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NATO and the Non-Proliferation Treaty Triangulations between Bonn, Washington, and Moscow

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Introduction

The following analysis will focus on the importance of the Non-Proliferation-Treaty (NPT), and of the negotiations leading up to it, to the break-through into a new era of international détente. This analysis necessitates a multi-polar approach based on multi-archival work and multi-national perspectives. Although the narrative of this chapter includes descriptions of diplomatic wrangling and political intrigues, its main focus is on the history of ideas and perceptions. From whatever perspective we might approach the issue of nuclear non-proliferation in the 1960's, the Germans, particular those in the Western part of the divided nation, remained the key to a treaty.

Some, perhaps even the majority of European statesmen saw the NPT in essence as an anti-German instrument, an opportunity to rationalise one's own germanophobia and to keep the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), which was gaining in economic and political influence, under control – at least militarily. Others perceived the seemingly unbroken continuation of Cold War foreign policy by the government of Chancellor Ludwig Erhard as an unavoidable and therefore particularly annoying hurdle to a truly global control of nuclear weapons.

From this perspective, the West Germans, and particularly the conservative right-wingers in Bonn's cabinet, might be compared to an immobile obstacle between the super-powers, hindering and even preventing them from moving decisively towards détente in Europe, which each was doing for its own reasons. From these motives stemmed a marked dualism of efforts towards non-proliferation and détente, which could, at least temporarily, have become antagonistic, particularly if the West-Germans had thrown their weight around within the Western alliance. Consequently, the present chapter is not a history of the NPT from Bonn's perspective but, rather, it is an investigation of how West German policy on nuclear weapons fitted in the socio-political and détente-political landscape of the latter part of the 1960's.

Key to this question are the rather different perceptions of the Western camp and the Eastern camp regarding Bonn's nuclear ambitions. To illustrate the often complicated relationship between national interests and perceptions, seven specific issues are discussed in this chapter.¹ These issues are:

- German nuclear ambitions, nourished by certain influential conservative circles in Bonn;
- the US administration's drive to bring about an era of détente with Moscow through the NPT;
- the intention of the British Labour government under Harold Wilson to use the NPT as an instrument for perpetuating control over the Germans;
- de Gaulle's maneuvering to make the best use of the differences between East and West for achieving apparently contradictory goals of his policy;
- Soviet interests in détente with Washington and security regarding Germany;
- the resulting special role resulting from all this of West Germany's Social Democrats under Willy Brandt's leadership;
- the repercussions and consequences of the multi-dimensional NPT controversies on NATO's role.²

The nuclear ambitions of the ruling conservatives in Bonn

The first and arguably one of the most fundamental issues regarding the NPT is the well documented wish of the Christian Democratic Union-Christian Social Union (CDU-CSU) leadership in Bonn to leave open at least a loophole for the still fairly young Federal Republic to gain nuclear capability one day, even if the chance to secure nuclear hardware for the Bundeswehr and Luftwaffe was not yet in sight. The list of protagonists working for this goal – though for different reasons and with different strategies – included Konrad Adenauer, security experts like Kurt Birrenbach and Heinrich Krone, and those who saw themselves as prospective candidates for the chancellorship, like Franz Josef Strauß, Rainer Barzel, and

¹ For a comprehensive, multinational account of the NPT, the road to détente and the German question see Oliver Bange, "Ostpolitik und Détente in Europa – Die Anfänge 1966-1969" (habil., University of Mannheim 2004.) The author is much indebted to the Thyssen-Foundation, which made this research possible, to Andy Wenger, Zürich, for his stimulating advice and to George Wilkes, Cambridge, for his invaluable linguistic and historical support.

Archival locations and abbreviations: Archivum Akt Novych, Warschau (AAN); Archives Nationales, Paris (AN); Archiv für Christlich Soziale Politik, München (ACSP); Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Bonn (AdsD); Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiskoi Federatsii, Moskau (AVP RF); Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg (BAMA); Bodleian Library, Oxford (Bodleian); Lyndon B. Johnson Library, Austin/Texas (LBJL); Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Quai d'Orsay/Paris (MAE); National Archives and Record Administration, College Park/Washington (NARA); NATO archives, Brussels (NATO); Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin (PA AA); Public Record Office, Kew/London (PRO).

² A discussion that the doyen of NATO research, Lawrence Kaplan, started with the author at the Zürich-conference.

Eugen Gerstenmaier. Back in 1954, Bonn's accession to the Western European Union was tantamount to a precondition for the re-establishment of a sovereign (West German) state. On this occasion, Adenauer had denounced the production, procurement, and possession of atomic, biological, and chemical (ABC) weapons by the FRG. The loopholes in this public relations move were obvious, as Adenauer himself repeatedly pointed out French President Charles de Gaulle: the denunciation was made "voluntarily", it had only been made to Adenauer's allies (and could therefore be revoked at any time), and it applied to German soil. Equally, the option of the control or shared control of nuclear weapons was not covered by the statement.¹

Since that time, successive governments in Bonn had either stressed the German denunciation of nuclear weapons or had underlined the extent to which there was still a viable nuclear option for the FRG within the framework either of NATO or of the European Community, depending on contemporary international developments, demands, and restrictions. In 1958, Strauß – as Adenauer's Minister of Defence – had tried to blackmail the new de Gaulle government into military nuclear cooperation. In 1962, Strauß returned to the subject with yet another idea: in return for French nuclear weaponry he offered, in effect, to lead West Germany out of the US-dominated NATO and into a closer political-military cooperation with France, once he had succeeded Adenauer as chancellor. To prove his sincerity, he offered an almost bizarre wedding gift: a special war gas developed by the infamous IG-Farben.²

In the following years, further approaches and plans were made by various prominent politicians, including Heinrich Krone, Rainer Barzel, Josef Hermann Dufhues, and Eugen Gerstenmaier. Recently declassified US intelligence information shows that this "important strand in German thought" sought as much independent control of nuclear weapons as it could possibly gain. The size of the prospective nuclear force seemed to be of secondary importance; the combination of independence and nuclear weapons was instead perceived as a basis for political power and personal influence; in short, the aim was "a larger German finger on a smaller trigger."³ Undersecretary of the Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt) Karl Carstens and other officials from the *Amt* even felt obliged to draw on Nazi terminology when they told their superiors that German *Lebensinteressen* were at stake, due to a sinister

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¹ Conversation de Gaulle-Adenauer, Paris, 4.7.1962 [dates are given in European order], 10.05-11.15 am. AN: 5 AG 1 (de Gaulle), vol. 161.

² Conversation Messmer-Strauß, Paris, 23.1.62. Summary and analysis from Messmer for Geoffroy de Courcel the general-secretary of de Gaulle's Elysée. AN: 5 AG 1 (de Gaulle), vol. 161.

³ Memorandum "The Growing Shadow of a European Nuclear Force", 6.12.1965, from the head of the State Department's Planning Council to the President. LBJL: WHCF, Confidential File, Subject File FG105 (containing classified DoS material), vol. 23.

conspiracy between Washington and Moscow that they had detected in late 1966. And in December 1966 Kurt Georg Kiesinger, the CDU Chancellor of the Grand Coalition with the Social Democratic Party (SPD), inquired personally: “Which European, Atlantic or other solutions are left open by the latest [NPT-]draft”¹ to German nuclear ambitions.

What could be perceived, and possibly even excused, as mere personal intrigues appeared to create a volatile and dangerous situation – both in a domestic and an international setting – through the combination of secret national goals and the personal futures of the protagonists. Both Strauß and Barzel seem to have aspired to topple Kiesinger by raising national emotions over issues of nuclear defence and national status. From 1967, Strauß’s hysterical attacks on the *Atomsperrvertrag* (which translates as the “nuclear prohibition treaty” – a term still widely referred to in the German media today) gave evidence of his ambition. His desire for the chancellorship was thus linked to his long-standing doubts over the reliability of the US nuclear guarantee. Already in the fall of 1962, his closest advisers had deemed reliance on the US to be “an incalculable risk” that could only be avoided by an “independent nuclear force”, for which preparations had to be initiated, and the sooner the better.² Seven years later, in the summer of 1969, the rationale was still the same, only complemented by detailed ideas developed in Strauß’s entourage as to what this West German deterrent should look like: a minimum of 250 medium range ballistic missiles with a reach between 600 and 4500 km, preferably mobile Polaris and Poseidon missiles adapted to be carried by tracked vehicles on land, capable of destroying the USSR up to the Urals as well as key industrial spots beyond.³ Consequently, the opponents of German nuclear armament – be it in Washington, Moscow or in Bonn – had ample reason to press the urgency of their cause. The NPT appeared to be precisely the instrument to achieve their ends.

The NPT as an instrument of US détente policy

A key factor in bringing about the NPT – given the resistance in Bonn and elsewhere – was the continuing acceleration of the Johnson Administration’s drive in favour of the treaty. To enact his concept of ideological competition with the East – for which “bridge building” was only a euphemism – Johnson needed an era of détente between the superpowers and particularly between the two antagonistic blocs in Europe. Without military, and particularly nuclear,

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¹ Enquiry by Osterheld at the office of the Foreign Minister in the Auswärtiges Amt on the personal request of Chancellor Kiesinger, 22.12.1966. PA AA: B150 (MB, VS-Bd. 10083).

² Memorandum “Gleichgewicht und Atommacht”, sent on 19.10.1962, on the personal order of Strauß, from Schmückle to Knieper. BAMA: BW 1/2377.

³ Letter from Alfred Seidl to Chancellor Kiesinger, 9.6.1969, referring to an exchange of letters with Strauß on 6.2.1967. Uncommented copy in the Strauß papers. ACSP: NL Strauß, Büro Bonn, Bd. 3708.

détente, his policy of “penetration” would be impossible or, worse, much too dangerous. Former US president Dwight D. Eisenhower had already realised this, and the crisis in Prague in 1968 served as a warning to both the core members of the Johnson team and the small group gathered around Brandt. By 1965, President Johnson and Secretary of State Dean Rusk realised that serious negotiations for a NPT offered promising leverage to break the ice with the new Soviet leadership. It appeared of utmost importance that they make the best use of Moscow’s apparent interest in cementing its exclusive status as a nuclear power (not least within the Warsaw Pact) and in perpetuating the nuclear disarmament of the Germans. It was all too obvious that without the Germans there would be no NPT with the Soviets.

Not least for this reason, the allies in Bonn had to be bound into Johnson’s overall strategy – to which a nuclear prohibition ordered from Washington was hardly helpful. The State Department therefore argued for a course that combined the drive towards détente and a revision of the alliance. This, it was widely hoped, would give the Germans a greater and more visible part in planning and decision-making (in Johnson’s words, “a place in the sun”) while curbing British influence significantly and axing London’s pseudo-independent nuclear force. Following the rationale of Francis M. Bator, Johnson’s deputy security advisor, the solution to the divisions within the alliance over nuclear proliferation appeared rather simple: one had to make the Germans understand their own national interests. After all, détente was the only feasible path to reunification, if it should ever come about, and the renunciation of German nuclear ambitions had to be a key element in any new Ostpolitik.

Technically, West Germany did not need nuclear weapons of its own so much as “a highly visible expansion of German participation in nuclear policy making, at every level and in every practicable way.”¹ However, it became increasingly apparent that the Americans had underestimated the resistance this would cause within the ruling conservative circles in Bonn – a force that no CDU/CSU chancellor could ignore in any domestic political calculation. Neither Erhard nor Kiesinger wielded enough power within the party to simply push through the policy envisaged by Bator and others. As a result, Johnson became increasingly impatient about the obstruction of his own policy towards the East, which he believed to be fully in tune with both US and German interests. In January 1967, Johnson finally overruled Rusk and the strategists in the State Department and decided that progress with the Soviets over non-proliferation would have to be realised at the expense of Bonn’s so-called “European

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¹ Memorandum “A Nuclear Role for Germany: What do the Germans Want?”, 4.4.1966, from Bator for Johnson. LBJL: Bator Papers, vol. 28. Bator’s rationale was clearly shared in comments by Defense Secretary McNamara and Secretary of State Rusk. See also the “Chronology on Nuclear Problem” prepared by Rusk for Johnson, 6.4.1966. LBJL: Bator Papers, vol. 28.

option”.¹ This presidential decision virtually ruled out any West German participation in a prospective multilateral European nuclear force – while leaving decision makers and the public in the FRG completely in the dark about it.

Bator’s colleague Walt Whitman Rostow cast the president’s thinking in unambiguous words: “The track [to détente] may move more slowly if a non-proliferation treaty fails at this stage.”² Rusk was charged personally with the task of seeing this presidential policy through with both the Russians and the Germans, which he did with considerable skill. Already in September 1966 he had met with Moscow’s foreign secretary, Andrei Gromyko, in New York. Whereas the head of the US Atomic Control and Disarmament Agency, Bill Foster, clearly alluded to German direction on this occasion by noting “we [do] not envisage and have never discussed a situation in which American nuclear weapons ceased to be American nuclear weapons”, Rusk recommended “complete discretion”. Soon afterwards, Gromyko and Johnson agreed at a dinner in Washington that the only thing left to do now was to find a “treaty language” which would not compromise the allies of the United States more than necessary.³ This was nothing else but a superpower *fait accompli* over the heads of even their most important allies.

Harold Wilson’s conception of the NPT as an instrument for perpetuating control over the Germans

The attitude displayed in private by Prime Minister Wilson was exemplary of the pursuit of anti-German and anti-Bonn interests under the cover of the NPT – often paired with almost desperate attempts to defend Britain’s own status as a middle ranking, or even a world power, in the face of rising German influence. Both in Western Europe and in dealing with the Soviet Union, Wilson played the role of a guarantor against West German nuclear armament, against German revanchism, and against a more powerful German voice in East-West affairs. Wilson’s role was everything but philanthropic. And this is completely unconnected to the question of whether Wilson believed – as his successor Margaret Thatcher did decades later – that the German national character was intrinsically dangerous and aggressive. During

¹ Francis M. Bator’s conversation with the author, 27.3.2004, and written exchanges thereafter. On Johnson’s order, Bator used wording that would clearly rule out a European option and penciled this into the American-Soviet draft treaty. LBJL: Bator Papers, vol. 21.

² Cover note by Rostow for Johnson from 8.9.1966 on a memorandum from Bator. LBJL: NSF, Rostow File, vol. 11.

³ Memoranda of Conversations between Rusk, Thompson, Kohler, Goldberg, Foster – Gromyko, Fedorenko, Dobrynin, Roschin, Mendlevitch in the Waldorf Towers, New York, 22 and 24.9.1966. NARA: DoS, Conference Files, Lot 67D586-CF84. Memcon of dinner at the Madison Room of the State Department including Johnson, Gromyko, Rusk, Foster, Thompson, Harriman, Leddy, Toon, Dobrynin, Zinchuk, Vorontsov, Ippolitov, 10.10.1966. NARA: DoS, S/S-I Files, Lot 79D246 (also in Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1964-68, vol. XI, doc. 158, pp. 388-91).

Britain's repeated European Economic Community (EEC) applications in the 1960s, Wilson consciously gambled on the impact of Britain's anti-German posture. British protection against an overly powerful Germany was clearly insinuated to the smaller EEC member states, and the old and mighty Charles de Gaulle in Paris was fed the illusion of a potential Anglo-French condominium with its own independent nuclear force.

Relying on the credibility of his performance as a watchdog over Bonn's sinister intentions, Wilson also aspired to take a key role in the West's relationship with the Soviet Union – a mediatory position claimed also by de Gaulle with varying degrees of success since the mid-1960s. Wilson's ambitions and self-image showed a remarkable continuity. Already in October 1963, as leader of the opposition, he had sketched out the role he intended to play in a conversation with Nikita Khrushchev, who cynically replied that “a re-united Germany would be a threat to the UK and France – but not Russia.”¹

Wilson's aversion to German aspirations to become a part of the community of nuclear powers, and his promises to the Soviets in this respect, remained virtually unchanged over the years. Similarly, he did not change his approach to Britain maintaining its world power status by nuclear means and to the global role a nuclear capability would give Britain. According to Wilson, Britain – perhaps in combination with de Gaulle's France – had to remain the most influential power in Europe, the most important advisor in Washington, particularly in nuclear questions, and a more potent (nuclear) mediator than Paris in East-West relations and in the Third World:

“We have a role in influencing America, and it is precisely for that reason that the Soviet Union, despite her very real difficulties will come more and more to listen to us. France may claim to say more things that Russia likes, but they are essentially negative things. And for this very reason France has less in reality to offer. And Russia understands this.”²

Wilson and his foreign secretary, George Brown, did not tire of bringing this message home to the Soviets over the following years. In conversation with Kosygin early in 1967, Wilson and Brown wholly excluded German participation in a NATO nuclear force and practically excluded a European option, too. Wilson himself pressed on Kosygin that the precondition for a European option was a new European state and repeated, so that Kosygin would fully understand the far-reaching meaning of this, “the word *State* must be emphasised”. London's rationale was intriguing: at best – or in a British perspective at worst – only a confederal European construction was feasible in the distant future; this would never be or become a

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¹ Conversation Wilson, Gordon Walker – Khrushchev, Gromyko, Moscow, 10.6.1963. Bodleian: Wilson Papers, MS. Wilson c.957.

² Manuscript of Wilson speech before the Parliamentary Labour Party, 15.6.1966. Bodleian: Brown Papers, MS. Eng. c.5015.

“state”, which was why there would never be European nuclear force.¹ Wilson added: “We realise of course that we could not expect the Soviet Union to say publicly that they approved of these arrangements; nor would we gratuitously make our interpretations public.” These interpretations were even handed over to the Soviets in written form. By this, in effect, Wilson had put himself at the mercy of the Kremlin for the sake of his country’s, and his own, international role. Even the British protocol of the meeting had to be heavily doctored before it was allowed to be circulated on a very restricted basis in Whitehall. Thus Wilson had made a far-reaching pledge in his private conversation with Kosygin, very much at Bonn’s expense:

“Indeed this was one of our two motives of seeking entry into the Common Market: to squeeze the German problem. [...] He could assure Mr. Kosygin that President Johnson feared the Germans, de Gaulle despised and hated them and so long as he himself was in power there would be no question of the Germans being allowed a finger on the nuclear trigger.”²

And Wilson’s gamble seemed to pay off. When Brown communicated the same line to Gennadiy I. Voronov, a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Politburo, the answer was unequivocal and straight. If the British remained helpful in settling the German nuclear problem, Voronov virtually guaranteed that preferential treatment by Moscow would ensure a special role for the Wilson government in East-West affairs.³ Almost a year later, in early 1968, Wilson praised himself in having played the watchdog role over Germany “just right”⁴; and when in early 1969 Kiesinger was still dragging his feet over a German signature of the NPT, Wilson, with no regard to the events in Czechoslovakia in August 1968, was yet again ready to jump at the Germans (“bear down hard on Kiesinger”⁵) – and let the Soviets know about this.

Contradictory French interests

The government in Paris monitored these proceedings from a distance. De Gaulle and his ministers had criticised the NPT from the outset as an American-Soviet plot and had refused to sign, citing France’s national interests. Nevertheless, it soon became clear that France – along with the United States and the USSR – would rank among the main beneficiaries of any such treaty on nuclear non-proliferation. This was not least because the implicit understanding between the superpowers to freeze the number of nuclear powers at the current status quo would confirm France’s status as a nuclear power of world rank, and France's contemporary

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¹ Conversation Wilson, Brown – Kosygin, London, 10.2.1967. This British position was even handed over in writing. PRO: PREM 13/1840.

² The handwritten alterations by Michael Palliser, Wilson’s foreign policy adviser, to the original protocol of Wilson’s private conversation with Kosygin on 7.2.1967 can be found in PRO: PREM13/1715.

³ Conversation Brown – Voronov at the British Houses of Parliament, 16.11.1966. PRO: PREM 13/1220.

⁴ Handwritten comment by Wilson on a Foreign Office note to Palliser, 22.1.1968. PRO: PREM 13/3216.

⁵ Embtel 1161, London, 11.2.1969, by US ambassador Bruce. NARA: DoS, POL FR-UK.

advantages over other states – whether in terms of strategic options or of mere prestige – would be further reinforced in that other states would be prevented from acquiring nuclear forces.

For very much the same reasons, France had no interest whatsoever in the nuclear armament of German troops. This was stated in unambiguous terms both with France's allies in the West and with the Soviet Union, while in their discussions with Bonn over the nuclear and reunification issues, the French tended to refer to the possibility of resolving these issues in the distant future. In any case, the rapprochement between the superpowers helped Paris to avoid an otherwise unavoidable, definitive answer to Bonn's repeated approaches regarding bilateral nuclear cooperation. Indeed, it allowed the French to exploit to their own advantage the differences within the Western camp over the "right" method of tying Bonn in. Within the EEC and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), French diplomacy was thus able to present itself (making a pointed barb at London) as a guarantor and nucleus of a future European nuclear force.

At the same time, French diplomats in Moscow presented France as a protector against and mediator to Bonn. And in Bonn itself, France's representatives continuously complained over the *fait accompli* presented by Washington and Moscow, both completely neglecting German interests for the sake of a superpower condominium. One could not express French opportunism more bluntly than French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville did in a conversation with Karl Carstens in October 1964: France might have agreed to West German participation in the MLF back in 1963 in order not to lose the Germans entirely to the Americans; but that was yesterday, and today was a new situation with new rules of play.¹

To the conservatives in Bonn, meanwhile, the French, and particularly Charles de Gaulle, appeared to be a natural ally in their fight against the NPT.² Although de Gaulle was quick to realise the opportunities this offered him, not for a second did he consider sharing his *force de frappe* with the Germans, nor did he allow himself to be used in the German drive towards nuclear reform within NATO. Instead, de Gaulle declared that France did not intend to sign the NPT, but would act as if it had acceded to the treaty.³ Faced with ever-increasing resistance to the NPT in Bonn, despite its signature in July 1968 by over sixty nations, the Soviets approached the French secretly in late January 1969 asking for help with the West German government.⁴ Despite the temptation to allow France to display its role in European, if

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¹ Conversation Couve de Murville – Carstens, Paris, 24.10.1964. AN: 5 AG 1/162.

² Ref. IIB1 (Lahusen), Aufzg. betr. Französische Haltung in Abrüstungsfragen. AdsD: Dep. E.B., Bd. 316.

³ Conversation de Gaulle – Adenauer, Paris, 14.1.1967. Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1967, doc. 19.

⁴ Conversation Alphand – von Braun, Paris, 30.1.1969. MAE: Série Europe, Sous-Série RFA, vol. 1610.

not world affairs, de Gaulle restrained himself. Despite all the illusions of global grandeur associated with de Gaulle's public rhetoric, this was a clear indication that France, after all, only saw itself as a significant power in Western European terms, and that France valued her good relations with Bonn considerably higher than any adventurous opportunity to attain a stronger global position.¹ Until his resignation in May 1969, de Gaulle kept to his ambiguous line on the NPT – and was never forced by the course of events to choose between France's role in Europe and France's role in the world, or between posturing as a victorious power in Germany and simultaneously as Bonn's best ally.

- *Soviet interests in détente with the West and in security regarding Bonn*

In the eyes of the leadership of state and party in Moscow, a comprehensive non-proliferation treaty would serve two important foreign policy goals: protection from Germany, specifically, and the launch of an era of détente with Washington and the West, in general. The aspects of this policy with regard to Europe, to the Warsaw Pact, and to domestic politics were closely intertwined. Thus, when the Polish and Soviet leaders met in the fall of 1967 in Moscow, the Poles had a disturbing story to tell, which they had in turn been told by de Gaulle during his recent visit to Poland: the Germans were producing nuclear weapons, which was why, de Gaulle had argued, the French needed their own *force de frappe* both as deterrence against the USSR, and also to hinder the Germans from gaining their own nuclear capability. Polish Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz said the Poles could only agree with de Gaulle's conclusion: "The most important thing is that the Germans will not receive access to nuclear weapons in any form."² Fears of German aggression and intentions were deeply rooted not only within the Russian people but also within its leadership, and these fears were a driving force that now appears almost irrational, given the division of Germany and the control achieved over its two parts by integration into the West and the East. Not until the series of meetings between the General Secretary of the CPSU Leonid Brezhnev and German Chancellor Willy Brandt in the early 1970s would there be a slow revision of this picture of Germany and the Germans, established as a result of so by so much damage and trauma. Now, in the mid-1960s, the decision about the NPT also posed questions about the future of a détente policy devised by an ageing Soviet leadership and about the USSR's master plan for the future of the communist world. This Soviet leadership had yet to prove to its people, its

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¹ See Note "Le problème allemand" of the Sous Direction Europe Centrale (YP/CT), Paris, 19.2.1969. MAE: Série Europe, Sous-Série RFA, vol. 1813.

² Conversation between Gomulka, Cyrankiewicz, Brezhnev, Podgorny and Kossygin, Moscow, 22.9.1967. AAN: KC PZPR, Gomulka's office files, XI A/84.

party, its allies, and not least to the younger (though still not so young) generation of hard-liners in the Politburo that détente with the West would not compromise Soviet security interests.

In January 1967, Gromyko made his first open appeal for a turn to détente before the members of the Politburo of the CPSU. Reversing the argument that détente would weaken Soviet security, he claimed that only détente could bring about a non-proliferation treaty – and thereby bring protection from Germany.¹ In the delicate domestic situation that existed, the supporters of détente in the Kremlin desperately needed an unequivocal signal from Washington, proving that – at least on the surface – US and Soviet interests coincided with regard to the maintenance of the status quo in Europe and that the Americans were prepared to exercise all their influence in Bonn accordingly.

When US President Richard Nixon and his National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger first stepped on to the stage as vigorous defenders of narrow national interests, détente seemed to be finished even before it had begun. In order to drive the Americans to concessions at the negotiating table, the Soviets advanced a counter-concept of a “selective détente”, including those forces in Europe, and particularly in Bonn, that wished to go forward with a constructive approach. Besides the Soviets’ greater strategic considerations, a number of opportunities for them to pursue their infamous “wedge-driving” game occurred in the course of the NPT-negotiations between 1967 and 1969.² Despite intrigue and rather rough language in public, the Soviet leadership was well aware of the delicate balance of power within the West and was attuned to the importance of this for obtaining the more important Soviet goals. When the Americans ran into more resistance over the NPT in Bonn than they had originally envisaged and appeared to withdraw slowly from their original promises in early 1968, the Soviets reminded them in a none too subtle a manner of the understanding reached in October 1966. They hinted at this in discussions with the West Germans, who – as was to be expected – started to ask penetrating questions in Washington.³ And in January 1969, leading figures in Moscow were even prepared to do what hitherto had been unthinkable: they went a long way towards meeting the demands made by Bonn and virtually guaranteed the Germans protection

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¹ This is at least the interpretation Dobrynin gave to the memorandum circulated by Gromyko before the Politburo on 13.1.1967. An English translation of the document can be found in Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence – Moscow’s Ambassador to America’s Six Cold War Presidents*, Seattle 2001, p. 640.

² See, for example, the memoirs of Julij A. Kwizinskij, *Vor dem Sturm – Erinnerungen eines Diplomaten*, Berlin 1993, p. 16ff.

³ The Soviets used the annual international Wehrkundetagung in Munich to explain to the West Germans that they would prevent any European or NATO option. The Germans immediately discussed this provocative Soviet stance with their allies in Washington. And Washington immediately sensed the covered warning from Moscow. Conversation Guttenberg – Naumow, 16.2.1968; Tel. 154 from Bonn to Washington. PA AA: B 150/120. Memcon Davis – Tcherniakov, 7.5.1968. NARA: RG59/2665.

from nuclear blackmail and aggression. Despite concerted action in the following weeks by General Secretary Brezhnev, head of the KGB Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, Soviet Ambassador to the US Anatoly Dobrynin, Henry Kissinger and Willy Brandt, the Conservatives in the Grand Coalition would have none of this, and Kiesinger had to delay the decision – with tacit acceptance from Brandt – until after the general elections in September 1969.¹ There was nothing Washington and Moscow could do but wait for the outcome of these crucial elections.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin had secured the most important goal it hoped to achieve with the NPT: negotiations for a more cooperative and constructive coexistence with the US administration had been opened and were maintained, despite tensions after the Prague invasion of summer 1968. Following the change of government from Kiesinger to Willy Brandt as chancellor and Walter Scheel as foreign minister, Bonn acceded to the NPT in November 1969, and the Soviet Union could finally ratify the treaty and open the road to a new era of détente.

- A “special role” for Brandt’s Social Democrats

If the Germans held a key to the launch of détente through the NPT, within Germany Brandt’s Social Democrats had to overcome the hitherto insurmountable opposition of the Conservatives. All sides, divided in terms of the goals they pursued through the NPT, saw one thing clearly: that without the accession of the Federal German Government there would be no Soviet ratification and thus no treaty. Johnson’s “penetration” of the communist world – under the camouflage of “bridge building” – had not to be realised in partnership with the Erhard government. In spite of the change of chancellor and government in Bonn in December 1966, the CDU-CSU was still led by the same politicians who had dominated the party during the Adenauer era. However, there was now a new coalition partner, the SPD. And almost all of the key proponents of the NPT had maintained close relations of respect and even mutual trust with its figurehead, new foreign minister Willy Brandt, since well before the relatively sudden change of government in Bonn.

This was certainly true for Johnson and Rusk, for de Gaulle, and even for the Soviets. All of them now pinned their hopes on Brandt, whose position on nuclear armament and the need

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¹ For Soviet and American analyses of this concerted action, see Kissinger’s memorandum for Nixon of 19.3.1969. NARA: Nixon, NSC, PTF, vol. 489. The analysis of the German desk of the Soviet Foreign Ministry of 24.2.1969 came to very similar conclusions. AVP RF: f.0757, op.14, p.53, d.5, 1.1-8. For a detailed account of these triangulations between Moscow, Washington and Bonn, see Oliver Bange, “Kiesingers Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik von 1966-1969”, in: Günter Buchstab, Philipp Gassert, and Peter Thaddäus Lang (eds), *Kurt Georg Kiesinger 1904-1988: Von Ebingen ins Kanzleramt*, Freiburg 2005, pp. 455-500.

for a new German policy of détente towards the East – *Ostpolitik* – was well known. With Brandt's help, Johnson and Rusk intended to overcome the impasse that their own bridge-building efforts were up against; with his help, the Kremlin planned to free the way for its own European and détente policy; and with his help, de Gaulle envisaged a new order in Europe that would be more stable than the postwar situation and which would be more receptive to de Gaulle's own ideas of a third power between the superpowers in the East and the West.

Brandt and his new Ostpolitik became the magic word for the acceptance of the status quo in Europe and to the final legalisation of territorial losses and gains as a result of World War II. For the leading figures in the Kremlin, as for most British politicians, this remained a goal in itself. Others expected from Brandt's Ostpolitik the start of still further developments, such as the increase of doubt in the East over the merits of socialism or the resurgence of European national identities. However different the concepts of de Gaulle, Johnson, or Brandt might have been, in their rationales or details, all of them were ultimately aimed at overcoming the division of Europe and, in the case of Brandt, also the division of Germany.

Brandt's concept, in which the NPT, Ostpolitik, and reunification were closely interconnected, was clearly laid out in Washington and Paris by trusted envoys at the beginning of the Grand Coalition. Thus, Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski, Günter Markscheffel, and Schmidt explained to the French: “Le parti SPD est en faveur de l’abandon de toute forme d’association à l’arme atomique” (the SPD is in favour of the abandonment of any form of association with atomic weaponry). Only this, they hoped, would create “a new climate”, the beginnings of détente between East and West, and would enable the “multiplication of contacts” with the people in the East, which was at the core of Brandt's Ostpolitik strategy, because only this could possibly open up real opportunities for unification by softening up the communist regimes from within. Helmut Schmidt, who would later succeed Brandt as chancellor, even pleaded for active French help for the NPT as a way of combating illusions over an eventual national nuclear force harboured in certain circles of the Conservative coalition partners¹, whom Herbert Wehner – yet another powerful figure within the SPD – labelled simply “the fetishists”.² Brandt himself, in his new role as foreign minister, became somewhat drawn into the fight against the superpower *fait accompli* in 1967, before realising

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¹ For Wischnewski's explanations to French diplomats in Bonn on 8.12.1966 see tel. 6943-51, Bonn, 9.12.1966; Note a. s. Entretien avec M. Markscheffel (on 12.12.1966), Paris, 13.12.1966, from Puaux; statement by Helmut Schmidt to ambassador Seydoux on 7.1.1967. Tel. 100-05, Bonn, 8.1.1967. MAE: Série Europe, Sous-Série RFA, vol. 1608.

² Herbert Wehner in an interview with Reinhard Appel. Reinhard Appel, *Gefragt: Herbert Wehner*, Bonn 1969, cited in: Knut Terjung (ed.), *Der Onkel – Herbert Wehner in Gesprächen und Interviews*, Hamburg 1986, p. 148.

that this course was actually endangering his Ostpolitik goals.¹ Without (West) German participation in the NPT there would be no understanding with the Soviets over a renunciation of force agreement, as it was then codified in the Moscow Treaty of August 1970. Without such a renunciation of force agreement with Moscow – and this was the blueprint for all of the Eastern treaties to come – progress in all other areas of Ostpolitik, including inner-German relations and Berlin, would have been rendered virtually impossible. Valentin Falin – a close collaborator of both Brezhnev and Gromyko – acknowledged this gatekeeper function of the NPT, both with respect to “selective détente” with the Germans and thereafter with respect to the desired global détente with the Americans; according to Falin, the NPT was an “enormously important treaty”. And US ambassador George McGhee, not known as being overly friendly towards Brandt, judged in retrospect that the NPT “encapsulated the most important ideas which Willy Brandt had developed during his time as Foreign Minister.”²

NATO and the multilateralization of nuclear non-proliferation

In 1966, NATO was, if not doomed as an international institution, then at least an alliance in profound crisis: with the all but certain failure of the multilateral nuclear force-Atlantic nuclear force (MLF-ANF), the issue of “nuclear sharing” within the alliance was once again wide open. The French withdrawal from NATO’s military structure posed fundamental questions about NATO’s future military and strategic viability. The move towards a strategy focused on a more “flexible response”, first initiated by the Kennedy Administration, was widely accepted. The West German response to ever-increasing US pressure to apply flexible response might serve as an example: while the Ministry of Defense in Bonn and the Bundeswehr’s generals paid due rhetorical respect to the doctrine, they simultaneously attempted to resist the central changes connected to it.³ They refused to give up their nuclear-capable F-104 Starfighters (to be armed with US warheads) for more viable sea-based US Polaris-missiles; they resisted the relocation of the ADMs, the atomic mines hitherto concentrated along the East German-West German border; and they refused the necessary restructuring of their defense budget towards conventional warfare.⁴ When US Secretary of

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¹ “The position of the Federal Government on the NPT is putting the credibility of our entire détente policy at stake.” Letter from Brandt to Kiesinger, 15.7.1968. AdSD: Brandt archive, BAM, folder 13.

² Valentin Falin, *Politische Erinnerungen*, Munich 1993, p. 65; George McGhee, *Botschafter in Deutschland 1963-1968*, Munich 1989, p. 377.

³ For a detailed discussion of the available evidence, see Christian Tuschhoff, *Deutschland, Kernwaffen und die NATO 1949-1967 – Zum Zusammenhalt von und friedlichem Wandel in Bündnissen*, Baden-Baden 2002, especially pp. 215-272.

⁴ Experts and leading politicians in the Chancellor’s Office and in the West German Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs agreed upon the “ongoing erosion” of the American “nuclear guarantee” for the FRG through “flexible response”, and the need to maintain a credible nuclear deterrence. This is clearly born out by Defense

Defense Robert McNamara proposed a Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) in December 1965 – implicitly as a “software” replacement for the MLF’s “hardware” solution to assumed German nuclear desires – and this NPG was institutionalised one year later, the West German military simply deemed the new developments “insufficient”¹. In Washington and London, the full or partial withdrawal of troops on the European continent remained on the top of the public agenda and was mirrored by contingency plans drawn up in the respective ministries.

The increasing bilateralism between Washington and Moscow found its equivalent in various efforts to form the EEC into a platform from which to pursue European interests in international affairs. As if bilateralism was itself not enough of a challenge to Western cohesion, the situation was exacerbated by a combination of doubts connected to the growing economic strength of the FRG, by factionalism amongst Europeans, by the intertwining of the interests that various member states brought to the NATO Council (notably the British EEC entry), and by the seemingly endless trilateral quarrels over offset costs (of pivotal importance to the debate about whether one should maintain control over the Germans or augment their independence). All this coincided with the end of the NATO treaty’s duration in 1969, which many feared might signal the end of NATO itself. The NPT crisis – provoked by Soviet-American cooperation over their partners’ heads – hit NATO in the midst of this turmoil. The effect was so serious that no lesser person than the organisation’s secretary-general, Manlio Brosio, convinced himself that this was going to be the last nail in NATO’s coffin.²

Instead, the NPT, or rather the fundamental questions related to it, became yet another factor in the effective restructuring which turned NATO within a few years, and in some respects even within months, into the forum that would effectively serve as a “smoothly functioning” platform for Western coordination in that crucial multilateral phase of *détente* culminating in the realisation of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in 1975.³ It might well be argued that without NATO’s almost classical catharsis in 1967-68, the West might not have been able to achieve its clear superiority over the communist regimes of Eastern Europe that became obvious and institutionalised at the end of the *détente* era – and which held firm until the final showdown in 1989-90.

● Minister von Hassel’s diary notes throughout 1966, and by the nuclear priorities within the drafts for the Bundeswehr’s planning exercises between 1965 and 1967. BAMA: BW 1/108-110, as well as BW 1/373-594.

¹ Matthias Küntzel, *Bonn und die Bombe – Deutsche Atomwaffenpolitik von Adenauer bis Brandt*, Frankfurt/M 1992, cites on pp. 95 and 101 corresponding documents of BAMA from the Nuclear History Project (NHP) collection.

² Wilhelm G. Grewe, *Rückblenden 1976-1951*, Frankfurt/M 1979, p. 699. On the coordination of resistance to the Nonproliferation Treaty between Grewe and Brosio, see Küntzel, Bonn, p. 152.

³ Helmut Sonnenfeldt, interview with the author, Washington, 29.4.2005.

However, later developments are a far cry from the troubling shape of the alliance in early 1967. The months following the first tabling of the joint Soviet-American NPT draft were marked by multiple crises and by hysteria within the alliance. Washington was faced with a dilemma. Trust, the glue of any alliance, was being lost at an alarming speed in Paris (where NATO still resided) and had to be regained as soon as possible. At the same time, speed was of the essence, if the Americans were to maintain the timetable agreed with the Soviets, which foresaw agreement on a draft text by the Eighteen Nations Disarmament Conference (ENDC) in Vienna in May, to be presented to the UN General Assembly in the autumn. The unceasing protests of the nuclear have-nots within the alliance, particularly the FRG and Italy, necessitated a quick revision of the draft, which was tabled and explained to the North Atlantic Council (NAC) by Bill Foster, the US chief negotiator in Vienna, on 4 April. Foster's was a courageous effort to win over the hesitant governments represented in this multilateral forum.

Once again, the draft hit an Italo-German stone wall. The Italians – supported by Brosio – complained about the NPT's unlimited duration (as set against NATO's limited lifespan), and the German list of considerations was so “extremely detailed” that it had to be circulated in full after the meeting. Apparently driven by his country's recent EEC application, the British representative replied with what – in the light of the Wilson-Kosygin records mentioned above – can only be termed an outright lie, saying that his government did not want to see Euratom weakened and that it attached the “greatest importance to leaving open the option for European Federation which should be able to have nuclear weapons in succession. This option had been mentioned to Mr. Kosygin when he visited London and he had not objected to it.” And even the Dutch, who had emphasized their preference for a speedy signature of the NPT, found it right to remind the Americans of their “heavy responsibilities regarding the solidarity of the Alliance” and to urge more time be allowed for the allies to study the new text.¹

Still the Americans would not give up their ambitious goals. On 5 May – only days after the reopening of the Foster-Roshchin negotiations in Vienna – they were back with a more low-key approach, which included: an explanatory letter by their permanent representative, Harlan Cleveland, advising the allies not to hand in proposals in Vienna that might provoke the Soviet Union; written US interpretations of the NPT clauses; sharing the latest information on the proceedings in Vienna; and an up-to-date compilation of the US and Soviet draft articles. Critique once again centred on the safeguards article (Article 3), detailing how

¹ Memorandum of the NAC meeting on 4.4.1967, with full texts of the statements by Foster, Alessandrini and Grewe. NATO: LOM 82/67.

adherence to the NPT was eventually to be controlled by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) – a provision to which the Euratom members took particular offence.¹ And again, the chairman closed the session by observing that there was a need for further consultations.

In Vienna meanwhile, the Soviets refused any softening-up of the IAEA controls that would favour Euratom, which meant the Johnson administration now faced two stonewalls, one in Paris and one in Vienna. By now it was clear that Washington's timetable was on the rocks and that the Americans' earlier tactic of steamrolling their allies had blown up in their faces. Finally, in late May 1967, this situation was evident in the US negotiation posture. Still unwilling to give up on the prospect of an early UN debate on the treaty, the US administration proposed to table the draft text in New York, while leaving the controversial Article 3 blank. Simultaneously acknowledging the situation within NATO, Cleveland now pledged that his administration would "keep the Council closely informed."²

With the Americans now spending more time on consultations with their allies and staging considerable efforts to impress their Euratom problem upon the Soviets, the turmoil within NATO was still far from over. In July 1967, the other allies detected that the French – against their proclaimed will to stay out of the NPT negotiations – had indicated to the Soviets in various high-level meetings that they did not object to IAEA safeguards, thus effectively undercutting the position of the Euratom members, and particularly that of Bonn. Over the following months, German Permanent Representative to NATO Wilhelm Grewe maintained on behalf of the Federal Republic that IAEA controls were tantamount to discrimination, and the Italians fought fiercely against any unilateral US explanatory statements outside the NPT text, which they argued were not binding under international law. However, the French intervention, combined with Soviet stonewalling and increased consultation efforts, made it possible for the United States to recast its own role as that of honest broker and guardian of the alliance. It was only in this changed environment in September 1967 that the Soviets slowly gave way to the US compromise proposal to place the existing Euratom controls under the IAEA, thus paving the way for the treaty's signature in the summer of 1968.³

The Johnson team had finally recognised that it was the only player in the game that could break the deadlock and broker an all-round deal, and it had come to realise the necessary components of such a deal. Parallel to the American's efforts to agree an NPT draft with the

¹ Letter by Cleveland, 3.5.1967, US interpretation of NPT, statement by Cleveland from 3.5.1967, US and USSR draft texts, record of NAC Special Meeting on 5.5.1967. NATO: LOM 103/67 and LOCOM 7966.

² Cleveland's statement to NAC, 24.5.1967. NATO: LOM 113/67.

³ NAC meetings on 5.7 and 20.9.1967, Cleveland's statement at the NAC meeting on 6.9.1967. NATO: LOCOMs 8090 and 8232, LOM 198/67.

Soviets that would be acceptable to their partners in NATO, the US decided to beef up the NPG, so it would constitute sufficient compensation for the FRG and to foster comprehensive political and military consultations in NATO, while receiving in return the final acceptance and codification of “flexible response” and all that came with it in terms of allocation and troop goals. Most of these considerations found their way into the so-called “Harmel Exercise” – a series of multilateral negotiations on the political and military restructuring of the Western alliance under the auspices of Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel, institutionalised by the NATO ministerial meeting in December 1967. The Harmel Report fixed a consensus on NATO’s overall strategy, on troop levels, consultation procedures, and nuclear planning, and it struck a balance between the organization’s political and military tasks and needs.¹ The next NPG meeting in April 1968 included the necessary carrot for the West Germans: it established the principle that the use of nuclear weapons on German soil – thus including East Germany – would be “subject of confirmation by the FRG Government” and that a future NPT “would not interfere” with Bonn’s role in the NPG.² All this was accomplished within a very few months and provided the framework in which the NPT could then be accomplished.

Through all this, the NPT remained the magnifying glass through which national interests were identified. It is hard to see the kind of wider bargains that compensated for the specific disadvantages the NPT held for the FRG, Italy, and others to which Johnson, Rusk, and Brandt were looking, and to which recent scholarship has pointed. In the first months of 1967, it became obvious that the superpowers had to backtrack at least far enough to allow their own allies to agree to the general outline of their draft treaty. That made it all the more necessary to engage in comprehensive multilateral consultations. And there was no better – or no other – institutionalised forum available than NATO.

The realisation of this led to an enhanced recognition of NATO’s value to the pursuit of both individual national interests and those of the West in general. This, in turn, facilitated the rebuilding of NATO and gave further credibility to its new second pillar – political consultations, which were meant to supplement the mere military cooperation that had dominated NATO so far. Nevertheless, NATO never became an actor in its own right –

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¹ The Harmel Report on the “Future Tasks of the Alliance”, accepted on 14.12.1967, can be found on the webpage of the NATO archives (www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b671213a.htm).

² Memorandum from Rusk and Clifford for Johnson, and telegram from the US embassy in The Hague to Washington, 19.4.1968; cit. in FRUS 1964-1968, vol. XIII, pp. 690, 679. For a detailed discussion of these documents, see Andreas Wenger, *Crisis and Opportunity – NATO’s Transformation and Multilateralization of Détente, 1966-1968*, in: *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 6/1, 2004, pp. 22-74, here pp. 69-70. Tuschhoff, *Deutschland*, p. 343, rightly points out that the USA had already granted these rights – albeit secretly – to Italy and Turkey.

unlike, for example, the European Community during the CSCE negotiations. The discussions within the NAC created a certain dynamic of their own, which had repercussions on national policy decisions. The basis for this phenomenon were the unofficial working procedures in and around the NAC, of which very few governments seemed to be aware. For George Vest, probably the most experienced NATO expert on the US side at the time, “most NATO Council meetings that were recorded were discussions of a bunch of professional ambassadors who expressed themselves with great delicacy and reserve.”¹

Almost always the key participants in the forthcoming debates met and discussed their home government’s instructions on a strictly personal basis before the council, and they did the same with NATO’s secretaries-general, Dirk Stikker and Manlio Brosio. In all of these meetings, ideas for compromise were thrashed out – and possibly even agreed upon – and, as a result, the council meetings, which the permanent representatives would later report on, appear to have been largely stage-managed by them in order to fit into the tentative solution scenario. It was only this working scheme that made the rather ambiguous role of the German permanent representative to NATO, Wilhelm Grewe, possible. Officially a representative of the FRG’s foreign office under SPD leader Willy Brandt, Grewe held firm to the principles of Adenauer’s policy towards the East, thus repeatedly undercutting both his own superior and the new Ostpolitik of the Grand Coalition: *Détente*, he intimated to his colleagues in the council in the summer of 1967, was a mere “illusion”². He continued to oppose the NPT in public, claiming that it would send the FRG back to the technological Stone Age, and his reports to Bonn remained tinted by the prospects of a broad front against the treaty within NATO, which in view of his own efforts behind the scenes in Paris was tantamount to a self-fulfilling prophecy.³

Conclusion

The NPT showed that behind, below, or across the East-West confrontation there still loomed – and very large, at that – the long established national interests of the various states, governments, and nations. But it also showed that the combination of the all-consuming East-

¹ George Vest, interview with the author, Washington, 25.4.2005.

² Private Meeting of Permanent Representatives, Harmel Exercise, 12.7.1967. NATO: NISCA 4/10/5, Item 29; cit. in: Wenger, *Crisis*, p. 62.

³ The first of numerous public statements by Grewe against the NPT on 24.1.1967 can be found in *Europa Archiv*, Folge 3/1967, pp. 77ff. A much-cited speech against the treaty before the *Wehrkundetagung* in Munich in February 1969 – completely against the official line of the coalition government – led to a reprimand from the foreign office’s under-secretary, which in turn triggered CDU-CSU accusations that Brandt and the SPD were trying to curb freedom of speech and which even led to a debate in the Bundestag. For a detailed analysis of Grewe’s reports on the NPT proceedings in Paris, his public statements and the repercussions in Bonn, see Oliver Bange, *Ostpolitik und Détente – Die Anfänge 1966-1969*, Habil. Mannheim 2004, particularly the chapter on the NPT, pp. 572-726.

West conflict and the new nuclear age – globalization at its purest – had changed the rules of the game. This meant that solutions to national problems (like the German question) or “only” to national status (as in the French and British cases) could only be sought within a multilateral framework. This is why nuclear sharing and nuclear non-proliferation became Siamese twins. The solutions lay in their parallel multilateralization. This was true within, as much as across, blocs. If the Germans at the centre of the NPT controversy were to give up any nuclear aspirations, for now and for eternity, then they had to be given compensation: a truly reliable umbrella provided by their nuclear allies; full knowledge about the details and intricacies of this umbrella; and a practical veto against its consequences on German soil. Simultaneous multilateralization also meant that both of these aspects – effective control¹ (of the Germans and their non-nuclear status in particular) and sharing (of nuclear responsibility at least for one’s own national territory) – could only be provided for within NATO. And this is something that both the United States and the USSR came to realise *and* acknowledge through the NPT process. For NATO, this meant a new role, the importance of which was recognised by East and West, the emergence of which helped to pave the way to NATO’s effective reconstruction in the Harmel exercise, and the institutionalisation of which effectively guaranteed NATO’s future as the prime forum for multilateral Western consultations during the East-West conflict.

● ¹ Ultimately, Article 3 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty established the principle of control through the International Atomic Energy Agency to which the results of Euratom’s control measures had to be reported. It was and is clear, however, that this legal and technical framework had to be supplemented by a viable political control – in effect executed by each superpower within its bloc and the respective alliances themselves.