Canadian nationalism that, though focused predominantly on Quebec, embraced all French Canadians. Instead, nationalists in Quebec began to focus their attention and ambitions almost exclusively on the province. Writing off the French minorities in the rest of Canada as virtually a lost cause, the new breed of nationalists considered that building a strong homeland in Quebec alone would be the only way to preserve, protect, and promote the French-speaking people and their culture in North America.² In essence, a sense of civic nationalism based on loyalty to a defined geographic locality and the institutions that governed it was beginning to replace the broader

1 Donald J. Horton, *André Lawendreau: French Canadian Nationalist 1912–1968* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 167.

2 In 1961, for example, Marcel Chaput's *Why I am a Separatist* predicted the doom of the French-speaking minorities in Canada, "arguing that Confederation had become 'the graveyard of the minorities'". As cited in Marcel Martel, *French Canada: An account of its creation and break-up, 1850–1967* (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, 1998), pp. 21–2.

sense of nationalism based on membership in an ethno-cultural community. French Canadian nationalists in Quebec were becoming Quebec nationalists with the goal of creating *un Québec pour les Québécois*. Not all French Canadian nationalists in Quebec became separatists, but by the early 1960s, a growing number of them were beginning to reject the idea of Confederation in favor of Quebec's independence from Canada.

Though the separatist movement sprang from a number of sources in Quebec and beyond, it was fuelled in part by the constraints imposed upon Quebec by Canada's constitution and its federal system of government. From a nationalist perspective in Quebec, the federal government was either unable or unwilling to promote the modernization of French Canadian society, but simultaneously impeded Quebec by denying it the full powers it needed to do so for itself.³ Among the nationalists' many complaints, mostly domestic in nature, Quebec's inability to pursue its own international relations was particularly galling, since the belief was widespread that contacts with other French-speaking peoples were important to the survival and the vitality of the French culture in Quebec. In the early 1960s, however, Canada's foreign relations were overwhelmingly oriented towards the US and Britain, while the Canadian government's interest in French-speaking countries seemed at best a far-distant, secondary consideration.⁴ Nonetheless, foreign relations remained the responsibility of the federal government of Canada, which was not anxious to share it with Quebec or any other province.

Given Canada's relative neglect of French-speaking countries in its foreign relations, nationalists in Quebec began demanding that their provincial government fill the void. Following its election in 1960, the Liberal government of Jean Lesage in Quebec took the first steps towards conducting its own international relations when it opened a quasi-diplomatic *délégation générale* in Paris in 1961. While Quebec directed its initial international efforts towards France,⁵ the independence of France's

3 For a study of the origins of the separatist movement, see William D. Coleman, *The Independence Movement in Quebec, 1945–1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

4 See, for example, Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein, *Empire to Umpire* (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman Ltd., 1994), chapters 6–8.

5 The literature on Quebec-France relations in the 1960s is extensive. See, for example, Dale C. Thomson, *Vive le Québec libre* (Toronto: Deneau Publishers, 1989), John Boshier, *The Gaullist*

last colonies and territories in Africa by 1961 gradually drew the attention of many Quebec nationalists to the desirability of establishing contacts between Quebec and the broader international community of French-speaking states. Moreover, this was a field that was, seemingly, wide open for Quebec's involvement. By the early 1960s, the Canadian government itself had demonstrated very little interest in developing its own relations with the newly independent former French colonies in Africa.

NATO Unity and Canada's Relations with French Africa

Canada owed its limited relations with the French-speaking African countries in the early 1960s to the policies towards France and NATO that the Canadian government had established in the early years of the Cold War. Unlike after 1963, when the need to reflect Canada's bilingual and bicultural character abroad began to influence Canadian foreign policy, in this earlier period it was largely conditioned by political-strategic concerns, including the need to build and then maintain an effective anticommunist Western coalition. Elements of this imperative can be seen in the Canadian government's reaction to the French threat, during the Washington negotiations in 1948–9, to refrain from signing the North Atlantic Treaty unless the treaty protected its North African dependencies of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. Though Canadian Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent worried about being required by the treaty to defend French colonial rule in North Africa, French insistence compelled Canada, and an equally reluctant US, to compromise. Eventually, they agreed that France's Algerian departments would be covered by the treaty's pledge of collective security. For St. Laurent, "Algeria was not a matter of great importance in relation to the main purposes of the Treaty, but France was essential."⁶ St. Laurent, like many others, recognized that France would be the alliance's political, economic, and military lynchpin in Western Europe. To proceed without France was unthinkable, especially since for many Canadian statesmen, the North

Attack on Canada, 1967–1997 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), or Claude Morin, *L'art de l'impossible: La diplomatie québécoise depuis 1960* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1987).

6 As quoted in John A. Munro and Alex Inglis (eds.), *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, Volume 2* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), p. 55.

Atlantic Treaty was supposed to lead to an even more deeply integrated community of nations in North America and Western Europe.

The compromise over Algeria secured France's membership in the Atlantic alliance in 1949, but French enthusiasm for NATO began to erode almost immediately thereafter. Differences of opinion over the geographical range of NATO responsibilities, France's discomfort with remaining under the American nuclear umbrella, disputes over the alliance's political leadership and strategic direction, the Suez crisis, and other issues all helped distance France from some of its allies. The tension within the alliance accelerated following Charles de Gaulle's return to power in 1958, but simply built on foundations that had already been laid. France was not alone in harboring objections to NATO, but it was unique in how its relations with the US and Britain, in particular, affected its commitment to the alliance as a whole. Increasingly convinced that NATO could not secure its national and global interests, France pursued its own nuclear force *de frappe*, removed its Mediterranean fleet from NATO command, and ultimately withdrew from NATO in 1966.

Canada had its own problems with NATO. The Canadian government was generally unhappy with the limited role for the smaller allies and the lack of political consultation within the alliance. By the mid-1960s, its concerns were exacerbated by the sense that the economic recovery and growing political integration of Western Europe, as well as the emerging opportunities for *détente* with the Soviet Union after 1962, meant a less dominant role for the US within NATO. Moreover, the Canadian government shared some of France's specific concerns about NATO including, for example, its objections to the US proposal to share some responsibility for nuclear planning through the Multilateral Force (MLF). Consequently, the Canadian government went to great lengths to try to minimize France's growing alienation from the alliance from 1963 to 1966, consistently presenting itself as the most understanding of France's sentiments amongst the allies and trying to mediate the differences between France and the US. From the NATO ministerial meeting in December 1964, when Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs from 1963 to 1968, articulated Canada's and France's shared concerns about MLF, to its attempts to moderate the response to France's withdrawal from the unified military com-

mand in March 1966, the Canadian government's policy towards NATO during the mid-1960s was motivated, in part, by the desire to preserve and even improve the relations between France and the rest of NATO. This desire also reflected Paul Martin's belief that improved relations with France through NATO could help pre-empt Quebec's efforts to establish its own international identity.⁷

The developments from 1963 to 1966, however, merely reinforced a tendency that had existed since 1949 within Canadian policy towards France and NATO. Given France's gradual alienation from the alliance throughout much of the 1950s and early 1960s, the Canadian government had considered it necessary to try to preserve the alliance's unity, as far as possible, by deferring to French sensitivities on a number of issues, particularly those related to France's interests in Africa and Asia. Because France expected assistance from its NATO allies to maintain its colonial empire, the Canadian government first manifested this deference by supporting the French campaign against Vietnamese nationalists in Indochina. Subsequently, despite its reluctance to alienate Third World opinion and its belief that self-government was a better response than military suppression to colonial nationalism, the Canadian government gave France significant political, diplomatic, and military support for during the Algerian War for Independence.⁸ The Canadian government was not comfortable with the support that it gave to French colonialism, but given the strength of

7 Greg Donaghy, *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States 1963–1968* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002), pp. 104–8.

8 In 1952, for example, the Canadian government allowed its gift of military equipment through the NATO Mutual Aid program to be diverted from France to Indochina. Similarly, between 1955 and 1961, Canada voted with France against nine resolutions in the United Nations seeking independence for Algeria and supplied France with over CAD 100 million in military equipment that was likely used by the French military in Algeria. Michael Harrison, *The Reluctant Ally: France and Atlantic Security* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), p. 14, James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada, Volume 4: Growing Up Allied* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 150–1, Steven Lee, *Outposts of Empire* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), pp. 49 and 135, and Robin S. Gendron, "Tempered Sympathy: Canada's Reaction to the Independence Movement in Algeria, 1954–1962", *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 9 (1998), pp. 237–9.

French feeling and the growing gulf of opinion between France and its allies, it felt compelled to provide it nonetheless.⁹

The Canadian government also took into account French interests when it considered its policies towards the French dependencies that gained their independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1956, for example, Canada's Department of Citizenship and Immigration wished to recruit immigrants for Canada in the North African countries of Tunisia and Morocco. Citing French concerns about encouraging an exodus of French citizens from the newly independent countries, however, Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester Pearson and his department vetoed the plan. Following Guinea's precipitous independence from France in 1958 and the tension that this caused between the two countries, the Canadian government was similarly leery about establishing contacts with Guinea's President Ahmed Sekou Touré for fear of antagonizing the French and undermining their efforts to maintain influence in their former colony. And in the aftermath of the Bizerte Crisis of 1961, when the Tunisian government approached Canada to replace France in providing training for Tunisian army cadets, the Canadian government demurred. In addition to the logistical and technical difficulties inherent in the proposal, the Canadian government refused the Tunisian request because, in the words of one Canadian official, "[we] do not think that Canada should contribute to the severance of links between France and Tunisia."¹⁰ These examples typify Canadian efforts in this period to help maintain France's influence in its former colonies and territories in Africa. In turn, these efforts were motivated by the need to bolster Western interests against the expansion of

9 In January 1957, Canadian Under Secretary of State for External Affairs Jules Léger suggested that pressure could be exerted upon France to accept the independence of Algeria as the basis for a negotiated end to the Algerian war. Secretary of State Lester Pearson overruled his deputy's proposal, arguing that any attempt by a French ally to broker a peace in Algeria risked further antagonizing the French, who were still bitter from the Suez Crisis. National Archives of Canada [NAC], Record Group [RG] 25, Vol. 7722 file 12177-40 pt 4, Telegram [Tel] 402, Pearson to Léger, 29 January 1957.

10 NAC, RG 25, Vol. 6115, file 50378-40 pt 1.1, Memo, *Immigration from North Africa and Canada's Relations with North Africa*, Léger to Pearson, 15 August 1956, NAC, RG 25, Vol. 7830, file 12700-A-40 pt 1.1, Message [Mes.] K-125, *Invitation to the President of Guinea*, H.F. Davis, Ottawa, to Canadian Embassy, Paris, 15 September, 1959, and NAC, RG 25, Vol. 5410, file 11033-C-40 pt 3, *Tunisian Request for Military Assistance*, Jean Fournier to Defence Liaison I Division, 16 February 1962.

Communist influences in Africa and the desire to maintain the solidarity of the North Atlantic alliance by refraining from intruding into what the French considered their *chasse gardée* in the continent.

As the differences between France and some of its allies within NATO mounted, therefore, the Canadian government responded in part by deferring to French interests whenever possible, particularly regarding French Africa, as a means of containing the erosion of French enthusiasm for the alliance. This deference was by no means universal. In the late 1950s, for example, the Canadian government rejected Charles de Gaulle's plan for a leadership triumvirate within NATO composed of Britain, France, and the US and actively opposed French nuclear testing in the Sahara Desert. Yet these instances merely reinforced for the Canadian government the importance of taking into account French sensitivities on other matters considered less vital to Canadian national interests than the direction of NATO and nuclear proliferation. The Canadian government thus developed a pattern of subordinating its own interests in French Africa to those of France, a pattern that would persist until the mid-1960s. As a result, Canada's relations with the French-speaking countries of Africa developed very slowly, particularly in comparison to the development of its relations with the African members of the Commonwealth.

By 1960 Canada possessed High Commissions in the Commonwealth countries of South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria and an embassy in Egypt, giving it four full diplomatic missions in all of Africa, though it also had a consulate-general in the former Belgian Congo. At the end of 1961, however, there were 29 independent countries in Africa, including 12 former French colonies and 11 former British colonies. To meet the burgeoning demands for Canadian diplomatic representation in Africa in 1961, Secretary of State for External Affairs Howard Green proposed opening an additional embassy in Tanganyika, which is now Tanzania in East Africa. It was only with some difficulty that Green's under secretary, Norman Robertson, persuaded him that establishing another mission in a Commonwealth country while ignoring all of French Africa would invite domestic criticism from French Canadians. Eventually persuaded to open a second embassy, Green nonetheless ignored his officials' advice that the new embassy should be located in Ivory Coast, preferring Cameroon

instead because it was a bilingual country and because he enjoyed pleasant relations with Cameroon's leaders, next to whom he sat at international meetings. When it announced the opening of the two new embassies in Africa in December 1961, however, the Department of External Affairs also appointed its representatives in Spain, Ghana, Nigeria, and Cameroon as non-resident ambassadors to all but three of the French African states.¹¹ Later, in 1962, the Canadian consulate-general in the former Belgian Congo was promoted to the status of an embassy, though it remained under the authority of a non-resident ambassador. By the mid-1960s, therefore, Canada had established diplomatic relations with most of the 21 French-speaking countries of Africa, but only had embassies in two of them. In contrast, it maintained resident embassies in four of the former British territories in the continent.

The paucity of developmental assistance given by Canada to French Africa reinforced the relative impression that the Canadian government was neglecting French Africa. In April 1961, the government announced a Canadian Dollars (CAD) 300,000 program of educational assistance to provide teachers for the French-speaking African countries. Senior officials within the Department of External Affairs pleaded for more money, arguing that the program as planned was insufficient either to be effective or to demonstrate Canada's interest in French Africa. Green and the government of John George Diefenbaker, however, remained adamant that CAD 300,000 was all that would be allocated to the project, despite the CAD 3.5 million in aid that the Canadian government had been giving to the Commonwealth countries of Africa since 1959.¹² After 1963, the Liberal government of Prime Minister Lester Pearson and Secretary of State for External Affairs Paul Martin Sen. increased developmental assistance for French Africa to CAD 4,000,000 in 1964 and CAD 7,500,000 in 1965. These increases corrected the imbalance between Canadian aid for the Commonwealth and for French-speaking Africa, but even so, the Pearson

11 NAC, RG 25, Vol. 5504, file 12354-40 pt 3, Memo to the Cabinet, *Establishment of Canadian Diplomatic Relations with French-speaking States in Africa*, Howard Green, 19 December 1961.

12 Green in particular stated that "there could be no question of an increase [in aid for French Africa] at the expense of external assistance to other areas, particularly to the Commonwealth." NAC, RG 25, Vol. 5259, file 8260-15-40 pt 4, Tel. 439, *Aid to French-speaking Africa*, Green to External Affairs, Ottawa, 18 March 1962.

government was careful to try to coordinate its growing aid for French Africa with France, both to maximize its efficiency and to minimize French antagonism towards Canada's activities there. In 1964, the Canadian and French governments agreed in principle to coordinate their aid policies for French Africa, but little practical cooperation ensued from this agreement, a situation that Canadian officials felt further undermined the efficiency and effectiveness of Canadian aid for French Africa in the 1960s.¹³

Though meager trade, investment, and immigration interests in French Africa and the scarcity of the Department of External Affairs' resources also played a part, the growing alienation of France from NATO impeded the growth of Canada's relations with the French-speaking countries of Africa. From the 1950s to the mid-1960s, successive Canadian governments felt compelled to downplay the pursuit of Canada's own interests in French Africa in order to contain the deterioration of France's relations with its NATO allies. Only France's withdrawal from NATO in 1966 released the Canadian government from the last of the inhibitions that had restrained its relations with French Africa. Thereafter, the Canadian government vigorously cultivated ties with the French African countries, particularly once it became clear in 1966–7 that Charles de Gaulle was using French influence with them to encourage Quebec's autonomous participation in the emerging international community of French-speaking states. By then, however, the damage had been done. Many nationalists in Quebec had already seized upon Canada's earlier apparent neglect of French Africa as proof that it was incapable of representing French Canadian interests abroad.

Quebec Demands to Represent French Canadians Abroad

A journalist by the name of Jean-Marc Léger was one of the first individuals in Quebec to develop an interest in French Africa. During the final years of the Maurice Duplessis era in Quebec, Léger differed from many of his contemporaries in that, while they dreamt of a more expansive Quebec reaching out to re-establish ancient cultural ties with France, he was already

13 See NAC, MG 32A3, Vol. 32, file 14.2 AFRIQUE, *La Collaboration France-Canada dans le domaine de l'aide aux états francophones, 1960–1967*, L'Équipe chargée du projet de la francophonie – 1974.

discovering the existence of a broader francophone community. He had spent three months touring the territories of French West and Equatorial Africa in 1956, meeting leaders such as Félix Houphouët-Boigny and Léopold Senghor, and was greatly impressed by French Africa's dynamism as it began the transition from colonial rule to self-government. According to Léger, French Africa was engaged in a political, economic, and social revolution that had accomplished a level of development within one decade that had taken Western societies centuries to achieve.¹⁴ This impression of dynamism and potential would have a lasting effect on Léger. As the secretary-general of the *Association des universités entièrement ou partiellement de langue française* and the president of the *Comité Afrique-Canada* in the early 1960s, Léger assiduously promoted the benefits for Quebec and Canada of improving relations with the then newly independent French African countries.

Léger's belief in the importance of French Africa led to frustration with the slow growth of relations between Canada and the French African states in the early 1960s. He expressed this frustration most forcefully in a series of five articles published in *Le Devoir* from 22–26 July 1963, in which he criticized Canada's lack of diplomatic representation in and the insignificant amount of Canadian development assistance for the French-speaking states in Africa. For Léger, however, Canada's neglect of French Africa and the French-speaking world was not a minor problem that could be corrected easily. It was emblematic of a much more fundamental characteristic that rendered the Canadian government incapable of representing French Canadians in world affairs. Canada, he argued, was an Anglo-Saxon country with an Anglo-Saxon country's foreign relations. Overwhelmingly oriented towards the US and the Commonwealth, its federal government had little understanding of the needs of the French Canadian people and their culture and could never advance their international interests effectively. In Léger's view, the conclusion to be drawn from this situation was simple; "[...] c'est évident que la création et l'orientation de relations sérieuses, intenses, étroites avec le monde de langue française ne peuvent être le fait

14 Jean-Marc Léger, *Afrique française, Afrique nouvelle* (Ottawa: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1958), p. 10.

que du Québec.”¹⁵ French Canadians were awakening to the fact that they were no longer isolated within a continent of anglophones, but belonged to a worldwide community of 150 million people who shared the French language and the French culture, many of them in Africa. The people of Quebec expected to benefit politically, economically, and culturally from extensive contacts with this community, but were being denied the opportunity to do so by Quebec’s subordination within Canada. Consequently, according to Léger, only the vigorous, imaginative, and persistent action of the government of Quebec itself could establish the extensive contacts with all of the French-speaking countries that the people of Quebec needed and desired.

The inadequacy of Canada’s relations with the French-speaking countries of Africa reinforced for Jean-Marc Léger the ultimate need for Quebec to secure its independence from Canada. To fulfill the potential of the French Canadian people, the government of Quebec needed to wield the full range of sovereign powers, including the ability to conduct relations with foreign countries unfettered by the constraints of Canada’s constitution and free from the neglect or the hostility of the Canadian government. Léger was among the first to link the need for relations with French Africa and Quebec’s independence, but he was quickly joined by other nationalists, including Claude Morin, who as deputy minister of intergovernmental affairs would spearhead Quebec’s efforts to establish its own relations with French African countries. Not all of Quebec’s nationalists reached the conclusion that Canada’s perceived indifference to the French-speaking world necessitated Quebec’s independence, however. University of Montreal professor André Patry and Paul Gérin-Lajoie, the first minister of education in the Lesage government, joined others in pressing Premier Jean Lesage to expand Quebec’s international capacities aggressively. Unlike Léger or Morin, however, Patry and Gérin-Lajoie believed that Quebec could realize its international ambitions by exercising the powers that Canada’s constitution already granted the province, including exclusive jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs.

15 Jean-Marc Léger, “Le Québec dans le monde, III”, *Le Devoir*, 24 July 1963, p. 2. See also John Hilliker and Donald Barry, *Canada’s Department of External Affairs, volume II: Coming of Age, 1946–1968* (Kingston & Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995), pp. 391–2.

Though more moderate nationalists like André Patry or Paul Gérin-Lajoie discounted the need for Quebec's independence, the fact that their demands for Quebec mirrored so closely those of separatists like Jean-Marc Léger contributed to the impetus behind the province's growing separatist movement in the 1960s. Because the moderate nationalists also wanted Quebec to exercise more autonomy in foreign affairs, it was often difficult to distinguish their desires from those of the separatists. In April 1965, for example, Gérin-Lajoie told the Consular Corps in Montreal that Quebec possessed the autonomy to act in international affairs without federal interference and that, henceforth, Quebec expected its agents abroad to be granted the same privileges extended to foreign representatives in Quebec. Though largely a challenge to the federal government to acquiesce to Quebec's claim of autonomy in international affairs, this speech was interpreted by some in Quebec, and indeed elsewhere, as a demand for Quebec's complete independence.¹⁶ Similarly, though André Patry and Claude Morin both sought to develop Quebec's relations with French-speaking countries, Morin alone of the two wanted to use them to establish the type of precedents for Quebec that Canada had used to secure its own gradual independence from Britain earlier in the 20th century.¹⁷ Nationalists of all stripes in Quebec agreed that the province needed to establish its identity on the international stage. The result was almost universal demands for Quebec to conduct its own foreign relations. Most separatists differed from their more moderate counterparts largely in that they saw increased international autonomy for Quebec as a stepping-stone to its independence.

In practical terms, therefore, there was little on the subject of Quebec's foreign relations to differentiate separatists from the province's more moderate nationalists, apart from their respective beliefs on the ultimate need for or desirability of Quebec's independence. As the government of Quebec responded to nationalist pressure by seeking to engage in international activities typically reserved to internationally recognized, fully

16 Thomson, *Vive le Québec libre*, p. 144.

17 Claude Morin used this analogy during discussions with Marcel Cadieux, the federal under secretary of state for external affairs, during negotiations between Canada and Quebec over the federal educational aid program for French Africa in May 1966. Claude Morin, *Les choses comme elles étaient* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1994), pp. 191–2.

sovereign states, however, the idea that Quebec could be or even should be such a fully sovereign, internationally recognized state became more widely accepted, even among moderate nationalists. Quebec's expanding relations with France in the 1960s, including the establishment of a *délégation générale* in Paris in 1961, a technical accord signed in 1965, and frequent ministerial exchanges between the two governments, demonstrated the benefits for Quebec of conducting its own foreign relations aggressively. Just as importantly, the failure of Quebec's attempts to establish relations with other French-speaking countries during the same period, most notably those in Africa, highlighted the limits to which Quebec could achieve its international objectives while remaining part of Canada.

On several occasions during the early and mid-1960s, the Lesage government attempted to initiate relations with French-speaking countries in Africa. Occasionally, a French-African country itself rebuffed these efforts, as was the case in 1963 when Morocco rejected Quebec's offer to build and staff a health clinic in the North African country.¹⁸ More often, however, it was the Canadian government that obstructed Quebec's ambitions in French Africa. Between 1964 and 1966, for example, the Lesage government attempted, unsuccessfully, to negotiate what amounted to joint responsibility with the federal government for the educational assistance program for French Africa, Canada's flagship aid program for the French-speaking African states.¹⁹ Then, in the fall of 1965, Paul Gérin-Lajoie and Claude Morin thought they had concluded an entente with Tunisia regarding technical assistance, only to be thwarted when Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, Paul Martin, convinced the Tunisian government not to enter into any agreements directly with Quebec. When the newly elected government of Daniel Johnson renewed attempts to conclude the entente with Tunisia in the fall of 1966, this time secretly, the Canadian

18 Instead of a clinic, the Moroccan government wanted to send Moroccan doctors and nurses to Quebec for training. Because the counterproposal would deny Quebec a high-profile aid project in North Africa, the idea was abandoned. Archives Nationales du Québec [ANQ], P422 S3, 3A 011-03-02-002A-01, 1995-01-008 Art. 5, file 1, Letter, Jean Bruchesi, Canadian Ambassador to Morocco, to André Patry, 22 December 1963.

19 See Robin S. Gendron, "Educational aid for French Africa and the Canada-Quebec dispute over foreign policy in the 1960s", *International Journal* 56, no.1 (Winter 2000–2001), p. 29.

government again persuaded Tunisia to abandon the deal.²⁰ In all of these cases, the Canadian government was motivated by the desire to preserve the federal government's responsibility for the conduct of all aspects of Canada's international affairs. The federal government was never able to prevent Quebec from establishing its own increasingly close relations with France, but for much of the 1960s, it successfully enjoined the French-speaking states of Africa from dealing directly with the province.

Viewed from Quebec's perspective, the federal government's systematic obstructionism demonstrated conclusively that it would not easily accept that Quebec had the right to establish its own international identity and maintain its own relations with foreign states, governments, and peoples. Federal hostility to Quebec's efforts to represent itself internationally thus raised doubts about Quebec's ability to advance the interests of the French Canadian people through the evolution of its constitutional position within Canada. With each rebuff by the federal government, nationalists in Quebec – in and outside of the provincial government – were driven to consider ever bolder and ever more forceful alternatives. At a time when even the premier of Quebec was beginning to evoke the possibility of independence, the frustration of Quebec's aspirations to international competence reinforced for many in Quebec the idea that the time had come to pursue Quebec's development as an independent, fully sovereign international entity.²¹

Conclusion

During the 1960s, the rush to have Quebec fill the void left by the Canadian government's seemingly inadequate relations with French-speaking countries helped accustom nationalists in Quebec to the idea that Quebec could be an independent actor in world affairs. Moreover, the limitations imposed upon Quebec's international activities by the structure of

20 NAC, RG 25, Vol. 8792 file 20-1-2-TUN pt. 2, Letter 163, *Quebec Offer of Aid to Tunisia*, Canadian Ambassador, Tunis to USSEA, 21 December 1966.

21 Daniel Johnson became premier of Quebec after his Union Nationale party defeated the Lesage Liberals in the election of 1966. Earlier, Johnson had authored a book on the need either for Quebec to receive special status and powers within the Canadian federation or for it to become an independent country. The title of the book was *Égalité ou indépendance*.

Canadian federalism and the hostility of the federal government helped reconcile many nationalists to the need for Quebec, ultimately, to become independent of Canada. A burgeoning interest in the French-speaking world was thus one of the factors that transformed French Canadian nationalists, with their historic interest in protecting the French minority within Canada, into Quebec nationalists anxious to create an independent state where the French-speaking population would be the majority. That this interest in establishing relations with the rest of the French-speaking world contributed to the growth of the separatist movement in Quebec has been clear since the 1960s. That the Canadian government's concern for preserving the relationship between France and its NATO allies helped create the conditions in which separatism flourished in Quebec has not been acknowledged.

Canada's relations with French African countries suffered from relative neglect until the mid-1960s, which a growing number of nationalists in Quebec interpreted as a manifestation of Canada's disinterest in the French-speaking world. They did not recognize, however, that instead of indicating disinterest in French-speaking countries, the slow growth of Canada's relations with French Africa had been heavily influenced by the Canadian government's overarching interest in its relationship with France, an even more important French-speaking country. France was a key member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and its gradual alienation from its allies threatened the alliance, its ability to confront the Soviet Union united, and the development of the trans-Atlantic community that was so important to Canada in the decades after 1945.²² To help contain the erosion of France's enthusiasm for the Atlantic alliance, the Canadian government pursued policies that deferred to France's interests in Africa, with the result that Canada's own relations with the newly independent French-speaking African countries developed slowly. This pattern of deference persisted until France withdrew from NATO in 1966, at which point Canada began to

22 For a further discussion of these concerns, see Greg Donaghy, "Domesticating NATO: Canada and the North Atlantic Alliance, 1963–68", *International Journal* 52, no. 3 (1997), pp. 445–63 and Kim Richard Nossal, "A European Nation? The Life and Times of Atlanticism in Canada", in *Making a Difference: Canada's Foreign Policy in a Changing World Order*, ed. John English and Norman Hiller (Toronto: Lester Publishing Ltd., 1992), pp. 79–102.

pursue its interests in French Africa more aggressively. By then, however, Quebec's nationalists had already seized upon the inadequacy of Canada's relations with the French-speaking countries of Africa as proof that only an increasingly autonomous or even independent Quebec could truly be relied upon to promote French Canadian interests. Seeking to preserve NATO unity, the Canadian government inadvertently played a small but important role in fostering the growth of the separatist movement in Quebec that has threatened to destroy Canada itself since the late 1960s.

PART III THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUALS

NATO in the mid-1960s: The View of Secretary-General Manlio Brosio

Bruna Bagnato

At the meeting of the North Atlantic Council on 3 April 1964, NATO Secretary-General Dirk Stikker officially announced his intention to resign. US Secretary of State Dean Rusk, previously informed by Stikker of his decision, had sent a message to Norwegian Foreign Minister Halvard Lange, British Foreign Secretary Richard A. Butler, and Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson on 23 March expressing his hope that the European members of the alliance could agree on a successor, thus avoiding the delicate situation that had arisen in 1961 when Stikker had been selected. On 4 April, Italian Ambassador to Washington Sergio Fenoaltea informed US Assistant Secretary of State William Tyler that Italy was asserting a claim to the position. On 21 April, the Italian government officially proposed Manlio Brosio, who had been a candidate for the post three years earlier, before Stikker was selected. Two days later, Britain proposed Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Sir Harold Caccia. But following further discussions with Italy, the British withdrew their candidacy, and Brosio was elected NATO secretary-general in August 1964. He remained in this office until the end of his diplomatic career in 1971, when he was elected to the Italian parliament's upper house, the Senate, for the Liberal Party.

When Brosio started his new job at the NATO headquarters, he could boast of a long and bright diplomatic career that had led him to Moscow, London, Washington, and Paris. When he took up his new post in Paris at age 67 in 1964, at the end of his diplomatic career, Brosio was flattered by the appointment and fully aware of the crucial importance of the events at the time for the future of the alliance. He often seemed preoccupied with the notion of being inadequate for the tasks and requirements of his

office, and his diary reveals frequent expressions of this fear.¹ As a matter of fact, the years under consideration in this chapter were crucial for the life of NATO, and it would not have been easy at all for any secretary-general of the alliance to manage the changes, to foresee the outcome of processes that in many cases were only in their initial phase at the time and, on these basis, to establish a program and a plan for action.

The international situation was in flux from the beginning of the 1960s. In the aftermath of the Cuban and Berlin crises, relations between the US and the Soviet Union appeared to be entering a new phase characterized by a less direct confrontation. French particular interests, as expressed by President Charles de Gaulle, and Germany's evolving role in the Atlantic framework threatened the cohesion of the alliance. Brosio was aware that he was ushering in a new phase in the life of NATO and thought that his record as secretary-general might depend upon his ability to adapt NATO to a new set of political requirements in a rapidly changing world. His role was that of an honest broker, Brosio declared during his visit to Washington in September 1964 – his first after being designated NATO secretary-general, and essentially an introductory call. He favored close political consultation within NATO on all issues, and stressed that he wanted to see NATO arrive at coordinated policies on world issues.²

In the mid-1960s, Brosio regarded NATO as an organization that had to face up to many challenges of internal and external nature. He was personally convinced that the most dangerous threats to the continuity of the alliance came from the inside of the Atlantic body and were constituted by the French policy on the one hand and by the US policy of détente on the other, both of which were leading to the split of the alliance. For the NATO secretary-general, these two dangers were facets of the same problem and had to be analyzed together.

This chapter will focus on Brosio's perception of these dangers and will be essentially based on his diaries. Brosio kept a regular journal from 1947 to 1972. This journal – bequeathed after his death to the archives of the

1 See e.g. Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, Torino (TFE), Manlio Brosio Collection (MB), diary XX, 12 February 1966 – 30 June 1966 (XX), notes for 21 April 1966.

2 *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), 1964–68, Vol. XIII, no. 39, "Circular Airgram from the Department of State to Certain Missions", Washington, 4 October 1964.

Luigi Einaudi Foundation in Turin – represents a source of great academic interest, as it provides historians with a record of the author’s most private opinions³ – those that he could not or did not want to express aloud – and sometimes tasty tidbits of information from behind the scenes.⁴

The French Danger

Brosio’s principal preoccupation during the first months of his charge as secretary-general of the alliance was with the French attitude toward NATO. On 5 September 1964, during a 50-minute “relaxed, courteous and calm discussion” with Brosio, de Gaulle laid out his views: NATO needed sufficient forces to fight the Soviet Union in case the Warsaw Pact decided to attack in Europe; France opposed NATO as an organization, since its object was the integration of national efforts, which France opposed; and NATO was no longer necessary because the US was not the only Western power with nuclear capability. Brosio asked de Gaulle how the NATO treaty might be revised, but de Gaulle replied that such suggestions would be useless, since the US would be “diabolically opposed to his ideas” and nothing would come of the discussion. De Gaulle asserted that the US was no longer interested in Europe, as its main focus had shifted to the Pacific, and that the US would not come to the assistance of Europe if attacked by Soviets. Although de Gaulle did not say so specifically, Brosio got the impression that France would withdraw from the treaty in 1969.⁵

In the opinion of the US Ambassador to France Charles Bohlen – who wrote William Tyler a letter on this subject – Brosio was wrong in his impression that de Gaulle was seriously thinking of renegeing on the NATO treaty, as the latter had always made a very definite distinction between the treaty establishing the alliance and the structure of the organization itself. Nevertheless, Bohlen began “to wonder how long we should remain

3 I should like to express my gratitude to the trustees and the secretary of the Einaudi Foundation. Without their invaluable help, my work would not have been possible.

4 The journal is unpublished. Fausto Bacchetti, a close collaborator of Brosio’s, has edited the journal covering Brosio’s time at the Italian embassy in Moscow (Manlio Brosio, *Diari di Mosca 1947–1951*, ed. Fausto Bacchetti, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1986), but the transcription is incomplete. I intend to edit an English version of the journal covering the period when Brosio was NATO secretary-general.

5 FRUS, 1964–68, Vol. XIII, doc. 33, fn. 2.

quiescent in the face of de Gaulle's gratuitous interpretation of American policy".⁶ In his response to Bohlen's letter, Tyler, who had just heard the same argument from people at the NATO Parliamentarians conference in Washington, pointed out the opportunity to work out some plan to reassure Europeans about the US commitment to the continent, but without making specific reference to de Gaulle.⁷

In Brosio's view, the major points of de Gaulle's position were the following: De Gaulle thought that although the threat had diminished, the alliance was still necessary; he remained adamantly opposed to the alliance, while refusing to suggest changes to the treaty or the organization; furthermore, he stressed European unity as a key factor; he persisted in his opposition to any change in NATO strategy, doubting that the US would use nuclear weapons in defense of Europe; and finally, he continued to be concerned about the effect of political events in the rest of the world on the alliance. In Brosio's opinion, de Gaulle would not do anything for the time being, but in 1969 might well denounce the treaty. This suggested an urgent necessity for the alliance members to act in advance if they wanted to forestall events in 1969. It was necessary to get the French to say what they wanted through an initial proposal that would prompt the French side to express their views. There was no point in making proposals to change the organization until after the German elections in 1965, but Brosio suggestions should be fielded from 1966 on.⁸

In a conversation on 13 May 1965 with US Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Brosio, referring to Ball's suggestions for more intensive study of the state of the alliance, asked how urgently the US viewed the French problem. Rusk explained that in December 1964 de Gaulle had said that France would make a proposal for a reorganization of the alliance, probably in 1967, but he now had the impression that the French might progress more quickly. The question, in Rusk's opinion, was whether it was preferable to wait and see what de Gaulle suggested, or try to establish what the

6 Ibid., doc. 33, Letter from the Ambassador to France (Bohlen) to the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Tyler), Paris, 14 September 1964.

7 Ibid., fn. 3, p. 73.

8 Ibid., doc. 39, Circular Airgram from the Department of State to Certain Missions, Washington, 4 October 1964: NATO Secretary-General Brosio's Visit, September 28–29.

remaining members wanted. In the meantime, Rusk stressed that the US had to be prepared for “serious” French surprises: the US did not want to push for far-reaching, reckless, or fundamental discussions, but did want to begin preparations where possible. Brosio declared that he and Rusk had the same approach, and agreed that it was desirable to prepare the ground in order to cope with de Gaulle’s demarches.⁹

Relations between France and NATO were an important issue in the discussions Brosio had in October 1965 during the second visit to Washington. In contrast to the previous visit in October 1964, this was a “working” visit. Brosio met with the secretaries of state and defense, and he also met with other administration officials, including Under Secretary Ball and Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs John Leddy. He also stopped briefly at the president’s office to exchange greetings after a talk with National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy. As far as French-NATO relations were concerned, Brosio said he felt the French attitude had changed recently. It had been generally known that the French were ready to stay in the alliance, although they were dissatisfied with the organization. His impression was that France had now turned towards the Soviets. The secretary-general declared that he was uncertain as to whether the French overtures towards the Soviets were meant to put pressure on the Germans, or actually constituted the first step towards uniting Europe “from the Atlantic to the Urals”. Brosio said the alliance could not wait for France, but had to move forward where possible.

In conversations with Leddy and Ball, Brosio appeared worried that the French would try to restrict discussions on US-French differences over NATO to the bilateral channel. It was made clear to him that the US considered this to be a problem between France and the other NATO members, and not solely a bilateral issue. When the French made their proposals, the US government would want to consult other NATO members at an early stage and work out with them how to handle the problem. Brosio was assured there would have to be intensive consultation between the US government and the allies before any moves could be undertaken. He was

9 Ibid., doc. 85, telegram from Secretary of State Rusk to the Department of State, London, 14 May 1965.

glad to note that the US position remained that Washington would try not to provoke a confrontation with the French, but was planning for all contingencies. Brosio was told that Washington was ready to wait until the French wished to make suggestions, and would continue to press the French to come forward with their ideas.¹⁰ What mattered most to Brosio was that the France–NATO problem was regarded as a problem of the whole alliance, and not as a US–French one. In a conversation with Rusk, he emphasized the need for close study regarding procedural aspects of the question, in order to avoid an approach that might isolate France¹¹.

On 7 March 1966, President de Gaulle made his long awaited demarche to NATO.¹² He informed President Johnson that France was removing its forces from the NATO integrated command and that all foreign forces and installations in France would be placed under French command.¹³ A March 11 aide-mémoire filled in the specifics of the French proposal.¹⁴ De Gaulle's political motivation was elusive, but it was clear that the French president was aiming for a fundamental change in France's relationship with NATO. Nevertheless, the fact that the US had decided to reply to

- 10 Ibid., doc. 105, Circular Airgram from the Department of State to the Posts in the NATO Capitals, NATO Secretary-General Brosio's Visit, 5–6 October 1965, Washington, 26 October 1965.
- 11 Ibid., doc. 116, telegram from Secretary of State Rusk to the Department of State, Paris, 14 December 1965.
- 12 On the French decision, see Maurice Vaïsse, *La grandeur: Politique étrangère du Général de Gaulle, 1958–1969* (Paris: Fayard, 1998); Frédéric Bozo, *La France et l'OTAN: de la guerre froide au nouvel ordre européen* (Paris: Masson, 1991); id., *Deux Stratégies pour l'Europe: de Gaulle, les États-Unis et l'Alliance atlantique (1958–1969)* (Paris: Plon, 1996); Maurice Vaïsse, Pierre Mélandri and Frédéric Bozo (eds.), *La France et l'OTAN 1949–1996*, (Paris: Complexe, 1996); Robert Paxton and Nicholas Wahl (eds.), *De Gaulle and the United States* (Oxford: Berg, 1994); Frédéric Bozo, "De Gaulle, l'Amérique et l'Alliance atlantique: une relecture de la crise de 1966", *Vingtième siècle* no. 43 (1994), pp. 55–68; Samuel F. Wells Jr., "Charles de Gaulle and the French Withdrawal from NATO's Integrated Command", in *American Historians and the Atlantic Alliance*, ed. Lawrence S. Kaplan (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1991), pp. 81–94; Georges-Henri Soutou, "La décision française de quitter le commandement intégré de l'OTAN", in *Von Truman bis Harmel: Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland im Spannungsfeld von NATO und europäischer Integration*, ed. Hans-Joachim Harder (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), pp. 185–208.
- 13 FRUS, 1964–68, Vol. XIII, Western Europe Region, Letter from de Gaulle to Johnson, doc. 137, 7 March 1966.
- 14 Ibid., doc. 142, Aide-mémoire from the French government to the US government, 11 March 1966.

the French demarche with a personal letter from Johnson to de Gaulle¹⁵ made Brosio “furious”: evidently, contrary to the assurances Brosio had received, Washington was dealing with the French problem on a bilateral basis and intended to “act unilaterally”.¹⁶

Brosio believed that the US and the British policy of détente was weakening NATO and was partially responsible for the French policy toward the alliance. In the spring of 1966, only days before the French announced their withdrawal from the integrated military structure of the alliance, he noted that “it was necessary to recognize that France had a special status in the alliance and that Great Britain and the US had no right to be intransigent with de Gaulle and to accuse France of weakening the alliance, as they, too, by their policy of détente, were working for its weakening”.¹⁷ In Brosio’s views, de Gaulle’s decision was extremely dangerous, since it gave Washington and London the opportunity to take advantage of the French departure from the NATO military command structure to strengthen their control over the alliance. For the secretary-general of NATO, the “mortal sin” of the French government lay in this inevitable consequence.¹⁸

On the same day that the French withdrawal from NATO’s military structure was officially announced, Brosio noted that “it was necessary not to push France to withdraw from the political framework of the alliance”.¹⁹ His first concern was always to avoid any actions or statements that could be perceived as urging France to leave the alliance. If the question was to adopt a strong attitude and to prepare a showdown with France, he noted, it was not up to him to take the responsibility of this decision and of its foreseeable consequences. As a matter of fact, he was strongly convinced that a brutal confrontation with Paris could not be taken, and, above all, that it would not be productive. For the secretary-general, the only viable alternative to “the showdown and the refusal to negotiate” was “a negotiation to be started immediately, but to be pursued with a post-de Gaulle France” in the hope that de Gaulle’s successor would prove more amenable. Brosio was convinced that the first option was impracticable and that the

15 Ibid., doc. 146.

16 TFE, MB, XX, 12 February 1966 – 30 June 1966, note for 23 March 1966.

17 TFE, MB, XX, note for 1 March 1966.

18 Ibid., 8 March 1966.

19 Ibid., 10 March 1966.

second option offered a great opportunity “to gain time”, the only problem with it being “to set up the negotiation and prepare it well”.²⁰

Brosio was also forced to consider the practical consequences of the French departure from the NATO military command structure: the organization had to make arrangements to move NATO headquarters out of France; to reach an agreement on the compensation that member states would receive for removing their forces and transferring their installations out of the country; to find a solution to the future of French troops stationed in West Germany under NATO auspices: in other words, NATO had to be rebuilt outside of France, and without the participation of France, as quickly as possible.²¹

When Brosio visited Washington for informal discussions in November 1966, he commented in general terms on French policy. He expressed his personal view that French policy was incompatible with the spirit of the alliance on two fundamental points. These were the French interpretation of Article V of the Treaty, and de Gaulle’s concept of Europe “from the Atlantic to the Urals”, which implied an inclusion of the USSR in Europe and an exclusion of the US from European affairs. He nevertheless stressed the view that it would be unwise and dangerous to force a showdown on this point, and that the wiser course was a pragmatic approach.²²

The US Danger

For the safety of the alliance, Brosio regarded the US policy of *détente*, with its attempts to reach an agreement with the Soviet Union to stop nuclear proliferation, as even more dangerous than the French initiative. He thought that “in this way, the Americans revealed their aim to reduce NATO to a simple instrument of their own policy of *détente*, which would finally lead to a bilateral dialog between the superpowers behind the back of the European countries”.²³

20 Ibid., 21 April 1966.

21 Ibid., 28 April 1966.

22 FRUS, 1964–68, XIII, doc. 217, Circular Telegram From the Department of State to the Posts in the NATO Capitals, “Brosio Visit to Washington”, 18 November 1966.

23 TFE, MB, XX, 15 April 1966.

According to Brosio's perception of the events, therefore, the Atlantic alliance was being disrupted by both the French and the US policies, which were simultaneously identical and opposite in nature.²⁴ This pessimistic view was reinforced by Brosio's acknowledgement of his narrow room for maneuver as secretary-general of the alliance. "I can do nothing", he wrote. "In the very moment of crisis", he bitterly added, "my function is that of a walk-on, with no authority and no power".²⁵ In an alliance where US and British influence was increasing thanks to the French withdrawal from its military structures, Brosio had to recognize that on vital issues, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the development of US policies towards the Soviet Union and Germany, his views diverged widely from those of the US.²⁶

Such a situation left Brosio very little room for a personal strategy in a moment where the existence of the alliance seemed to be at stake. He sharply condemned the US policy of *détente*. It was clear to him that the price that Washington was ready to pay for a compromise with Moscow was to deprive West Germany of any access to nuclear weapons: it meant that the US was giving up the idea of changing the European situation and was in favor of what Brosio called "a return to Potsdam".²⁷ In this perspective, the battle for *détente* was dangerous: it might arouse West German suspicions towards Atlantic policy as a whole, and, by leaving Bonn aside,

24 On the European policy of the Johnson administration, see Thomas Alan Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe: In the Shadow of Vietnam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Massimiliano Guderzo, *Interesse nazionale e responsabilità globale: Gli Stati Uniti, l'alleanza atlantica e l'integrazione europea negli anni di Johnson 1963–1969* (Florence: Il Maestrale, 2000). More generally, on the foreign policy of the Johnson administration, see Diane B. Kunz (ed.), *The Diplomacy of the Crucial Decade: American Foreign Relations During the 1960's* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); H.W. Brands (ed.), *The Foreign Policy of Lyndon Johnson: Beyond Vietnam* (College Station: Texas University Press, 1999); Robert A. Divine (ed.), *The Johnson Years*, in particular vol. III, *LBJ at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994); Warren I. Cohen and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (eds.), *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy 1963–1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giants: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961–1973* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

25 TFE, MB, XX, 15 April 1966.

26 Ibid., 29 April 1966.

27 Ibid.

it would finally give the Soviets victory in the struggle over Germany that had begun in 1945.²⁸

Brosio did not oppose the principle of détente per se: he opposed the form and the content that the US was giving it and did not trust the Soviet willingness to reach an agreement with the Western bloc as a whole. In Brosio's opinion, détente had to be one of the instruments in the Western political arsenal to promote a progressive liberation of Eastern Europe from Soviet control. He thought it was important for NATO to have an active role in shaping the course of East-West relations. Otherwise, individual members would tend to follow their own path vis-à-vis the Soviets. In his opinion, the only protection against Soviet attempts to exploit differences among the members lay in a growing role for NATO as a center for consultation, for the exchange of information, and for coordination of positions.²⁹ As far as the German question was concerned, Brosio thought that no one could seriously believe that a compromise with Moscow was the best way to resolve the division of the country:³⁰ Any meaningful rapprochement with the Soviet Union had to be achieved in the context of the German problem.³¹ In this perspective, "while NATO powers should do what was possible to improve the atmosphere in relations with Eastern Europe and USSR, NATO work on matters of interest of Germany should parallel further progress on détente": Brosio considered this "absolutely essential for stability of Europe and Atlantic area".³²

Brosio interpreted Washington's eagerness to reach an agreement with Moscow on nuclear matters as being due to the growing involvement of the US in Vietnam and the need to reach an honorable settlement of the conflict.³³ In his diary, Brosio was extremely clear on this point. He

28 TFE, MB, XXI – 1 July 1966 – 28 May 1967, note 13 October 1966.

29 FRUS, 1964–68, XIII, doc. n. 39, NATO Secretary General Brosio's Visit, September 28-29, 1965.

30 TFE, MB, XXI, 8 November 1966.

31 FRUS, 1964–68, XIII, doc. n. 39, NATO Secretary General Brosio's Visit, September 28-29, 1965.

32 Ibid., doc. n. 217, Brosio Visit to Washington, 18 November 1966.

33 On the role the Vietnam war played in the Atlantic relationships see Lawrence S. Kaplan, "The Vietnam War and Europe: The view from NATO", in *La guerre du Vietnam et l'Europe, 1963–1973*, ed. Christopher Goscha and Maurice Vaïsse (Bruxelles-Paris: Bruylant – LGDJ, 2003), pp. 89–102.

regarded the NPT negotiations as heralding the end of a long historical phase when cooperation between the Western allies and the creation and the strengthening of the Atlantic structures had been the top priorities of US foreign policy. Now the US wanted the Soviets to convince North Vietnam to enter negotiations for a settlement of the Asian conflict³⁴ and, in order to secure the help of the Soviet Union, Washington was ready to abandon the tenets of its previous European policy and to sacrifice its Atlantic allies. In other words, Brosio regarded *détente* as a game between two players that started with a classical *do ut des*: the Soviets would commit themselves to bringing Hanoi to the negotiation table, and Washington would repay the Soviet cooperation with a – not so “agonizing” – reappraisal of its European and Atlantic policy.

Brosio repeatedly tried to warn Washington about the dangers of such a strategy. In February 1966, he told Rusk that the Soviet Union had no real intention to help the US to find a settlement to the conflict in Vietnam; Moscow wanted the NPT in order to weaken Germany.³⁵ In November 1966, during a conversation with Leddy, he went so far as to state that an “indiscriminate policy of *détente*” was incompatible with Germany remaining in the Atlantic alliance.³⁶ In his interpretation of the interconnections between the Vietnam war, *détente*, the NPT, and a settlement for the European continent, Brosio was not alone. He agreed with the Italian ambassador in Washington, Sergio Fenoaltea, who thought that “the real danger was that the Soviets would concede a honorable peace in Asia that would be paid in Europe”³⁷ and with those who, in Italy, were denouncing the risk that the US would abandon Europe in favor of Asia.³⁸ In Brosio’s words, the NPT was “the counterpart of the exchange”.

As a matter of fact, a compromise on nuclear matters that would impose a freeze on the arms race in Europe would be perceived by the Soviet Union as “an American concession against Germany and against

34 On the Soviet Policy in Vietnam see Ilia V. Gaiduk, *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996).

35 TFE, ME, XX, 19 February 1966.

36 TFE, ME, XXI, 16 November 1966.

37 *Ibid.*, 18 November 1966.

38 *Ibid.*, 22 January 1967.

the possibility of a strong Europe”³⁹ as well as a demonstration of the real US commitment to work for an improvement of its relations with Moscow and disengage from Europe. For these reasons, the NPT would mark a turning point from several points of view: as far as the US policy towards Western Europe was concerned, it would represent a watershed between two eras. The first of these phases, according to Brosio, was characterized by the perception that the status quo had to be modified sooner or later; the second phase, inaugurated by the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963, was marked by the fundamental acknowledgment of this perception. As far as the form and the structure of East–West relations were concerned, the NPT would represent the definite end of the period when confrontation pitted the two blocs against each other and the beginning of a new phase dominated by dialog between the superpowers over the interests of the junior partners of the respective alliances.⁴⁰

The Harmel Exercise: Wishful Thinking?

In November 1966, Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel, recalling the initiative taken by Canada in December 1964, proposed a study on the future of the alliance. At the December 1966 Ministerial Meeting, this proposal was accepted.⁴¹ In US opinion, the aim of the study had to be “to articulate up-to-date role for the alliance; to assure its continued relevance to improved East–West relations and, against background of French withdrawal and approach of 1969, to assure continued governmental and public

39 Ibid.

40 TFE, MB, XXI, 18 November 1966.

41 In a “scope paper” prepared for the 14–16 December 1966 NATO Ministerial meeting, the Department of State stressed that the US objectives at the meeting would be: “a) to present the picture of an Organization and of an alliance which has surmounted its crisis with France but which will continue to accept French cooperation to the extent this does not damage essential NATO interests; b) to demonstrate that the fourteen are going ahead in a business-like manner, modernizing NATO to meet their need – in the defence structure, in the nuclear field and in the area of communications and crisis consultations as well as in the non-military fields; c) to demonstrate that, in spite of a reduced probability of war in Europe, the nature of the Soviet threat calls for an effective NATO; d) to evidence that a strong alliance is an essential prerequisite to the attainment of a genuine détente and an equitable settlement in Europe; e) to support European efforts to study the future organization and activities of NATO”, FRUS, 1964–68, vol. XIII, doc. 223, Scope Paper, Washington, 7 December 1966.

understanding and support for goals of Western cohesion and deterrent strength of Alliance".⁴²

When Harmel's ideas began to circulate in November, Brosio considered such a proposal an "illusion" because, he noted, there was no agreement about its ultimate political aims.⁴³ Harmel presented his proposal as an instrument to react to the French decision, and the US thought it was a good idea, as it would mark the distance between France and the rest of the alliance. Brosio, however, was convinced that the whole initiative could be used first of all as a means to prevent West Germany from exploring the possibility of a direct agreement with the Soviet Union.⁴⁴ In his opinion, the US and French policies of détente were creating a sense of isolation and abandonment in Bonn that was pushing West Germany to seek a bilateral dialog with Moscow. This process represented, for Brosio, a major risk for the alliance.

Only after a crucial meeting with the permanent representative of the US to NATO, Harlan Cleveland, and the Belgian representative, André de Staercke, on 8 December 1966 did Brosio realize that the Belgian initiative was much more important than he had initially thought. Brosio and Cleveland agreed that the study on East–West relations would save time and, consequently, could help avoid an immediate crisis with France and

42 Ibid., doc. 221, Telegram from the Department of State to the US embassy in Belgium, Washington, 26 November 1966. The proposal was in line with the opinion expressed by US President Johnson some weeks before. On 7 October 1966, Johnson addressed the National Conference of Editorial Writers in New York. In commenting the European situation, Johnson stressed that the US and its European allies had to move ahead on three fronts: "First, to modernize NATO and strengthen other Atlantic alliances; second, to further the integration of the Western community; third, to quicken progress in East–West relations". Ibid., doc. 211.

43 On the Harmel Exercise, see the NATO documentation in Anna Locher and Christian Nuenlist (eds.), *The Future Tasks of the Alliance: NATO's Harmel Report, 1966/67*, at http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll_Harmel.htm. Cf. Andreas Wenger, "Crisis and Opportunity: NATO's Transformation and the Multilateralization of Détente, 1966–1968", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 6, no. 1 (2004), pp. 22–74; Helga Haftendorn, "Entstehung und Bedeutung des Harmel-Berichts der NATO von 1967", *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, vol. 40, no.2 (April 1992), pp. 169–220; ead., "The Adaptation of the NATO Alliance for a Period of Détente: The 1967 Harmel Report", in *Crises and Compromises: The European Project, 1963–1969*, ed. Winfried Loth (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2001). On the French attitude, see Frédéric Bozo, "Détente vs. Alliance: France, the United States and the Politics of the Harmel Report 1964–1968", *Contemporary European History* 7, no. 3 (November 1998), pp. 343–60.

44 TFE, MB, XXI, 17 December 1966.

Germany.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, Brosio was bitterly sarcastic when de Staercke explained to him that the idea was to promote “an institutional and functional discussion on the status of the alliance” and that the crucial questions concerned East-West relations and “what mission was to be found for NATO”. The NATO secretary-general commented in his journal: “As if it needed to be found.”⁴⁶

In Brosio’s opinion, the success of the initiative depended upon the policy that France and Germany would adopt towards the Soviet Union and towards Europe as a whole. But de Gaulle, after his visit to Moscow from 20 June to 1 July 1966, had openly spoken of a “pan-Europe” and called for a Franco-Soviet agreement over Europe: this was, for Brosio, “the most anti-European, anti-Atlantic, anti-liberal, and authoritarian language” that France could speak. Therefore, as far as France was concerned, “Harmel’s dream” had no perspective. As for West Germany, nothing could be said, since the chance of a German policy of direct agreement with Moscow remained, at that time, “a political unknown”.⁴⁷

In mid-December 1966, on the eve of the NATO ministerial meeting, Brosio, accompanied by Fausto Bacchetti (of NATO International Staff), met with Secretary of State Rusk. Rusk made some suggestions concerning the Harmel proposal, but Brosio did not reply. Perhaps he did not want to be insincere or express his perplexity. At the very moment when the Harmel proposal was discussed in the NATO Council, Brosio was in fact very severe in his comments on the whole initiative. “This proposal is crackbrained,” he sarcastically noted. “It aims to solve the crisis of the alliance, but in fact it will end up worsening it,” Brosio believed, since the starting point of the study was a reflection on the necessity of the alliance, and this, a contrario, seemed to implicitly legitimate potential doubts in this respect.⁴⁸ If its purpose was to indicate the present and the future tasks of the alliance in a spirit of *détente*, in order to find a solution for the German question, Brosio believed that *détente* would win “no compensation from the enemy”, and that no solution could be foreseen for

45 Ibid., 8 December 1966.

46 Ibid., 9 December 1966.

47 Ibid., 9 December 1966.

48 Ibid., 15 December 1966.

West Germany, at least for the present.⁴⁹ In this perspective, the Harmel proposal risked bringing about a renovation of NATO where the alliance would maintain its “shell”, but would lose its “essence”.⁵⁰

At the December 1966 ministerial meeting, the Council “resolved to undertake a broad analysis of international developments since the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949. Its purpose would be to determine the influence of such developments on the alliance and to identify the tasks that lie before it, in order to strengthen the alliance as a factor for a durable peace”.⁵¹ A few days later, at the end of the year, when he tried to take stock of the turbulent events of 1966, Brosio was confused: “We were able to save the life of NATO this year, but did we really rescue its mission and its functions? I don’t know. The maintenance of a balance of power in Europe is necessary and in order to keep it, the participation of the US is necessary, since the idea of a French–Soviet agreement on the control of Europe is sheer madness.”⁵² Would the Harmel Exercise help in the solution of NATO’s crisis? Brosio was pessimistic. The only advantages of “the sea of papers and reports” in which the Harmel proposal was condemned to drown were, on the one hand, the possibility of “saving time” in view of the final showdown with France, and on the other, on a more personal note, the fact that it would allow him “not to lose ground” in view of the growing US control of the alliance.⁵³ Nevertheless, as far as the core problems of the alliance were concerned, “no one believes in the present mission of NATO, and no one can say what the nature of the new mission will be,”⁵⁴ as the roots of the political meaning of the alliance were themselves under discussion.⁵⁵

Agreement was quickly reached on the procedure for the Harmel Exercise but, for Brosio, this in itself could not justify optimistic expectations for the future: on 13 January 1967, in a meeting with Cleveland and de

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 *The Harmel Report: Full Reports by the Rapporteurs on the Future Tasks of the Alliance* at <http://www.nato.int/archives/harmel/harmel.htm>.

52 TFE, MB, XXI, 22–31 December 1966.

53 Ibid., 16 December 1966.

54 Ibid., 3 January 1967.

55 Ibid., 25 February 1967.

Staercke, Brosio reaffirmed that the first priority was to know “what we want.”⁵⁶ His sharply critical attitude was probably perceived by his collaborators: he noted that de Staercke wanted to leave him out of the study as – Brosio argued – “he evidently feared I could torpedo the initiative.”⁵⁷

At the December 1966 ministerial meeting, it had been decided that a preliminary report would be examined at the ministerial meeting in the spring of 1967. Then the ministerial Council, at its meeting in December 1967, would draw the appropriate conclusions from the enquiry. It had also been decided that a special group of representatives designated by the member governments would be established under the chairmanship of the secretary-general. This Special Group was set up on 22 February 1967 by the permanent Council.

In view of the preliminary discussion scheduled for 6 March, Brosio met Cleveland and de Staercke on 3 March for an exchange of opinions about the procedure and the content of the study. They agreed that it would not make sense to go on with the creation of the sub-groups and the designation of the rapporteurs unless the political purpose of the study had previously been determined. “Obviously,” Brosio noted, “this raises great questions” about Soviet foreign policy, the significance of détente and the objectives of the East–West contacts as well as about the principle of consultation and its constraints.⁵⁸ These were difficult problems, Brosio remarked, but if these questions could not be answered, the whole process might turn out to be only “a technical exercise”.⁵⁹

After the meetings of 6 and 14 March 1967, he had the impression that this danger was becoming real: no one seemed to be willing to face a serious discussion about the political problems of the alliance⁶⁰ and about the coordination of the policy of détente.⁶¹ In Brosio’s opinion, détente remained a “political mirage”: it was no more than “a word, a smoke”, he noted, but it was the only compensation that Washington would receive from the Soviets in exchange for the NPT, which would lead to the break-up

56 *Ibid.*, 13 January 1967.

57 *Ibid.*, 1 March 1967.

58 *Ibid.*, 3 March 1967.

59 *Ibid.*, 15 February 1967.

60 *Ibid.*, 14 March 1967.

61 *Ibid.*, 2 April 1967.

of the alliance.⁶² He noted that the context was marked by the interconnection of several elements: the change of priorities in US foreign policy; the wish to avoid an immediate showdown with France; the agony of the alliance itself because of the French and US policies towards Moscow, both pursued behind the back of Germans and both aiming to establish a new framework to control Germany;⁶³ the concern to reassure Bonn and prevent an unilateral German policy of détente: in this context, the Harmel exercise was, in Brosio's opinion, no more than "an exercise in futility"⁶⁴ amid growing pressure to show Western public opinion that NATO was still alive and necessary.

In April 1967, the Special Group established four sub-groups, each working on a broad subject of interest to the alliance: East-West Relations; interallied relations; general defense policy; and relations with other countries. The rapporteurs for the respective member states were the Englishman J.H.A. Watson and the German Klaus Schütz for the first sub-group; the Belgian Paul-Henri Spaak for the second one; US representative Foy Kohler for the third one, and Dutchman C.L. Patijn for the fourth sub-group.⁶⁵ Their work started on 17 April 1967.

Brosio's original skepticism about the relevance of the initiative was confirmed as the work of the four sub-groups progressed. As the chairman of the Special Group, he had been regularly reading their documents and considered them "indefinite and vague": "they pointed out the most difficult problems," he noted, "but no one has any ideas about the means to solve them."⁶⁶

The Six-Day War in June 1967 opened new divergences between NATO's official pro-Israeli line and the pro-Arab policy expressed by France. This rift added a new element to Brosio's pessimism, confirming his doubts about the Soviet interpretation of détente and about the solidity of the Atlantic alliance. First of all, it made clear that the NATO partners were far from being unanimous as to the strategy to be adopted in the Middle

62 Ibid., 28 March 1967.

63 TFE, MB, XXII, 28 May 1967 – 21 March 1968, note for 11 July 1967.

64 TFE, MB, XXI, 19 April 1967.

65 *The Future Tasks of the Alliance*, Press release, 13 April 1967, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1967/p67-003e.htm>.

66 TFE, MB, XXI, 15 May 1967 and XXII, 3 August 1967.

East: the French and the US, he noted, “are more or less in favor of the Arabs, but the French aim to precede the Americans in order to play a role as peace-makers together with the Soviets, leaving the Americans aside.”⁶⁷ It also showed that clarification was required as to the form and content of “détente” and, last but not least, that the Atlantic alliance was unable to play any major role in the international system.⁶⁸ On this occasion, Brosio wrote, the only concern of the NATO Council was to show that it was active and that the alliance was still alive, but, as bitterly remarked, it was nothing more than an action “going nowhere”.⁶⁹

The centrality of the French question became apparent at the very beginning of the Harmel Exercise. In Brosio’s opinion, if the study was meant to be of any significance, it should establish the parameters of a common policy “be it of détente, of negotiation or of firmness” towards Moscow. The problem was that France was opposed to even the principle of an Atlantic common policy. If this was true – and it was – all the dangers that Brosio had foreseen since the launching of the Belgian proposal seemed certain to be confirmed: either the reports would omit to mention the French position, and the exercise as a whole would be considered a failure; or they would increase the risk of a showdown with France. Brosio wondered whether it was convenient to give France this opportunity. Would France exploit the situation to mark its distance from the fourteen other members and leave the alliance? Was this the opportunity France had been looking for to justify the decision to abandon the Atlantic framework?⁷⁰ As 1969 was approaching, the risk of a French repudiation of the treaty grew: it was impossible to exclude the possibility that France would take advantage of the mistakes of its allies and precipitate its decision. In September, French Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville told Brosio that if the allies intended to use the Harmel Exercise to provoke a French reaction, the French government would accept the challenge. He added that he couldn’t guarantee his participation in the ministerial meeting in December, and stressed that his government had accepted the

67 TFE, MB, XXII, 14 June 1967.

68 Ibid., notes of 14 June, 21 June, 5 July, 12 July 1967.

69 Ibid., 21 June 1967.

70 Ibid., 21 August 1967; 5 September 1967.

Harmel Exercise “in a spirit of tolerance”, but that the results of the report were now being interpreted “in an inadmissible way”. Couve de Murville declared that NATO was a military and defensive alliance: “the quieter we stay, the better”. Brosio tried to convince him that Harmel harbored no anti-French sentiments; that his proposal had been aimed mainly at strengthening the alliance in the eyes of Western public opinion; that the purpose of the Exercise had been to reaffirm and develop the principles of consultation and coordination that were already included in the 1956 document of the Three Wise Men. But Couve was not at all persuaded by these arguments.⁷¹

When Cleveland was informed by Brosio of Couve’s declarations, he reacted very sharply. He said that nobody in the US regarded the French as allies any longer, and that it would not matter at all if they left the alliance, since the remaining fourteen states agreed on the principle of the development of *détente*. Brosio replied that the French, too, wanted to pursue a policy of *détente* and that, from this point of view, the choice of *détente* in itself did not constitute an element of division: the divergence related to the conditions of *détente*, and namely its effects on the German question. As for the danger of a German unilateral policy of *détente*, Brosio stressed that the US policy of *détente* was pushing the German government towards Moscow, and risked driving Germany out of the alliance.⁷²

At the end of September 1967, the NATO secretary-general registered in his journal the attempts to postpone the conclusion of the Harmel Exercise in order to prevent a clash with Paris. He pointed out that the Germans might react, at the very least, with suspicion.⁷³ After his mission to Bonn at the beginning of October 1967, Brosio was perfectly aware that the Germans did not want a showdown with the French. Bonn agreed that the final report should emphasize the rapprochement between East and West, the policy of *détente*, and the monitoring of this process by the alliance, but requested that the document not specify the instruments by

71 Ibid., 19 September 1967.

72 Ibid., 22 September 1967. On this aspect, see Helga Haftendorn, “Entstehung und Bedeutung”; ead., *Kernwaffen und die Glaubwürdigkeit der Allianz: Die NATO-Krise von 1966–1967* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1994).

73 TFE, MB, XXII, 26 September 1967.

which such a control would be exercised.⁷⁴ As for the French position, de Gaulle did not want a political strengthening of the alliance.

The contradiction between these attitudes and the progress of the Harmel Exercise was evident. The Harmel proposal, Brosio argued, compelled the allies to prove that NATO, in spite of its internal divisions, still retained its intimate *raison d'être*, and to show that the Atlantic community, which had been established less than 20 years before, would survive the end of the Cold War and accept the challenge of *détente* without losing its essence. This was the message that the Atlantic governments wanted to send to their public constituencies. In Brosio's opinion, the "original sin" of the Harmel proposal lay precisely in the fact that it aimed at bringing together actual facts and wishful thinking. On the one hand, the Harmel report had to show public opinion that NATO was a vital international forum where the reasons for unity prevailed over the elements of divergence; on the other hand, in the absence of a common strategy, the alliance member's individual policies of *détente* and compromise with the Soviets provoked dangerous shocks, since every country based its attitude towards Moscow on its peculiar national interests. From this point of view, the French case was the most important and dangerous, but not the only one.

In order to prevent a crisis between the fourteen remaining NATO members, who wanted the alliance to promote and control the whole process of *détente*, and France, which did not intend to give up its absolute freedom of movement in relations towards the Soviet Union, Brosio envisaged only two alternatives: the first was to try to concentrate the collective engagement on a "few well-determined issues"; the second was a commitment to consultations on all issues, which, however, would not involve any real commitment to a common policy.⁷⁵ In November 1967, French Permanent Representative to NATO Roger Seydoux was firm on this point: he told Brosio that NATO was not an appropriate framework for the new policy of *détente*, and that the only problem was that the partner governments didn't have the nerve to tell their citizens this unpleasant truth.⁷⁶

74 *Ibid.*, 9 October 1967.

75 *Ibid.*, 21–22 October 1967.

76 *Ibid.*, 10 November 1967

At this point, the work of the four sub-groups was over. The conclusions of the four written reports had been reviewed and compared during a last meeting of the rapporteurs at Ditchley Park in October 1967. Based on the work of the sub-groups,⁷⁷ a draft summary report was prepared by the International Staff of the Secretariat in November. This report, presented to the foreign ministers in December, was approved on 14 December 1967 and issued as an annex to the final communiqué.⁷⁸ Brosio confided to his journal that he distrusted the “insipid, reduced” text. But he also admitted that it offered a twofold advantage: preventing a showdown with France and allowing the alliance to survive with a program that was “more or less illusory, but more or less decorous”.⁷⁹ From this point of view, Brosio was forced to recognize that the outcome of the study was “modest, but less disastrous than [he] had foreseen”.⁸⁰ In any case, if the Harmel Exercise was over, the task of the alliance had only just begun: in the years ahead, the fifteen NATO members would have to demonstrate through their actions that “the alliance was a dynamic and vigorous organization,” that “the cohesion and solidarity of interest of its members” was not only a slogan for their public opinions and, last but not least, that it would play a major role in the promotion of détente. In other words, the time was coming to transform wishes into reality.

77 The full reports are available at <http://www.nato.int/archives/harmel/harmel.htm>.

78 The Council's report “The Future Tasks of the Alliance” is available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c671213b.htm>.

79 TFE, MB, XXII, 23 November 1967

80 *Ibid.*, 24 November 1967

Conclusion

In Brosio's opinion, a policy of détente was dangerous, for a number of reasons, both to the Atlantic alliance and to Europe. He thought that the US viewed the Atlantic alliance mostly as an instrument for controlling Europe. The US search for an agreement with Moscow on a bilateral base was changing the nature of this arrangement. Would the Soviets accept it, in order to keep Europe weak and harmless? Brosio didn't think so. He believed that Moscow wanted a divided and weak Europe, but under its own control, and that in the Soviet policy of détente, any agreement with Washington would represent only one stage in the process towards the "Soviet rule" over the continent.⁸¹

In addition to the dangers represented by the US and Soviet policies of détente, the perils of French foreign policy had to be taken into consideration. De Gaulle did not want Great Britain to join the EEC, and he did not want the US to control Europe. He wanted Europe to reach an agreement with Moscow in order to control Germany. But the Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals" that de Gaulle was building would be, in Brosio's words, a continent "in Soviet hands". Both France and the US were working on an agreement with Moscow at the expense of Germany, but the Soviets thought that only Washington could meet their requirements by ensuring that Germany remained harmless and under control. The alliance, Brosio wrote, faced with these dangers, was slowly losing its original features.⁸²

Brosio pointed out in no uncertain terms that both the US and France intended to use the demagogic impact of détente on public opinion in order to pursue a policy of compromise with the Soviets dictated by their own strategic interests, the purpose of which was an agreement with Moscow behind the back of the allies.

Brosio's skepticism about the Harmel proposal was due to the demagogic character of the operation, which was mainly motivated by the necessity to demonstrate to Western public opinion that the alliance was "a dynamic and vigorous organization", in spite of the difficulties it was

81 TFE, MB, XXI, 20 February 1967.

82 Ibid., 11 July 1967.

facing; and by the fact that the relevance of the alliance and its *raison d'être* were themselves becoming subjects of discussion. There was a risk that the whole experience would be reduced to a technical exercise, as it had not been made clear whether its aim was to precipitate a showdown with de Gaulle and to push France to leave the alliance, or to prevent Germany from searching a direct compromise with Moscow, or to establish Atlantic control over the policy of *détente* as a whole. In his concern about the French attitude, Brosio considered the Harmel Report a document of “wishful thinking” that would nevertheless allow the alliance to survive.

Belgium, NATO, and Détente, 1960–1973

Vincent Dujardin

“There are only two great or grand countries in the European Union: Great Britain and the Grand Duchy. The others have decided to be more careful and not to stress their size in their names.”¹ This joke, told by Prime Minister of Luxembourg Jean-Claude Juncker, reminds us that if a small country such as Belgium wishes to have any international influence, it must be represented by an exceptional figure. Between 1961 and 1966, Paul-Henri Spaak was the main figure in Belgian diplomacy. A few days before the Belgian foreign minister and former prime minister officially took office as secretary-general of NATO, his picture was featured on the Newsweek cover, which described him as a “big man for a big job.”² Only in exceptional circumstances can representatives of a small country play an important role on the international scene. Such was the case during the period under discussion, thanks to the role played by Spaak in the relaunching of the Messina Conference and the signing of the Treaty of Rome, which established the EEC.

Pierre Harmel³, who took over from Spaak in March 1966, was also an important political figure in his day. He was prime minister from July 1965 to March 1966, then minister of foreign affairs until January 1973. In 1969, US Secretary of State Dean Rusk wrote that thanks to Harmel, Belgium’s role within NATO and in the world as a whole was far more influential than its surface area or population would suggest.⁴ The topic of “Belgium, NATO, and Détente, 1960–73”, therefore, covers a particularly significant time for the history of Belgian diplomacy.

1 Jean-Claude Juncker, Interview with *La Libre Belgique*, 12 December 2001.

2 *Newsweek*, 6 May 1957, quoted in Michel Dumoulin, *Spaak* (Brussels: Racine, 1999), p. 536.

3 For an overall analysis of Harmel’s political career, cf. Vincent Dujardin, *Pierre Harmel* (Brussels: Le Cri, 2004), pp. 806–8.

4 Rusk (Washington) to Harmel, 4 February 1969, Belgian State Archives, Harmel Papers (BSA, HP).

The Spaak Years 1962–1965: Preparing the Ground

As early as 1962, Spaak, then minister of foreign affairs, spoke of the need for dialog with the East and tried to convince his partners that strengthening the military wing of NATO was not incompatible with the idea of negotiation.⁵ Spaak wished to negotiate on disarmament, then on the Berlin issue, while believing that resolution of the German question as a whole would have to be left to a later date. This was a similar position to that of Paul van Zeeland, former Belgian prime minister, (1935–37), then minister of foreign affairs (1936–37 and 1949–54). In 1953, the man who in 1938 had brought down the head of the fascist Rex party, Léon Degrelle, had, indeed, submitted a plan for starting a dialog with the East. And on 3 December 1953, he wrote: “We must pursue a dual policy. We must miss no opportunity to negotiate while continuing to strengthen the West’s position.”⁶ Paul van Zeeland also said that Europe would not be able to defend itself alone against the Warsaw Pact. The Communist threat, and its political, military, and economic aspects, could only be addressed effectively within NATO.⁷ In a nutshell, Belgium had to build up its defenses, but also negotiate, for “any arms race, when it continues for some time, ultimately leads to war.”⁸ This dictum is a forerunner of Spaak’s political approach, and of what would be called the Harmel doctrine.

This was the general background to the two meetings held by Spaak with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. The first of these took place on 12 September 1961, in spite of the misgivings of several partners within NATO. Couve de Murville, who served as French foreign minister from 1958–68, felt that Spaak’s visit to Moscow was “pointless, inappropriate and inadvisable,” London failed to understand, and The Hague was displeased.⁹ The second trip to Moscow took place from 7–9 August 1963. This time, Bel-

5 Dumoulin, *Spaak*, pp. 631–2.

6 Pascal Deloge, “Paul van Zeeland et les questions de sécurité”, in *Paul van Zeeland et les questions politiques et économiques de son temps*, ed. Geneviève Duchenne and Vincent Dujardin (Louvain-la-Neuve: IEE, 2001), p. 88.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 93.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 95.

9 Dumoulin, *Spaak*, p. 625.

gium's NATO allies took a more positive view. On 4 October, US President John F. Kennedy received Spaak one last time before his assassination in Dallas and stressed "the important personal role" played by the Socialist statesman in the area of cessation of nuclear testing.¹⁰

In 1963, Spaak also began negotiations with his Polish counterpart, Adam Rapacki.¹¹ At the time, these Belgian–Polish talks would not prove very fruitful. Marian Naszkowski, former under secretary of state to the Polish minister of foreign affairs, draws a negative picture of Spaak in his memoirs, feeling that he had little credibility due to the development of his political convictions. He speaks of Spaak's very left-wing beginnings, then of his increasing sympathy and support for the US and NATO, his anti-Communism and finally his attempts to enter into dialog with the East. He had also accompanied Spaak to Auschwitz, and writes that he had never seen a politician who seemed less affected by everything he saw there.¹² He thus describes him as a cold man. In fact, the Socialist statesman spoke only later of how moved he had been by the visit to Auschwitz, saying: "We began the day with an overwhelming experience. Obviously I knew of Auschwitz by repute. I have read books on the concentration camps, but seeing the place itself is a completely different experience."¹³

Spaak saw, in particular, the potential of Rapacki's 1964 proposal to organize a CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe), although he did not suggest that it should be accepted in every detail. But Rapacki was also suspicious of the Socialist politician. A memo internal to the Polish minister of foreign affairs of December 1963 reads as follows:

Spaak's wish to encourage political relations between Belgium and the Socialist countries, including Poland, stems from his views on the role of small countries in creating détente. Spaak's personal ambitions are of

10 Ibid.

11 On 2 October 1957, Adam Rapacki, on the instigation of the USSR, had put to the United Nations General Assembly a disarmament plan involving the denuclearization of Central Europe (Poland, Czechoslovakia, but also both Germanys). Georges-Henri Soutou, *La guerre de cinquante ans: Les relations Est-Ouest, 1943–1990* (Paris: Fayard, 2001), p. 354.

12 Marian Naszkowski, *Paryż-Moskwa, wspomnienia dyplomaty 1945–1950* (Warsaw: Panstwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1986), pp. 127–8.

13 Polish Foreign Ministry Archives (PFMA), IV/17/51, internal memo from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 17 December 1963.

some importance here. He wishes to be seen as a ‘pioneer’, a mediator between the East and the West. Spaak probably wishes ultimately to take all the credit for laying the foundations for any future relations between the Socialist countries and the EEC.¹⁴

It is true that the Belgian diplomatic service, severely tested at that time by events in Africa, wished to restore its reputation. But this was not Spaak’s only motive. He felt that NATO could not just be a tool for containment, but should also work as a political instrument in favor of peace. The Socialist statesman had not rejected the Rapacki plan out of hand, but had, on the contrary, started a dialog with the Poles, and was, when he left the Belgian government in 1966, preparing another trip to Moscow. He had also already accepted invitations from Prague and Budapest.¹⁵

In this area, the initiatives taken by the former NATO secretary-general did not return any tangible results. Nevertheless, the ground had been prepared. Spaak’s visit to Warsaw gave Belgium the status of a credible partner for Poland. Moreover, Spaak’s initiatives suggest that he, like Paul van Zeeland, helped prepare the doctrine that would be named after Pierre Harmel.¹⁶ The two-fold approach – defense and *détente* – at the heart of the Harmel doctrine was already present in Spaak’s ideas, even if his was more of a pragmatic approach than a doctrine as such.

In the meantime, the storm clouds were gathering over NATO and would burst just a few days after the arrival of his successor as minister of foreign affairs, Pierre Harmel.

14 Quoted in Dumoulin, *Spaak*, pp. 621–32.

15 Luc Desmedt, “M. Spaak et M. Harmel: Dix années de politique étrangère belge, deux hommes, une même politique”, *Res Publica* XVI, no. 5 (1974), p. 604.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 632.

The Harmel Years: From “Damage Limitation” to the “Doctrine”

Harmel’s Motives and Reactions to Harmel’s Exercise

On 20 January 1966, NATO Secretary-General Manlio Brosio was received at the Elys e Palace. As they discussed issues concerning the future of the alliance, the French president stated: “In 1969, France will no longer be a member of NATO as such, but I realize that we must explain our intentions to our partners [...]. I feel that a multilateral alliance must be replaced by bilateral relations.”¹⁷ We are familiar with what happened next. On 2 March 1966, de Staercke wrote the following to Spaak: “Decisions on NATO have now been taken.”¹⁸ Five days later, as the Harmel government was resigning, de Gaulle would inform US President Lyndon B. Johnson of France’s decision to leave the peacetime military structure of the North Atlantic alliance.¹⁹

On 20 May, Harmel was received in the White House by President Johnson. If we are to believe the US memorandum, the Belgian minister was given a particularly warm welcome. Harmel restated how much importance he attached to NATO, and said that he felt the French position to be outdated, since an alliance with no operational powers “would be simply a paper alliance, and it might be better not to have it.”²⁰ On the other hand, although he claimed to be unaware of the true motivations behind de Gaulle’s trip to Moscow, he felt that NATO should also create “humanitarian and cultural” links with Eastern Europe. Finally, Harmel stated his view – without, at this stage, proposing anything specific – that the problem of the presence or otherwise of French troops in Germany

17 Account by Andr  de Staercke, on the basis of private conversations with Brosio, Fondation Paul-Henri Spaak, Brussels (FPHS), 303/5703.

18 De Staercke to Spaak, Brussels, 2 March 1966, FPHS, 303/5703.

19 Georges-Henri Soutou, “La d cision fran aise de quitter le commandement int gr  de l’OTAN, 1966,” in *Von Truman bis Harmel: Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland in Spannungsfeld von NATO und europ ischer Integration*. ed. Hans-Joachim Harder (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), pp. 185–208.

20 Memorandum of Conversation between Harmel and Johnson, Washington, 20 May 1966, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Records of the Department of State (RG 59), E111B. Nato 3 Bel.

should only be considered as part of a general debate on the future of the alliance. As for the US president, he declared directly his certainty “that [Harmel] would play a leading role” during the NATO ministerial discussions in Brussels. As early as 26 April, he had spoken to parliament of the need for “a new edition of the new alliance gospel,”²¹ which shows that the “Harmel exercise” was already taking shape in his head at that time. In view of the large body of scholarship that has been published on this issue, we shall refrain from describing it in great detail for the purposes of the present discussion.

On 14 June, Harmel stressed to the Chamber of Representatives (the Belgian parliament) the political role which must be played by the Atlantic alliance, and stated his belief that working towards détente was more important than efforts in the area of defense.²² This is the same idea that forms the backbone of the Harmel report, i.e., that: “The Atlantic Alliance has two main functions. Its first function is to maintain adequate military strength and political solidarity to deter aggression and other forms of pressure and to defend the territory of member countries if aggression should occur. [...] Military security and a policy of détente are not contradictory, but complementary” (§5), and that “The ultimate political purpose of the Alliance is to achieve a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe accompanied by appropriate security guarantees” (§9).

In July, moreover, Harmel appointed the Belgian ambassador to Vienna, Louis Colot,²³ as an “itinerant ambassador for peace issues”. Following this appointment, some countries began to suspect the Belgian minister of taking an interest in Eastern Europe for domestic policy reasons. The French ambassador to Brussels noted the following on 28 July: “It is not impossible that the Minister acted for reasons of domestic policy,”²⁴ i.e., to try and placate the Socialist opposition to the location of SHAPE in Belgium.

21 *Annales parlementaires. Chambre* (APC), Session of 26 April 1966, p. 2.

22 APC, 14 June 1966.

23 Louis Colot had been the principal private secretary to Paul van Zeeland (1949–51).

24 De Crouy-Chanel (Brussels) to Paris, no. 2269, 28 July 1966, French Foreign Ministry Archives, Paris (FFMA), Europe-Belgique, 1966–1970.

The British were still supportive of the Belgian idea, although they too sometimes expressed some doubts as to the motives underlying the Belgian diplomatic moves. This emerges from a note drawn up by the Foreign Office in February 1967, with a view to the visit to be made by Wilson to Belgium on 16 February. The note describes the Belgian objectives as: “1. To respond to a reduction in military expenditure with a view to abolishing military service. 2. To take account of Belgian public opinion since the arrival of NATO on Belgian soil. 3. To reassure the Walloons that France’s exit would not mean less co-operation with France. 4. To find a job for Mr Spaak. 5. (and only fifthly), to deal with the 1969 situation and to resolve East–West problems.”²⁵

However, how could the other 14 countries, and in particular France, ever be expected to accept such a step if its only purpose had been to find a job for Spaak or to solve internal Belgian problems linked to the location of SHAPE in Belgium? When the Italians informed others of their own domestic problems somewhat later, these were ignored.²⁶ Having said that, it is true that Belgium reduced its military expenditure. In 1960, it was spending 3.5 percent of its GNP on defense. In 1969, this would go down to 3 percent, and in 1974 to 2.75 percent. Between 1969 and 1972, 10,000 posts were lost from the Belgian army, so much so that it was becoming difficult for Belgium to meet its military commitments within NATO.²⁷ Yet this was certainly not Harmel’s main political objective, even though it was a useful side-effect.

The most important thing in 1966 was to carry out “damage limitation” vis-à-vis Charles de Gaulle’s decision, and to grasp the chance to promote

25 Report, February 1967, Public Record Office, Kew (PRO), Foreign Office (FO) 33/14.

26 On 20 November, the Italians made an official request that no decision be made on the adoption of the final report in the December Council, but that it rather be postponed until May or June 1968, after the Italian elections. The Christian Democrats were worried that if France were to leave the alliance in December, they might be forced, under pressure from the Socialists, their partners in the coalition, as well as from right-wing members, to withdraw also. This type of argument based on domestic policy issues of a particular country was not accepted. J. Robert Charles, *The Future Tasks of the Alliance: NATO’s 1967 Harmel Exercise and Report* (unpublished manuscript, s. l., 1993), pp. 337–44.

27 Mark van den Wijngaert, Lieve Beullens, and Frank Decat, “De buitenlandse en militaire politiek van België in een gebipolariserde wereld”, in *Oost West, West Best: België onder de Koude Oorlog, 1947–1968*, ed. Mark van den Wijngaert and Lieve Beullens (Tiel: Lannoo, 1997), p. 60.

détente. Harmel's political approach also had clear Christian overtones. Eugene Rostow, the US under secretary of state, responsible for monitoring Harmel's exercise closely, noted the following: "The report is a restating of the desire for peace, not just a theoretical desire, but in the form of a practical, tangible program intended to create peace through good works and faith. It is a perfect expression of the idealistic nature of Pierre Harmel, a religious and high-minded individual, as well as an experienced and effective businessman. This is a rare combination. It is also an invaluable one."²⁸ As for Harmel himself, he reports that he drew particular inspiration from the Encyclical *Pacem in terris* issued by Pope John XXIII. We should also note that when Harmel was due to visit the UN in October 1966, Pope Paul VI asked him to support his peace initiatives and, in particular, to contact Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. The Pope said that in any discussions he might have with the Soviet leader, Harmel could refer to the desire, which Gromyko had expressed to him to co-operate with his work towards peace.²⁹ Promoting détente and peace was clearly one of the motives behind Harmel's exercise.

Reactions of the various Western countries to the adoption of the Harmel report were lukewarm. But we should focus on reactions from the East, which require some explanation.

It is true that in public, the authorities ridiculed the document, saying that it was a front for NATO's "aggressive" policies.³⁰ In April 1967, Leonid Brezhnev described the Harmel exercise as a "low-cost" effort made "to save the 'Holy Alliance'".³¹ But already in early December 1967, diplomats from the Soviet embassy in Washington came to the State Department to enquire, off the record, as to the content of the plan.³² Equally, shortly before adoption of the report by the Council, the Polish ambassador to Washington came to the State Department in person to ask for more information. He indicated that Polish Foreign Affairs Minister Rapacki

28 Eugene V. Rostow, "Un programme pratique pour la paix, le 20e anniversaire du Rapport Harmel," *Revue de l'OTAN* no. 4 (August 1987), p. 15.

29 Paul VI's wishes as expressed during the audience granted on 28 September 1966 to Charles Poswick, Belgian ambassador to the Vatican. BSA, HP, Poswick to Harmel, 7 October 1966.

30 Charles, *The Future Tasks of the Alliance*, p. 398.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

had recently discussed the issue with Harmel, and that the Poles were extremely interested in his ideas.³³

For an attempt coming from someone who had only been foreign minister for a few months, it was a masterstroke. He was not, it is true, the sole author of the report, but it was his idea, and he was the main figure behind it, refusing to listen to doom-mongers and pessimists. NATO Secretary-General Brosio himself talked of the “Harmel dream.”³⁴ And at the same time, the efforts made by the Belgian minister allowed him to resolve the domestic problems linked to the setting up of SHAPE, to encourage France to stay within the alliance, to give new momentum to this alliance, to lay the foundations for German Chancellor Willy Brandt’s Ostpolitik in the whole of the West, and to open up a path towards disarmament and resolving the German problem, which was key to détente. Additionally, in parallel to the development of this new “doctrine”, the Belgian minister was moving from theory to practice and dialoguing, daringly at times, with the countries of Eastern Europe, in particular with Poland.

Combining words and actions

The choice of Poland was not an arbitrary one. It was in Warsaw that eight Communist nations signed a mutual defense treaty on 14 May 1955 in response to the establishment of NATO, whereas the NATO headquarters was now in Brussels. Both Poland and Belgium have borders with Germany. Harmel realized, however, that his plan was not risk-free. This was not just because some members of the alliance (even the US) were sometimes more than reticent about the initiative. They felt that Harmel was going too far, too quickly, and were worried, especially, that discussions on reductions in conventional arms would lead to the withdrawal of US troops from Europe,³⁵ and that it would therefore be better to restrict dialog to economic, social, scientific, or cultural matters. At this point, both

33 Memorandum of Conversation between Michalowski and Stoessel, 13–14 December 1967, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, 1964–1968, XVII, no. 130.

34 Bruna Bagnato, “Handling the Alliance in a Time of Change: Manlio Brosio and the Transformation of NATO,” paper presented at international conference on *NATO, the Warsaw Pact, and the Rise of Détente, 1965–1972*, Dobbiaco, 26–28 September 2002.

35 Cf. Charles, *The Future Tasks of the Alliance*, pp. 276 and 418.

blocs were very rigid, suspicious, and aware that anything said could be used for propaganda. Harmel, who was not seen as a ‘talkative man’ – to say the very least – was clearly, then, the right man for the job. Moreover, as he told the Belgian–American Society in January 1967, “small countries such as ours can take ‘risks for peace’.”³⁶

As early as late June 1966, Harmel wished to begin dialog with the East and to pay visits to Russia, Hungary, Romania, and especially to Poland. On 30 June 1966, Etienne Davignon explained to Jan Wasilewski, the Polish ambassador to Brussels, that the head of the Belgian diplomatic service was keen to follow in Spaak’s footsteps and to resume and pursue dialog with Poland, “with whom we now have closer relations than with any other Eastern European countries.” This approach did not have the desired effect, to say the least. Wasilewski was annoyed, since Spaak “never used his private secretary to contact ambassadors.” The diplomat described Davignon as “young and lightweight”. It was felt that Harmel’s attitude was not sufficiently clear, and he was suspected, like Spaak, of trying, above all, to sound out the Eastern bloc governments in order to put himself forward as an expert in *détente* before the NATO meeting in December.³⁷

Gradually, the Poles’ tone changed. Wasilewski was touched to be invited with his wife to lunch at Harmel’s home over the summer, and was convinced of the Belgian’s sincerity when the minister said that he was very keen to meet Rapacki.³⁸ The report from the Polish ambassador clearly hit the spot, since Harmel was invited to Warsaw. He took up the invitation at the beginning of September. A note internal to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirms this change of tone in Warsaw vis-à-vis Harmel. “He is a new figure in international politics,” it says. “He will not blindly follow Spaak. He has his own views on foreign policy, and we cannot rule out the possibility of a fruitful dialog with him. He has only been a minister for five months, but has already dealt with many crises (EEC, NATO, Congo). He frequently recalls that he intends to follow a policy of *détente* and rapprochement, especially with Poland. [...] He seeks any way to bring our countries closer together [...] He shows great appreciation for

36 Ibid., p. 119.

37 Wasilewski to Warsaw, Brussels, 12 July 1966, PFMA, 17/48/5.

38 Wasilewski to Warsaw, Brussels, 20 July 1966, PFMA, 17/48/5.

the Polish initiatives on détente, which he would like to discuss in Poland, to seek specific ways of resolving any outstanding issues.”³⁹

Rapacki and Harmel clearly liked each other. The outcome was that a “conference on security in Europe could be a possible objective.” The two men also agreed to say that Moscow and Washington should participate in such a conference, and discussed the delicate problem of nuclear disarmament in Europe as well as conventional disarmament. But above all, the Belgian and Polish ministers decided to meet once a year, and arranged for their civil servants to meet more frequently. This is probably what led the French ambassador to Brussels, to whom Harmel gave an account of his impressions when he got back home, to say that “our initial impression of these conversations [...] is that their results are better than we hoped or expected. By the decision to institutionalize Belgian–Polish contact via regular meetings, Harmel seems to wish to place his country at the vanguard of efforts towards détente.” The diplomat again detected the wish “to make up, to some extent, for the decision to accept SHAPE” on Belgian soil. Then he continued: “Having said that, Harmel, for the first time, subscribed to the Soviet proposal to recognize the territorial status quo in Europe,”⁴⁰ something which NATO Secretary-General Manlio Brosio was still describing at the time as “probably the Soviet Union’s most effective political tool to confirm its hegemony in Europe. [...] A new European system of collective security would amount to nothing less than a form of Soviet domination.”⁴¹

As for the Polish ambassador to Belgium, Wasilewski, he wrote that “the first meeting between Harmel and Rapacki was even more fruitful than those which took place in the past between Rapacki and M. Spaak.”⁴² Harmel himself felt that Rapacki was “less of a Communist than a Socialist converted to his country’s regime”.⁴³

39 PFMA, 17/48/5. The content of the report shows that it was drafted shortly before Harmel’s visit.

40 De Crouy-Chanel to Paris, Brussels, 10 September 1966, FFMA, Europe-Belgique, 1966–1970, 2269.

41 Quoted in Rik Coolsaet, *La politique extérieure de la Belgique* (Brussels: De Boeck, 2002), p. 185.

42 Colot to Harmel, 21 December 1966, Belgian Foreign Ministry Archive, Brussels (BFMA), 14953/1660.

43 Interview granted by Pierre Harmel to J. Robert Charles, 23 October 1990, BSA, HP, Brussels.

Relations between Harmel and Rapacki would become more and more trusting, even extremely warm. This was probably the first time that Poland had had such contacts with a Western state since 1945.⁴⁴

On 20 March 1968, Harmel sent Rapacki a list of principles concerning the implementation of certain measures to restrict armed forces and armaments in Europe, a document summarizing the Belgian-Polish discussions.⁴⁵ This is clearly a key text, not only because we have the Polish reaction to the Belgian memo, but also because this document gives us a general idea of the state of the dialog between the two ministers on the eve of the events in Czechoslovakia. Finally, the text seems even more significant when we think that Harmel never moved an inch without informing his allies and Secretary-General Brosio, as André de Staercke could see on a daily basis. This is in fact particularly true for the US. Other countries would feel that they had not been sufficiently informed as to the exact Belgian intentions. Harmel would explain to the US embassy in Brussels that informing all countries in advance would seriously slow down any progress in discussions. Harmel felt that preparatory bilateral talks were more efficient than “‘bloc-to-bloc’ discussions”.⁴⁶

Informing NATO was clearly not the same as gaining support from all its members for the initiative. Nevertheless, when the Belgian minister sent his communication to his counterpart, it was still somewhat as if NATO were sending a memorandum to the Warsaw Pact. This explains the following words taken from a letter from Harmel to Rapacki and dated 29 March 1968: “I have decided, in the light of the specific nature [of the talks], to step up our country’s action vis-à-vis our partners in the Atlantic Alliance, with a view to gaining their support for the principles of disarmament listed in the Belgian document.”⁴⁷ But which points in the document could Poland support? Rapacki stated his agreement to the following: the concept of a freeze on conventional and nuclear weapons in an area to be agreed upon; the concept of international surveillance,

44 Cf. *The Guardian*, 18 January 1967.

45 This report can be found in BSA, HP.

46 NARA, RG 59, Belgium, 969000/1870, Knight to DoS, 5 June 1968. The diplomat writes that the “Minister of Foreign Affairs kept [the embassy] very closely informed of the content of the talks.”

47 *Le dialogue belgo-polonais sur le désarmement en Europe*, BSA, HP, Brussels.

in particular “the negotiation of ad hoc agreements, aiming to ensure the settling of international disputes by peaceful means as well as the respect of principles concerning the non-recourse to force or the threat of force in international relations”; the “prevention of the risk of sparking off a war by accident, as the result of a calculation error or a surprise attack, by establishing an ad hoc arrangement comprising, in particular, the creation of an adequate system of observation posts.”⁴⁸ As for points of disagreement, the Poles felt that a balanced reduction of foreign troops stationed in European countries would be impossible while the war in Vietnam was still going on. They also believed that armaments limitation measures should apply to territorial waters and naval forces, something excluded from the Belgian plan. Rapacki, then, wished to ratify the text, but felt it to be incomplete.⁴⁹ He undertook to send a new draft as soon as possible and wrote to Harmel on 4 April 1968, as part of a warm correspondence.⁵⁰

Harmel’s note was clearly broadly based on the plans of Rapacki and Władysław Gomułka, omitting to specify within which area a nuclear arms freeze would apply. But it also included the idea of international monitoring of such a freeze. Finally, by talking of a “freeze”, rather than of “denuclearization”, it was closer to the Gomułka plan than to the Rapacki plan. It is also interesting that Rapacki was careful about what he said to his country’s press when questioned on the content of the talks with Harmel. In the 23 June 1968 edition of a Polish newspaper, *Trybuna Ludu*, he fields the question with some irony by stating that he can reveal “that we did not discuss the possibility of replacing the division of Europe into two opposing military blocs by a military alliance between Poland and Belgium.”⁵¹

Besides his talks with the Poles, Pierre Harmel forged contacts with Romanian, Hungarian, Czechoslovak, and Yugoslav diplomats. In February 1967, he revealed some of his views on East–West dialog to the Romanian magazine *Lunea*, stating in particular that in his opinion, economic and cultural cooperation as well as cooperation in the area of tourism should

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 BSA, HP.

51 Seyfert to Harmel, 23 June 1968, BFMA, 15276/1791.

precede military or political cooperation, since these would help to overcome fear and suspicion between Europeans in both East and West.⁵²

From 25–26 April 1967, Harmel met with his Hungarian counterpart, Janos Peter, in Budapest. On his return, Harmel told the French ambassador to Brussels that he had concentrated on issues related to economic cooperation, in line with his usual “method” for approaching Eastern European countries, but that the political talks “did not achieve anything significant”.⁵³ The Hungarian archives confirm this, but give us a little more information. Reporting back to the Hungarian Communist Party Central Committee, Janos Peter described the atmosphere of the talks as “sincere and open”.⁵⁴ Indeed, in the political domain, Harmel said he was open to the idea of a European Security Conference, but that he felt that circumstances were not yet ready for this, due, in particular, to the non-resolution of the German question, although the latter could not be the pre-condition for détente in Europe, but only a result of it. In this context, the Belgian minister expressed his fears that resurgent “German nationalism” might be strengthened by a loss of the prospect of reunification, even if this would only be possible in the long term. He added, finally, that Belgium was loyal to NATO, but that, in his view, this organization, just like the Warsaw Pact, was a provisional one, and that his objective would be to transform it into an alliance working for peace rather than a defense organization. It is interesting to see that Harmel did not hesitate at this time to stress the provisional nature of NATO, although we should handle this statement with much caution. Janos Peter declared that he was hoping for the simultaneous disbanding of NATO and the Warsaw Pact in 1969.⁵⁵ When questioned on recognition of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Harmel apparently did not reply.

Harmel’s initiatives to promote détente brought him media attention. The *Financial Times* of 30 August 1967 published a profile of the Belgian minister. With reference to his tendency to go out on a limb among NATO

52 Cf. Seyfert to Harmel, “Rapport annuel 1967”, BFMA, 15276/1791.

53 Crouy-Chanel (Brussels) to Couve de Murville, 5 May 1967, FFMA, 2270, Europe-Belgique, 1966–1970.

54 Hungarian Foreign Ministry Archives, Budapest (HFMA), XIX, Belgium, 135-001071/25-1967.

55 *Ibid.*

member countries in favor of détente, the article was headlined “Harmel, the loner”. On 20 February 1968, finally, Francois-Xavier van der Straten, director-general for political affairs, convened a meeting of ambassadors of Eastern European countries in order to hear their reactions to the adoption of the Harmel report. The Polish ambassador took a particularly tough line, harshly criticizing the German government under Chancellor Kurt-Georg Kiesinger and NATO’s policy vis-à-vis Germany. He went so far as to say that “the German people have no right to self-determination.”⁵⁶ Could these have been warning signs of the sad events of summer 1968? At any rate, the West was still feeling relatively optimistic at this time, and was preparing the “Reykjavik Signal”.

The Harmel Plan: A Useful Preparation for the Famous “Reykjavik Signal”?

Among the representatives of NATO member countries, Harmel was clearly one of those doing most to encourage détente, which brought him much media attention. His Dutch colleague Joseph Luns would follow his example.⁵⁷ As for his French counterpart, he complained that Harmel did not consult sufficiently with the NATO Council.⁵⁸

In the run-up to the NATO ministerial meeting in Reykjavik, however, Harmel tried to convince his colleagues of the need to move from words to actions, and to send out a clear message to the East in favor of détente. On 25 April 1968, therefore, André de Staercke was most pleased to write the following to him: “This time we shall be able to spend more time on détente than on defense. My American colleague recalled how much importance

56 Seydoux (Brussels) to Paris, Tel. 2012, 21 February 1968, FFMA, Fonds Europe 1966–1970, Organismes internationaux et grandes questions internationales, OTAN. There were also important visits by Bulgarian Foreign Minister Ivan Bachev to Brussels on 4–9 March 1968 and on 12–14 November 1969. Cf. also Luxembourg Foreign Ministry Archives, Luxembourg, 14303.

57 Political analyst Alfred van Staden believes that Luns copied his Ostpolitik from Harmel. Alfred van Staden, *Een trouwe bondgenoot: Nederland en het Atlantisch Bondgenootschap, 1960–1971* (Baarn: Anthos, 1974), p. 158. This theory was endorsed by Duco Hellema, *Neutraliteit en vrijhandel: De geschiedenis van de Nederlandse buitenlandse betrekkingen* (Utrecht: Het Spectrum, 2001), pp. 158–9.

58 De Beaumarchais to Couve de Murville, 7 November 1967, FFMA, 2270, Europe-Belgique, 1966–1970.

his government attached to the post-Vietnam period. He told us, word for word, that the Allies wished ‘the Americans to stop this nonsense’.”⁵⁹ As far as Harmel’s position concerning the Vietnam war is concerned, it will suffice to quote the words of the US ambassador to Brussels: “While he wants to be on our side, he is a troubled man.”⁶⁰

On 16 May 1968, Harmel wrote to Brandt, in the hope that the ministers could discuss §13, on disarmament, of the December report, which formed the basis of the Belgian–Polish dialog. Harmel felt this to be particularly urgent, since the Soviets had considerably increased their defense budget during recent months. Brandt replied saying, firstly, how pleased he was to hear of the conversations between Belgian and Polish experts on disarmament:

I am quite sure that these talks are helping to give new impetus to East-West dialog in the still relatively unexplored area of disarmament and arms control on a regional European scale. In this respect we have to admit that the Polish government, whose hard-line policies are holding up détente with respect to the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany] – just like some other Eastern European countries – is showing more openness in these talks and contacts. I will therefore be most pleased if you could point the Polish government to the necessary limits of bilateral talks.⁶¹

Harmel needed much support for the Reykjavik meeting, as several NATO allies felt he was going too far too quickly with the Poles. But once again, he would receive support from the US. On 15 May, Harmel had written to Rostow suggesting that at the Reykjavik Council, the West could take the initiative in the area of disarmament, which would show the Poles that dialog could be fruitful and lead to action. The idea was not to ask for an agreement on a true disarmament plan, which “could seem too controversial (to the East),” but to “detect any convergence of ideas on certain general issues.”⁶² In comments made on the letter to ambassador Knight, Harmel

59 BFMA, Archives du service de sécurité européenne. Non-classified documents.

60 Knight to Rostow, Brussels, 21 December 1966, NARA, RG 59, E 112 POL 15-1.

61 Brandt to Harmel, Bonn, 29 May 1968, BSA, HP.

62 Harmel to Rostow, Brussels, 15 May 1968, NARA, RG 59, Belgium, 989309/16.

regretted “the ‘excessive influence’ of the military in the NATO structure, who, in his view, unfailingly and effectively stymie political progress.”⁶³ Ten days later, the US under secretary of state replied to him as follows:

We share your deep interest in the arms control question. Your letter came just at the moment that we ourselves were submitting to Belgium and other Alliance members our thoughts on the manner of dealing with the mutual force reductions question at the forthcoming NATO Ministerial Meeting.⁶⁴

It is, then, generally acknowledged that the talks between Harmel and the Polish were a useful preparation for the famous “Reykjavik Signal” of June 1968, which was passionately advocated by the Belgian minister, and to which France did not sign up.⁶⁵ It allowed the Atlantic Council, on the basis of §13 of the Harmel report, to make a skilful proposal to the Russians to study the possibility of balanced reductions between East and West, particularly in the central part of Europe. “This meant that the Soviets would not have the monopoly on proposals concerning security in Europe, but that discussions were guided towards specific issues, rather than to a negotiation of general principles as wished by Moscow.”⁶⁶ The Western aim was clearly to obtain a reduction in Russian conventional forces, which were far superior to those of the West, a situation which was obliging “Western strategists to consider nuclear options at a very early stage.”⁶⁷

Harmel played a significant role in the Reykjavik declaration. Speaking before the Council on 24 June 1968, he invited his counterparts to make a strong gesture to the East. In particular, he said: “In the sensitive area of mutual arms reduction, we are convinced that we must not just reflect, but take immediate concerted action.”⁶⁸ He referred in his arguments to

63 Knight to Rostow, Brussels, 15 May 1968, NARA, RG 59, Belgium, 989309/16.

64 Rusk to Harmel, 25 May 1968, FRUS, 1964-1968, XIII, no.. 307.

65 Georges-Henri Soutou, “L’attitude de Georges Pompidou face   l’Allemagne”, in *Georges Pompidou et l’Europe*, ed. Association George Pompidou (Brussels: Complexe, 1995), p. 294.

66 Georges-Henri Soutou, *La guerre de cinquante ans: Les relations Est-Ouest, 1943-1990* (Paris: Fayard, 2001), p. 478. This is what Harmel was advocating in October 1967. Cf. Charles, *The Future Tasks of the Alliance*, p. 276.

67 Soutou, *La guerre de cinquante ans*, p. 478.

68 Record of the meeting in BFMA, Archives du service de s curit  europ enne, Non-classified documents.

the dialog with Poland, and declared: “Through the exploratory talks we have held with Poland, Belgium has been trying to discover, by way of an example, what sort of reception would be given to specific proposals.”⁶⁹ Optimism was in the air. When he first took up his post as foreign minister, Harmel spoke of Europe as a unified whole. On 3 July 1968, he wrote to André de Staercke: “The results achieved in June are very satisfactory. But why does the Alliance seem ashamed of what it is doing? [...] Also, several countries would have made no progress at all in this direction if they had not been pushed or dragged along. Nevertheless, let us proceed with cheerful hearts.”⁷⁰

Prague 1968 and the Visit to Moscow

Eastern reactions to the Reykjavik Signal were somewhat negative. The Romanian magazine *Lunea* criticised in particular the “Harmel Plan”, which it described as “a camouflage exercise intended to conceal Western Europe’s political subjugation to American military interests and the abandonment of our policy of détente.”⁷¹ “The so-called ‘Harmel plan,’” the influential Bucharest weekly continued, “has not prevented the vast NATO apparatus from using its strategic plans and military force to serve, rather than the interests of détente, the particular interests of the USA, and the requirements of modern warfare.”⁷²

However, in just one night, on 20–21 August 1968, at a time of increasing détente, all efforts to create dialog between the East and the West were suddenly brought to a standstill. Troops from the USSR, Bulgaria, Hungary, the GDR, and Poland occupied Czechoslovakia. Harmel immediately broke off negotiations with his Warsaw Pact counterparts.⁷³ In the meantime, André de Staercke wrote to Harmel on 22 August: “Your plan, according to declarations made by members of the Council, will remain

69 Ibid.

70 Harmel to de Staercke, Brussels, 3 July 1968, BFMA, Papiers de Staercke, 18298.17.

71 Adriaensen (Bucharest) to Harmel, 17 July 1968, BFMA, Archives du service de sécurité européenne, Non-classified documents.

72 Ibid.

73 Massimiliano Guderzo, *Interesse nazionale e responsabilità globale: Gli Stati Uniti, l’Alleanza atlantica e l’integrazione europea negli anni di Johnson 1963–69* (Florence: Aida, 2000), p. 501.

the basis for NATO's political action."⁷⁴ This would be confirmed at the NATO Ministerial session held in Brussels in November 1968, as well as that held in April 1969 in Washington. In fact, the Harmel report and its two main "pillars" had one major advantage: varying degrees of emphasis could be given to either pillar, depending on the circumstances.

On 27 August 1968, the French ambassador in Brussels came to see Davignon to explain his government's conviction that the events in Prague showed Harmel's conception of NATO to be mistaken.⁷⁵ In fact, he said, the Harmel report, contrary to the wishes of Paris, did not go beyond a bloc on bloc view of détente.⁷⁶ The Russians made similar accusations. An interesting article referring to Harmel was published in Pravda on 5 September 1968 by an "authorized spokesman". The article claimed that the events in Czechoslovakia could be blamed on "the new-look NATO, détente, the 'future tasks of the Alliance'".⁷⁷ The timing is interesting. On 2 September, Harmel – speaking to Groubiakov, the Soviet ambassador to Brussels – declared that he preferred "the noise of diplomats talking to that of armies on the march".⁷⁸ Journalist Yuri Joukov wrote his article on 3 or 4 September.

Harmel postponed his planned trip to Yugoslavia. He wished to do the same for Romania, but his counterpart Corneliu Manescu insisted that the visit go ahead. As Romania had condemned the events in Czechoslovakia, Harmel finally agreed to travel there on 16 September. Once in Bucharest, where he would meet not only Manescu, but also President Nicolae Ceausescu, and Prime Minister Ion Gheorghe Maurer, Harmel was told that the Romanian government wished above all to have a Western witness present for the expected imminent invasion of Russian troops.⁷⁹ Maurer told him that "Romania did not think that the USSR would make the

74 Jean Stengers, "La crise de 1968 vue de l'OTAN", in *Les alliances militaires depuis 1945*, ed. Luc De Vos and Pierre Lefèvre (Brussels: Musée royal de l'Armée et d'histoire militaire. Centre d'histoire militaire, 2000), p. 306.

75 Davignon to Harmel, 27 August 1968, BSA, HP.

76 Frédéric Bozo, *La politique étrangère de la France depuis 1945* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), p. 55.

77 Gérard (Moscow) to Harmel, 9 September 1968, BSA, HP.

78 Ibid. The quotation is contained in de Crouy-Chanel to Paris, 4 September 1968, FFMA, Europe 1966-1970, International organizations, NATO, 2012.

79 Author's interview with Pierre Harmel, 12 July 2000.

mistake and the incalculable error into which it fell by intervening in Czechoslovakia.”⁸⁰

Harmel wished to show that détente was still the main objective by resuming dialog with the East. The first country with which Harmel resumed relatively in-depth and fruitful talks on détente was Czechoslovakia, where the wind of liberalization that had come with the Dubcek government now was clearly a thing of the past. He went to Prague on 28 May 1969, where he met with Foreign Affairs Minister, Jan Marko who “in the (present) painful circumstances showed great dignity and a sort of calmness, at odds, no doubt, with the internal tension he is probably feeling.”⁸¹ His absence of bitterness towards the West was “remarkable”,⁸² even if their conversations did not give rise to any conspicuous results.⁸³

Shortly after his return from Czechoslovakia, feeling fairly optimistic, Harmel prepared to visit Moscow for only the second time in his life on 24 and 25 July 1969. He would be the first Western politician to go there since the events in Czechoslovakia, and some of his partners within NATO, notably Britain and the US, showed certain misgivings.⁸⁴

In the Soviet capital, Harmel had three meetings with Foreign Affairs Minister Andrei Gromyko and another with Alexey Kosygin, president of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. As an introduction to the discussions, Harmel recalled Western wishes in connection with the idea of convening a CSCE, in particular the desirability of agreeing beforehand on topics to be discussed before inviting the various countries to a conference of this type. One of the topics to be addressed, Harmel demanded, must be the renunciation of the use not only of nuclear, but also of conventional force, and a mutual and balanced arms reduction involving either a freeze or some sort of monitoring regime, as had been proposed in Reykjavik by the NATO countries. Other topics for discussion should be the environment

80 Cf. the Memorandum of Conversation [prepared by Harmel], NARA, RG 59, Belgium, 969000/1869.

81 Note drafted by Harmel and addressed to Davignon, n.d., in BSA, HP.

82 Note from Davignon to Harmel, n.d., *ibid.*

83 Handwritten record by Harmel, n.d. [May/June 1969], BSA, HP.

84 Memorandum of Conversation between Stewart and Harmel discussions, 14 July 1969, PRO, FCO 33/443. Cf. also Eisenhower (Brussels) to DoS, 20 May 1970, NARA, RG 59, Belgium, 969033/212.

and technical cooperation, as suggested by the Budapest declaration of 17 March 1969 concerning the holding of a security conference in Europe, and also the communiqué published by NATO member countries at their last meeting in Washington in April of the same year. Harmel also made it clear that there could be no CSCE without the US and the Soviet Union, which the Soviet side “seemed to have understood”.⁸⁵ Both sides agreed that neutral states could participate in the conference and its preparation.⁸⁶

In his reply, Gromyko repeated the Soviet demands. He said it was not enough to undertake to renounce the use of force. There must also be recognition of the borders resulting from the Second World War, and thus recognition of the two German states. Harmel replied that the arrangements made to renounce the use of force could lead to a *de facto* situation acceptable to all, pending the signing of a peace treaty. But Gromyko claimed to have suspicions as to the “vengeful attitude of Germany,”⁸⁷ whilst “if the FRG were not to sign the NPT [Non-proliferation Treaty], the treaty would collapse.” Harmel defended his German counterpart, reminding the Soviets in particular that the latter had been brave enough to declare before the German elections that Germany should sign the NPT, which also happened to be the Belgian view. As for the border issue, Harmel claimed to be aware of the wishes of the East for *de jure* recognition of the two German states, but said that for the West, “the situation is different.”⁸⁸ The German people, he argued, had the right to choose between division and reunification, hence the idea of self-determination. Starting from these two standpoints, continued Harmel, some pragmatic way forward “may be possible and worthy of consideration,”⁸⁹ thinking, notably, of a *de facto* rather than a *de jure* recognition. Harmel said he was in favor of the reunification of Germany as soon as free elections had taken place – the reply of Gromyko being that in that case, “that will not

85 Ibid.

86 Cf. “Compte rendu des entretiens entre MM. Harmel, Kossyguine et Gromyko à Moscou les 24 et 25 juillet 1969”, in AGR, Papiers Gaston Eyskens.

87 Cf. “Compte rendu des entretiens entre MM. Harmel, Kossyguine et Gromyko à Moscou les 24 et 25 juillet 1969”, in AGR, Papiers Gaston Eyskens.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid.

be too soon, [...] appearing to mean that there never would be such elections in Eastern Germany.”⁹⁰

In his interview with Kosygin, Harmel would basically go over the same main areas. He would once more defend his counterpart Brandt when the president of the Soviet Council of Ministers complained of the presence of “Nazi and fascist” elements in Germany.⁹¹

Overall, this visit by Harmel to Moscow did not lead to any significant breakthroughs. That is not the role of the foreign minister of a small country, for whom the opening up of horizons is already a success in itself. Publication of the joint communiqué led, indeed, to the following comment from a Russian official: “Our texts have been changed sufficiently to cause us problems without the text being unacceptable.”⁹² It spoke of the need to draw up a list of topics to be discussed at a possible CSCE, whereas the Soviets said that no list had as yet been drawn up and that discussions should stick to the Budapest declaration of 17 March 1969. Kosygin, according to Harmel, seemed a little “disconcerted by the interest shown by the European countries in the Russians’ proposal for a conference. They had probably made it without expecting such a reaction. Now they seemed to be unprepared for the questions they were being asked and the interest shown.”⁹³ The presence of the US at the conference was not directly referred to, but since the communiqué spoke of “consultation of all interested States,” it was safe to assume that they were included.⁹⁴

Harmel’s visit seems to have gone down well in Moscow and in the East as a whole.⁹⁵ But it is interesting to see that advisers to French President Georges Pompidou felt that Harmel had been “extremely hasty” in presenting his ideas on the CSCE and the mutual and balanced reduction of force in Europe to the Soviets as the opinion of other Western coun-

90 Talks with Pierre Harmel, 12 January 1998.

91 Ibid.

92 “Compte rendu des entretiens entre MM. Harmel, Kossyguine et Gromyko à Moscou les 24 et 25 juillet 1969”, in AGR, Papiers Gaston Eyskens.

93 De Crouy-Chanel to Paris, 4 September 1969, FFMA, Europe-Belgique.

94 De Crouy-Chanel to Schumann, 29 July 1969 FFMA, Europe-Belgique, 1966–1970, 2269.

95 *Pravda*, 29 July 1969; *Izvestia*, 28 July 1969. Cf. also the Polish Magazine *Sprawy Międzynarodowe* 4 (1974), pp. 89–98.

tries.⁹⁶ Maybe Paris, too, found the Belgian minister overly daring in the area of détente?

Towards the CSCE

A few weeks later, on 5 December 1969, the alliance responded, on the basis of the Harmel report, to a declaration made by the Warsaw Pact in Budapest on 17 March 1969, in favor of a pan-European conference to examine questions concerning the security of the continent and peaceful cooperation. Based on the double concept of defense and détente, ministers adopted a declaration expressing their views on the future development of relations between the countries of the East and the West.⁹⁷ This is an extremely interesting document, since it addresses the processes, prerequisites, topics, participants, and the titles of one or several conferences on cooperation and security in Europe. It is true that the Eastern proposal is mentioned only briefly, but up to then, reactions in the West had been negative. This is in line with Harmel's speech at the session in Brussels.

Among Harmel's various meetings with representatives from the Eastern bloc was the visit of Hungarian Foreign Minister János Péter to Brussels, 24 to 29 February 1970. It is interesting that the final communiqué speaks of "non interference in internal domestic issues" and "the right of each nation to be responsible for its own fate," a concept that contradicts the "theory of limited sovereignty" developed by Brezhnev just after events in Czechoslovakia. Was this a sign of greater flexibility, reflecting a growing desire of the Soviet Union to see the conference on European security meet at last? The same communiqué refers to "the favorable influence of any possible partial or regional measures towards a reduction or freeze in armaments."⁹⁸ In Brussels, much importance was attached to this phrase, which was the first reference in a final communiqué to the proposal made by the NATO Council, based on the Harmel plan, first in Reykjavik in 1968, then in Brussels in December 1969.

96 Raimond to Pompidou, Paris, 6 August 1969, Archives Nationales de France (ANF), Papiers Pompidou, 5AG2/1013.

97 Record in BFMA, Archives du service de sécurité européenne. Non-classified documents.

98 Ibid.

Harmel was certainly among the NATO statesmen who were pushing hardest for the opening of a CSCE and discussions on Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR). This attitude could be explained “mainly by the fact that the Foreign Affairs Minister is very much in favor of promoting rapprochement,” but also by the fear of a reduction in the presence of US troops in Europe.⁹⁹ Receiving British Foreign Secretary Sir Alec Douglas-Home in Brussels on 2 December 1970, the Belgian minister insisted “obstinately” (according to the British memorandum) on a continued consideration of MBFR.¹⁰⁰

At this point, we must refer to the fear of German nationalism that was felt within Belgian diplomatic circles at the time, particularly following the signature of the German-Soviet treaty, which according to the British ambassador in Brussels “scared” the Belgians. “They recognize,” he continues, “that this is a step towards greater détente, something which Harmel very much supports. They fully trust Brandt, but their fear is that the Germans might in the future be tempted to act independently, and that the Russians will exploit this to destroy the unity of Western Europe. They believe that the French have now understood that having Great Britain as a member of the EEC might help to contain the Germans. But anything beyond that, in the form of a unified defense for Europe or political unification, is just a Belgian dream.”¹⁰¹

From 1971 onwards, Harmel – who, in the words of the State Department, had played a “driving role in the area of détente policy”¹⁰² – would travel less to the East. The ball was now in the court of the US and the USSR. Harmel was well aware that only they could call the shots. His only ambition could be to foster a positive atmosphere.

99 Eisenhower (Brussels) to DoS, Report of 20 May 1970, NARA, RG 59, Belgium, 969033/212.

100 Memorandum of Discussion in PRO, FCO 33/1298. Cf. also Summary note on Belgian-US relations, 19 January 1971, NARA, DOS, Belgium, 969033/2120. Memorandum of discussions between Pompidou and the President of the Council of Ministers of Belgium in the Palais Royal in Brussels, 25 May 1971, ANF, Pompidou Papers, 5AG2/1013.

101 British Embassy in Brussels to the Secretary at the Foreign Office, 9 November 1970, PRO, FCO 33/864. The US ambassador would make similar comments. Eisenhower to DoS, 5 March 1971, NARA, RG 59, Belgium, 969033/2121.

102 Summary Note on Belgian-US Relations, 19 January 1971.

On 1 September 1972, at a WEU ministerial meeting, Harmel again stressed the importance of MBFR.¹⁰³ André de Staercke would do the same at NATO a week later.¹⁰⁴ From 9–12 July 1972, Gromyko made an official trip to Brussels. During the talks, the two men would refer to the CSCE and MBFR. They also had long discussions on the Middle East and Vietnam, as well as on the free movement of ideas and people in Europe, a topic that would be included in the “third basket” of the Helsinki agreements.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

As of 26 January 1973, Harmel was no longer a minister. For Harmel, who had been in charge of Belgian diplomatic efforts for seven years, this was a disappointment, since the opening of the CSCE in Helsinki on 3 July 1973 was partially his creation. For it was on the basis of the Harmel report and in the wake of initiatives taken by the Belgian minister (among others) to increase the dialog with the Eastern bloc (in particular with Poland and the USSR) that the West began discussions with these Communist countries on security questions hinging on the reduction of nuclear and conventional weapons and on the principles set out in the Helsinki Final Act,¹⁰⁶ signed on 1 August 1975.

As far as the Atlantic alliance was concerned, Harmel’s policy approach continued the line followed by Spaak, whose objectives were, in turn, identical with some of those espoused by van Zeeland. The Belgian Foreign Office has always seen NATO as a key aspect of defense in Europe. However, this defense must go hand in hand with coordinated efforts towards détente within NATO. This is the idea at the heart of the 1967 report on the future tasks of the alliance. The Harmel Doctrine would influence East-West relations for more than twenty years. In 1985, Helmut Schmidt would write that the Harmel exercise had, in fact, been nothing other

103 Record in BFMA, Service de sécurité européenne, Non-classified documents.

104 Ibid.

105 BFMA, Papiers Noterdaeme 18779/7. In a note dated 23 August 1972 (ibid., 18779/8). Cf. also the Harmel-Rogers talks of October 1972. Rogers (New York) to DoS, 6 October 1972, NARA, RG 59, Belgium, 969033/2119.

106 Soutou, *La guerre de cinquante ans*, p. 562.

than “the West’s main strategy” during the period 1967–1976.¹⁰⁷ After the Cold War, NATO’s image changed rapidly at the Copenhagen ministerial meeting of 6–7 June 1991, “leading in particular to the adoption by the allies of a declaration on ‘the essential security functions of NATO in the new Europe,’ a sort of update of the 1967 Harmel report.”¹⁰⁸ As far as the German Democratic Republic was concerned, NATO had certainly moved on to a post-Harmel period, yet it seemed that NATO still had a role to play.

After the collapse of Communism, Harmel felt that NATO should not be disbanded, but should undergo a sort of face-lift. In the same way, in 1987, when accepting the Atlantic Prize, he would declare the following: “A third of humanity is still growing in number in devastated countries – some given over to despair, some to religious or mystical zeal which could have uncontrollable results.”¹⁰⁹ The author of the Harmel doctrine would continue by saying that, especially since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the main threat was now from terrorist movements, and that the alliance was therefore still necessary. The danger, he said in 1995, could come “from any part of the Mediterranean. It may come from the East, it may come from a madman in some far-off country.”¹¹⁰ Since 11 September 2001, these words strike a particular chord.

107 Helmut Schmidt, *A Grand Strategy for the West: The Anachronism of National Strategies in an Interdependent World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 11–4 and 152–4.

108 Bozo, *La France et l’OTAN*, p. 183.

109 The text, reworked, was published under the title “Vers un élargissement du dialogue Est-Ouest”, in *Studia diplomatica* XL, no. 6 (1988), pp. 1–14.

110 Typewritten record of the interview given by Pierre Harmel to Yvan Sevenans and M. Mees, October 1995.

Explaining NATO to the West Germans: Helmut Schmidt as a Military Affairs Writer in the 1960s

Oliver B. Hemmerle

The role of German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in formulating NATO's double-track decision remains his main legacy within the history of the alliance in the late 1970s and 1980s. During that period, Schmidt was one of the major players within the alliance and was regarded as such by his political counterparts both in the US and in Western Europe. This article will discuss the role of Schmidt concerning NATO in the 1960s, when the future chancellor had not yet achieved an international reputation, but was making a name for himself within German domestic politics as a defense expert. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) found itself relegated to the opposition from 1949 to the mid-1960s, not least due to the lack of public confidence in the SPD's concepts for defense and foreign policies. Schmidt's role in the subsequent confidence-building process, aimed at gaining public support for the transformation of the SPD into a governing party, will be analyzed in the context of how Schmidt established himself as a party hopeful and a candidate for potential office in a future SPD government. The focus will be on the discussion of the ideas and intentions that shaped Schmidt's writings during this period of the Cold War. Whereas his military writings of the 1960s may have helped Schmidt's ascent to the ministry of defense and to the chancellorship, one could argue that his support for NATO's double-track decision was a reason for his loss of office in 1982. The final question therefore will be whether Schmidt and/or the Germans had changed in the meantime, or whether Schmidt became popular in the 1970s despite his military writings of the 1960s.

The quality of rationality has been attributed to Schmidt both by his political contemporaries from the 1960s to the 1980s and by many of his biographers. The widespread notion of Schmidt's rationality may be associated with popular preconceptions about his Northern German origins

(northerners are considered to be much more restrained than Germans from the south; Schmidt's rival from Bavaria, Franz Josef Strauß, was regarded as the archetype of the ill-tempered southerner) and may be derived from his cool reaction in crisis situations (the Hamburg flood of 1962, and the series of kidnappings and hijackings by extremists in 1977). The term rationality is used in this article to describe his way of presenting defense topics, which were matters of life and death in the divided Germany of the Cold War period, in words that were comprehensible to the layperson. The rationality of that approach is seen in the fact that, by presenting military doctrines and political concepts in an accessible manner, Schmidt signalled that a rational debate involving the wider public was not only intellectually possible, but necessary. Part of the analysis will be devoted to the question of whether this is evidence of a process of democratization in the German public debate on defense – beyond that well-established discourse based on total refusal of the military among the pacifist circles of the German public (such as the Ostermarschbewegung campaign for nuclear disarmament etc.).

In the Beginning was Adenauer: West German Politicians, the West German Public, the SPD, and NATO in the 1950s and 1960s (a very short introduction)

The specific West German setting in the 1950s was as difficult as the Cold War was in general: West Germany and West Berlin would not have survived the Eastern Bloc's hostility without NATO, but at the same time, much of the West German public was ardently opposed to any re-armament only ten years after the end of the Second World War. This rift also separated the two major people's parties (Volksparteien): the CDU of Konrad Adenauer stood for integration with NATO (Westintegration) at the cost of a rapid re-unification of Germany (Wiedervereinigung), while the SPD – in the rather nationalistic tradition of Kurt Schumacher and under the lead of Erich Ollenhauer – was opposed to re-armament (Wiederbewaffnung). Although the economic "miracle" (Wirtschaftswunder) of the mid-1950s was the determining factor at the general elections, with losses for the SPD as Chancellor Adenauer reaped the popular credit for

this “miracle”, the SPD was unable to gain ground in the areas of foreign and security policy as well.¹

The SPD’s Godesberg Program of 1959 is generally seen as the single most decisive factor that ultimately allowed the SPD to take part in government as part of a grand coalition (Große Koalition) with the CDU in 1966, and later as the senior partner in government from 1969 on. In retrospect, Godesberg is credited with giving the SPD, as a traditional labor party, a more modern and Realpolitik approach. This is certainly true for the way the German labor party opened itself – first theoretically, and then in practical terms – to non-working-class voters and party members, and for some essential changes in SPD doctrine (put simply, the party dropped most of its Marxist heritage). But the implications of this change for defense and foreign policy were not tackled at this party conference in Godesberg, which was too engaged in party-internal, social, and economic matters.

In the Bundestag (parliament) in particular, the party’s defense and foreign policy was formulated by SPD politicians Herbert Wehner, Fritz Erler,

1 For the history of the positions of the SPD in defense matters, cf. Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (ed.), *Sozialdemokratie und Bundeswehr* (Berlin: Dietz, 1957); Reinhard Höhn, *Sozialismus und Heer*, 3 volumes (Bad Homburg/Bad Harzburg: Dr. Max Gehlen/Verlag für Wissenschaft, Wirtschaft und Technik, 1961–1969); Christian Götz, *Jungsozialisten und Bundeswehr* (Bonn: Jungsozialisten, 1962); Vorstand der SPD (ed.), *Grundsätze sozialdemokratischer Wehrpolitik* (Bonn: 1969); Martin Kempe, *SPD und Bundeswehr: Studien zum militärisch-industriellen Komplex* (Cologne: PRV, 1973); Joachim Hütter, *SPD und nationale Sicherheit: Internationale und innenpolitische Determinanten des Wandels sozialdemokratischer Sicherheitspolitik 1959–1961* (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1975); Udo F. Löwke, *Die SPD und die Wehrfrage 1949 bis 1955* (Bonn: Neue Gesellschaft, 1976); Detlef Haritz, *Zwischen Miliz und stehendem Heer: Der Milizgedanke in der sozialdemokratischen Militärtheorie 1848 bis 1917* (Berlin: Ph.D. thesis, 1983); Karl-Heinz Rambke, *Diesem System keinen Mann und keinen Groschen? Sozialdemokratische Wehrpolitik 1907–1914* (Würzburg: Ph.D. thesis, 1983); Christoph Butterwege and Heinz-Gerd Hofschien, *Sozialdemokratie, Krieg und Frieden* (Heilbronn: Diestel, 1984); SPD (ed.), *30 Jahre Bundeswehr: Streitkräfte in der Demokratie. Von A-Z* (Bonn: 1985); Siegfried F. Kissin, *War and the Marxists* (London: Deutsch, 1988); Jürgen Lampe et al., *Diesem System keinen Mann und keinen Groschen: Militärpolitik der revolutionären deutschen Arbeiterbewegung 1830 bis 1917* (East Berlin: Militärverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1990); Manfred Becht, *Ost-West-Konflikt und europäische Sicherheit: Sozialdemokraten und sicherheitspolitische Zusammenarbeit in Westeuropa* (Frankfurt: Ph.D. thesis, 1994); Bernd Semmel (ed.), *Marxism and the science of war* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); Hartmut Miegel, *Keine Parteisoldaten: Der mühevollen Weg der SPD in die Bundeswehr* (Hamburg: Mittelrel, 1999).

and Helmut Schmidt. Willy Brandt never talked too much about defense matters, and his Ostpolitik,² conceived by his strategic mind Egon Bahr, only appeared on the scene much later, at the end of the 1960s. Although Wehner was charged with announcing any crucial foreign and defense policy shifts of the SPD in the Bundestag, he was too much engaged in day-to-day party and parliamentary work to write a more sophisticated defense analysis that could appeal to a broader audience on the book market. If Fritz Erler, who was seen within the party and even outside Germany as the SPD's main defense and foreign policy thinker, had not died at age 53 in 1967, this paper would probably deal with him instead of Schmidt.³ However, Erler did not live to see the "promised land" of an SPD-led government and its policies. Schmidt (born in 1918) saw himself as second in line to Brandt in the party's chain of succession to office for generational reasons (Brandt was five years his senior), which equally applied to Erler (Brandt and Erler both being born in 1913). Schmidt never expected to reach the chancellorship for that generational reason. But despite the political importance of Erler in the 1960s, when it surpassed that of Schmidt in terms of both office and public recognition, one could make the argument that in his writings on defense and foreign policy matters, Schmidt was second to none within the SPD. Another important factor was that Schmidt had been an officer during the Second World War, and had had the opportunity to take part in exercises of the Bundeswehr as a captain of the reserve. This did not always help his position within the rather pacifist SPD, but proved decisive in the long run for preventing the army from coming completely under the sway of the ruling CDU/CSU.⁴

Schmidt's military credentials helped the SPD to gain respectability. In the political climate of the late 1950s and early 1960s, the party was still regarded by parts of the population, and by even larger parts of the

2 Cf. Horst Ehmke, Karlheinz Koppe, and Herbert Wehner (eds.), *Zwanzig Jahre Ostpolitik: Bilanz und Perspektiven* (Bonn: Neue Gesellschaft, 1986).

3 For works by and about Erler, cf. Fritz Erler and Richard Jaeger, *Sicherheit und Rüstung* (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1962); Fritz Erler, *Demokratie in Deutschland* (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1965); Fritz Erler, *Politik für Deutschland* (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1968); Hartmut Soell, *Fritz Erler: Eine politische Biographie*, 2 volumes (Berlin: Dietz, 1976).

4 Cf. for example: CDU, ed., *Wer Mißtrauen sät...: Das Liebeswerben der SPD um die Bundeswehr: Utopie und Wirklichkeit* (Bonn: 1965).

officers in the newly-established Bundeswehr, as unfit to take responsibility for defense policy (thus perpetuating the reactionary labelling of the SPD as *vaterlandslose Gesellen* by former emperor Wilhelm II). It has to be pointed out that this positive public reception of Schmidt as a former officer serving as an SPD functionary and parliamentarian says much about the political climate in West Germany of the 1950s and 1960s, and hardly anything about Schmidt himself. But it is important to remember this political mindset when analyzing the role of Schmidt in this period. Undoubtedly his public standing was helped by his achievements as senator for internal affairs in Hamburg during the flood disaster of 1962. His reputation as a “deliverer” who had managed to organize help when natural disaster struck generated sympathy and interest for his ideas on preparing for or preventing a man-made disaster, namely war. Whereas the German public increasingly took notice of Schmidt, his position in the SPD was not yet firmly established: Opportunities to win public office at the federal level did not arise until 1966, and while both Brandt and especially Wehner accepted Schmidt, they subordinated his career to their ultimate goal of becoming part of a government under their leadership.⁵

5 Cf. Michael Schwelien, *Helmut Schmidt: ein Leben für den Frieden* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2004), pp. 161–4.

Gaining Respectability in the Party and for the Party: Helmut Schmidt Discusses NATO in the 1960s

The Publications of Helmut Schmidt during the 1960s

Whereas the role of Schmidt⁶ in the shaping NATO's nuclear strategy in the late 1970s and early 1980s is well known, his efforts as a military affairs writer in the 1960s are neglected. Schmidt delivered many speeches and articles on defense issues,⁷ but his two most notable books were *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung* (1961)⁸ and *Strategie des Gleichgewichts* (1969)⁹ The first of these was published long before Schmidt became West German minister of defense in 1969. Unfortunately, the print runs of these two books can no longer be established, as the archives of the now-defunct Seewald publishing house seem to be lost and even Helmut Schmidt himself does not know,¹⁰ but these books certainly were bestsellers of their time. Other important defense-related writings of Schmidt during this period include *Was fehlt der Bundeswehr?* (1966),¹¹ *Beiträge* (1967),¹² *Perspektiven der Atlantischen Allianz* (1969),¹³ and *Sozialdemokratische Sicherheits- und*

6 The following is a selection of biographies of Helmut Schmidt: Helmut Wolfgang Kahn, *Helmut Schmidt: Fallstudie über einen Populären* (Hamburg: Holsten, 1973); Karl Wilhelm Berkhan et al. (eds.), *Hart am Wind: Helmut Schmidts politische Laufbahn* (Hamburg: Knaus, 1979); Sibylle Krause-Burger, *Helmut Schmidt: Aus der Nähe gesehen* (Düsseldorf: Econ, 1980); Thomas Endres, *Franz Josef Strauß – Helmut Schmidt und die Doktrin der Abschreckung* (Koblenz: Bernard & Graefe, 1984); Jonathan Carr, *Helmut Schmidt* (Munich: Knaur, 1987); Harald Steffahn, *Helmut Schmidt* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1990); Andrea H. Schnieder, *Die Kunst des Kompromisses: Helmut Schmidt und die Große Koalition 1966–1969* (Paderborn: Schöningh 1999); Martin Rupp, *Helmut Schmidt: Politikverständnis und geistige Grundlagen* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1997); Hartmut Soell, *Helmut Schmidt 1918–1969* (Munich: DVA, 2003).

7 Cf. for example: Deutsche Gesellschaft für auswärtige Politik e.V. (ed.), *Ansprache von Helmut Schmidt, MdB* (Bonn, 1968).

8 Helmut Schmidt, *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung: Ein deutscher Beitrag zum strategischen Problem der NATO* (Stuttgart: Seewald 1969).

9 Helmut Schmidt, *Strategie des Gleichgewichts: Deutsche Friedenspolitik und die Westmächte* (Stuttgart: Seewald 1969).

10 Cf. letter to the author by Helmut Schmidt of 20 October 2005 and information by the legal successor of the Seewald Verlag in 2004.

11 Helmut Schmidt, "Was fehlt der Bundeswehr?", in *Armee gegen den Krieg: Wert und Wirkung der Bundeswehr*, ed. Wolfram von Raven (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1966), pp. 104–17.

12 Helmut Schmidt, *Beiträge* (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1967).

13 Helmut Schmidt, *Perspektiven der Atlantischen Allianz* (Bonn: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 1969).

Verteidigungspolitik (1969).¹⁴ Schmidt also wrote occasionally lengthy prefaces for the German editions of foreign military affairs books (for example books by Herman Kahn and André Beaufre).¹⁵

When politicians publish books, the question is not only how much of the content reflects the political ideas and goals of the author, but also to what extent the politician himself is the author.¹⁶ That is mainly a time question, as it is difficult to reconcile writing books with an active political career in parliament, in government, or in a constituency. Schmidt mentioned Wolf Loah in *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung* as the author of the appendix, and named 21 politicians and officers from Germany, France, Britain, and the US as inspiring interlocutors.¹⁷ In *Strategie des Gleichgewichts*, Schmidt thanked 13 staff members in Bonn for their help in his writing effort. Since rumors persist about the involvement of Uwe Nerlich in the writing of *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung*, and since Schmidt's biographers have ignored this issue so far, we shall deal with it in detail.¹⁸ Some of these reports go as far as to claim that the Seewald publishing house had a manuscript from Nerlich for a book to be authored by Franz Josef Strauß, and then decided to ascribe the book to Schmidt instead. Helmut Schmidt wrote to the author on 20 October 2005:

I do not think that the idea was proposed by Seewald publishers at the time; certainly the book title was not devised by the publishers, but by myself. I am not aware of any manuscript by Mr. Uwe Nerlich (with whom I was well acquainted at the time); neither do I know anything about plans for a manuscript or book by Franz Josef Strauss on the same topic.

14 Helmut Schmidt, *Sozialdemokratische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik* (Bonn: Vorstand der SPD, 1969).

15 Cf. Helmut Schmidt, "Preface", in Herman Kahn, *Eskalation* (Frankfurt: Propyläen, 1966), pp. 11–26; Helmut Schmidt, "Preface", in André Beaufre, *Die NATO und Europa* (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1967), pp. 7–10.

16 I thank Dr. Bruno Thoß for information concerning this subject.

17 Schmidt, *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung*, pp. 8–9.

18 See for example the chapter on "Verteidigung oder Vergeltung" in the recent biography by Soell, *Helmut Schmidt*, pp. 333–58.

You correctly point out the importance of professional assistance for politicians writing books. I had no expert support in writing the first of the books you mention [*Verteidigung oder Vergeltung*]. I was a young member of parliament at the time and did all the necessary research myself. In the case of the second book [*Strategie des Gleichgewichts*], I had help from Mr. Eugen Selbmann (who has sadly passed away in the meantime); at the time, I was the chairman of the SPD Bundestag faction, and Mr. Selbmann was a highly regarded staff member of the faction with special expertise in foreign and security policy.

The original printings (first editions) are no longer available to me, but I believe that I expressed my gratitude to a large number of interlocutors there.”¹⁹

Uwe Nerlich wrote to the author on 23 October 2005 concerning the same topic:

The main author of the first Schmidt book [*Verteidigung oder Vergeltung*] was Helmut Schmidt’s collaborator, who is mentioned in the foreword [Wolf Loah]. He, of course, consulted papers, and it is likely that my working papers for the DGAP study group²⁰ [...] were sourced directly and indirectly: After all, Helmut Schmidt had chaired the group since 1968 and had been a member since its inception, i.e.

19 Letter to the author by Helmut Schmidt of 20 October 2005 (“Ich glaube nicht, daß die Initiative vom damaligen Seewald-Verlag ausgegangen ist; auf keinen Fall stammt die Formulierung des Titels vom Verlag, sondern vielmehr von mir. Von einem Manuskript von Herrn Uwe Nerlich (den ich damals gut gekannt habe) ist mir nichts bekannt; ebenso wenig weiß ich etwas von einem beabsichtigt gewesenen Manuskript oder Buch von Franz Josef Strauß zum gleichen thematischen Komplex. Sie haben recht hinsichtlich der Notwendigkeit professioneller Unterstützung für Politiker, wenn sie Bücher schreiben. In meinem Falle hat es für das erstgenannte Buch [= *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung*] keine Zuarbeit von fachlicher Seite gegeben. Ich war damals ein junger Abgeordneter und habe alle notwendigen Recherchen selbst unternommen. Im Falle des zu 2. genannten Buches [= *Strategie des Gleichgewichts*] gab es Zuarbeit durch Herrn Eugen Selbmann (inzwischen leider verstorben); ich war damals Vorsitzender der SPD-Bundestagsfraktion, Selbmann war damals ein sehr angesehenen angestellter Mitarbeiter (für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik) der Fraktion. Die Originalausgaben (erste Auflagen) liegen mir nicht mehr vor; ich vermute aber, daß ich dort Dank an eine größere Zahl von Gesprächspartnern ausgesprochen habe.”).

20 Daniel Friedrich Eisermann, *Zwischen Außenpolitik und Wissenschaft: Entstehung und Geschichte der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik 1945/55 bis 1972* (Bonn: Ph.D. thesis, 1996).

from 1962 on. I am not aware of the story of the publisher, but find it difficult to imagine that books by Strauss and Schmidt would have been treated as interchangeable: these two were far apart at the time (as were Strauss and Georg [sic!] Schröder within the CDU/CSU). Strauss was not a member of the study group himself, but may have had access to the papers through Baron zu Gutenberg [sic!] [...] ²¹

Although Schmidt and Nerlich differ on details, they agree on the context of the production of Schmidt's military affairs books in the 1960s. Whereas the exact authorship of insights and ideas of these publications is of interest for historical research, the general public of the time did regard these books as presentations of and by an emerging hopeful of the SPD.

Divided Germany and the Soviet Union

For any German politician in the 1960s, the division of Germany was necessarily an important issue – not only because the German Basic Constitutional Law (Grundgesetz) decreed it, but also because a steady influx of political and more often economic refugees from East Germany made the division noticeable on an everyday basis until the Berlin Wall was built in 1961. At the time, due to the arrival of refugees and the personal experience of (now West) German citizens, the GDR was not yet the terra incognita that it became in the late 1970s and 1980s. Because the GDR as such had not yet been recognized by the West German state, Bonn's foreign policy vis-à-vis the eastern neighbors (including East Germany) was geared towards the Soviet Union as the guardian and master of the GDR. This was reflected in Schmidt's parliamentary speeches and publications: In both *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung* and *Strategie des Gleichgewichts*, he devoted chapters

21 Letter to the author by Dr. h.c. Uwe Nerlich of 23 October 2005 ("Hauptautor des ersten Schmidt-Buches [= *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung*] war der Mitarbeit [sic!] von Helmut Schmidt, der im Vorwort erwähnt ist [= Wolf Loah]. Der hat natürlich Papier benutzt, und da sind meine Arbeitspapiere für die Studiengruppe der DGAP [...] sicher direkt und indirekt eine Quelle gewesen: Helmut Schmidt war ja ab 1968 Vorsitzender der Gruppe und von Anfang an, also 1962, Mitglied. Die Verlagsgeschichte kenne ich dazu nicht, kann mir aber kaum vorstellen, dass die Bücher von Schmidt und Strauß da austauschbar gewesen sind: Die beiden lagen in der Phase weit auseinander (so wie Strauß und Georg [sic!] Schröder CDU/CSU-intern). Strauß war selbst nicht Mitglied der Studiengruppe, hat aber über Baron zu Gutenberg [sic!] u.U. Zugang zu den Papieren gehabt. [...]").

and several subchapters to Soviet strategy. But Schmidt's presentation of Soviet thinking was far removed from the Cold-War rhetoric and nationalist bluster of the likes of Franz Josef Strauß.²² It was a rational analysis of a military threat that Schmidt wanted to counter by guarding peace. He openly pointed out that due to Germany's Nazi past, the neighboring countries (including those in the East) were entitled to harbor doubts about the prospect of German rearmament.²³ That position was certainly in line with Schmidt's convictions, but he also regarded it as a means – in fact, the only means – of overcoming the division of Germany, although he did not expect this to happen within the foreseeable future.²⁴

Although Brandt and his companion Egon Bahr are today regarded as the great prophets of the Ostpolitik, the rhetoric of Schmidt's 1961 book *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung* sounds much more pre-Ostpolitik than the speeches of Willy Brandt at the same time. To be fair, it should be mentioned that Brandt as the mayor of West Berlin was on the frontline of the Cold War confrontation on a day-to-day basis, whereas Schmidt, based in Hamburg and Bonn, did not have to react to major events on his doorstep, but had more time for contemplation and proper analysis even in preparing his speeches. Nevertheless, it seems that the role of Schmidt in formulating the SPD's defense and foreign policy in the 1960s with regard to the Soviet Union is still underestimated. A comparison of books written by Schmidt in the 1960s and in the 1980s respectively will not return the same amount of reconsideration and opinion shifts as can be found when comparing the speeches of Willy Brandt throughout the 1960s with the statements of the Nobel peace price laureate in the 1970s. Schmidt did not have to distance himself from a "cold warrior" image of the past, because he had not had any comparable experiences to the Berlin years of Brandt. Whereas Brandt's views on how to deal with the Soviet Union and the GDR changed in a way that almost implied a "Road to Damascus" experience, Schmidt's writings on this topic indicate much

22 Cf. Enders, *Franz Josef Strauß – Helmut Schmidt*; Franz Josef Strauß, *Die Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Goldmann, 1991) p. 340; Mark Speich, *Kai-Uwe von Hassel: Eine politische Biographie* (Bonn: Ph.D. thesis, 2001), pp. 238–366.

23 Schmidt, *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung*, pp. 196–203.

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 203–10.

more continuity. His form of analysis and strategic thinking, which to a certain extent detested any infringement of emotions on policy, made him a lucid observer of Soviet (and Eastern and Chinese) affairs. He was without doubt as staunch an anti-Communist as Brandt was, but despite his image as the sharp-tongued Schmidt-Schnauze, he knew better than the mayor of Berlin about the importance of the right word at the right time, although he only criticized CDU/CSU government officials publicly for their rhetoric regarding relations with the East, and especially for their overbearing boastfulness concerning the role of Germany in the defense of the West.²⁵

To a certain extent, this difference in the approach of the two SPD politicians, who later both became German chancellors, is still reflected today: Whereas Schmidt described his Eastern European counterparts in a mellow tone and without anger in his memoirs,²⁶ Brandt quarreled until his death with some of his SPD colleagues, such as Herbert Wehner, and with his counterparts in the east, such as East German leader Erich Honecker. Even his widow Brigitte Seebacher-Brandt continued this old story in the form of a media crusade.²⁷ These different personal approaches did not affect NATO in the 1960s, as neither of the two men occupied an important federal office before 1966, but their disagreement later had a great influence on West Germany and NATO when the Schmidt-inspired NATO double-track decision was first covertly, and then openly torpedoed by Brandt as the SPD party leader.

The United States (and France)

The setting of *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung* was the pre-Vietnam era. By this time, the US was seen by a large majority of the West German population as a friend, ally, and protector.²⁸ The images of John F. Kennedy's visit to Berlin reinforced this feeling, although West Berlin was certainly even more pro-US at the time than West Germany as a whole. This context is important for understanding why authors who presented US thinking to a

25 Ibid., p. 198.

26 Helmut Schmidt, *Weggefährten: Erinnerungen und Reflexionen* (Berlin: Siedler, 1996).

27 Brigitte Seebacher-Brandt, *Willy Brandt* (Munich: Piper, 2004).

28 Cf. Heep, *Helmut Schmidt*.

German public at that time did not need to go to great lengths to explain why US concepts might be interesting or even good. Although a minority of West Germans criticized the military might of the US in the early 1960s out of pacifist or Communist convictions, most West Germans agreed that in general, US military power was a good thing for West Germans, too. Schmidt therefore did not have to justify US military thinking, but could simply explain it. It is difficult to overstate the importance of this factor, which changed – maybe forever – during the late-1960s/early-1970s protests against the Vietnam War.

There are certainly a lot of West German publications of the 1970s and 1980s explaining US policy, but those publications appealed to a West German public that had become highly critical of the US, whereas Schmidt did not have to bother with such sentiments on the part of his readers in the early and mid-1960s. His *Strategie des Gleichgewichts* of 1969 already included a section on “Vietnam und danach”: Schmidt argued that the US intervention had seemed “reasonable” (“vernünftig”) in the beginning, but that the US had in the meantime understood that the war had to be ended for moral reasons, as well as for US domestic and foreign-policy reasons. Nevertheless, the six-and-a-half pages on Vietnam²⁹ in Schmidt’s book of 1969 did not really grasp the complete impact of the Vietnam disaster, which was not fully understood until after the evacuation of Saigon in 1975.

Schmidt’s explanations were necessarily based on the bipolarity³⁰ of the world and on the simple fact that the only two major players in the Cold War were the US and the Soviet Union. This truth, which now seems self-evident, was still news in Western Europe and Germany at the time. This state of affairs was the basis of all arguments in favor of NATO, as despite the unconditional surrender of 1945, many Germans were still unaware that (a) after the Second World War, the world did not want a Germany capable of defending itself on its own (e.g., a neutral Germany or a Germany with a nuclear capability of its own),³¹ and that (b) Germany – lacking a nuclear

29 Cf. Schmidt, *Strategie des Gleichgewichts*, pp. 196–202.

30 Cf. Schmidt, *Strategie des Gleichgewichts*.

31 Detlef Bald, *Die Atombewaffnung der Bundeswehr: Militär, Öffentlichkeit und Politik in der Ära Adenauer* (Bremen: Temmen, 1994).

capability – would never again be able to defend itself alone against the Soviet Union. This realization sounds ridiculously obvious from today’s point of view, but at the time it had to be spelled out to Germans in the same way as the contemporaneous process of decolonialization had to be explained in France, Britain, Belgium, and the Netherlands. One could argue that Adenauer’s actions since the late 1940s had been based on this realization, but that he had failed to communicate it to the general public, while the rhetoric of his defense minister Strauß was devoid of any comprehension of this central aspect of the post-1945 order.

The main ideological rift within the German political class of the 1960s was between the Atlantacists (Atlantiker) and those who preferred a strong Franco-German alliance. With the Franco-German friendship treaty of 1963, Charles de Gaulle intended to build a strong mutual foreign policy and military co-operation. His hopes were spoiled by the preamble that the Bundestag added to this treaty and which underlined the importance of West Germany’s links to the US. Schmidt was in the Atlantiker camp and was highly critical of de Gaulle and his anti-NATO-policy.³² He even ridiculed CDU/CSU politicians Karl Theodor von und zu Guttenberg and Franz Josef Strauß as “Sekundär-Gaullisten”³³ (secondary Gaullists). His remarks on the role of France in *Strategie des Gleichgewichts* are mostly veiled attacks on Ludwig Erhard’s government and its political mistake of damaging German-French and German-US relations at the same time.³⁴

More serious are Schmidt’s thoughts on France³⁵ in his *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung*. Here, he concedes that de Gaulle had legitimate reasons for criticizing the US leadership within NATO,³⁶ although he doubts the capability of the French “farce [sic!] de frappe”.³⁷ But Schmidt highlights the importance of the critical French question: “Who controls the use of

32 Schmidt, *Strategie des Gleichgewichts*, pp. 27, 40, and 141–3.

33 Ibid., p. 143.

34 Ibid., pp. 40–1 and 164–5.

35 From the late 1970s on, Schmidt changed his approach to France completely, cf. Helmut Schmidt, *Menschen und Mächte* (Berlin: Siedler, 1987); Helmut Schmidt, *Die Deutschen und ihre Nachbarn* (Berlin: Siedler, 1990); Helene Miard, *Le Chancelier Helmut Schmidt et la France 1974–1982*, 2 volumes (Paris: Ph.D. thesis Paris IV Sorbonne, 1989).

36 Schmidt, *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung*, pp. 76 and 91.

37 Ibid., pp. 98 and 106.

nuclear weapons?” Schmidt urged the German public to discuss this crucial issue – not in order to gain German control over the nuclear arms, but to have a proper and democratically approved German strategy approach on this topic within NATO.³⁸ In this, Schmidt may be considered an involuntary and unrecognized forerunner of the peace movement of the 1980s.

Strategic Thinking and Consequences

In his two books *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung* and *Strategie des Gleichgewichts*, Schmidt introduced much of US military and foreign policy thinking of the time into the West German debate.³⁹ In particular, Schmidt explained the doctrines of nuclear weapons strategy concisely and publicly to a bigger West German audience. Schmidt introduced the names of George Kennan, Henry A. Kissinger (long before his first appointment to government office!), Herman Kahn, etc., as well as their ideas, to the German public. These publications had at least two effects:

(a) As far as the internal discussion within the SPD was concerned, Schmidt paved the way for an understanding of the role of a democratically controlled military (Bundeswehr) within NATO. The integration of the Bundeswehr into NATO was seen as one fundamental aspect of the integration of the Bundeswehr in a democratic society (the other pillar being the concept of Internal Leadership, or *Innere Führung*, which was also championed by Schmidt).

(b) Apart from giving the SPD a more *Realpolitik* image in defense matters, Schmidt familiarized the general West German public with the concept of defense in democratic societies, as opposed to the role of the former Reichswehr and Wehrmacht. He pointed out that even in a nuclear-armed world, there were rational (non-pacifist) concepts of how to avoid war. Probably even more importantly, by presenting the US debate to the West German public, Schmidt showed that defense policy was a legitimate object of political controversy.⁴⁰ This contrasted sharply with the internal friend-or-foe attitude that characterized Adenauer’s defense policy, as well

38 Ibid., pp. 124–8.

39 Cf. Soell, *Helmut Schmidt*; Miegel, *Keine Paradesoldaten*, pp. 66–9.

40 Cf. Klaus Hornung, *Staat und Armee* (Mainz: von Hase & Koehler, 1975).

as with the pacifist-versus-militarist debate within the SPD in the 1950s.⁴¹ Schmidt accepted the given realities (from the Cold War confrontation to the integration of the Bundeswehr within NATO), but tried to democratize the debate on these issues: By presenting and commenting on the US debate, he enabled the West German public to participate in this debate in an informed manner. This was a new experience for West Germany, as the 1950s and 1960s had been dominated by government-sponsored defense publications on the one hand⁴² and pacifist literature on the other hand.⁴³ When members of the peace movement started to research and publish on defense matters in the 1980s to enable the general public to join the debate, they forgot about their – often much more lucid and sophisticated – forerunner Helmut Schmidt (whose support for the NATO double-track decision had made him the bogeyman of the left) and his writings of the 1960s. It is doubtful, however, whether Schmidt himself saw his writings as being in the tradition of “General” Friedrich Engels and August Bebel, two highly prominent and influential figures of the early SPD who were heavily committed to writing about military affairs for the enlightenment of the masses and for the purpose of democratic control of military power.⁴⁴

41 Cf. Wolfgang Krieger (ed.), *Adenauer und die Wiederbewaffnung* (Bonn: Bouvier, 2000).

42 Cf. Alfred Bronhardt, *Das Janusgesicht der deutschen Sozialdemokratie: Eine wehrpolitische Auseinandersetzung* (Stuttgart: Süd-West-Verlag, 1953); Norbert Tönnies, *Der Weg zu den Waffen: Die Geschichte der deutschen Wiederbewaffnung 1949–1957* (Cologne: Markus, 1957).

43 See for example Bernt Engelman, *Schützenpanzer HS 30 - Starfighter F-104 G oder Wie man unseren Staat zugrunde richtet* (Munich: Desch, 1967).

44 Cf. for example August Bebel, *Nicht stehendes Heer sondern Volkswehr!* (Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der DDR, 1989).

Winning the 1970s, Losing the 1980s: Helmut Schmidt and NATO at the End of his Chancellorship

The Cold War did not end during the active political life⁴⁵ of Helmut Schmidt (from the 1950s to the mid-1980s). When he was forced to leave the chancellery in 1982, he was well respected within the German population, but out of touch with the majority of his own party, foremost on defense matters.⁴⁶ Schmidt probably had not changed, but especially the younger generation within the SPD (including both Oskar Lafontaine and Gerhard Schröder) sympathized heavily with the peace movement. The NATO double-track decision was carried out by Helmut Kohl, Schmidt's CDU successor in the chancellery. When the stationing of US Pershing II missiles came up for approval by the Bundestag on 22 November 1983, most parliamentarians of the SPD minority voted against the stationing – along with the MPs of the Green Party, which was first elected to the Bundestag in 1983. Even though there had been bitter infighting at various SPD party conferences up to 1982, the sharp split between Schmidt and nearly all other SPD lawmakers was never demonstrated more clearly in public than in this Bundestag session in November 1983.

What went wrong? Why did the defense and security affairs communicator of the 1960s failed to convince his fellow party-members in the 1980s? Schmidt had continued to publish on this subject⁴⁷ and produced a major bestseller with his book *Eine Strategie für den Westen* in 1985.⁴⁸ But there were several reasons for that lack of success in the 1980s:

(a) Within the party: The SPD had never really come to terms with its despicable and, in retrospect, traumatic decision to support the Kaiser's

45 His "active political life" is seen as the period during which he held parliamentary and government office – Schmidt has had an ongoing tenure as editor of the German weekly "Die Zeit" since 1983.

46 Cf. Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (ed.), *Die Streitkräfte im demokratischen Staat: Sozialdemokratische Positionen im Pro und Contra* (Bonn: 1982); Ute Overmeyer, *Das Nein der SPD – Eine neue Ära? SPD und Raketen 1977–1983* (Marburg: VAG, 1985); Jürgen Grosz, *Einstellungen von SPD-Anhängern zu sicherheitspolitischen Fragen in der Zeit der sozialliberalen Koalition 1969–82* (Hagen: Ph.D. thesis, 1994).

47 Helmut Schmidt, "Der Wille zum Konsens", in Joseph Godson (ed.), *Brennpunkt Westliche Allianz*, (Braunschweig Westermann, 1985), pp. 7–12.

48 Helmut Schmidt, *Eine Strategie für den Westen* (Berlin: Siedler, 1985).

war in 1914. It led to a formal split of the party (into SPD and USPD) during World War I, but probably its most enduring effects were felt in the mental inner life of the party officials and members, who have tended to be pacifists ever since, although the SPD program was never determined by a purely pacifist agenda. Therefore the real question must not be “Why did Schmidt fail in the 1980s”, but “Why did Schmidt succeed in the 1960s”. Schmidt and his ideas would never have succeeded in the 1960s, as the SPD was identified in popular perception since the late 1960s with Willy Brandt and his Ostpolitik. This Ostpolitik had a pacifist appeal in the public opinion (in Germany and abroad), but in fact relied heavily on the Westintegration of Adenauer. Nevertheless, the SPD had to bridge a gap between its rhetoric of the 1950s and its Ostpolitik as Realpolitik in the late 1960s and 1970s. This gap was filled by Schmidt, who was one of the leading SPD figures, both as a speaker in the Bundestag and as a writer, to integrate the status quo that had been created during the Adenauer era into a social-democratic policy for the 1960s and 1970s. Many of the party members would not have liked this policy at all, but as the Ostpolitik was presented as the real policy issue, this potential conflict did not emerge too loudly in the party-internal debate. Nevertheless, the desire to take over the government led many reluctant party members to the point of accepting Schmidt and his defense writings as another pillar of the SPD’s electoral success, as it was clear that Schmidt appealed to non-traditional SPD voters. It should be remembered that Brandt, as the messenger of the Ostpolitik, had always been the darling of the party, not the rational defense and security thinker Schmidt. When the Ostpolitik seemed to bear fruits in the 1970s, leading to the Helsinki process, a growing number of SPD officials and members tended to forsake a rational review of the armament efforts of the Soviet Union. When Schmidt pointed to the Soviet leadership’s role in the ongoing arms race, he was seen as the troublemaker by his own party. Neither was his position helped by the changing messages of US President Jimmy Carter or by the old Cold War rhetoric of Carter’s successor, Ronald Reagan. Although Schmidt had conceived the NATO double-track decision as a method of avoiding a new arms race by putting negotiations on arms reduction before stationing, his party officials and members did not follow him. As much as many SPD officials and mem-

bers blamed the Reagan administration for its lack of enthusiasm for the negotiation part of the NATO double-track decision, they themselves were equally opposed and averse to the stationing of US missiles in case of a failure of negotiations. In this irrational atmosphere, Schmidt's position was untenable, and after his premature dismissal in a parliamentary no-confidence vote in 1982 (Konstruktives Mißtrauensvotum, i.e., the election of Helmut Kohl) he chose not to stand again as SPD candidate for the chancellorship in the 1983 elections.

(b) Within the German population: Although many Germans, including many young people, joined the peace movement for nuclear disarmament in the 1980s and the Federal Republic of then-West Germany witnessed its largest demonstrations ever, the majority of the population followed the defense policy set out by Schmidt. It is now undisputed that Helmut Kohl (and even Franz Josef Strauß) not only fulfilled and executed the NATO double-track decision of Schmidt, but also continued along the general lines of Brandt's and Schmidt's Ostpolitik, although the CDU/CSU had contested this policy with vigor in the 1970s.⁴⁹ The continuity of defense policy from the Schmidt government to the Kohl administration is evident; continuity in foreign policy was even symbolically represented in the person of the old and new FDP foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher. Therefore one could argue that Schmidt's thinking dominated the strategic elements of West German defense and foreign policy until the dramatic events of 9 November 1989, when the Berlin Wall came down. However, in the eyes of the German population (probably not only the West German population), this policy was still represented by Schmidt, but not by the SPD. The 1970s dictum that "Chancellor Schmidt is in the wrong party" to a certain extent proved true for his defense policy in the 1980s.

49 Even Helmut Kohl himself has argued in this way in several televised interviews, and will probably argue along these lines in his forthcoming memoirs concerning this period.

Addenda beyond the 1960s and 1980s (Conclusion)

At the time of this writing, the first assessments of the legacy of the Schröder/Fischer government are being published. Historically speaking, it is much too early for such an evaluation, as both the Kosovo and the Iraq issues remain unresolved at this point. The self-image of Schröder/Fischer is that Germany's participation in the Kosovo war prevented genocide, and that refusing to participate in the Iraq war was an act of peace policy. Conservative critics would agree on the Kosovo issue, but would charge that massive collateral damage has been done to German-US relations by Gerhard Schröder's stance on the Iraq war. Left-wing critics would ridicule the SPD-sponsored image of Schröder as a "peace chancellor" (Friedenskanzler) by pointing to the dubious legal basis of the Kosovo intervention, and to the German aid for the US-led Iraq invasion and occupation by allowing the use of the important US infrastructure on German soil as well as NATO supplies.

Damaged relations with the US were not unknown to Schmidt during his chancellorship, and his relationship with Carter had become completely spoiled by the end of Carter's presidency. Military intervention outside Germany was not an option during Schmidt's active political career, and West Germany had even been able to resist such demands from the US during the Vietnam era. Nevertheless, a comparison between Schmidt and Schröder can be useful: When Schröder entered the chancellery, he did not have any noticeable experience in defense and foreign affairs matters. Schmidt had spent years in opposition specializing in such matters, whereas Schröder's path to power was mainly determined by the regional affairs of Lower Saxony and the economic issues of that region.⁵⁰ But the respective preparedness of the two politicians for military and foreign policy issues was inversely proportional to the possibilities of German politics during their respective term in office: Whereas during the active time of Schmidt, West German policy was still very dependent on the Western allies in the Cold War context, the chancellorship of Schröder was seen by both Schröder

50 Cf. Jürgen Hogrefe, *Gerhard Schröder* (Berlin: Siedler; 2002); Reinhard Urschel, *Gerhard Schröder* (München: DVA, 2002); Sylvia Meichsner, *Zwei unerwartete Laufbahnen: Die Karriereverläufe von Gerhard Schröder und Joschka Fischer im Vergleich* (Münster: Tectum, 2002).

and his critics as a time of formulating a new German position within the post-Cold War world. Schröder was faced with dramatic events like the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US, which created a completely new context for international relations and demanded immediate decisions, for example concerning German military operations in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, Schröder's policy seemed to be equally arbitrary and spontaneous: There is ongoing debate over the question of whether Schröder opposed the US attack on Iraq on principle, or opportunistically to win electoral success in 2002. His foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, has elaborated on the principles of his foreign policy, but *Die Rückkehr der Geschichte*,⁵¹ his main book on this topic, was published in 2005 just before the end of his term in office, and therefore serves much more as a justification of past decisions than as an outline for future politics.

The main difference between Schröder and Schmidt may be seen in the electorate's ability to calculate the policy of these protagonists: The defense and foreign policy concepts and visions of Schmidt were known to the public from his books long before he became minister of defense and chancellor. When Schröder was first elected in 1998, at least, the German electorate could only guess at his intentions in this sphere. In the 1980s, Schröder had benefited from the appeal of the post-Schmidt SPD that opposed NATO's double-track decision, but this was already history during the 1998 election. When Gerhard Schröder and Joschka Fischer, two former NATO and Schmidt critics, took over the government after the SPD/Green Party election victory, their first major foreign affairs enterprise was the ill-conceived war on Yugoslavia over the Kosovo issue. This had not been a topic in the electoral campaign. When the first German war engagement after 1945 started, Helmut Schmidt, who had been depicted by Schröder's and Fischer's generation as a warmonger during the late 1970s and 1980s, was opposed to this attack, which was illegal under the international law of the time. Schmidt expressed his view, but did not engage in a major public campaign – in order to avoid overly open criticism of his SPD successor in the chancellery after 16 years of CDU/CSU/FDP rule.

51 Joschka Fischer, *Die Rückkehr der Geschichte* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2005).

CONCLUSION

Reflections on the US and NATO in the 1960s

Lawrence S. Kaplan

For the US, involvement with NATO in the decade of the 1960s began with the successful Soviet launching of Sputnik on 4 October 1957. The appearance of the first earth satellite instantly placed in jeopardy the notion of US technological superiority that had dominated NATO thinking in the early 1950s. The Sputnik launch created doubts in Europe about the reliability of the US connection. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's boasts of an armory of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), seemingly justified by Sputnik's global reach, raised fears that the Soviets would subjugate the world from outer space. More specifically, they suggested that ICBMs would make the US as vulnerable to Soviet attack as the Soviet Union was to US medium-range ballistic missiles from bases in Western Europe.

Nuclear weaponry, it seemed, placed the US in a new light: Would the US redeem its "pledge" to Europe once US cities became hostage to potential Soviet attack? West Germany, the most vulnerable of the allies, was worried that its patron would turn away from Europe and return to its isolationist tradition. President Charles de Gaulle utilized this chink in the US armor to mount his own challenge to US leadership in Europe. France, he hoped, could become a third force balancing the superpowers of the East and West.

There was panic in the US as well as in Europe. In Washington, the sense that the nation had fallen behind its adversary was manifested in the outpouring of federal funds for science education. More immediately, the Eisenhower administration came under Democratic attack in the presidential election of 1960 for allowing the "missile gap" to develop. Well-publicized news reports from Moscow dramatizing the prowess of Soviet missiles further aggravated US military and political leaders. In January 1959, Khrushchev announced that the Soviet Union had begun mass production of intercontinental ballistic missiles, and earlier in that month, Secretary of Defense Neil H. McElroy reportedly admitted in a

secret meeting before a Senate committee that the Soviets would have a missile superiority of 100 over the US by 1960. The press placed the number at 300. When the president informed the public that the gap was being closed, his assurance did little to calm critics.

Given this background, it was hardly a surprise that the missile issue provided fodder for the 1960 presidential campaign. The Democratic candidate, Senator John F. Kennedy, warned about dangerous days ahead as the missile gap loomed even larger. He demanded a crash missile program to accompany a complete reevaluation of the nation's defense organization. In his first State of the Union address, Kennedy instructed his secretary of defense to reappraise the missile program in light of the putative gap.

At the same time, the new administration was aware of the toll that this perceived inferiority was taking on the morale of the allies. Matters only worsened as the inept effort to remove the Castro by an invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs ended in spectacular failure. Nominally, the invaders were Cuban exiles in Florida, but it was obvious from its inception that the administration was heavily involved. Kennedy lost face almost immediately at the outset of his administration.

If Kennedy could not manage to deal with a minor Communist problem on its doorstep, how would the young inexperienced president stand up to a superpower under an aggressive, confident leader such as Khrushchev? He had his chance in June 1961 when he met with the Soviet premier in Vienna, and seemingly failed the test. A bullying Khrushchev was ready to resume threats against West Berlin, temporarily postponed in 1958, if the US would not join the Soviet Union in signing a peace treaty with East Germany that would terminate the West's presence in West Berlin. Before the meeting in Berlin, Kennedy stopped in Paris where de Gaulle treated the young president with avuncular courtesy. The French president seemed more taken with Jackie Kennedy than with her husband. In Vienna, Kennedy was treated to Khrushchev's blunt harangues, a combination of bluster and humor, implying that the Soviet leader was not impressed by a man who could not put down a threat in his own backyard, in the manner the Soviets had done in Hungary a few years before.

In brief, the US faced a determined foe that would not be appeased by attempts at accommodation. The allies recognized Kennedy's efforts to

build up the nation's defenses as a result of the gloomy prognosis in Europe. But how effective were these in convincing the allies that the US would have the measure of the Soviet adversary after the Europeans witnessed a passive US reaction to the building of the Berlin wall two months later? Throughout the month of August 1961, there was only a limited implementation of the promised buildup. The six divisions to be deployed to Europe would not be in place until January 1962, on the assumption that the Soviets would take no serious action until the new year. Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt felt betrayed by US inaction as the wall went up. The most that the allies could come up with in the immediate aftermath was to impose restrictions on East Germans traveling to NATO countries.

The wall remained in place even as Vice President Lyndon Johnson and General Lucius Clay were dispatched to Berlin, and an acceleration of reinforcements was announced and implemented. Despite apparent US determination when US and Soviet tanks faced each other at Checkpoint Charlie in October 1961, fears of US weakness continued to agitate the allies. Even the increase in US troop strength in Europe raised a question of credibility. Did this emphasis on ground forces come at the expense of the US nuclear pledge? This concern was exacerbated by the shift in strategy from massive retaliation to what was called flexible response.

Even before the end of the Eisenhower administration, there had been discomfort with the doctrine of massive retaliation as an excessive response to even a minor Soviet infraction. Guided by the advice of General Maxwell Taylor, Kennedy and his defense secretary, Robert McNamara, revamped nuclear strategy to allow controlled responses whereby nuclear weapons would be used only as a last resort, forming the final rung in a ladder of escalation. This strategy required an emphasis on conventional forces to cope with Soviet adversary in the event of conflict, a policy that Europeans regarded as too expensive and too ineffective. The allies did not want to accept the judgment of McNamara's "Whiz Kids" that the imbalance between the West and the East was more apparent than real, and that the Soviets divisions were both smaller than the US and less well equipped. An appropriate ground force could cope with a Soviet attack and contributed to deterrence. McNamara's acceptance of this strategy was accompanied

by his recognition that nuclear weapons were unusable, and if used would only bring on mutual destruction.

Promoting this new strategy deepened European fears about US reliability. Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) General Lauris Norstad shared European reluctance to give up massive retaliation as the primary deterrent, and was a factor in the Kennedy administration's embrace of the multilateral force (MLF). The MLF was destined for colossal failure, but it was grasped as a way of calming European concerns by sharing nuclear weapons with nervous allies. Conceivably, it might have prevented de Gaulle from pursuing an independent nuclear deterrent, but primarily it was intended to remove German pressure for nuclear weaponry. The European view was that if the US could not be relied upon to defend the continent, as de Gaulle proclaimed, access to nuclear weaponry would revive European confidence.

The notion of a European nuclear weapon originated in the Eisenhower administration from two very different sources. One was the pressure from the powerful SACEUR, General Norstad, who wanted a modernized medium-range missile system that would provide Europeans with a more credible defense system. He wanted NATO to become a fourth nuclear power, under his own leadership. This was not the view of the State Department, which under the inspiration of Robert Bowie, director of the Policy Planning Staff, and his associates (known as the "theologians") saw the sharing of nuclear weaponry as a means of making European full partners of the US. The MLF would help break down antiquated and dangerous nationalist behavior and pave the way for a united Europe based on the US model as espoused by such reformers as the French economist Jean Monnet.

Given the incompatible approaches of Bowie and Norstad, it is a wonder that the concept lasted as long as it did – some four years. The State Department view prevailed, up to a point. The MLF would be a naval force, not a land-based entity. It would consist of 25 surface ships, each manned by member nations and armed with eight Polaris A-1 missiles with a range of over 4,000 kilometers. Aside from a test run, the project never materialized. It was a fraud and an embarrassment. It was fraud because the Europeans might own the nuclear weapon, but the warhead would be

in US hands. It was an embarrassment because only the Germans really evinced any enthusiasm for the force, and this raised questions about German motives. Once again, the US showed a face that disturbed its allies. (In a presentation on the MLF at the Woodrow Wilson Center in 1989, I was surprised to find Bowie in the audience. I was even more surprised to find him upset when I identified Norstad as the founding father of the MLF; he felt the credit belong primarily to him.)

If the MLF was intended to forestall German Gaullism, exemplified by Defense Minister Franz-Josef Strauss, its only effect upon de Gaulle himself was to confirm his judgment about the wisdom of pursuing his own path toward nuclear independence and independence generally of US suzerainty in the alliance. Granted that France's withdrawal from the military structure of NATO would have taken place even without the apparent, and in de Gaulle's opinion, glaring shortcoming in the superpower's leadership, the continuing signals of America's weakness justified his course. The US reaction to his challenge was hardly encouraging to the allies. The only open outrage in Washington was expressed not by President Johnson, but by the "theologians", who said de Gaulle's actions imperiled the MLF and the limited nuclear test ban treaty with the Soviet Union. The fact that the US signed such a treaty in 1963 that banned testing in outer space, in the atmosphere, and under seas was another signal of its reluctance to employ the nuclear weapon as a deterrent to aggression. France was not a party to the treaty.

France's withdrawal from NATO's military structure created enormous difficulties for the organization. New lines of communication and transportation had to be built; the transportation route from the Atlantic seaports to Germany through France had to be replaced by a more expensive and more unwieldy route via the North Sea. Aside from the cost of the changes, what messages were being sent to the allies? One result was certainly a sneaking admiration for the ability of the French president to manipulate the US. He was able to have his way and still enjoy the protection of the alliance; France had no intention of leaving the alliance itself. In fact, it was largely US pressure that removed the civilian headquarters from Paris to Brussels as punishment, inadequate as it was, for the removal of the military headquarters.

That Belgium itself was able to impose its own terms on the establishment of SHAPE in the Mons area was a testament to a diminished bargaining power of the US with its allies. The logical new location of the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe (SHAPE) would have been in Brussels, close to the secretariat and council, much as the two headquarters had been in Paris. The argument against a relocation to Brussels was based on the danger that such an arrangement would imply for the civil population of the city in wartime. Given that no such cry had been raised against SHAPE in France in 1951, this objection was specious at best. A more likely reason, and more credible, was the wish to move SHAPE into economically depressed Wallonia, where an expanded Belgian military base at Casteau would revive the economy of the area.

The superpower, in need of quick action, raised few objections. Nor did the chief US military representative, SACEUR General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, recognize that the political clout that his arrogant predecessor, Lauris Norstad, had wielded would be reduced when the International Military Staff (replacing the Standing Group in Washington) resided in Brussels along with the secretariat. The distance between Brussels and Casteau was only 50 kilometers, but it was sufficient to mark the SACEUR's loss of influence in NATO decision-making. Lemnitzer's disinclination towards political activity, unlike Norstad's style, minimized his political role, and consequently reduced the predominant position of the US in the alliance. (In numerous interviews with Lemnitzer in the 1950s, I tried unsuccessfully to have him deal with this issue; he would usually bring the conversation back to his undoubted triumph in meeting de Gaulle's deadline of one year to complete SHAPE's departure from France).

It was in this period that an anecdote circulated in Belgium and elsewhere in NATO Europe that illuminated the new transatlantic relationship as well as Western Europe's attitude towards the Soviet Union. Alluding to Shakespeare's "Tempest", the Europeans identified not one, but two Calibans stalking the Old World. One of the monsters was in the East, the other in the West, and both were threats to themselves and to the survival of the virtuous Ariel, caught in the middle. The assumption, though, was that the civilized if weak Ariel could tame the strong but stupid Calibans. This anecdote seemed to have had a French provenance, since the civiliz-

ing force would have its capital in Paris. While the Belgians from whom I heard this tale as a Fulbright lecturer in 1965 might have contested the Paris center, they relished both the notion of European superiority and the lack of distinction between the Soviet Union and the US in the mid-1960s. Such were European perceptions of the decline of the US the first half of the decade.

Justification for Europe's lack of faith in the US ability to provide the protection it has offered its allies in the 1950s is an appropriate subject of debate. Was there a genuine decline in US power vis-à-vis the Soviet Union that gave rise to European doubts, or was the issue a matter of misperceptions on the part of both the US and the Europeans?

To answer these questions, it is important to turn back to the aftermath of Sputnik. The Eisenhower administration was quick to recognize the importance of countering the apparent advantage Khrushchev enjoyed in launching the first earth satellite. After initial assertions that Sputnik would have no effect on US plans for launching its own satellite in spring 1958, US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles took up a French proposal made earlier in the year to build a nuclear arms stockpile for NATO in Europe, designated exclusively for US troops, but to be released to the SACEUR with an understanding that their use would be subject to agreement between the supreme commander and the countries concerned.

Still, these steps did not address Europe's worries about the new vulnerability of North America to an intercontinental ballistic missile, particularly when leaks from congressional hearings reported that the Soviets enjoyed an overwhelming superiority in ICBMs, with such figures as 1,000 to 3,000 bandied about. This was a gross exaggeration, but Khrushchev did his best to contribute to a sense of imbalance. It had been the unwitting help of the Kennedy presidential campaign that had made an issue of the "missile gap." There was no gap, as Kennedy's secretary of defense discovered. If anything, the alleged gap was in favor of the US. The US possessed a strategic military capability twice that of Soviet Union. It was only in the number of ICBMs that the Soviets held a narrow lead. Given the mix of long-range B-52 bombers, the missiles carried by submarines, and the Minutemen ICBMs, the US was already ahead in what McNamara called "the destruction gap". The Soviet leader's reckless boasting sparked

massive efforts to increase the numbers in all three categories, to the point where McNamara intervened to cut back the US Air Force's demands for far more missiles than he felt were needed. What influenced the secretary was information from the CIA that the Soviet ICBM strength was much lower than US analysts had previously estimated. His confidence was based on evidence about the state of the Soviet missile program from the new spy satellite, SAMOS 2 (an acronym for Satellite And Missile Observation System), which entered service in January 1961. The reconnaissance satellite replaced the more vulnerable U-2 airplanes for surveillance of Soviet installations.

The missile gap formally disappeared as an issue when Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric made a widely publicized speech in October 1961 that amounted to the official interment of the "gap". He noted that the destructive power the US could bring to bear, even after a Soviet surprise attack, "would be as great as – perhaps even greater than – the total undamaged force which the enemy can threaten to launch against the United States in a first strike." So much for the decline of US power vis-à-vis that of the Soviet Union.

The imbalance of power between the US and its major adversary – in favor of the US – did not appear to impress the allies. Nor were they convinced by the US emphasis on conventional forces as manifested by Washington's decision to increase the number of its combat divisions from eleven to sixteen divisions. The doctrine of flexible response that disturbed Europeans was built around the idea of raising the level of NATO's ground forces to a level where they could cope with something less than a nuclear attack. While most Europeans were skeptical about the role of nuclear power in the flexible response doctrine, they also doubted the efficacy of any conventional buildup against the overwhelming numbers of Soviet ground forces. The US claimed that the West exaggerated Soviet power. Although the Soviet Union had 147 divisions, many were maintained well below full strength. Moreover, Soviet divisions were substantially smaller than their Western counterparts. McNamara, guided by his corps of youthful civilian advisors, dismissed the notion of NATO's inferiority in conventional forces as a psychological, not a military problem. He was convinced that a modest troop addition by the allies, along with the larger contribution

of the US, would give NATO the ability to respond effectively to Soviet aggression, if not deter it.

As for the charge of abandoning the allies, the concomitant emphasis on airlift should have been a source of comfort. McNamara envisioned the possibility of loading troops and equipment in the US and flying them directly to the battle overseas. Exercise Big Lift, in October 1963, embodied many of the secretary's projections. This was a NATO strategic mobility exercise in which the US Air Force airlifted the army's combat-ready 2nd Armored Division, along with its support units, from Fort Hood, Texas directly to Germany. The exercise would prove that an entire armored division – some 15,000 men – could be flown to Europe, draw its supplies and equipment from depots there, and be ready to participate in NATO maneuvers within five days.

It could be argued that if the allies were not convinced of US military power and its willingness to employ it, the Soviet advisory was. Despite the barrage of propaganda about Soviet successes in overtaking the US in military technology, it was Khrushchev, not Kennedy or Johnson, that blinked when it came to a showdown. The Cuban missile crisis was just that for the US, with the frightening prospect of nuclear destruction; but the Soviets essentially accepted the US-imposed quarantine on ships caring missiles to Cuba. This action might have constituted a *casus belli*. Instead, they withdrew their missiles from Cuba in 1962 under US pressure. Granted that the US also withdrew its Jupiter missiles from Turkey in an under-the-counter arrangement; but this only provided cover for what was essentially a Soviet retreat.

If the Soviets felt vulnerable because of an involvement thousands of kilometers away from their home bases, in an island 130 kilometers off the US shore, they might have taken more advantage of the inferior US position in Berlin, in the midst of a Communist East Germany. Ever since Kennedy assumed office, Khrushchev had made every effort to force the US to abandon West Berlin – from his harangues in Vienna in June 1961 to a tank confrontation at Checkpoint Charlie in October of that year. Sending missiles to Cuba might have been the key to forcing a *quid pro quo* with the US. Instead, from 1962 to 1964, the Soviets engaged in petty harassment of the air and land corridors to West Berlin. But at no time was

a treaty made that legitimized East Germany's control of the West's access to that city, least of all a treaty that would have ended the Western allies' presence in Berlin, as determined in the Yalta agreements of 1945.

When a treaty was finally concluded in June 1964, it was between the Soviets and their East Germany ally, not with the US, Britain, or France. After six years of tension over Berlin, the resolution came as an anticlimax. What counted in the treaty was left unsaid. The rhetoric of traditional statements in friendship and collaboration between the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic omitted any reference to allied troops in West Berlin or their right of access to the city. Only two brief mentions of West Berlin appeared in the treaty.

Any objective examination of US military power in the first half of the decade would have shown it to be stronger than it had been at the end of the 1950s. US support of the doctrine of flexible response or the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963 were not signs of weakness but rather, as McNamara put it, a recognition of the bankruptcy of nuclear warfare as a policy option. McNamara's tactlessness in his heavy-handed hectoring of the allies at the Athens meeting of the North Atlantic Council in May 1962 helped to obscure the reality of the US commitment. The allies' bridled at his insistence on centralized control of nuclear weapons and resented his disparagement of national nuclear forces; their national pride was insulted. Consequently, they were not inclined to face up to the feasibility of conventional defense in Europe or the possibility of successfully meeting a conventional attack with conventional forces. Perceptions dominated, and for the most part they were out of focus.

Even when the US, influenced by the ideologues of the State Department, mounted its ill-fated MLF, it was not a sign of military weakness on the part of the senior NATO partner. It was a misconceived effort to calm European fears and passions. The MLF did neither. It only served to justify de Gaulle's independent course, while Germany, the one partner with special interest in the project, felt all the more isolated because of the negative reactions of the other allies. Yet the MLF's failure, like France's departure from SHAPE, produced side-effects that were beneficial to the alliance. Both developments meant that planners concentrated on new possibilities for nuclear sharing that had not been possible before. With France

absent from the deliberations dealing with military affairs, McNamara was able to create in the new Nuclear Planning Group in 1966 a vehicle for providing the smaller nations of the organization with information about nuclear affairs hitherto held only by the US, and to a lesser extent, Great Britain. With nuclear problems under the wing of the secretary-general, the gap between the US and its allies was narrowed, at least semantically and certainly psychologically. Whatever damage de Gaulle's actions had done to the fabric of the organization was compensated in part by increased solidarity among the fourteen remaining members.

In this context, the notion of a weakened US, challenged successfully by the Soviet Union, with its commitment to the defense of Europe discredited, is unwarranted. In fact, analyses in mid-decade proclaiming the end of the alliance, suggest not the failure of its mission but its success. The Soviet retreat in Cuba and Berlin led some European and US observers to believe that the Cold War had essentially ended, and that the Soviet Union was not the monster of the 1950s, but a normal, if not quite tamed, neighbor of the West. It allowed Europeans to air their resentment and differences with the US with a freedom not possible before. The sense of normality restored in the mid-1960s between East and West also led pundits such as Ronald Steel and Richard Barnet to speculate that NATO had fulfilled its mission and should disband. Arguably, the most visible symbol of how the environment had changed since the 1950s was the Harmel report to the Council in 1967. In a sense, this was a trade-off between the superpowers and the allies, particularly the smaller allies. The report was rightly celebrated for bringing the concept of *détente* between the East and West into focus. But the less familiar half of the report identified collective defense as a "necessary condition for effective policies directed towards a greater relaxation of tension". And the same meeting of the North Atlantic Council adopted a flexible response to all levels of aggression. Defense was inextricably linked to *détente*, and defense was primarily the responsibility of the senior ally. So if *détente* was a prospect for the future, it was the result of the continuing credibility of the US pledge of 1949.

But by the end of the decade, the disarray that had followed the launching of Sputnik seemed to have finally settled in – a loss of confidence in the senior partner, a weakened US seeking *détente* out of desperation,

congressional demands for more equitable burden-sharing, suspicions about withdrawal of troops from Europe, and a general breakdown of faith in the credibility of the alliance. The argument for this malaise was the US entanglement in the Vietnam War, particularly when the US assumed management of the war in 1965. To Europeans, the US was diverting its attention and energies away from the major arena of the Cold War and was withdrawing troops in order to pursue its objectives in Southeast Asia. All the visceral suspicions about the US commitment were intensified by the war. And the situation was worsened by the sense that the US was trapped in a quagmire without means of escape.

The US, for its part, was increasingly resentful over Europe's tendency not to support its efforts, or worse, to disparage and condemn them. Resentment over the allies' behavior also surfaced in the Senate; the war in Vietnam, after all, was not only intended to aid a country in danger of Communist domination, but also to show US commitment to its allies. If the US withdrew from Vietnam, would this action not damage its commitment to Europe? Fuming over this ingratitude, prominent senators in the late 1960s threatened to make troop withdrawals permanent unless the allies showed a willingness to share burdens – at least the financial burdens.

There is no doubt that Washington's acceptance of European initiatives to reduce the tensions of the Cold War was induced by the drain – psychological as well as military – caused by the Vietnam War. Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* might have been resisted at another time. When the new president, Richard Nixon, promised "Vietnamization" of the war in 1969, he pledged at the same time to keep NATO as the first priority of the US. These proclamations were greeted with more skepticism in Europe than in the US. Was Vietnamization simply a pretext for the nation to abandon the cause that was lost? Nixon's doctrine was tantamount to a confession of failure. Such was the reaction of many NATO partners. The perceptions of US decline certainly seemed more valid at the end of the decade than they had been at its beginning.

But just as an appraisal of the US military after Sputnik suggests that the perceptions of weakness were more apparent than the real, so a close look at the state of the US, NATO, and the Soviet Union in 1969 may reveal

more strength than weakness in the US position. Had the Soviet Union achieved the military dominance it lacked in 1960? It is unlikely that the Soviets had recovered fully from their setbacks in the first half of the decade. The buildup of Soviet military power, energetically undertaken after Khrushchev's fall, took time to complete. The Soviets made a point of advising NATO that the suppression of the "Prague Spring" was not a hostile act against the alliance, which was in itself a sign of insecurity. Was US anger at Europe's response to the Vietnam War destructive to the alliance? It is worth noting that the Federal Republic of Germany responded with financial compensation, with what historian Hubert Zimmermann has called a "quiet" means of appeasing the US. As for the Senate's threats to withdraw troops from Europe, none of the Mansfield resolutions became law in the 1960s. The US troop deployment in Europe remained in place at the end of the decade. Europe may have moved more aggressively toward détente, and the US may have reacted more passively than it might have done had there been no Vietnam War, but the internal balance of power in NATO was essentially unchanged. Moreover, the Brezhnev Doctrine in action made it clear to the West that defense remained a vital element in the alliance's future.

In brief, the perception of US weakness was more psychological than military, as it exaggerated the influence of the Warsaw Pact in the late 1960s. The Vietnam experience was a major factor in accounting for the diminished status of the US in NATO. But the importance of the US contribution to the alliance had not diminished. No partner was any more interested in terminating its membership in 1970 than it had been in 1960.

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