

**The Road to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in  
Europe, 1969-1973: Britain, France and West Germany**

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## **Declaration**

The work presented in the thesis is the candidate's own.

Takeshi Yamamoto

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23 April 2007



## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine European international politics towards the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) from 1969 to 1973. The importance of the CSCE is widely recognised by historians and political scientists, but the pre-diplomacy of the Conference is poorly understood. Based on the British, French and West German archive documents, and focusing on international political dynamics, this study explores how multilateral European détente represented by the CSCE was realised in the early 1970s.

The four-year period leading up to the opening of the CSCE was also highly significant, because these four years saw the crucial transformation of the nature of European détente. When the Soviets proposed the European Security Conference in 1969, their aim was to consolidate the status quo in Europe. However, the West Europeans were the leading actors in convening the Conference, and between 1969 and 1973, they made the CSCE meaningful and substantial in two ways: its procedure and its content. The idea of a three-stage Conference, which was developed by the Europeans during the pre-conference diplomacy, made it possible to negotiate thoroughly on the text of the Helsinki Final Act and steer it in the direction the West wanted. More significantly, the West succeeded in incorporating the human rights and human contact agenda into the Conference. This study will thus examine how the ideas of the constructive procedure and humanitarian subjects were developed. It will further argue that multilateral European détente was uncontrollable by the superpowers, and a transformation of détente was possible in the context of multilateral diplomacy. Britain, France and West Germany respectively played an important role in the opening up and development of the CSCE. As a result, multilateral European détente went beyond the status quo.

## **Table of Contents**

Abstract.....	p.2
Table of Contents.....	p.3
Acknowledgements.....	p.4
List of Abbreviations.....	p.6
Introduction:.....	p.7
Chapter 1: Détente in the 1960s.....	p.22
Chapter 2: NATO's Commitment to a European Security Conference, January 1969 - May 1970.....	p.64
Chapter 3: Increasing Priority of an ESC, June-December, 1970.....	p.120
Chapter 4: Berlin, MBFR, and a European Security Conference, 1971.....	p.159
Chapter 5: Emergence of European Political Cooperation, 1971-1972 .....	p.198
Chapter 6: The Battle for a Good Start, January 1972 – July 1973.....	p.227
Conclusion: Organising Multilateral European Détente.....	p.262
Bibliography.....	p.280

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>AAPD:</b>	<i>Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland</i>
<b>ABM:</b>	Anti Ballistic Missile
<b>AN:</b>	<i>Archives Nationales</i>
<b>CBM:</b>	Confidence Building Measures
<b>CDU:</b>	<i>Christlich Demokratische Union</i>
<b>CES:</b>	Conference on European Security
<b>CPSU:</b>	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
<b>CSCE:</b>	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
<b>CSU:</b>	<i>Christlich-Soziale Union</i>
<b>DBPO:</b>	Documents on British Policy Overseas
<b>DNSA:</b>	Digital National Security Archives
<b>EC:</b>	European Community
<b>EEC:</b>	European Economic Community
<b>EMU:</b>	Economic and Monetary Union
<b>EPC:</b>	European Political Cooperation
<b>ESC:</b>	European Security Conference
<b>FO:</b>	Foreign Office
<b>FCO:</b>	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
<b>FDP:</b>	<i>Freie Demokratische Partei</i>
<b>FQP:</b>	Final Quadripartite Protocol
<b>FRG:</b>	Federal Republic Germany
<b>FRUS:</b>	Foreign Relations of the United States series
<b>GDR:</b>	German Democratic Republic
<b>HMG:</b>	Her Majesty Government
<b>LTBT:</b>	Limited Test Ban Treaty
<b>MBFR:</b>	Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions
<b>MAE:</b>	<i>Ministère des Affaires Étrangères</i>
<b>MFN:</b>	Most Favored Nation
<b>MLF:</b>	Multilateral Force
<b>MPT:</b>	Multilateral Preparatory Talks
<b>NAP:</b>	Non-Aggression Pact
<b>NATO:</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
<b>NLF:</b>	National Liberation Front
<b>NPT:</b>	Non-Proliferation Treaty
<b>NSC:</b>	National Security Council
<b>NSDM:</b>	National Security Decision Memorandum
<b>PAAA:</b>	<i>Politisches Archiv, Auswärtiges Amt</i>
<b>PRC:</b>	People's Republic of China
<b>SALT:</b>	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
<b>SCEWR:</b>	Standing Committee on East-West Relations
<b>SPC:</b>	Senior Political Committee
<b>SPD:</b>	<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i>
<b>TNA:</b>	The National Archives (previously Public Records Office)
<b>UK:</b>	United Kingdom
<b>US:</b>	United States
<b>USA:</b>	United States of America
<b>USSR:</b>	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
<b>WEU:</b>	Western European Union

## **Introduction**

In the first years after the Second World War, Europe was divided into two blocs. Mistrust between the United Kingdom/United States and the Soviet Union over ideology and security in Europe and other regions gradually increased, and the Cold War conflicts between them were reflected above all in the European continent. Indeed, America's European Recovery Programme of 1947, the so-called Marshall Plan, was a landmark in the division of Europe; West European countries joined the Programme, but East European countries rejected it or were forced by the USSR to reject it. The Iron Curtain fell; two camps appeared. Economic, cultural, and human contacts between the two sides were restricted politically and practically. The Eastern regimes implemented and then strengthened their oppressive one-party dictatorships, becoming suppressive on their people. The defeated Germany was also divided in two. The Allies' enemy had been occupied by the Four Powers – the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union –, but eventually the three Western sectors were merged and in 1949 became one independent state, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Immediately, the Soviets also made their sector another state, the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The two Germanies did not recognise each other as states representing the German people. A peace treaty, which would formally have ended the World War II, was not concluded because there was no official country that all war-participating countries could agree was an eligible Germany. The division of Europe and Germany (without a peace treaty) would continue for more than 40 years.

Within 10 years after World War II, the East/West division was also institutionalised with the establishment of two military alliances. In 1949, West European countries, the United States and Canada signed the North Atlantic Treaty and then developed a collective security organisation (NATO)



against the Eastern bloc. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, which was regarded by the West as an example of the Kremlin's communist expansionism, also caused deep anxiety amongst Americans and West Europeans about Western security, and thus convinced them of the necessity to rearm West Germany so as to build up NATO's military strength. The Soviets seriously feared the rearmament of their former enemy. In order to prevent it, at the 1954 Berlin Four-Power Conference of Foreign Ministers, the USSR Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, proposed the convening of an all-European conference in which a 'General European Treaty of Collective Security in Europe' would be signed. However, Western countries rejected such a conference, and the FRG concluded the Paris treaty in September 1954 which partially restored its sovereignty including the authority to rearm with the exception of the procurement of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and then entering NATO in May 1955. Simultaneously, the Soviets and East Europeans created the Warsaw Pact Organisation, which the GDR joined. In Europe, two military alliances came to confront one another.

An arms race between the East and the West escalated too. Four years after the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Soviet Union successfully conducted its first atomic bomb test in 1949. Within four years, moreover, both superpowers succeeded in detonating hydrogen bombs; their explosion yielded 10.4 megatons of energy — over 450 times the power of the bomb dropped onto Nagasaki. Britain too became a nuclear power in 1952. The atomic powers continued nuclear tests, and developed smaller and more easily deliverable thermonuclear weapons. During the 1950s, the number of such weapons skyrocketed, and the destructive capabilities of the superpowers were significantly expanded. While the United States had an advantage in the number of nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union had larger-scale conventional forces in Europe than NATO. Although in 1952 NATO agreed to set a target of 96 divisions to counter 175

Soviet divisions, the members of the Atlantic Alliance could not meet the target mainly because conventional troops were expensive. Hence, in order to preserve the military balance, Western Europe became more and more dependent on America's tactical nuclear weapons. If a crisis between the two Blocs had escalated, nuclear exchanges between the two Alliances would have been a real possibility. Europe, and the world, found themselves in the highly dangerous situation where all civilisation might have disappeared because of a nuclear war.

Understandably, some efforts to reduce the tension between the East and the West were attempted. However, in the 1950s in particular, the results were limited. A clear example was the 1955 Geneva Summit. Here the top leaders of the US, the UK, France and the USSR gathered for the first time since the end of the Second World War, but in the end could not produce any practical outcome. The essence of the 'Geneva spirit' was the agreement that they were not able to resolve the central problem in Europe, namely the German question. Nor did disarmament advance. Since 1952, there had been the United Nations Disarmament Commission, but in retrospect it merely continued fruitless discussions. After the second Berlin Crisis of 1958-1961 and the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union, in 1963, signed the first arms control agreement; the Limited Test Ban Treaty. Throughout the 1960s, bilateral East/West exchanges developed in Europe. However, they were sporadic, fragmented, and unsystematic. Although the Warsaw Pact countries again proposed a pan-European conference in the mid-1960s, it was not until the early 1970s that such multilateral détente covering the whole European region came to pass.

This dissertation has two main aims. Its first purpose is to examine how such multilateral European détente was realised in the early 1970s. In particular, it will focus on the way in which the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) came to be held in 1973-75. The second major

aim of this study is to analyse the way in which the West transformed the content of détente in the CSCE context. The CSCE began in 1973, including thirty-five European States (plus the United States and Canada). Members of both the Eastern and Western blocs participated, as did the neutral countries. After two years of negotiations, in 1975, the participants in the Conference successfully signed the so-called Helsinki Final Act. The multilateral European conference thus became a symbolic event in European détente. Yet, the most important aspect of the CSCE was that the Final Act signed in 1975 contained a clause on human rights in the Basket I as well as the celebrated Basket III stipulating the freer movement of people, ideas and information – developments which many argue ultimately contributed to ending the Cold War.<sup>1</sup> These were undoubtedly new elements in East-West dialogue. How did they emerge and how were they incorporated into the agenda of the CSCE?

In order to understand more clearly the process towards the CSCE and the transformation of European détente, this study distinguishes the concept of 'détente' in three ways. Firstly, it contrasts bilateral détente with multilateral détente. Indeed, it will argue that although bilateral détente served to stabilise the Cold War, it was multilateral détente that contributed to the overcoming of the division of Europe. The focus of the study is therefore on the multilateral rather than bilateral dimension of détente. Secondly, it also differentiates European détente from superpower détente. This implies not only that European détente was regional and superpower détente was global. More importantly, while détente between the US and the USSR could be developed independently of European matters, the advance of détente in Europe was significantly impeded by the German question. It is thus necessary to underline the difference between the two. The focus will be

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Schlotter, Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt: Wirkung einer internationalen Institution, Frankfurt: Campus, 1999; Daniel C. Thomas, The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.

on European détente rather than superpower détente.

Finally, it argues that there were three pillars of détente; the status quo, economic-cultural exchanges, and arms control and disarmament. Status quo détente was the search for stability through the recognition of the current borders and regimes. Economic-cultural exchange détente aimed not at only economic benefits but also at producing a friendly atmosphere between European states and developing mutual understanding through communication at various levels, such as the relationships between business people, academics, students, scientists, athletes, musicians etc. Arms control and disarmament détente was intended to create a militarily less confrontational environment by restricting the arms race or by limiting or reducing the number of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons. This study will illustrate a decline in disarmament détente and, in particular, an expansion of economic and cultural détente to include humanitarian questions in the early 1970s.

For the two purposes mentioned above, this dissertation will concentrate primarily on the diplomacy of the Western Bloc. Although the idea of a European security conference originated in the Eastern Bloc, it was Western reactions to this Eastern initiative that determined almost the entire content and procedure of the Conference. While the East's main purpose was simply to hold an East-West conference and thereby consolidate the *status quo*, the West countered by insisting on what would be discussed in such a conference. In particular, the addition of human rights and the Basket III to the agenda was a significant contribution made by NATO alliance members. Among them, Britain, France and West Germany played significant roles in moving NATO towards a multilateral conference and in developing its content and procedure. Therefore, it is meaningful to analyse the road to the convening of the CSCE by focusing on the West European policies towards the Conference.

Moreover, this study will focus exclusively on the pre-conference

diplomacy, in particular from 1969 to 1973, because the most important elements of the CSCE were arranged before the Conference itself had convened. From 1969, when the Warsaw Pact proposed an "all-European conference" in its Budapest Appeal, to the start of the Conference in 1973, the agenda and the procedural principles were discussed within the Western bloc and then between East and West. Although the details were only finally settled during the working phase of the CSCE from 1973 to 1975, the substance of the Helsinki Final Act of August 1975 went no further than what the West had discussed before the opening of the Conference in 1973. On top of that, this pre-diplomacy matters all the more since it is clear that the basic Soviet idea of a conference which would consecrate the *status quo* was decisively transformed by the Western powers before the Helsinki talks themselves had even begun. Without an understanding of the pre-conference international politics, therefore, it is difficult to grasp fully either the subsequent course or the ultimate importance of the CSCE.

So as to understand the process leading to multilateral European détente in a broader context, this thesis will examine separately two developments that occurred simultaneously. First, it will analyse consultations, arguments and controversies within NATO and EPC on the agenda and procedure of the CSCE. Second, the international politics around the Conference, namely, the German/Berlin problem and Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) in particular, will be investigated. These were inseparably related to the diplomacy which led to the opening of the CSCE. The Western initiative on mutual conventional disarmament first aired in 1968 became a counter-proposal to the Eastern initiative on a European security conference. The settlement of the Berlin problem was a precondition for a multilateral European conference. Hence, the examination of the German/Berlin question and MBFR in relation to the CSCE is an indispensable part of looking at the whole picture of multilateral European détente. The pre-conference diplomacy will thus be highlighted by these two

dimensions.

Finally, the overarching issue of this thesis is the political dynamics which led the West to a multilateral European conference. To ensure that this point remains central, the study will ignore highly technical details which were entailed in particular in the preparation for the economic or military agenda of the CSCE. Instead, it will concentrate on the way in which several coalitions or groupings developed within the Western bloc, which significantly affected the directions in which the West's approach to détente and the CSCE itself evolved. In order to understand diplomacy within NATO and European Political Cooperation (EPC) – a foreign policy consultation framework for the European Community members established in 1970, it is thus highly significant to take an international approach. Although this study will primarily focus on Britain, France and West Germany, it will also examine not only the attitude of the United States – one of the countries most negatively disposed towards the idea of the CSCE – but also that of smaller Western partners such as Belgium. By analysing the process leading to the CSCE from a Western perspective, this thesis will elucidate the development and transformation of European détente.

The international process leading towards the convening of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe has so far been analysed only superficially. Because of secrecy not only within the Soviet bloc, but also within NATO and surrounding each Western state's policy-making on the CSCE, together with restricted access to primary documents, it was highly difficult to examine internal discussions on both sides.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, most previous writing including memoirs on the CSCE has focused mainly on the exchanges between East and West within the conference itself from 1973 to

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<sup>2</sup> Only the official papers of the Conference itself were available. There are some studies using these. Ljubivoje Acimovic, Problems of Security and Cooperation in Europe, Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands; Rockville, Md., USA: Sijthoff & Noordhoff, 1981; Victor-Yves Ghebali, La Diplomatie de la Détente: la CSCE, d'Helsinki à Vienne, 1973-1989, E. Bruylant, 1989; Schlotter, Die KSZE.



1975 or after.<sup>3</sup> In these works, therefore, diplomacy before 1973 has been generally and briefly described as the period of 'dialogue by communiqué.'<sup>4</sup> And where some analysis was attempted, it rarely went beyond the language of the communiqués issued by NATO and the Warsaw Pact themselves. Of these, Ljubivoje Acimovic's and Michael Palmer's research has illustrated the exchange of communiqués in most detail.<sup>5</sup> However, previous arguments have scarcely touched on the diplomacy among NATO states and the debate and decision-making process within NATO.

Furthermore, the arguments in these earlier studies do not rely on primary historical materials, because the relevant official documents of NATO governments have only just started to be declassified. There are a few exceptions, but they adopt a mostly national approach; hence they fail to examine international political dynamics which led the West to multilateral European détente. Georges-Henri Soutou and Marie-Pierre Rey used President Pompidou's private papers and shed light on French policy under Pompidou towards the CSCE.<sup>6</sup> Because of the limitations of the Pompidou

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<sup>3</sup> Acimovic, Problems of Security, pp.72-97; John J. Maresca, To Helsinki—the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1973-1975, Duke University Press, 1985, pp.3-7; Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, Report on a Negotiation. Helsinki-Geneva-Helsinki 1972-1975, Alphen aan den Rijn-Genève, 1979; Ghebali, La Diplomatie de la Détente; Schlotter, Die KSZE; Elizabeth Jane Burdett, 'The effectiveness of European political cooperation as a system of collective diplomacy: a study of the CSCE process, 1972-1992,' Ph.D. (London) thesis 1997 LSE; Kenneth Dyson, "The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Europe before and after the Helsinki Final Act," in Kenneth Dyson (ed.), European Détente: Case Studies of the Politics of East-West Relations, F. Pinter, 1986; Jussi Hanhimäki, "They Can Write it in Swahili: Kissinger, the Soviets, and the Helsinki Accords, 1973-1975," The Journal of Transatlantic Studies, 1/1 (2003); Jacques Andéani, Le Piège: Helsinki et la chute du communisme, Paris: Odile Jacob, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Dyson, "The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe," pp.86-93; Acimovic, Problems of Security, pp.72-97; Maresca, To Helsinki, pp.3-7; Ferraris, Report on a Negotiation, Chapter 1; Michael Palmer, The Prospects for a European Security Conference, London: Chatham House, PEP, 1971; Ghebali, La Diplomatie, pp.3-7; John van Oudenaren, Détente in Europe: the Soviet Union and the West since 1953, Duke University Press, 1991, pp.317-22; Richard Davy, "Up the Learning Curve: An Overview". Richard Davy (ed.), European Détente: A Reappraisal, Royal Institute of International Affairs: Sage, 1992.

<sup>5</sup> Acimovic, Problems of Security; Palmer The Prospects.

<sup>6</sup> Georges-Henri Soutou, "L'attitude de Georges Pompidou face à l'Allemagne", in Association Geroges Pompidou, Georges Pompidou et l'Europe, Editions Complexe, 1995; Georges-Henri Soutou, L'Alliance Incertaine: Les Rapports Politico-Stratégiques Franco-Allemands 1954-1996, Fayard, 1996, Chapter IX; Marie-Pierre Rey, "Georges

papers, however, these arguments have remained rough sketches. Neither author examined the French attitude within NATO nor its exchanges with Alliance partners other than with West Germany. More detailed and well-documented studies on the FRG policies towards the CSCE have recently been done by Kristina Spohr Readman and Petri Hakkarainen.<sup>7</sup> However, their perspectives are also limited to West German national diplomacy. Robert Spencer's classic work on Canadian policy falls into the same category.<sup>8</sup>

There exist some other works examining the policy of individual countries, although most were written before the declassification of archival sources. Peter Becker and Helga Haftendorn analysed the FRG's CSCE policy.<sup>9</sup> In so doing, Becker used a theoretical framework and has focused on the domestic decision-making process of the Conference. Michael Meimeth studied French détente policy during the 1970s, arguing, however, from the parochial French national-interest point of view.<sup>10</sup> Brian White and Philip Williams examined British foreign policy during the détente era. While White assessed the British contributions to détente positively, though admitting they were limited, Williams by contrast scrutinised the reasons for British reluctance regarding the CSCE process.<sup>11</sup> In addition, a number of

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Pompidou, l'Union soviétique", in Association Geroges Pompidou, Georges Pompidou et l'Europe, Editions Complexe, 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Kristina Spohr-Readman, "National Interests and the Power of 'Language': West German Diplomacy and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1972-1975", Journal of Strategic Studies, 29/6 (2006); Petri Hakkarainen, "From Linkage to Freer Movement: The Federal Republic of Germany and the Nexus between Western CSCE Preparations and Deutschlandpolitik, 1969-72", in Andreas Wenger, Vojtech Mastny, Christian Nunlist (eds.), At the Roots of European Security: The Early Helsinki Process Revisited, 1969-1975 (forthcoming, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Robert Spencer, "Canada and the Origins of the CSCE," in Robert Spencer (ed.), Canada and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, University of Tront, 1984.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Becker, Die frühe KSZE-Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Hamburg: Lit, 1992; Helga Haftendorn, Sicherheit und Entspannung: zur Aussenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1955-1982, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983, pp.415-461.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Meimeth, Frankreichs Entspannungspolitik der 70er Jahre: Zwischen Status quo und friedlichem Wandel. Die Ara Georges Pompidou und Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Baden-Baden 1990, pp. 156-173.

<sup>11</sup> Brian White, Britain, Détente, and Changing East-West Relations, Routledge, 1992, pp.120-30; Philip Williams, "Britain, Détente and the Conference on Security and

articles contained in *European Détente: A Reappraisal* take a non-archival, one-nation centred view.<sup>12</sup> These books and articles give us general views of each government's policy towards the CSCE and détente. They have also shown that each state had different motivations and opinions. But they leave plenty of scope for an international and multi-archival-based study.

This study takes advantage of the opening of Western archives. Indeed, it is based on the archives of three principal West European states: Britain, France and West Germany. The '30 years rule' makes it possible to consult the documents relating to the period from 1969 to 1973. However, some restrictions still unfortunately remain that will be discussed below. In order to examine an international history of Western diplomacy leading to the CSCE, this study adopted the following archival methodology. The most informative and well declassified archive is the British one. The UK government documents are available through the National Archives (the Public Record Office) at Kew. A wide range of papers concerning the CSCE is found in the FCO 41 collection in particular. It provides extensive information not only about British diplomacy, but also that of its partners. It also tells us about what happened within NATO, in particular through many dispatches and telegrams from Brussels. Inevitably, records kept by the British are not neutral and contain some biases. In order to achieve as much objectivity as possible, therefore, they were compared and contrasted with the collections of the French and the German archives, though sadly the levels of their declassification are less satisfactory than the British archive. As regards France, the French Foreign Ministry's official papers, available in the historical archives of the Foreign Ministry in Paris, are the main sources. President Pompidou's private papers, held in the *Archives Nationales* (Paris), are also important. Yet, unfortunately, the documents directly relating to the

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Cooperation in Europe", in Kenneth Dyson (ed.), *European Détente: Case Studies of the Politics of East-West Relations*, F. Pinter, 1986.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Davy (ed.), *European Détente: A Reappraisal*, Royal Institute of International Affairs: Sage, 1992.

CSCE and MBFR have not yet been declassified.<sup>13</sup> The most important West German documents on the CSCE are amongst the official papers of the West German Foreign Ministry, kept by the *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes* (Berlin). The availability of the records of the Chancellor's office in the *Bundesarchiv* (Koblenz) relating to the CSCE is highly limited because the catalogue of the Chancellor's office files has not yet been completed. In fact, the French and German archival information is patchy and fragmented; thus it is sometimes difficult to follow the process of their policy-making. However, ample British materials fill in much of the context needed to interpret the real meaning and importance of each French and German document. Of course, French and German archives themselves are helpful in providing more detail about French and German policies, and often provide fresh views. In brief, the combination of the archives of the three Western European powers makes it possible to an acceptable albeit imperfect extent, to explore the Western pre-conference diplomacy from an international perspective.

Archival documents have also been complemented with other sources. The published collection of the West German official documents, the *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, offers a vitally important complement to the German archives. These contain very valuable documents, such as the records of top-level discussions or position papers on important subjects. The British equivalent, *Documents on British Policy Overseas* (Series III) is also helpful, but its focus is on the European Security Conference itself from 1972 to 1975, not on the period before the holding of the Conference. Some information on US policy towards European détente can be obtained through the internet and a CD-Rom. In particular, the website of the Digital National Security Archive holds valuable collections such as that of the Presidential Directives and Kissinger's Transcripts.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The carton, 5 AG 2 / 1041, which, according to the catalogue of Pompidou's paper, contains documents on the CSCE and MBFR. Archives nationales, *Archives de la présidence de la République. Ve République: Georges Pompidou, 19 juin 1969-2 avril 1974*, Paris: Documentation française, 1997, p. 180.

<sup>14</sup> <http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/marketing/index.jsp>

The CD-ROM *The Rise of Détente*, edited by prominent historians, also contains important US documents from the 1960s and the early 1970s.<sup>15</sup>

The chapters of this study are organised in loosely chronological fashion. In order to analyse some issues in a coherent way, however, they will sometimes depart from a rigid chronological sequence. Chapter 1 will present an overview of European détente in the 1960s. In particular, the origins of four issues will be explored. Firstly, focusing on the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty, it will discuss the beginning of the separation between superpower and European détente, the latter developing in the 1960s only bilaterally as symbolised by De Gaulle's détente with the Warsaw Pact countries. Secondly, it will recall how the concept of a European security conference reappeared in the mid-1960s. Thirdly, it will also analyse the origins of the Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions proposal, which in the late 1960s was to be the West's main counter-proposal to the East's call for a European security conference. And finally, it will briefly describe two significant events which would have a psychological impact on policy-makers in the Western bloc: the 1968 student rebellions and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in the same year.

Chapter 2 will highlight NATO's gradual commitment to the idea of a European Security Conference. Firstly, after a brief examination of the East's Budapest Appeal of 1969 advocating the convention of a pan-European conference, it will discuss the West's reactions and scepticism towards it. Analysing NATO members' policies towards a European security conference, this chapter will then illustrate how the West's most significant idea of "freer movement of people, ideas, and information," which first appeared in NATO's Declaration on East-West relations of 1969, came to the fore. And thirdly, it will also address the process of how the Atlantic Alliance accepted the East's

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<sup>15</sup> This electronic document reader was compiled by Mircea Munteanu, Hedi Giusto, and Christian Ostermann in cooperation with William Burr and with the CWIHP's research assistants for the international conference "NATO, the Warsaw Pact and the Rise of Détente, 1965-1972" in Dobbiaco, Italy, on 26-28 September 2002.

proposal for a conference on European security in its May 1970 Rome communiqué. The debates within NATO were acute, but this chapter will demonstrate that, thanks to a British initiative and the influence of public opinion, the West for the first time indicated its commitment to the CSCE on condition that progress was made on other important issues such as the Berlin question.

The Warsaw Pact's reply to the NATO Rome communiqué constitutes the starting-point for Chapter 3. In particular, it contained the first indications that the East might consider the Western idea of mutual force reductions. Therefore, this chapter will first analyse NATO's reactions to these first signs of flexibility from the Soviet bloc. The second major focus of this chapter is the German and Berlin problems. On the one hand, the period covered by this chapter saw a decisive advance on the German question with the first significant success of Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. Therefore the important implications of Brandt's policies for multilateral European détente will be briefly discussed. On the other hand, in order to explain why the attitude of NATO governments hardened remarkably in the latter half of 1970, it will analyse the impasse of the Berlin negotiations which had begun to develop in early 1970. This chapter will also examine important behind-the-scenes developments; the policy changes of the French and the British governments, which now made Paris a champion of the idea of CSCE within the Western bloc, while London became a pragmatic and business-like, albeit far from enthusiastic, supporter of the CSCE.

Chapter 4 will demonstrate how deeply the idea of the CSCE was linked to the Berlin question and MBFR. Firstly, it will attempt to explain why the FRG leaders agreed with the French opinion that the Berlin settlement should be the only pre-condition of the opening of multilateral preparatory talks for a European security conference and dropped other pre-conditions, in particular the conclusion of the German-German negotiations. Secondly, it will look at how the deadlock of the Berlin talks



was broken. Then the chapter will address a British proposal to connect MBFR with the CSCE, because it indicated a possibility that the preparatory talks for the CSCE might have been held earlier than they actually were. However, such a possibility vanished, as the USSR refused to sign the final protocol of the Berlin Agreement before the ratification of the Moscow Treaty in the West German Parliament. The Soviets' counter-linkage thus meant that the final settlement was suspended for some time; hence the start of preparations for the CSCE was also postponed.

Chapter 5 will go back to the internal debates within the Western camp, and explore three essential debates that were subsequently to affect the basic character of the CSCE. Firstly, it will examine the Western debates about the procedure which should be adopted in the Conference. This discussion about the way in which the East-West meeting should work became one of the most controversial issues among NATO members, and in particular between France and the United States. Secondly, it will reveal how and why the topic of human rights emerged. This was eventually to produce the most celebrated clause in the Helsinki Final Act's ten principles governing relations between states but its origins lie in the discussions between Western powers in the course of 1971-2 and in a West German initiative in particular. And thirdly, the chapter will explain how EC members developed their cooperation on CSCE matters within the framework of European Political Cooperation (EPC). Indeed, it will demonstrate that the key factor in allowing EPC to function effectively was the convergence of EC countries' policy on the procedural question relating to the CSCE.

Chapter 6 will examine the final stages of the road towards the CSCE. The military aspects of the CSCE remained as an unsolved problem within NATO. The chapter will thus first explore how the new concept of Confidence Building Measures appeared, arguing that it was an indication of the retreat of disarmament détente. It will then discuss how MBFR came to be

completely separated from the CSCE. It will also demonstrate that, in order to obtain the USSR's commitment to MBFR unlinked to the CSCE, the Americans secretly agreed with the Soviets on a timetable for both sets of negotiations. With Moscow's consent to the opening of exploratory talks on mutual force reductions, the Multilateral Preparatory Talk (MPT) for the CSCE began in November 1972. The result of the MPT – the Final Recommendations – was in the end a significant success for the West. The chapter will therefore analyse how the Western countries were able to achieve such a success. In order to make the best use of this successful result, it was imperative that the CSCE had time to develop its own rhythm. The chapter will thus conclude with an examination of West European resistance to the superpowers' very tight CSCE/MBFR timetable. The Europeans were ultimately successful enabling the West to prepare well for the start of the actual negotiations at the CSCE.

The manner in which the pre-negotiations had operated was absolutely fundamental not merely to the opening of the conference altogether but also to their ultimate achievements, especially over human rights and freer movement. As a result, the humanitarian elements were added in multilateral European détente. Eventually – one could argue – they would be one of the significant factors eroding the institutionalised division of Europe. In this sense, the pre-conference period of 1969-1973 represented a crucial turning point in Cold War history.

## **Chapter 1: Détente in the 1960s**

It was the early 1970s that saw the beginning of multilateral European détente. In particular, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) started its preparatory talks at the end of 1972, which finally lead to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act: the climax of European détente. The process leading up to the CSCE was heavily affected by events in the 1960s. Moreover, in order to understand fully why the Conference was held in the 1970s, it is important to compare the international situation in the 1970s with that of the 1960s. For that purpose, this first chapter will focus on four origins. Firstly, it will consider the difference and separation between superpower and European détente. Analysing the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty, it will emphasise the structural importance of the German question for multilateral European détente, and explain why détente in the 1960s progressed on a bilateral basis. Secondly, this chapter will look at the origins of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which was proposed by the Eastern Bloc. Reviewing NATO's reaction, it will underline how and why the West ignored the Warsaw Pact proposals for a European conference on security during the 1960s. Thirdly, it will explore the origins of Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, which would be NATO's chief proposal for multilateral European détente. Finally, it will consider briefly student protests in Western Europe, the Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. These events significantly affected Western countries' attitudes in dealing with the East's détente proposals from 1969.

### **The Origins of the Separation of Superpower and European Détente**

It is often said that “détente” began in 1963. Especially, the signing of the Limited Test Ban Treaty in August 1963 is referred to as the start of “little détente”.<sup>1</sup> It was in essence the first step towards superpower rather than European détente. In order to understand this point, it is necessary to see how US-Soviet rapprochement in the field of arms control became possible. The key factor proved to be the detachment of superpower détente from the German question in two ways. On the one hand, in West-West relations the problem of German reunification had to be disconnected from the arms control agreement. On the other hand, in the East-West relations the controversy over the recognition of two Germanies needed to be shelved.

Firstly, in order to begin negotiations on the test ban with the Soviet Union, the United States had to separate the German question from the arms control talks. As early as 1955, the USSR proposed a comprehensive disarmament plan that included a ban on the testing of nuclear weapons.<sup>2</sup> This was the first time that they suggested such a test ban, and the Soviets insisted at the 1955 Geneva Conference that this was their most important proposal.<sup>3</sup> The West did not accept Moscow’s initiative, however, contending that a resolution of the political questions had to come before arms control and disarmament: German reunification had to be first.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the British government had already advocated German unification based on free elections (the Eden Plan).<sup>5</sup> A new French government led by Guy Mollet from February 1956 was at first a strong supporter of an ambitious disarmament programme. The French Prime Minister insisted that negotiations on arms control and disarmament had to precede German

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<sup>1</sup> Jennifer W. See, “An Uneasy Truce: John F. Kennedy and Soviet-American Détente, 1963,” *Cold War History*, 2/2 (2002).

<sup>2</sup> M. Smith-Norris, “The Eisenhower Administration and the Nuclear Test Ban Talks, 1958–1960: Another Challenge to ‘Revisionism’”, *Diplomatic History*, 27/4 (2003), p. 506.

<sup>3</sup> John van Oudenaren, *Détente in Europe: the Soviet Union and the West since 1953*, Duke University Press, 1991, p. 37, 165.

<sup>4</sup> Van Oudenaren, *Détente in Europe*, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> Saki Dockrill, “Eden Plan,” in Günter Bischof and Saki Dockrill (eds.), *Cold War Respite: The Geneva Summit of 1955*, Louisiana State University Press, 2000.

unification.<sup>6</sup> Konrad Adenauer, the West German Chancellor, however, vehemently opposed Mollet, stressing that the linkage between disarmament and the resolution of the German question was a Western principle. For him, détente could not occur before the reunification of Germany. Adenauer's stance was supported by US Secretary of State John F. Dulles. Consequently, Mollet had to retreat from his desire for disarmament.<sup>7</sup> That it why the linkage between arms control/disarmament and German unification prevented détente in the military field in the mid-1950s.

It was in 1957 that the linkage was brought to an end. According to Kurashina, during the spring of that year, Dulles decided to begin test ban negotiations separated from the comprehensive disarmament package proposed by the USSR.<sup>8</sup> While, in order to coax Adenauer, he admitted that *conventional disarmament in Europe* would not advance before the unification of Germany, the US Secretary of State tried to push forward *nuclear arms control* without being disturbed by the German question. Growing protests at the H-bomb tests of the late 1950s pushed the Eisenhower administration into arms control talks.<sup>9</sup> The then Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Bulganin had again suggested a nuclear test ban treaty at the end of 1956. Although there was opposition from the Atomic Energy Commission within the US government, the US President decided to start test ban negotiations, which were formally initiated in October 1958.<sup>10</sup> In the context of West-West relations, detaching the problem of German

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<sup>6</sup> Pierre Guillen, "Le probleme allemand dans les rapports East-Ouest de 1955 à 1957", *Relations internationales*, vol. 71, 1992, p. 303; Jeffrey Glen Giauque, *Grand Designs and Visions of Unity: the Atlantic Powers and the Reorganization of Western Europe, 1955-1963*, University of North Carolina Press, 2002, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> Wilfried Loth, "Adenauer's Final Western Choice, 1955-58," in Wilfried Loth (ed.), *Europe, Cold War and Co-Existence 1953-1965*, Frank Cass & Co, 2004, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Itsuki Kurashina, "1950 nenndai kouhan no beikoku gunnsyuku gunnbi kannri seisaku to doumei kankei [U.S. Disarmament Policy and the Allies in the Second Half of the 1950s: Over the 'Junktim' with German Unification]," *Kokusaiseiji* [International Relations], vol. 134, 2003, pp. 47-48.

<sup>9</sup> Andreas Wenger and Jeremi Suri, "At the Crossroads of Diplomatic and Social History: The Nuclear Revolution, Dissent and Détente", *Cold War History*, 1/3 (2001), p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Smith-Norris, "The Eisenhower Administration", p. 509-514.

unification from arms control détente was an important pre-condition for launching the test ban talks, and at the same time keeping the principle of linkage between European security (conventional disarmament in Europe in particular) and German unification. In other words, in order to start negotiations with the Soviet Union on nuclear matters, the US government firstly had to make superpower relations independent from the central problem in Europe: the German question.

Needless to say, the German question was not the only problem for the test ban treaty. Indeed, verification was the most controversial issue during the negotiations. The West insisted that inspections of nuclear tests were indispensable for the effective application of a test ban agreement. The Soviet Union, however, strongly rejected the argument, denouncing verification as a form of espionage. In the end, in order to avoid the inspection problem, Moscow proposed an agreement forbidding nuclear tests in the air, which were far easier to observe without internal verification. As a result, the test ban treaty became limited or partial, rather than a comprehensive one including underground nuclear testing.

However, the second aspect of the German question also closely related to the test ban talks, namely the problem of East German recognition. Since 1955, the Soviet government had followed a two Germanies policy.<sup>11</sup> Instead of a unified Germany, Moscow sought the recognition of both East and West Germanies as sovereign states in the international arena. The USSR had established formal diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic Germany (FRG) in September 1955, at the same time as it had concluded the German Democratic Republic (GDR)-USSR treaty. By recognising the existence of two Germanies, the Soviets sought status quo détente. They also demanded that Western countries respect the GDR as a formal international actor. Yet, the FRG and its NATO partners adamantly opposed this. They stubbornly

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<sup>11</sup> Wolfram F. Hanrieder, *Germany, America, Europe: Forty Years of German Foreign Policy*, Yale University Press, 1989, pp. 85-86. See also, Loth, "Adenauer's Final Western Choice," pp. 24-26.



maintained that West Germany was the only representative of the German people, and therefore could not admit East Germany as a legitimate state. Indeed, the Adenauer government issued the so-called "Hallstain Doctrine": the FRG principle not to maintain diplomatic relations with states which recognised the GDR after 1956. With this doctrine, Bonn tried to isolate East Germany in international society.<sup>12</sup> One of the ways for the Soviet Union to force the West to recognise East Germany as a member of the international community was to bring the GDR into multilateral treaties, such as a Non-Aggression Pact (NAP) or the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT).

In order to conclude the LTBT, however, both superpowers had to shelve the second German problem. While the United States had to pay attention to its relations with West Germany, the Soviet Union also had to take East Germany into account. When Nikita Khrushchev visited East Berlin, the capital of GDR, on 2 July 1963, he made a speech proposing a link between a non-aggression pact and the LTBT.<sup>13</sup> By doing so, he implicitly tried to involve East Germany in the pact. However, the Soviet leader's language in the speech was perhaps intentionally ambiguous enough to permit the West not to regard the link as an absolute precondition.<sup>14</sup> On the one hand, the Soviet leader showed attention to East Germany by suggesting a NAP. On the other hand, he also prepared an escape hole for the West. In fact, after the Americans repeatedly stressed that a NAP would have to be preceded by consultations within NATO, the Soviets accepted that they initially would have to focus solely on the LTBT. In order to make an agreement with Washington on arms control issues, Moscow was ready to drop the linkage between an NAP and the LTBT.

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<sup>12</sup> William Glenn Gray, Germany's Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949-1969, The University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Anna Locher and Christian Nuenlist, "What Role for NATO? Conflicting Western Perceptions of Détente, 1963-65", Journal of Transatlantic Studies, 2/2 (2004), p.187.

<sup>14</sup> See, "An Uneasy Truce," p. 176; Kendrick Oliver, "West Germany and the Moscow Test Ban Treaty Negotiations, July 1963," in Saki Dockrill (ed.), Controversy and Compromise: Alliance Politics between Great Britain, Federal Republic of Germany, and the United States of America, 1945-1967, Bodenheim: Philo, 1998, pp. 163-64.

The recognition of the GDR by the West through the LTBT was also evaded by another trick. Adenauer had feared that if East Germany joined the test ban treaty, it would mean the recognition of this other part of Germany, thereby consolidating the division of Germany that he had opposed for a long time.<sup>15</sup> The US, the USSR and the UK, however, agreed to prepare their own versions of the LTBT, and the East German government was to sign only the Soviet version, implying that the Americans and the British could insist that they did not recognise the GDR through the Limited Test Ban Treaty.<sup>16</sup> By postponing the non-aggression pact negotiations and with the idea of preparing three LTBT documents, the USA, the Soviet Union and Britain could finally conclude the LTBT on 5 August 1963 in Moscow. It became possible because the superpowers implicitly understood the necessity of shelving the East German recognition problem.

The success of the superpower détente on arms control was achieved by dividing it from European affairs, the German question in particular. In fact, the test ban treaty was accomplished by the USA and the USSR bilaterally, and their European allies only played a little role.<sup>17</sup> In this sense, the 1963 LTBT was the starting point for the separation of superpower and European détente. From now on, Washington and Moscow could carry on their bilateral rapprochement – in particular in the nuclear field – and stabilise their privileged positions. By contrast, the German question still remained a huge obstacle for multilateral European détente. As long as the German question was not solved, détente in any form had to be pursued bilaterally during the 1960s.

Bilateral superpower détente did not spill over into multilateral European détente. After the August 1963 signing of the LTBT, several

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<sup>15</sup> Oliver, "West Germany and the Moscow Test Ban," p. 168; Locher and Nuenlist, "What Role for NATO?," p. 188.

<sup>16</sup> Oliver, "West Germany and the Moscow Test Ban," pp. 169-70.

<sup>17</sup> Vojtech Mastny, "Détente, the Superpowers and their Allies, 1962-1964," in Wilfried Loth (ed.), *Europe, Cold War and Coexistence 1953-1965*, Frank Cass, 2004, p. 222; Wenger and Suri, "At the Crossroads of Diplomatic," p.7; van Oudenaren, *Détente in Europe*, p. 170.

smaller countries in NATO such as Belgium, Canada, Norway, and Italy favoured further East-West agreements. The development of "little détente" clearly stimulated some of the West Europeans. They wanted for instance to consider the idea of a Non-Aggression Pact and ground observation posts for watching and preventing surprise attacks. However, France and West Germany opposed further steps towards détente. Bonn in particular could not accept a NAP that might lead to the recognition of East Germany.<sup>18</sup> Any other ideas of rapprochement would also be linked to the German question by the East.<sup>19</sup> Hence, the hope of post-LTBT multilateral détente in Europe was rapidly curtailed.

Détente in the 1960s therefore progressed on a bilateral basis. First and foremost, the West German Foreign Ministry under Gerhard Schröder had adopted a new policy from 1961, a 'policy of movement' that sought the informal establishment of commercial and cultural relations with East European countries.<sup>20</sup> In an atmosphere of relaxation, the FRG's Foreign Minister pragmatically pursued a new policy to fend off Eastern criticism of Bonn's confrontational cold war policy, without deviating from the Hallstain Doctrine.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, by the end of 1963, West Germany successfully set up trade missions that had no diplomatic responsibility, in Warsaw, Budapest, Sofia and Bucharest.<sup>22</sup> Yet, this policy also aimed to dissociate East Germany from other Eastern states.<sup>23</sup> While strengthening the relationship with East Europeans except the East Germans, Bonn intended to isolate the East German regime from other Socialist states. However, the FRG's attitude antagonized the Warsaw Pact countries and they would later demand the recognition of East Germany's sovereignty in the context of

<sup>18</sup> Locher and Nuenlist, "What Role for NATO?," p. 189.

<sup>19</sup> Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, p. 142.

<sup>20</sup> Locher and Nuenlist, "What Role for NATO?," p. 119-2; Wilfried Loth, *Overcoming the Cold War: A History of Détente, 1950-1991*, Palgrave, 2002, p.85; Hanrieder, *Germany, America, Europe*, pp. 178-82; Oliver, "West Germany and the Moscow Test Ban," p. 154.

<sup>21</sup> Franz Eibl, *Politik der Bewegung: Gerhard Schröder als Außenminister 1961-1966*, Munich: Oldenbourg, 2001, p. 153.

<sup>22</sup> Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, p. 142.

<sup>23</sup> Hanrieder, *Germany, America, Europe*, p. 180.

European détente. Excluding another Germany was unacceptable to the East. From the outset, Schröder's 'policy of movement' contained limits for further advances in East/West relations.

The British also quietly enhanced economic relations with the Eastern Bloc. In the early 1960s, the Planning Staff of the British Foreign Office tried to encourage internal reform of the Warsaw Pact states by developing commercial, cultural and scientific contacts.<sup>24</sup> In the summer 1964, London then concluded agreements with Prague and Moscow, giving long-term credit for improving East-West trade. The new British Labour government, elected in October 1964 and led by Harold Wilson, also favoured an improvement in economic relations with the communist powers.<sup>25</sup> As Michael Clarke points out, however, "There were surprisingly few substantive matters for London and Moscow to discuss on a bilateral basis, and fewer still between, say, Britain and Poland, or Britain and Hungary."<sup>26</sup> And Britain's trade with the states of the Eastern Bloc constituted no more than 3 per cent of its total trade.<sup>27</sup> In addition, Wilson was less interested in diplomatic initiatives with the other side of the iron curtain.<sup>28</sup> As a consequence, bilateral relations between the UK and the Warsaw Pact countries developed quietly and had little political impact.<sup>29</sup>

It was De Gaulle's France that pursued more dynamic bilateral rapprochements with the Soviet Union and East European countries. During the Adenauer era, the French President, together with the West German Chancellor, had opposed détente in general. Showing his support for the FRG's interest in striving for reunification, the General had initially wanted a European political union led by France, and closer Franco-German

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<sup>24</sup> Geraint Hughes, "British policy towards Eastern Europe and the impact of the 'Prague Spring' 1964-8", *Cold War History*, 4/2 (2004), p. 118.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>26</sup> Brian White, *Britain, Détente, and Changing East-West Relations*, Routledge, 1992, p. 92.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Hughes, "British policy towards Eastern Europe," p. 121.

<sup>29</sup> John W. Young, *The Labour Governments 1964-70: International Policy (The Labour Governments 1964-70)*, Manchester University Press, 2003, p. 128.

cooperation in particular.<sup>30</sup> However, the Fouchet Plan aiming at political consultation among EEC members, failed because of Belgian and Dutch opposition in 1962.<sup>31</sup> Swiftly, the French leader switched to an alternative: a closer relationship between France and West Germany. Thus, in January 1963, de Gaulle and Adenauer concluded the Elysée treaty institutionalizing cooperation between the two governments in diplomatic, economic, and cultural fields, including regular summit meetings twice a year.<sup>32</sup> Again, however, the Paris-Bonn axis did not last long. There was strong hostility towards the exclusive bilateral treaty in West Germany and among its NATO partners. When the treaty was ratified in May 1963, the FRG Parliament modified it adding a preamble asserting the significance of the Atlantic Alliance. For the French leader, who was antagonistic to NATO, the preamble meant the death of the Franco-German treaty.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the relationship between the two countries deteriorated after Ludwig Erhard replaced Adenauer in October 1963. The new chancellor, who preferred closer relations with the US to France, was strongly opposed to the Elysée treaty.<sup>34</sup> When the two leaders met in July 1964, it became clear that they had very different opinions on the future vision of international affairs. As Soutou puts it, "this meeting of July 1964 marked a point of rupture in the Franco-German relations."<sup>35</sup> After the failures of cooperation with West European countries, de Gaulle then turned to the East.

From 1964 French relations with the states of the Eastern Bloc developed rapidly. It started firstly in commercial and technological

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<sup>30</sup> Georges-Henri Soutou, "Le General de Gaulle et le Plan Fouchet d'Union Politique Europeenne: un Projet Strategique," Ann Deighton and Alan Milward (eds.), Widening, Deeping and Acceleration: The European Economic Community 1957-1963, Nomos, 1999.

<sup>31</sup> Yves Stelandre, "Les Pays du Benelux, l'Europe Politique et les Negociations Fouchet," Ann Deighton and Alan Milward (eds.), Widening, Deeping and Acceleration: The European Economic Community 1957-1963, Nomos, 1999; Jeffrey W. Vanke, "An Impossible Union: Dutch Objections to the Fouchet Plan, 1959-62," Cold War History, 2/1 (2001).

<sup>32</sup> As regards the Elysée Treaty, Corine Defrance et Ulrich Pfeil (dir.), Le traité de l'Elysée: Et les relations franco-allemandes 1945 - 1963 - 2003, Paris: CNRS, 2005.

<sup>33</sup> Soutou, L'Alliance incertaine, pp. 290-291.

<sup>34</sup> Gray, Germany's Cold War, p. 141.

<sup>35</sup> Soutou, L'Alliance incertaine, p. 274.

cooperation. The French Minister of Economy and Finance, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, visited Moscow in January 1964. In return for a previous visit by French parliamentarians, the chairman of the Soviet presidium, Nikolai Podgorny, came to Paris and began a dialogue with the French government, which in the end led to the Franco-Soviet commercial treaty of October 1964.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the official visit of Ion Maurer, the Premier of the Rumanian Council of Ministers, to Paris in July 1964 marked the beginning of a political as well as economic dialogue. It was important, according to a French diplomat, because Maurer's visit hinted at the possibility of rapprochement with the East.<sup>37</sup> During 1965, bilateral diplomatic exchanges between France and the Warsaw Pact countries continued at the Foreign Minister level.<sup>38</sup> French Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville also began to insist in May 1965 that the German problem should be solved with the Soviet Union. Furthermore, he declared in December 1965 that "we believe the time has come for links with Soviet Russia on a more political – and therefore frequent – basis."<sup>39</sup> De Gaulle wanted this "new course" and put forward his idea of "constructive entente from the Atlantic to the Urals."<sup>40</sup> For the General, who vehemently opposed the two "blocs", East-West exchanges had to be carried out on a bilateral basis. He therefore objected to any joint NATO policy towards the Eastern Bloc.<sup>41</sup> The French President's independent initiative was to culminate with a 1966 Moscow visit.

### **The Origins of the European Security Conference**

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<sup>36</sup> Vaisse, *La Grandeur*, p. 418.

<sup>37</sup> François Puaux, "L'originalité de la politique française de détente," in Institut Charles de Gaulle, *De Gaulle en son siècle: L'Europe*, Tome 5, Paris : Plon, 1992, p. 433.

<sup>38</sup> Vaisse, *La Grandeur*, pp. 423-24, 435.

<sup>39</sup> Locher and Nuenlist, "What Role for NATO?", pp. 200-201.

<sup>40</sup> Vaisse, *La Grandeur*, p. 424. The concept "la coopération de l'Atlantique à l'Oural" firstly appeared as early as in February 1965. Soutou, *L'Alliance incertaine*, p. 284.

<sup>41</sup> Locher and Nuenlist, "What Role for NATO?", p. 201.

After the separation of superpower and European détente, the latter progressed on a bilateral basis. From the East, however, proposals for multilateral European détente came in the mid-1960s. Firstly, Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki presented his idea of a European conference for security at the UN General Assembly on 14 December 1964.

I must stress our strong belief that the time is ripe for examining the problem of European security in its entirety. In our considered opinion, the advisability of convening for this purpose a conference of all-European States with the participation, of course, of both the Soviet Union and the United States, should be closely examined. <sup>42</sup>

According to Helga Hafterndorn, this was proposed so as to prevent NATO's Multilateral Force (MLF) project, which aimed to create a NATO multi-national nuclear fleet with six Polaris missiles, and would give West Germany a finger on the nuclear trigger.<sup>43</sup> In order to promote East-West dialogue and his long-standing idea of creating a denuclear zone in particular, Rapacki took up the concept originally submitted by the Soviets in 1954, which had at that time called for a European conference to conclude an all-European treaty on collective security designed to impede West German

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<sup>42</sup> Quoted in John G. Keliher, The Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions. The Search for Arms Control in Central Europe, Pergamon Press, 1980, p. 11. See also, Ljubivoje Achimovic, Problems of Security and Cooperation in Europe, Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands; Rockville, Md., USA: Sijthoff & Noordhoff, 1981, p. 78.

<sup>43</sup> Helga Haftendorn, Sicherheit und Entspannung: zur Aussenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1955-1982, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983, p. 415. As regards the Western controversy on the MLF, see Marilena Gala, "The Multilateral Force: A Brief History of the American Efforts to Maintain the Nuclear Status Quo Within the Atlantic Alliance," Stria delle Relazioni Internazionali, 13/1 (1998); Susanna Schraafstter and Stephen Twigge, "Trick or Truth?: The British ANF Proposal, West Germany and US Nonproliferation Policy, 1964-68", Diplomacy and Statecraft, 11/2 (2000); Martin Koopmann, "Le malentendu d'une defense nucléaire commune: l'Allemagne et la Force multilatérale", in Wilfried Loth (ed.), Crises and Compromises: the European Project, 1963-1969, Nomos, 2001; John Young, "Killing the MLF? The Wilson Government and Nuclear Sharing in Europe, 1964-66", Diplomacy & Statecraft, 14/2 (2003).

rearmament.<sup>44</sup> The Polish Foreign Minister's initiative was independent and undertaken without consultation with his Warsaw Pact partners.<sup>45</sup> One month later, the Polish Communist leader, Wladyslaw Gomulka, who had also in February 1964 tabled his plan for a nuclear armaments freeze in Central Europe, brought up again the proposal of a European security conference in front of his colleagues at the January 1965 Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact in Warsaw. It should be underlined here that, Poland's view, as the above quotation demonstrates, did not exclude the participation of the United States in a European conference. For Warsaw, an agreement between the nuclear states including America whose nuclear weapons were deployed in Europe, and other European states was necessary for European security.<sup>46</sup> This Polish proposal was in the end hesitantly accepted by the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact states, and they jointly called for a conference of European states in their final communiqué.<sup>47</sup>

Since the late 1950s, NATO had rejected Warsaw's plan for establishing a nuclear free zone in the central Europe for three reasons.<sup>48</sup> Firstly, from a disarmament point of view, the Polish idea did not cover Soviet territory.

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<sup>44</sup> van Oudenaren, *Détente in Europe*, pp. 29-30; As regards the so-called Rapacki Plan of a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe, Piotr Wandycz, "Adam Rapacki and the Search for European Security," in Gordon A. Craig and Francis L. Loewenheim (eds.), *The Diplomats, 1939-1979*, Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994.

<sup>45</sup> At the 1965 meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact, Wladyslaw Gomulka, the first secretary of the Polish Communist Party, apologised for his Foreign Minister's unilateral act, stating that "Rapacki came forward at the UN with a proposal related to the question of European security. We feel guilty that we did not consult with the other socialist countries on this issue, although the proposal was presented in a very general form." Douglas Selvage, "The Warsaw Pact and Nuclear Nonproliferation, 1963-1965," *Cold War International History (CWIHP) Working Paper 32*, 2001, p. 47.

<sup>46</sup> Vojtech Mastny, "VII. Meeting of the PCC, Warsaw, 19-20 January 1965: Editorial Note," in the "Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact" website (hereafter PHP); [http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/documents/collection\\_3/PCC\\_texts/ed\\_note\\_65.htm](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/documents/collection_3/PCC_texts/ed_note_65.htm)

<sup>47</sup> Haftendorn, *Sicherheit und Entspannung*, p. 416. The communiqué of the Political Consultative Committee meeting stated that "Supporting the initiative of the Polish People's Republic, the Political Consultative Committee calls for the convocation of a conference of European states to discuss measures to ensure collective security in Europe." [http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/documents/collection\\_3/PCC\\_docs/1965/1965\\_19.pdf](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/documents/collection_3/PCC_docs/1965/1965_19.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris (hereafter MAE), Série Europe 1966-1970, 2034, "L'U.R.S.S. et la sécurité européenne," 23.5.1966.



Without it, the West thought, disarmament could not truly stabilize the situation. Secondly, in regards to European security, the Rapacki/Gomulka Plan could not stabilise Europe because it would maintain the division of Germany. Finally, from a balance-of-power point of view, creating a nuclear free zone would diminish Western military capabilities without affecting Soviet armed power. If the agenda for a European conference itself, namely the Rapacki/Gomulka Plan, was unattractive, the conference itself was also meaningless for the West.

The Polish proposal for a European security conference, however, had some, albeit limited, impact on the smaller NATO countries. It stimulated some détente-oriented states to move further on arms control agreements with the East. For instance, Belgian Foreign Minister Paul-Henri Spaak was inclined towards modifying the Rapacki Plan so as to make it acceptable to the West. Other smaller countries in NATO such as Norway, Denmark and Canada, also supported Spaak and wanted some progress in arms control.<sup>49</sup> Nonetheless, the West Germans who rigidly adhered to the principle of linkage between European security and the German question, had confidence that as long as the United States, which was one of the Four Powers having responsibility on the German question, remained committed to the linkage, there would be no negotiations with the Eastern Bloc that could damage Bonn's vital interests.<sup>50</sup> In fact, due to American indifference to a European conference and their observance of the German-reunification-first principle, Belgian eagerness was contained.

The Erhard government however needed to take a new initiative because its diplomacy had reached a deadlock. Firstly, the USA-West German policy convergence on a Multilateral Force project collapsed in 1964/65. The two governments had pursued the MLF together from the late 1950s. After the detonation of Communist China's first nuclear device in

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<sup>49</sup> Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (hereafter AAPD), 1965, Dok. 152, Aufzeichnung des Ministerialdirektors Krapf, 26.3.1965.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

October 1964, however, the Johnson administration gradually shifted its priority from a MLF to nuclear non-dissemination.<sup>51</sup> Although the relationship with Bonn was still important, it became equally significant for Washington to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. For that, it was indispensable to cooperate with the Soviet Union, which insisted that the renunciation of MLF was a precondition for a Non-Proliferation Treaty. In short, West Germany's aspiration for nuclear weapons, of which the Eastern countries were seriously afraid, became incompatible with America's desire for arms control détente. The British government was also strongly interested in arms control and disarmament from the start. Indeed a non-proliferation treaty was attractive to the Wilson government in order to restrain the FRG's nuclear ambition.<sup>52</sup> In addition, as argued above, Franco-West German relations had already worsened. And more ominously for Bonn, Paris was reaching out to the Soviet Union and East European countries in the course of 1965.<sup>53</sup> Finally, as already mentioned, many smaller NATO countries were pro-détente. By the mid 1960s, therefore, Schröder's first Ostpolitik, which aimed to merely develop informal economic relations with the Eastern Bloc, seemed insufficient. West Germany was clearly isolated on arms control and disarmament détente, to which the West Germans were highly negative partly because of their adherence to a MLF, and partly because it was completely unacceptable for them to conclude any arms control/disarmament agreements that included East Germany. This would imply the recognition of another Germany as a legitimate state. Although the FRG Foreign Ministry understood that NATO governments showed little interest in a European security conference, they anticipated that the Polish government would take another step on European security matters.<sup>54</sup> Erhard and Schröder were therefore looking for a way out of the

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<sup>51</sup> Thomas Alan Schwartz, Lyndon Johnson and Europe: In the Shadow of Vietnam, Harvard University Press, 2003, pp.53-5.

<sup>52</sup> White, Britain, Détente, pp. 114-15.

<sup>53</sup> Soutou, L'Alliance incertaine, pp. 281-86.

<sup>54</sup> AAPD 1965, Dok. 262, Aufzeichnung des Ministerialdirektors Krapf, 29.6.1965.

diplomatic impasse.

The outcome was a new West German initiative launched on 25 March 1966: the famous “peace note”. Its original idea came from the head of the Eastern Bloc department in the *Auswärtigen Amt*, Erwin Wickert, who in January 1966 recommended that the Federal Republic of Germany should present its own détente proposal in order to undercut communist propaganda attacks on West Germany.<sup>55</sup> Wickert’s suggestion was taken up by State secretary Karl Carstens, and a memorandum was prepared in the Foreign Ministry. It was then adopted by Schröder who was seeking something novel. In late March 1966, the Erhard government sent the “peace note” to the East with the exception of East Germany, the West and the Third World countries, proclaiming that the German people opposed the division of Germany, wanted its reunification, desired to live in friendship with its Eastern neighbours, rejected war, and proposed non-aggression pacts with the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and other East European states.<sup>56</sup>

Yet, the note only provoked antagonistic reactions from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. True, Bonn’s Western partners welcomed the Erhard government’s new initiative. For example, the British Ambassador in Bonn, Frank Roberts, praised the peace note as “a turning point in post-war foreign policy of the Federal Republic.”<sup>57</sup> He was however correct in his observation that the note contained little that was new with regard to the German question.<sup>58</sup> In fact, the West Germans ignored the existence of the GDR, and

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<sup>55</sup> Eibl, *Politik der Bewegung*, p.423.

<sup>56</sup> *Europa-Archiv*, 21/7 (1966), pp. 171-175.

<sup>57</sup> Gottfried Niedhart, “The British Reaction towards Ostpolitik. Anglo - West German Relations in the Era of Détente 1967-1971,” downloaded from the website “Ostpolitik and CSCE”. <http://www.ostpolitik.net/>

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. Many scholars also complain that the peace note said little new. William E. Griffith, *The Ostpolitik of the Federal Republic of Germany*, MIT Press, 1978, pp.127-28; Hanrieder, *Germany, America, Europe*, p. 182; Gray, *Germany’s Cold War*, pp. 193-94; W. R. Smyser, *From Yalta to Berlin: the Cold War struggle over Germany*, Macmillan, 1999, p. 215; Peter Bender, *Die “Neue Ostpolitik” und ihre Folgen: vom Mauerbau bis zur Vereinigung*, München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995, pp. 116-18. Suri places a high value on the peace note, but it is less clear why he praises it, given that the note was condemned by the

did not recognise the Oder-Neisse border with Poland. They also did not call for the establishment of formal diplomatic relations with the East European governments. In brief, Erhard and Schröder had no intention of abandoning their basic positions set in the Adenauer era, which prevented the advance of East-West reconciliation in Europe. Although the proposal of non-aggression pacts was new from the Western side, the idea itself had already been tabled by the Eastern Bloc from the mid-1950s. Still more importantly, a NAP excluding East Germany was worthless from the Eastern point of view. Answering the peace note with polemics, the Soviet Union and East European countries criticised West Germany for not respecting the status quo.<sup>59</sup> As William Gray put it, “the peace note symbolized the bankruptcy of Erhard’s approach.”<sup>60</sup>

For the purposes of this study, the important thing is that the idea of a European conference on security re-emerged as a reaction to the peace note. Soon after Bonn’s friendly gesture, the Soviet Union picked up this concept, and started to advocate it aggressively and polemically throughout 1966. Firstly, while complaining that “the FRG intends to continue its aggressive and revenge-seeking policy,” the first secretary Brezhnev, in his speech at the 23rd Congress of the CPSU on 29 March 1966, called for the convention of “an appropriate international conference” on European security.<sup>61</sup> Following the remarks of the Kremlin’s head, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko also made public Moscow’s willingness to hold such a conference, when he visited Rome on 27 April 1966.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, in the Soviet’s formal reply of 17 May 1966 to the West German peace note, the USSR government insisted upon

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East and therefore did not promote détente in any real sense. Jeremi Suri, Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003, pp. 219-20.

<sup>59</sup> Eibl, Politik der Bewegung, pp. 426-27.

<sup>60</sup> Gray, Germany’s Cold War, p. 194.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Thomas W. Wolfe, Soviet power and Europe, 1945-1970, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970, pp. 285-6; See also, Haftendorn, Sicherheit und Entspannung, pp. 416-17.

<sup>62</sup> Marta Dassù, “An Italian View”, in Davy, Richard (ed.), European Détente: A Reappraisal, Royal Institute of International Affairs: Sage, 1992, p. 115.

the importance of a European security conference, in which not only the concept of a nuclear-free-zone, but also the questions of force reductions and “a peaceful solution of the German question” would be addressed.<sup>63</sup> This was clearly in retaliation against West Germany’s peace offensive which had aimed at isolating East Germany, by establishing non-aggression pacts with East European countries. The Soviets probably proposed a European conference in which the GDR would participate and be recognised as a member of international society in order to counter the FRG’s tactics to divide the Eastern Bloc. For the East, a multilateral framework was a useful concept for saving East Germany from its isolation. Once the rupture of the Sino-Soviet relationship became clear, maintaining Warsaw Pact solidarity had surely become even more important for the Kremlin.<sup>64</sup> Bonn’s peace note may also have radicalised Russian attitudes. When Poland had proposed a European security conference at the end of 1964, the participation of the United States had been taken for granted. After the peace note, the Soviet government put forward the same idea, but intentionally dropped references to US participation in such a European conference. In addition, in answering Bonn’s peace note, the Soviet attacked the US presence in Europe stressing the European character of European security.<sup>65</sup> As Bonn tried to divide the Eastern Bloc, Moscow also attempted to isolate the USA from European affairs.

Also, De Gaulle’s imminent visit to Moscow in July 1966, probably encouraged the Soviets to exclude the United State from a pan-European conference. The antagonistic attitude of Paris towards Washington was no

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<sup>63</sup> Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik, IV/12, p. 723-732.

<sup>64</sup> As regards the Sino-Soviet conflict in the 1960s, see Vladislav Zubok, “Unwrapping the Enigma: What was behind the Soviet Challenge in the 1960s?” in Diane B. Kunz (ed.), The Diplomacy of the Crucial Decade: American Foreign Relations during the 1960s, Columbia University Press, 1994; Sergey Radchenko, “Splitting Asia: Beijing and Moscow in Search of Allies,” which was presented at the LSE at the invitation of the Cold War Studies Programme in 2002. This paper can be downloaded from his website, <http://www.radchenko.net/sinosovietresearch.shtml>

<sup>65</sup> AAPD 1966, Dok. 166, Botschafter von Walther, Moskau, an das Auswärtige Amt, 25.5.1966.

doubt a useful diplomatic tool for Moscow. From 1963, the Franco-American relationship had gone from bad to worse. To begin with, De Gaulle had opposed any cooperation with the US on nuclear matters, and pursued French nuclear independence. In January 1963, for example, he rejected the Anglo-American Nassau agreement which had offered Polaris medium-range missiles to France as well as to Britain.<sup>66</sup> He also continued to oppose the MLF, a NPT and NATO's flexible response strategy, all of which the Americans wanted to agree with their European partners. Still more critical for Paris-Washington relations, the General had started publicly to criticise US policy in Indo-china. Condemning the Vietnam War, he had instead proposed the unification of North and South Vietnam and its neutralisation, a stance which was completely unacceptable to the Americans.<sup>67</sup> In the course of 1964, as mentioned above, the French President had also condemned West Germany's closeness to the United States and had emphasised the necessity of a "European Europe" independent of America. Approaching the Warsaw Pact countries, furthermore, he announced in February 1965 a new concept of "cooperation from the Atlantic to the Urals" through which the German question would be solved.<sup>68</sup> France's boycott of the European Community Council of Ministers, the so-called "Empty Chair Crisis" of 1965, also gave the impression that the French were retreating from the Western Bloc.<sup>69</sup> Finally, last but not least, de Gaulle, in his 7 March 1966 letter to Johnson, announced the withdrawal of French forces from NATO's integrated military command.<sup>70</sup> All of these Gaullist challenges

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<sup>66</sup> Soutou, *L'Alliance incertaine*, pp. 230-40. At the same time, de Gaulle publicly rejected British membership of the European Economic Cooperation at the famous press conference on 14 January 1963. N. Piers Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain: The Six and the First UK Application to the EEC*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 206-212.

<sup>67</sup> Vaisse, *La Grandeur*, pp. 525-27; Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*, University of California Press, 1999.

<sup>68</sup> Soutou, *L'Alliance incertaine*, p. 284.

<sup>69</sup> However, as Ludlow convincingly proves, French commitment to the European integration process was much stronger than it appeared during the 1965/66 crisis. N. Piers Ludlow, *The European Community and the Crises of the 1960s: Negotiating the Gaullist Challenge*, London: Routledge, 2006, chapter 3 and 4.

<sup>70</sup> Frédéric Bozo, *Two Strategies for Europe: De Gaulle, the United States, and the Atlantic*

towards the United States and NATO were seen by the Soviets as evidence of a trend towards division within the Western Bloc.<sup>71</sup> For Moscow, a Franco-Soviet rapprochement could be a good opportunity to accelerate this centrifugal tendency. The Soviet leadership probably expected to obtain the General's support of a European security conference without America given de Gaulle's vision of a Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals".<sup>72</sup>

The Western Bloc countries, however, vehemently opposed the Soviet attempt to separate the United States from Europe. Although the Danish government suggested to its NATO partners that the West should take the initiative for a European security conference including America, other Alliance members were remarkably prudent and critical of the idea, doubting that such a conference could succeed at that time.<sup>73</sup> At the Ministerial meeting of the NATO council in June 1966, Foreign Ministers judged the value of a European conference negatively, and underlined that the participation of the Americans in any East-West negotiation on European security was crucial.<sup>74</sup> The Danish proposal was also regarded by the French and US Foreign Ministers as "dangerous [and likely] to raise false hopes in this area".<sup>75</sup> Other Ministers also supported this opinion. As a consequence, they deliberately ignored Moscow's call for a conference, did not mention it in their final communiqué, and, instead, underlined bilateral cooperation in the cultural, economic, scientific and technical fields.<sup>76</sup> Even de Gaulle, when he met Brezhnev in June 1966, argued that one could not

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Alliance, Rowman & Littlefield, 2001. See also, Schwartz, Lyndon Johnson and Europe, pp. 93-115.

<sup>71</sup> Newton, Julie M., Russia, France, and the Idea of Europe, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. 57-75.

<sup>72</sup> AAPD 1966, Dok. 142, Ministerialdirektor Werz an die Botschaft in Moskau, 10.5.1966.

<sup>73</sup> AAPD 1966, Dok. 169, Ministerialdirigent Ruete an die Ständige Vertretung bei der NATO in Paris, 27.5.1966 and fn. 9, p. 725.

<sup>74</sup> AAPD 1966, Dok. 166, fn. 10, p. 725.

<sup>75</sup> Telegram From the Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and European Regional Organizations to the Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS) 1964-1968, XIII, Doc. 177, 10.6.1966.

<sup>76</sup> As regards the text of NATO communiqué of 9 June 1966, <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c660607a.htm>

solve the German question without the US, and, although he did not reject the idea of a European conference, the French President stressed that he would see a conference as a result of détente, not as a means towards it.<sup>77</sup>

In a sense, the Soviet attempt to exclude American participation in a European security conference gave the West a good excuse to reject Moscow's proposal. However, a more fundamental obstacle to multilateral European détente was still the German problem. West Germany stubbornly maintained its non-recognition policy towards East Germany. Thus, if and when a European conference took place, it would be vitally important for the West Germans how the "Soviet occupied zone" would be involved.<sup>78</sup> As long as the Warsaw Pact countries demanded that East Germany should enjoy equal status to all other participants, Erhard's CDU government could never accept it. The Americans and more reluctantly the British endorsed Bonn's stance. The French also would not recognise the GDR. De Gaulle saw East Germany as an artificial entity which would disappear in three hours if the Soviets withdrew from it.<sup>79</sup> Although Brezhnev suggested a rapprochement of two Germanies must be done at a European conference, the General replied that German reunification would be a historical necessity in the long run; hence he could not accept two Germanies.<sup>80</sup> The 1966 Franco-Soviet summit thus came to an impasse on the German problem. As French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville put it, a European security conference was "highly premature, because one is still far from mutual understanding on the German question."<sup>81</sup> In order for détente to advance multilaterally, either German reunification would have to be realised beforehand or the existence of two Germanies would have to be accepted. The former seemed highly unlikely in the near future. Rather, a West German Social Democratic Party

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<sup>77</sup> Vaisse, *La Grandeur*, pp. 426-28; Bozo, *Two Strategies for Europe*, p. 177.

<sup>78</sup> AAPD 1966, Dok. 169, Ministerialdirigent Ruete an die Ständige Vertretung bei der NATO in Paris, 27.5.1966.

<sup>79</sup> Vaisse, *La Grandeur*, pp. 427.

<sup>80</sup> Bozo, *Two Strategies for Europe*, p. 177.

<sup>81</sup> AAPD 1966, Dok. 142, fn. 27, pp. 615-16.



(SPD) had adopted the latter direction. As early as 1963, Willy Brandt, at that time mayor of Berlin and the chairman of SPD from 1964, and his political advisor Egon Bahr had proclaimed the celebrated slogan “*Wandel durch Annäherung* (change through rapprochement)”. During the SPD party conference in June 1966, they committed themselves to pursue rapprochement between East and West Germany. In addition, the opposition in West Germany won the local elections in July 1966. The Federal Republic was changing.

Although de Gaulle did not concur with Brezhnev about a European security conference, the Soviets did not abandon the idea. Rather they made their proposal a more formal, concrete and collective initiative. On 4-6 July 1966, Warsaw Pact leaders gathered in Bucharest, and adopted the “Declaration of the Strengthening of Peace and Security in Europe”. The so-called Bucharest Declaration called for the convocation of an all-European conference for security and cooperation, as well as the dissolution of military alliances, the withdrawal of all foreign troops, the reduction of forces in both Germanies, the establishment of nuclear-free zones, West German renunciation of nuclear weapons, and the recognition of existing borders and East Germany.<sup>82</sup> By issuing such a declaration, the Eastern Bloc made its conference proposal that much more official. A Soviet newspaper praised the Declaration as “the most comprehensive and realistic plan for European security ever offered the people of Europe.”<sup>83</sup> Calling for the dissolution of the two alliances was unrealistic, however, and was regarded by the West as propaganda. The proposal for an *all-European* conference without mentioning America also indicated the exclusion of the United States. NATO governments thus dismissed the Declaration as an attempt to play the West Europeans off against the Americans, in order to weaken, and in the end

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<sup>82</sup> Haftendorn, *Sicherheit und Entspannung*, p. 417. The text of Bucharest Declaration in English can be downloaded from the “Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact” website;

[http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/documents/collection\\_3/PCC\\_docs/1966/1966\\_10.pdf](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/documents/collection_3/PCC_docs/1966/1966_10.pdf)

<sup>83</sup> Wolfe, *Soviet power and Europe*, p. 309.

disunite the Atlantic Alliance.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, NATO never referred to the Bucharest Declaration or a European security conference in public.<sup>85</sup> As will be seen, it was not until 1969 that the West publicly began to commit to the idea of a European conference for security and cooperation.

In the course of the mid-1960s, however, the way in which both the East and West pursued détente became clearer. There were three pillars. The first was in the economic and cultural fields including scientific and technical cooperation. Economic and cultural détente aimed at developing communications between the East and West for mutual benefit, thereby improving relations generally. The second pillar was the recognition of the status quo. By recognising the reality of the international situation through, for example, the conclusion of non-aggression pacts, status quo détente was to serve to stabilise East-West relations. And finally, arms control and disarmament was the third pillar of détente. Agreements on limitations or reductions of nuclear and conventional weapons were expected to bring about a militarily less confrontational situation. While the Warsaw Pact preferred the first two pillars of détente, NATO was to emphasise arms control and disarmament détente from 1967.

### **The Origins of MBFR and the Harmel Report**

In June 1968, the Foreign Ministers of NATO countries issued the so-called “Reykjavik signal,” which was a declaration proposing mutual and balanced reductions of conventional forces between East and West. This Declaration has been regarded as a counter-proposal to the Warsaw Pact’s initiative on a

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<sup>84</sup> Peter Becker, Die frühe KSZE-Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Der Außenpolitische Entscheidungsprozeß bis zur Unterzeichnung der Schlußakte von Helsinki, Lit, 1992, p. 109.

<sup>85</sup> Again, the final communiqué of the NATO ministerial meeting in December 1966 did not refer to a European conference. <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c661215a.htm>

European security conference.<sup>86</sup> The Signal, which would eventually lead to negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) in the 1970s, was in appearance the first proposal for multilateral European détente from the Western side.

The idea of balanced force reduction can be seen in the report of “The Future Tasks of the Alliance”, known as the “Harmel Report,” which defined NATO’s roles as being both defence and détente.<sup>87</sup> The report was an answer to de Gaulle’s challenges.<sup>88</sup> The Atlantic Alliance had to respond to French criticisms of its credibility and legitimacy.<sup>89</sup> France’s retreat from NATO’s integrated command and the General’s trip to Moscow in 1966 were serious attacks on the *raison d’être* of the military Alliance in the détente era. It was the Belgians who first took the initiative to review the roles of NATO in order to deal with its identity crisis. After the French withdrawal, Western ministers had decided to move the headquarters of the North Atlantic Alliance to Brussels, the capital of Belgium. Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel therefore needed to explain the importance of NATO to his domestic citizens who risked becoming the main targets of any Warsaw Pact offensives.<sup>90</sup> At the December 1966 NATO Ministerial meeting, the Belgian Foreign Minister thus proposed to “study the future tasks which face the alliance, and its procedures for fulfilling them, in order to strengthen the Alliance as a factor for durable peace.”<sup>91</sup> This recommendation was welcomed, and the Harmel study began in February 1967. Details of the Harmel exercise which eventually led to the report of “The Future Tasks of

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<sup>86</sup> Keliher, The Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, p. 16; Acimovic, Problems of Security, p. 81.

<sup>87</sup> The text of the Report on Future Tasks of the Alliance annexed to the 14 December 1967 NATO ministerial communiqué, <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c671213b.htm>

<sup>88</sup> Frédéric Bozo, “Détente versus Alliance: France, the United States and the Politics of the Harmel Report (1964-1968)”, Contemporary European History, 7/3 (1998).

<sup>89</sup> Andreas Wenger, “Crisis and Opportunity: NATO and the Miscalculation of Détente, 1966-1968”, Journal of Cold War Studies, 6/1 (2004), pp. 25-34.

<sup>90</sup> Rik Coolsaet, La politique extérieure de la Belgique: Au Coeur de l’Europe, le poids d’une petite puissance, Graduit du néerlandais par Serge Govaert, Bruxelles: De Boeck Université, 2002, p. 180.

<sup>91</sup> Quoted in Wenger, “Crisis and Opportunity”, p. 59.

the Alliance” adopted in December 1967 have been extensively examined elsewhere.<sup>92</sup> However, the origins of the concept of balanced force reductions in the Harmel report have not been sufficiently examined.<sup>93</sup> Although the idea of mutual conventional disarmament existed from the 1950s or earlier, the more precise origins of MBFR can be traced back to mid-1966.

It was at a meeting between Anglo-American Foreign Ministers on 9 June 1966, immediately after the spring NATO Ministerial meeting in Paris that a secret suggestion emerged. In the US Embassy in London, US Secretary of State Dean Rusk met UK Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart, and offered to study the possibility of a reciprocal withdrawal of Soviet and Allied troops. Rusk brought up this idea, because the Americans expected that, when de Gaulle visited Moscow in June 1966, the French and the Soviets would agree to pull their forces out of Germany. The US State Secretary said “from indications he had received he did not think the Russians were uninterested in the subject of reciprocal withdrawals and it might be dangerous if the French raised this.”<sup>94</sup> At that time, the Johnson government was under pressure because of the worsening balance of payments caused largely by the Vietnam War – a problem which strengthened Congressional pressures demanding unilateral withdrawal of

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<sup>92</sup> Helga Haftendorn, “The Adaption of the NATO Alliance to a Period of Détente: The 1967 Harmel Report”, in Wilfried Loth (ed.), Crises and Compromises: the European Project, 1963-1969, Nomos, 2001; Wenger, “Crisis and Opportunity”, pp. 59-71; Bozo, “Détente versus Alliance”, pp. 350-355.

<sup>93</sup> Haftendorn has referred to the May 1966 German proposal on armaments control measures including balanced reduction of forces. Haftendorn, “The Adaption of the NATO Alliance,” p. 306. Bluth has also stress the German origins of MBFR. Christoph Bluth, “Détente and Conventional Arms Control: West German Policy Priorities and the origins of MBFR”, German Politics, 8/1 (1999). However, as will be argued below, this study will stress the Anglo-American, as well as West German origins of MBFR. In their works, Wenger and Keliher have implied the US origins of MBFR. But they have completely missed the British factor. Wenger, “Crisis and Opportunity”, pp. 50-51; Keliher, The Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, pp. 13-15.

<sup>94</sup> The National Archives (Public Record Office), Kew, London (hereafter TNA). FO 371/190712, an extract from the record of the conversation between Rusk and Stewart on 9 June 1966. As regards Anglo-American relations and the Gaullist challenge, see also, James Ellison, “Defeating the General: Anglo-American Relations, Europe and the NATO Crisis of 1966”, Cold War History, 6/1 (2006).

US troops in Europe.<sup>95</sup> If the USSR was ready to reduce its forces in Central Europe, mutual reductions of East and West troops were preferable for the United States. For this idea to be useful, however, it would have to be the Americans and not the French who put it forward. Stewart agreed, commenting “we should not pass up any chance of doing so on a reciprocal basis.”<sup>96</sup> The two Foreign Ministers agreed to examine this topic only between the two governments and exclude other NATO partners and West Germany in particular. This was when the study leading to the future MBFR began.

Although the proposal to study a possible reciprocal withdrawal came from the Americans, the British accepted it more enthusiastically. On the one hand, ideologically, the British leftist Labour government favoured détente policies. During 1966, for example, Stewart took the initiative, albeit in vain, to produce a draft “Declaration on Europe,” which contained statements on the mutual respect for sovereignty and on the virtues of increased East-West economic and cultural exchanges. This enterprise was however rejected by the East because the draft recognised neither the GDR nor Germany’s eastern borders.<sup>97</sup> Yet, for the détente-oriented Wilson government, as mentioned above, the disarmament projects were also another attractive détente policy. Still more significantly, mutual force reductions would be helpful in ameliorating the worsening British balance of payments.<sup>98</sup> Since the 1950s, the British government, along with the US government, had wanted to reduce the cost of maintaining their troops in Germany.<sup>99</sup> There were two ways to cut down the burden, either to withdraw the troops or to demand that the West Germans cover the stationing costs.

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<sup>95</sup> Keliher, *The Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>96</sup> TNA. FO 371/190712, an extract from the record of the conversation between Rusk and Stewart on 9 June 1966.

<sup>97</sup> Hughes, “British policy towards Eastern Europe”, p. 121.

<sup>98</sup> On British economic and financial problems in the 1960s, see for example, Sabine Lee, *Victory in Europe: Britain and Germany Since 1945*, Longman, 2001, pp. 102-04.

<sup>99</sup> Hubert Zimmerman, “The Sour Fruits of Victory: Sterling and Security in Anglo-German Relations during the 1950s and 1960s”, *Contemporary European History*, 9/2 (2002).

From political and strategic points of view, weakening the bond with the Continent and NATO's military strength was considered highly undesirable; hence, the continuous demand for more money from the FRG government – the so-called 'offset problem'. The idea of reciprocal withdrawal of East-West troops was immediately regarded as a way to alleviate the offset problem that had been a long-standing and bitter issue between the UK and the FRG, because the partial withdrawal of British forces from Germany would become more acceptable than it would be were it carried out unilaterally.<sup>100</sup> Indeed, Prime Minister Wilson quickly showed his interest in it.<sup>101</sup> The combination of détente and the offset problem made a reciprocal withdrawal plan very attractive to the British government.

Yet, international financial speculation did not await the result of the study on mutual force withdrawals. The sterling crisis, which erupted in mid-1966, immediately forced Wilson to announce on 20 July 1966 that expenditure on British troops in Germany (the British Army of the Rhine or BAOR) "would be cut so that total foreign exchange costs were at a level covered by offset and other payments".<sup>102</sup> In the following month, the UK government officially informed the Council of Western European Union (WEU) that it was ready to withdraw a part of the 59,000 BAOR personnel. At the same time, the significance of reciprocal withdrawals became more important and clearer for the British.

For the Labour government, although the reasons for British troop withdrawals were exclusively economic, it was equally important to minimise political damage to relations with the FRG. In order to coax the West Germans, the British decided to promote mutual withdrawal arrangements as "an initial step towards wider military and political détente

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<sup>100</sup> TNA. FO 371/190712, Barnes to Arthur, 13.6.1966.

<sup>101</sup> TNA. FO 371/190712, Palliser to the Foreign Office, 30.6.1966.

<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Hubert Zimmerman, Money and Security: Troops, Monetary Policy, and West Germany's Relations with the United States and Britain, 1950-1971, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 189.

in Europe.”<sup>103</sup> London tried to persuade Bonn, arguing that they intended not to neutralise Germany but to contribute to détente by connecting their force reductions with those carried out on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Tactically, however, the British were determined to “keep this card up our sleeve, or at least only let the tip of it appear,” in order primarily to concentrate on bilateral offset negotiations with the West Germans, in which Britain would try to extract as much money from them as possible.<sup>104</sup> The time to consider showing more of the disarmament card, they thought, would be “after we have concluded our negotiations with the Germans and our financial position is no longer at risk.”<sup>105</sup> However, this card was soon played by the Americans.

In the United State, President Johnson also had to consider more seriously the idea of reciprocal force withdrawals. On 31 August 1966, Senator Mike Mansfield, the Democratic leader in the Senate, took a concrete initiative, proffering a resolution which called for “a substantial reduction of US Forces permanently stationed in Europe.”<sup>106</sup> Facing pressure from Congress calling for a unilateral pullback of US forces in Europe, the White House favoured force reductions on the both sides.<sup>107</sup> Five weeks later, on 7 October 1966, the US President made a famous speech on bridge-building, proclaiming loudly that “We want the Soviet Union and the nations of Eastern Europe to know that we and our allies shall go step by step with them as far as they are willing to advance.”<sup>108</sup> In this speech, Johnson mentioned mutual force reductions as one of the steps. In order to counter the “Mansfield Resolution,” the US leader made public the idea of an eventual mutual-withdrawal bargain with the Soviets.

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<sup>103</sup> TNA. FO 800/959, Charlfont to the Secreatary of State, 16.8.1966.

<sup>104</sup> TNA. FO 800/959, “Troop Reductions in Europe”, 19.8.1966.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Quoted in Keliher, The Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, p. 14. See also, Schwartz, Lyndon Johnson and Europe, pp. 121-2.

<sup>107</sup> Memorandum From the President's Deputy Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bator) to President Johnson, FRUS 1964-1968, XIII, Doc. 198, 11.8.1966.

<sup>108</sup> Quoted in Schwartz, Lyndon Johnson and Europe, p. 134.

Johnson's speech of 7 October 1966 is worthy of further attention, because he also referred to the German question. Indeed, the President argued: "We must improve the East-West environment in order to achieve the unification of Germany in the context of a larger, peaceful and prosperous Europe."<sup>109</sup> According to Zbigniew Brzezinski, an adviser to the US State Department's Policy Planning Council, this speech "fundamentally reversed the post-war priorities of the United States in Europe," because "[i]t said that reconciliation of the two halves of Europe was a necessary precondition for the eventual and rather distant reunification of Germany."<sup>110</sup> Actually, however, the Johnson administration still refused to recognise either East German sovereignty or the Oder-Neisse line, steps without which any multilateral European agreement was implausible because of Eastern antagonism against the Western non-recognition policy. Rather, what Johnson could do was to advance bilateral talks with the Soviet Union, much as his predecessor had done. In fact, in the autumn of 1966, the superpowers bilaterally thrashed out the broad outlines of a non-proliferation treaty.<sup>111</sup> Eventually, the Non-Proliferation Treaty was signed on 1 July 1968 without West German participation. Again Superpower détente was possible because it advanced independently of the problems of German reunification and recognition of the GDR.

In the Erhard government, Johnson's bridge-building speech was received as a sign that Washington no longer supported Bonn's policy on unification.<sup>112</sup> In fact, not only his policy, but also the Chancellor himself

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<sup>109</sup> Quoted in Wenger, "Crisis and Opportunity," p. 47. As regards Johnson's "bridge building" policy, see also, Frank Costigliola, "Lyndon B. Johnson, Germany, and "the End of the Cold War," in Warren I. Cohen and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (eds.) Lyndon B. Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy, 1963-1968, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 192-99.

<sup>110</sup> Quoted in Wenger, "Crisis and Opportunity", p. 47.

<sup>111</sup> White, Britain, Détente, pp. 116-17. See also, Hal Brands, "Progress Unseen: U.S. Arms Control Policy and the Origins of Détente, 1963-1968", Diplomatic History, 30/2 (2006), p. 270.

<sup>112</sup> Gray, Germany's Cold War, p. 195.





was abandoned by the Americans.<sup>113</sup> At the end of October 1966, Chancellor Erhard, who had lost America's support for his foreign and financial policies, resigned after the Free Democratic Party withdrew from his cabinet.<sup>114</sup> After one month of political turmoil, a new government was born: a "Grand Coalition" led by Kurt Kiesinger of the CDU/CSU and Willy Brandt of the SPD. The appointment of Brandt, as the new Foreign Minister, became a further factor pushing NATO towards mutual force reductions. Indeed, from the outset, the SPD leader supported the idea of disarmament on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Soon after becoming Foreign Minister, on 14 December 1966, Brandt raised the issue of step-by-step and mutual balanced force reductions at the Assembly of the WEU.<sup>115</sup> Then, in the course of reviewing the future roles of the Alliance, West Germany together with the United Kingdom, led the discussion of NATO towards arms control and disarmament détente.

From the future MBFR point of view, the importance of the Harmel exercise which started in February 1967 lay in the Atlanticisation of the reciprocal withdrawal problem. When Johnson had mentioned the possibility of mutual retreat, he had probably imagined a bilateral – or at most trilateral – process of pulling back US (plus possibly UK) and USSR forces stationed in Europe. The driving force would be "mutual example," namely an unspoken understanding between the superpowers to withdraw troops when the forces of the other side retreated unilaterally. It would need no formal agreement; therefore it could be carried out without touching the German question. Through the "Future role of Alliance" study, however, the problem of mutual force reductions would become NATO's multilateral project.

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<sup>113</sup> Quoted in Lee, *Victory in Europe*, p. 109.

<sup>114</sup> Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*, pp. 115-33; Gray, *Germany's Cold War*, pp. 194-95.

<sup>115</sup> Aus der Erklärung des Bundesministers Brandt vor der Versammlung der WEU in Paris, 14.12.1966, *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik*, p. 79; Bluth, "Détente and Conventional Arms Control", p. 186.

From a very early stage of the Harmel study, British and West German governments made clear that they wanted the Alliance to discuss the issue of mutual and balanced force reductions. London suggested in a letter of 11 February 1967 to the Secretary General of NATO, Manlio Brosio, that the Atlantic Alliance should undertake to study "the prospects of maintaining the present balance of deterrence in Europe while lowering the level of forces maintained opposite each other by the parties to the North Atlantic and Warsaw Treaties."<sup>116</sup> On 15 February 1967, the FRG's delegation to the special meeting of NATO Council, State Secretary of Foreign Ministry Karl Schütz also proposed to examine "the field of European security with special reference to the possibilities of gradual and balanced revision in force levels on both sides of the demarcation line of Central Europe."<sup>117</sup> The Americans were reluctant to discuss disarmament problems in the study of the future task of the Alliance. The leader of the US delegation to the study, Deputy Under Secretary of State Foy D. Kohler, was concerned primarily with defence problems and stressed that disarmament must not proceed at the expense of Alliance security.<sup>118</sup> Indeed, in his preliminary outline for the first discussion at the Sub-Group 3 - "General Questions of Defense Policy" - meeting on 18 April 1967, there was no mention of arms control and disarmament.<sup>119</sup> It was the West Germans, however, who submitted a counter-amendment. They stressed détente, as well as deterrence, stating that "primary importance attaches to a non-proliferation treaty and, for instance, to a step-by-step, balanced reduction of forces on both sides of the

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<sup>116</sup> Letter from United Kingdom Delegation, 11.2.1967, NATO Archives document, downloaded from PHP;

[http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll\\_Harmel.htm](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll_Harmel.htm)

<sup>117</sup> Statement Made by Herr K. Schütz State Secretary of the German Foreign Office, 15.2.1967, NATO Archives document, downloaded from PHP;

[http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll\\_Harmel.htm](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll_Harmel.htm)

<sup>118</sup> Haftendorn, "The Adaption of the NATO Alliance," p. 306; Letter From the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Kohler) to the British Assistant Under Secretary of State (Watson), FRUS 1964-1968, XIII, Doc. 260, 13.7.1967.

<sup>119</sup> Letter from US Delegation Circulating Rapporteur's Preliminary Outline, 17.4.1967, NATO Archives document, downloaded from PHP;

[http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll\\_Harmel.htm](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll_Harmel.htm)

Iron Curtain”.<sup>120</sup> Washington then reluctantly agreed to examine “What are the prospects for and risks of balanced force reductions?”<sup>121</sup> Still more importantly, NATO Foreign Ministers in principle endorsed the idea of balanced force reductions at their biannual meeting in June 1967.<sup>122</sup>

The concept of mutual force reductions was then gradually transformed into a multilateral project. Although the US government did not renounce the idea of bilateral withdrawal, it was drawn into a multilateral framework. Existing economic and political pressures among some NATO members to reduce defence expenditure did not permit merely superpower troop reductions. It required studying how to achieve a balanced and lower force level of NATO and Warsaw Pact forces.<sup>123</sup> It was the British, supported by the West Germans, which took the lead in pressing for studies on balanced East/West reductions after the June 1967 NATO Ministerial meeting.<sup>124</sup> Eventually, the final Harmel Report of December 1967 confirmed the need for an active study of this subject. Moreover, from February 1968, the Atlantic Alliance launched the follow-up to the Harmel Exercise, in which mutual force reductions played a central role.<sup>125</sup> Given a less tense East/West atmosphere and the pressures for budgetary defence cuts in some NATO countries, there was a fear that a chain reaction of unilateral force

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<sup>120</sup> Proposals by the German Delegation to US Draft, 5.5.1967, NATO Archives document, downloaded from PHP;

[http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll\\_Harmel.htm](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll_Harmel.htm)

<sup>121</sup> Telegram From the Department of State to the Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and European Regional Organizations, *FRUS 1964-1968, XIII*, Doc. 252, 5.10.1967; Letter from US Delegation Circulating a Revised Outline on Future Defence Policy, 15.5.1967, NATO Archives document, downloaded from PHP;

[http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll\\_Harmel.htm](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll_Harmel.htm)

<sup>122</sup> The Final Communiqué of NATO Ministerial meeting of 13-14 June 1967 stated that: “if conditions permit, a balanced reduction of forces by the East and West could be a significant step toward security in Europe. A contribution on the part of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries towards a reduction of forces would be welcomed as gesture of peaceful intent.” <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c670613a.htm>

<sup>123</sup> Paper Prepared in the Department of State, *FRUS 1964-1968, XIII*, Doc. 273, 10.25.1967.

<sup>124</sup> TNA. FCO 41/181, NATO Ministerial Meeting Reykjavik: 24-25 June, 1968, Brief no. 2, Follow-up to the Report on the Future Tasks of the Alliance, undated; *AAPD 1967*, Dok. 318, Aufzeichnung des Botschafters Schnippenkötter, 7.9.1967.

<sup>125</sup> Martin Müller, *Politik und Bürokratie: die MBFR-Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zwischen 1967 und 1973*, Nomos, 1988, pp. 56-57.

reductions, which could lead to a collapse of the Alliance, might occur.<sup>126</sup> In order to avoid this, it was necessary to examine the degree of force levels, the principles and the procedure for reductions as a whole. Hence, the reciprocal withdrawal idea was multilateralised.

This meant that East Germany would participate in future negotiations on mutual force reductions. Indeed, all six “models” of hypothetical mutual withdrawal, which were discussed in NATO’s follow-up exercise in early 1968, contained the GDR as a participant.<sup>127</sup> If the West wanted to agree on balanced reductions of forces between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in the Central Europe, East German involvement would be unavoidable. No doubt, the GDR and its Warsaw Pact allies would have insisted on equal status of both Germanies as members of international society as a condition of reciprocal force reductions. If so, why did NATO publicly proposed mutual and balanced force reductions in the Reykjavik Signal of June 1968?

Interestingly, it was the Americans who first and enthusiastically asked their allies to adopt the Signal.<sup>128</sup> Despite their early reluctance about multilateral troop cuts, on 25 May 1968 Washington proposed to its NATO partners that the Alliance issue a declaration for mutual force reductions.<sup>129</sup> This sudden US offer was surprising. Indeed, it was not a natural outcome of the Harmel Report. During March and April 1968, NATO had actually examined an “arms freeze in Europe” plan suggested by the Belgians as something to discuss at the next Ministerial meeting in Reykjavik.<sup>130</sup> More

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<sup>126</sup> AAPD 1967, Dok. 313, Botschafter Knappstein, Washington, an Ministerialdirektor Ruete, 30.8.1967.

<sup>127</sup> Müller, *Politik und Bürokratie*, p. 58.

<sup>128</sup> Müller and Bluth have argued that the Reykjavik signal was the result of efforts by Harmel and Brandt. Müller, *Politik und Bürokratie*, p. 59; Bluth, “Détente and Conventional Arms Control,” p. 187. However, their insinuations are misleading.

<sup>129</sup> AAPD 1968, Dok. 171, Botschafter Grewe, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 25.5.1968.

<sup>130</sup> The Belgians had talked about the idea with the Polish beforehand without consultation with its NATO partners; therefore, the Belgian proposal was criticised by the majority of allies. Telegram From the Department of State to the Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *FRUS 1964-1968, XIII*, Doc. 300, 17.4.1968; *Documents on British Foreign*

importantly, a study being undertaken in NATO on mutual and balanced force reductions was still at a very early stage.<sup>131</sup> In practice, therefore, the West was not yet ready to make proposals on reciprocal troop cuts.<sup>132</sup>

The reason for the American proposal was, again, domestic pressure. From the spring of 1968, Senator Symington led the Senate to push for an amendment calling for a cut in U.S. troops in Europe to only 50,000. (At that time, there were more than 300,000 men stationed in Europe.)<sup>133</sup> In order to contain Congressional demand for unilateral cuts, Johnson and Rusk sought NATO's help to approve a mutual troop reduction appeal. They did so, however, in the expectation that NATO's initiative would be rejected by the Eastern Bloc. Although, in their Bucharest Declaration of 1966, the Warsaw Pact countries had referred to the withdrawal of all foreign troops and reductions in forces in both Germanies, the Soviet Union seemed to have lost interest in disarmament from 1967. Reportedly, this was partly because the USSR government was under considerable pressure internally and from the North Vietnamese not to take any action which would make it easier for the US to withdraw troops from Europe for use in Vietnam.<sup>134</sup> Such actions could also entail criticism from Communist China. In addition, events in Czechoslovakia, which will be described below, gave the Soviets good reasons to keep their troops in Central Europe. In fact, after Rusk had officially proposed that parallel troop reductions be made to Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin in January 1968, there was no reply from Moscow.<sup>135</sup> The US State Secretary could, therefore, persuade his counterparts that: "[Rusk] doubted that the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact colleagues would be particularly

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Policy Overseas (hereafter DBPO), Series III, Volume I, p. 44, fn. 9.

<sup>131</sup> Bluth, "Détente and Conventional Arms Control," p. 187.

<sup>132</sup> In fact, later in August, all 'models' submitted by Belgium, West Germany, Canada, the US, and the UK were rejected by the NATO's military committee. Müller, Politik und Bürokratie, p. 59.

<sup>133</sup> Schwartz, Lyndon Johnson and Europe, p. 215.

<sup>134</sup> Paper Prepared in the Department of State, FRUS 1964-1968, XIII, Doc. 273, 25.10.1967.

<sup>135</sup> Wilfried Loth, Overcoming the Cold War: A History of Détente, 1950-1991, Palgrave, 2002, p. 94.

interested in holding discussions at this time. ... However, NATO agreement that any troop reductions should be mutual will help the US hold the line against demands for a unilateral force reduction.”<sup>136</sup> This implied that, with a declaration, NATO could show an openness towards arms control and disarmament détente that might also serve to counter US domestic pressures without touching the German question at least for a time, because the Warsaw Pact supposedly could not give a positive response to the declaration and hence could not use the opportunity to ask for the recognition of the GDR.

All NATO governments except France supported the US proposal. Although Paris had accepted the Harmel Report, it had done so reluctantly. The General, who criticised the Atlantic Alliance, did not want to strengthen NATO’s consultation role. Nonetheless, when confronted with their partners’ strong desire to conclude the Harmel study at the Ministerial meeting in December 1967, France, which had already retreated from the Alliance’s military integrated command, could not reject NATO completely; therefore it reluctantly joined the final Report.<sup>137</sup> The French government thus became less cooperative in the follow-up Harmel exercise. In particular, Paris dissociated itself from the discussions on reciprocal force reductions. For the French, the idea of multilateralised mutual troop reductions meant negotiations between two military alliances. Such bloc-to-bloc dialogues were totally contrary to de Gaulle’s détente aim: namely the dissolution of blocs through bilateral communication.<sup>138</sup> Subsequently, through the 1970s, the French government continued to refuse to contemplate MBFR.

On 25 June 1968, the Fourteen NATO Foreign Ministers approved the Reykjavik Signal without France.<sup>139</sup> For Washington, the French absence

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<sup>136</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, FRUS 1964-1968, XIII, Doc. 309, 6.6.1968. See also, TNA. FCO 41/180, Washington tel no. 1826 to FCO 11.6.1968.

<sup>137</sup> Bozo, “Détente versus Alliance,” pp. 350-55; Wenger, “Crisis and Opportunity,” pp. 66-68.

<sup>138</sup> Bozo, Two Strategies for Europe, pp. 220-22.

<sup>139</sup> As regards the text of the Reykjavik Signal,  
<http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c680624b.htm>

did not matter; to refute critics in Congress was much more significant than winning French acceptance.<sup>140</sup> Admitting that “the other part of Germany would have to be involved at some stage,” Brandt also accepted the Declaration on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions.<sup>141</sup> As argued above, however, NATO’s multilateral European détente proposal was mainly produced for US domestic purposes and not in the expectation of a reply from the Warsaw Pact.<sup>142</sup> In this sense, the Reykjavik Signal was not a counter détente proposal in response to the East’s calling for a European security conference (ESC). Nonetheless, within a year, MBFR would become a counter proposal, and the relationship between an ESC and MBFR was to become one of the central issues in the European détente of the 1970s.

Despite appearances, the Harmel Report was not the genesis of détente in Europe. Firstly, as mentioned above, the Reykjavik Signal was aimed at the US Congress, not at the Warsaw Pact. Secondly and still more significantly, the Report did not contribute to the resolution of the German question, the structural problem blocking European reconciliation. Rather, the process of the Harmel study was a good opportunity for the West Germans to highlight their vital interests, convincing their allies of the importance of the German question for European security.<sup>143</sup> In the course of discussions in the Harmel study sub-group 1 which was considering “East-West relations,” the German government repeated its traditional positions: the German nation’s right to self-determination, the responsibility of the Four Powers, and the non-recognition of the GDR.<sup>144</sup> Despite the Grand Coalition leaders’ new steps, such as the normalisation of West German-Rumanian relations in January 1967, Bonn did not change its stance in the Harmel exercise. Smaller countries like Canada, the

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<sup>140</sup> Memorandum for the Record, FRUS 1964-1968, XIII, Doc. 313, 19.6.1968; TNA. FCO 41/180, Washington tel no. 1826 to FCO 11.6.1968.

<sup>141</sup> TNA. FCO 41/182, UKDEL NATO Saving tel no. 30 to FO, 28.6.1968.

<sup>142</sup> Intelligence Note No. 512, FRUS 1964-1968, XIII, Doc. 316, 28.6.1968.

<sup>143</sup> AAPD 1967, Dok. 184, Aufzeichnung des Ministerialdirektors Ruete, 26.5.1967.

<sup>144</sup> Haftendorn, “The Adaption of the NATO Alliance”, p. 299.

Netherlands, and Belgium criticised the FRG's attitude in vain. London, which had responsibility together with Bonn for the Sub-Group 1, also opposed the Germans, but they were not able to achieve a breakthrough. In the absence of agreement, the report on the German question was in the end issued merely as a personal statement by the two chairmen of the Sub-Group 1.<sup>145</sup> The Harmel study process demonstrated the isolation of what was perceived to be stubborn West Germany among its NATO partners. Nonetheless, the Harmel Report could offer little new on the German problem given that it was meant to be an exercise in Alliance solidarity and needed unanimous support. Although the Harmel Report highlighted détente, along with defence, it achieved little in paving the way towards multilateral European détente.<sup>146</sup> As will be argued in chapter 3, this last would be possible only after the success of Brandt's Ostpolitik involving the *de facto* recognition of the existence of the GDR.

### **Student Protests and the Origins of the Brezhnev Doctrine**

In 1968, further challenges hit the two blocs, which would have considerable influence on multilateral European détente. In the West, student revolts spread from city to city in the first half of the year. In the East, Czechoslovakia's movement to reform socialism was blocked by the Warsaw Pact's military intervention. In order to understand the development of discussions on a European security conference analysed in the following chapters, the 1968 crises in both Eastern and Western camps will be briefly described in this section.

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., pp. 300-02; Wenger, "Crisis and Opportunity", pp. 63-64.

<sup>146</sup> Andreas Wenger has argued that "NATO's crisis and its ensuring transformation were instrumental in the shift from the bilateral superpower détente of 1963 to the multilateral European détente of the 1970s." Wenger, "Crisis and Opportunity", p. 72. However, the Harmel Report, which did not contain any new approach towards the German question, was not instrumental for moving towards multilateral European détente of the 1970s.



On 5 January 1968, due to a continued inability to deal with a long-standing economic crisis, unpopular Czechoslovakia leader Antonin Novotny was finally forced to resign. The reformist Slovak party leader, Alexander Dubcek took over the post of the first secretary of the Czechoslovakia Communist Party. He was a sincere communist, but he attempted to construct 'Socialism with a human face.' Soon the new leader suggested policies of economic as well as political reform, expanding freedom, such as encouraging public discussion, ending official press censorship, and limiting the powers of the secret police. He also attempted to strengthen links with West European countries, at the same time as he gradually removed Moscow's representatives in his country.<sup>147</sup>

Dubcek's reforms were strongly criticised not only by the Soviets but also more harshly by the East European partners. In particular, Polish leader Gomulka, who was irritated by the student protests of March 1968 in Warsaw, gave vent to his hostility, stating that "Hence it is appropriate to consider, within the framework of the Warsaw Treaty, the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Soviet forces."<sup>148</sup> Fearing the possibility of a spillover into their countries, at a meeting of the Warsaw Pact summit in Dresden on 23 March 1968, Gomulka and East German leader Walter Ulbricht condemned the events in Czechoslovakia as "counterrevolution."<sup>149</sup>

Despite the increasing pressure from its Communist partners, on 5 April 1968, the Czechoslovakia Communist Party adopted and published a very liberal "Action Programme," a document mapping out comprehensive reform policies. The reform programme declared that it did not "wish to assert its leading role by bringing pressure to bear on society, but by serving

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<sup>147</sup> Mark Kramer, "The Czechoslovak Crisis and the Brezhnev Doctrine," in Carole Fink et al., (eds.), 1968: The World Transformed, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp.121-22; Matthew J. Ouimet, The Rise and Fall of the Brezhnev Doctrine in Soviet Foreign Policy, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003, p. 18.

<sup>148</sup> Quoted in Vojtech Mastny, "Was 1968 a Strategic Watershed of the Cold War?" Diplomatic History, 29/1 (2005), p. 156.

<sup>149</sup> Kramer, "The Czechoslovak Crisis," p.128; Mark Kramer, "The Prague Spring and the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia: New Interpretation," Cold War International History Project Bulletin, Issue 3, 1993, p. 5.

it devotedly with an eye to its free, progressive, socialist development.”<sup>150</sup> In Czechoslovak newspapers and journals, lively discussions of political and social issues had begun. Unofficial political “clubs” sprang up all around the country, advocating the creation of non-communist parties.<sup>151</sup> Spring was coming in Prague.

Carefully observing the Czechoslovakian situation, NATO countries adopted a cautious attitude. Although Dubcek’s reformist trend was undoubtedly welcomed, they were also deeply concerned about a Soviet reaction partly because they were afraid that the tragedy of the 1956 Hungarian revolution would be repeated.<sup>152</sup> It was thought that the West’s approach to Czechoslovakia might provoke a Soviet invasion. Caution was also necessary, because the West still wanted to improve its relations with the Eastern Bloc as a whole. Indeed, some NATO members genuinely expected reciprocal force reductions in the future, and probably more imperative, the day of concluding a Non-Proliferation Treaty seemed to be approaching. Not to irritate Moscow at a crucial stage was important for advancing arms control détente. Therefore, NATO adopted a wait-and-see approach towards the Prague Spring.<sup>153</sup>

At the same time, West European countries suffered their own domestic protests. Slower growth, industrial unrest, and political alienation were common problems across Western Europe at that time.<sup>154</sup> More tangibly, the bloody Vietnam War provoked growing resentment all over the world, in particular among university students, the population of which had risen dramatically after the Second World War.<sup>155</sup> Students then became leading protesters against governments’ social, economic, political and cold

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<sup>150</sup> Quoted in J.P.D. Dunbabin, The Cold War: The Great Powers and their Allies, London: Longman, 1994, p. 446.

<sup>151</sup> Kramer, “The Czechoslovak Crisis”, p. 122.

<sup>152</sup> John G. McGinn, “The Politics of Collective Inaction: NATO’s Response to the Prague Spring”, Journal of Cold War Studies, 1/3 (1999), pp. 121-2.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122-23.

<sup>154</sup> David Reynolds, One World Divisible: A Global History since 1945, London: W.W. Norton, 2001, p. 191.

<sup>155</sup> Suri, Power and Protest, pp. 88-93.

war policies. Some of the earliest mass student revolts in Western Europe erupted in Italy the winter of 1967-1968 at universities from Trento to Rome; by February 1968, these had spread to London and West Berlin, in which large-scale anti-Vietnam war demonstrations broke out.<sup>156</sup> In April 1968, “the biggest and most violent protests in post war German history” exploded against the Federal Republic government’s “emergency laws”.<sup>157</sup>

The most striking of student protests was the French upheavals of May 1968. First ignited at the new University of Nanterre, the dissident flame leaped to the centre of Paris, at the Sorbonne, where students clashed with police, and built barricades. The student protests proliferated in many other cities in France. Furthermore, industrial workers joined students, escalating the protest into a general strike on 22 May 1968. France was so paralyzed that de Gaulle escaped from Paris to Baden-Baden, Germany. By late June 1968, the situation was returning to normal owing to huge concessions made by Georges Pompidou’s government.<sup>158</sup> However, this series of student revolts had had a deep impact on Ministers. At the Reykjavik NATO Ministerial meeting of June 1968, for example, British Foreign Minister Michael Stewart’s speech included the following passage;

[...] we have not only a defence and deterrent function but a function of promoting détente. But we have not only to do that; we have got to make it quite clear to the younger generation that that is what we are doing, because in fact to the critic, who looks at the world and who says that it is outrageous that mankind should be thus divided and is inclined to blame his own country for it, if he is a citizen of a NATO country, there is a good and valid answer we can make to him. [...] ,[W]e shall, [...], be increasingly in a position to show him what we are now doing in a genuine search for détente; but it will be necessary

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<sup>156</sup> Reynolds, *One World Divisible*, p. 190; Suri, *Power and Protest*, p. 180.

<sup>157</sup> Reynolds, *One World Divisible*, p. 191; Suri, *Power and Protest*, p. 181.

<sup>158</sup> On the events of May 1968 in France, Reynolds, *One World Divisible*, pp. 191-93; Suri, *Power and Protest*, pp. 186-94; Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, “May 1968 in France: The Rise and Fall of a New Social Movement,” in Carole Fink, et al. (eds.), *1968: The World Transformed*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

to make this clear to the younger generation.<sup>159</sup>

At a later stage, with his conviction that NATO should be more forthcoming in order to attract support from the younger generation, the UK Secretary of State would try to lead the Atlantic Alliance to commit to the idea of multilateral East-West contacts.

At just about the same time, grass roots activity became more visible in Czechoslovakia. On 27 June 1968, the "Manifesto of 2,000 words" written by a famous writer and supported by many prominent intellectuals, was published in major newspapers. It boldly condemned the Communist Party and pleaded for citizens to advance reforms and democratisation. The reactions from ordinary Czech people were also clear. Letters supporting the Manifesto almost immediately arrived at media offices throughout the country.<sup>160</sup> Power from below began to shake the Eastern Bloc.

The Two Thousand Words Manifesto markedly alarmed the Warsaw Pact leaders. For instance, Hungarian Communist leader Janos Kadar, who had been relatively moderate before June 1968, joined hard-liners, pledging to Brezhnev that, if necessary, Hungary would participate in a military occupation of Czechoslovakia.<sup>161</sup> The Warsaw summit of 14-15 July 1968, then adopted the open "Warsaw Letter," to the Czechs, stating that "We cannot, [...], agree that hostile forces push your country off the path of Socialism and cause the separation of Czechoslovakia from the Socialist Community of Nations. These are not any longer your concerns only. These are the common concerns of all Communist and Workers' Parties and of all the nations joined in alliance, co-operation, and friendship."<sup>162</sup> This was an ultimatum, implying a threat to intervene in Czechoslovakia. From the end

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<sup>159</sup> TNA, FCO 41/182, Text of Secretary of State's Statement in the General Debate on 23 June. See also, AAPD 1968, Dok. 204, Ministerialdirektor Ruete, z.Z. Reykjavik, an das Auswärtige Amt, 25.6.1968.

<sup>160</sup> Suri, *Power and Protest*, pp. 200-03.

<sup>161</sup> Kramer, "The Czechoslovak Crisis", p. 146.

<sup>162</sup> Quoted in Wilfried Loth, "Moscow, Prague and Warsaw: Overcoming the Brezhnev Doctrine," *Cold War History*, 1/2 (2001), p. 103.

of July to mid August 1968, there were several vain talks between the Soviets and the Czechs. On 13 August 1968, an exhausted Dubcek told Brezhnev of his readiness to resign because he thought he could no longer stop the dynamism of reform, which implied for the Soviet leader that Czechoslovakia was spiralling out of the Communist Party leader's control.<sup>163</sup> On 17 August 1968, the Soviet Politburo decided to start the military operation 'Danube'; three days later, Soviet-led Warsaw Pact forces (except Rumania) crossed the Czech borders and occupied the country.<sup>164</sup>

The West's response towards the Warsaw Pact's military intervention in Czechoslovakia was mixed. The ingredients included surprise because NATO governments had not expected that military action would be taken, followed by strong anger at the brutality of the repression.<sup>165</sup> In particular, the East's justification for the intervention provoked further antipathy. The Brezhnev Doctrine, as it was dubbed in the West, claimed that "sovereignty and the right to self-determination of the Socialist countries were subordinated to the interests of the Socialist world system."<sup>166</sup> On the other hand, the NATO governments' actual reactions were restrained. While they stopped ministerial level contact with the invading Eastern Bloc governments as a gesture of protest, the Western governments did not take harsh retaliatory moves such as economic sanctions. The US, Britain, and other NATO countries kept their reactions muted and before long returned to a "business as usual" approach towards the Warsaw Pact governments.<sup>167</sup> Probably, it was partly because they had thought from the start that if the Soviet Union had intervened in Czechoslovakia, the Western powers could have done nothing.<sup>168</sup> It might also have been because many thought, though unvoiced, that pursuing détente rather than taking a confrontational

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<sup>163</sup> Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., pp. 34-35; Kramer, "The Czechoslovak Crisis", pp. 154-56.

<sup>165</sup> Hughes, "British policy towards Eastern Europe", pp. 124-26.

<sup>166</sup> Quoted in Loth, "Moscow, Prague and Warsaw", p. 104.

<sup>167</sup> Hughes, "British policy towards Eastern Europe", p. 131; Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*, pp. 216-18.

<sup>168</sup> Hughes, "British policy towards Eastern Europe", p. 125.

approach was still a practical way to stabilise not only East-West relations, but also the Western Bloc as well as the domestic integrity of each NATO country. In fact, despite the agreement by the Foreign Ministers of the Atlantic Alliance that détente should become “a long-term goal of NATO policy,”<sup>169</sup> as will be argued in the following chapters, momentum for East/West rapprochement eventually leading up to multilateral European détente was to come sooner than had been expected.

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<sup>169</sup> Telegram From Secretary of State Rusk to the Department of State, FRUS 1964-1968, XIII, Doc. 337, 16.11.1968.

## **Chapter 2: NATO's Commitment to a European Security**

### **Conference, January 1969 - May 1970**

In 1969, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The year 1969 also saw important administrative changes in the Western Bloc, particularly in the United States, France and West Germany. A new US government was inaugurated in January 1969 with President Richard Nixon's famous speech proclaiming the beginning of the "era of negotiation." For Europe, 1969 was also the starting point of multilateral European détente. Indeed, the Warsaw Pact's Budapest Appeal of March 1969 was the first step of the road leading to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.<sup>1</sup> One part of this chapter will analyse the Western reactions to the Eastern initiative. Then, after discussing the new French and FRG governments' policy towards a European security conference, this chapter will illustrate how one of the most significant Western proposals – namely the call for "freer movement of people, ideas, and information" – appeared in NATO's Declaration on East-West relations. And finally, focusing on the British role and the importance of public opinion, the third part of this chapter will highlight the diplomacy among NATO countries, which culminated in their commitment to multilateral East/West contacts at the Rome NATO Ministerial meetings in May 1970. The period between March 1969 and May 1970 were therefore characterised by the first significant transformation of European détente with the proposal of "freer movement" designed to change the status quo, and by the first public statement by the Atlantic Alliance expressing a willingness to get involved with a multilateral project. The ground rules for East-West dialogue which had applied throughout the 1960s were hence significantly and rapidly

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<sup>1</sup> During 1969/70, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was generally referred to as the European security conference.

re-written in a twelve month period at the very end of the decade.

### **Western Reaction to the Budapest Appeal**

The first half of 1969 saw three important steps towards the establishment of multilateral European détente. Firstly, the Warsaw Pact issued the so-called Budapest Appeal, which was one of the most direct origins of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Secondly, while suspicious of the Eastern initiative, NATO indirectly responded to it by embarking on the drafting of their own 'list of concrete issues' for East/West negotiations. And finally, Finland, a neutral country, emerged as a likely mediator between the two antagonistic alliances.

It was on 17 March 1969 that the concept of a European security conference re-emerged. About six months after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Warsaw Pact members held a meeting of their Political Consultative Committee in Budapest and issued an appeal "to All European Countries".<sup>2</sup> In this Appeal, the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries again proposed the convening of a European conference on security. As had been the case in the Bucharest Declaration of 1966, they laid down the following points as necessary in order to safeguard European security: the inviolability of existing frontiers in Europe including the Oder-Neisse line and the frontiers between the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic, the recognition of East Germany, and a special status for West Berlin other than as a part of West Germany. Also, the Budapest Appeal did not refer to the offer made by NATO Ministers in Reykjavik in June 1968 to enter into discussions with the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions.

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<sup>2</sup> The text of the Budapest Appeal (extracts): Michael Palmer, The prospects for a European Security Conference, London: Chatham House, PEP, 1971, pp.85-7.



Moscow's main motivation was still to consolidate the *status quo* in Europe.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, after the Sino-Soviet border skirmish in early March 1969, it had probably become even more important for Moscow to stabilise its Western front.<sup>4</sup> Still, for the Soviets, recognition of the *status quo* meant recognition of the existence of East Germany. Thus, the GDR's participation in an international conference was an important aim for the USSR, because this would indicate that the West accepted East Germany as a member of the international society. There was hence nothing new in the substance of the Budapest Appeal. However, the tone of the Appeal was less aggressive than the 1966 Bucharest Declaration. For example, it cautiously avoided propaganda criticism of the West Germany. It also no longer demanded the dismantlement of the two military alliances as a pre-condition for talks. While the Appeal did not mention the USA, the Soviets privately indicated their acceptance of American participation in such a conference.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, the reactions of Western countries to the Budapest Appeal were divided, but understandably the majority was cautious or sceptical.

Many Ministers expressed their suspicions when they discussed the Budapest Appeal at the NATO Council of Minister meetings in Washington on 10-11 April 1969, which was also the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty. For example, Michael Stewart, the British Foreign Secretary, remarked that the Budapest declaration might be partly designed to undermine Western unity. He stressed, rather, the significance of the Alliance's military build-up, which, he believed, was a *sine qua non* for

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<sup>3</sup> William Bundy, A Tangled Web: The Making of Foreign Policy in the Nixon Presidency, New York: Hill and Wang, 1998, p. 247.

<sup>4</sup> Sarotte stressed in her recent work that Soviet détente policy was strongly affected by the armed clash with China. M. E. Sarotte, Dealing With the Devil: East Germany, Détente, and Ostpolitik, 1969-1973 (The New Cold War History), University of North Carolina Press, 2001, esp. pp. 4, 21-3, 178.

<sup>5</sup> The Digital National Security Archives (hereafter, DNSA), <http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/>, The Kissinger Transcripts: A Verbatim Record of U.S. Diplomacy, 1969-1977, Memorandum of Conversation with Ambassador Dobrynin, April 3, 1969, KT00014; Henry Kissinger, White House Years, Little Brown, 1979, p. 414.

improving East-West relations.<sup>6</sup> The UK Foreign Office had argued that “the statement [namely, the Appeal] gives no ground for supposing that there is sufficient readiness on the part of the Warsaw Pact countries to move from unacceptable positions in regard to a conference or for a preliminary meeting”. Furthermore, the British criticized the Appeal for failing to make concrete proposals for a conference.<sup>7</sup> Michel Debré, the French Foreign Minister, also saw the chances of success for a European Security Conference as low, and felt that at present no conference at all would be preferable to certain failure.<sup>8</sup> The US State Secretary William Rogers did not hide his doubts either, stating that “[NATO] members might test Soviet intentions by seeing if the Russians were prepared to drop the idea of a single conference and were ready instead to accept the need for an evolutionary process.”<sup>9</sup> The Belgian, Dutch, West German and other representatives were equally cautious about the initiative of the East.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, a few governments indicated their interest in the Warsaw Pact offer. Italian Foreign Minister Pietro Nenni, who was the leader of the Italian Socialist Party, welcomed the Eastern initiative. In his speech, the Italian suggested that a NATO proposal for a conference on pan-European security would be the best response to the Budapest Declaration. The Norwegian Foreign Minister also indicated his willingness to participate in such a security conference. Yet, their voices were too isolated to have an immediate effect.

NATO's caution about a European security conference was therefore reflected in their agreements on this matter. At the NATO Council meeting, Ministers confirmed four basic principles on the issue: a conference should not be conditional, it should be well prepared, it should have a reasonable

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<sup>6</sup> TNA. FCO 41/411, Washington tel no.54 to FCO, 11.4.1969; AAPD 1969, Dok.121, Ministerialdirektor Ruete, z.Z. Washington, an das Auswärtige Amt, 11.4.1969.

<sup>7</sup> TNA. FCO 41/538, tel no.117, Stewart to UKDEL NATO, 18.3.1969.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. FCO 41/411, Washington tel no.54 to FCO, 11.4.1969.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> TNA. FCO 41/411, tel no.54 A Saving, Washington to FCO, 11.4.1969; AAPD 1969, Dok.121, Ministerialdirektor Ruete, z.Z. Washington, an das Auswärtige Amt, 11.4.1969.

prospect of resolving the major problems of European security, including the German question, and the United States and Canada should participate from the outset in the conference and all preparatory meetings.<sup>11</sup> These principles would still be useful in opposing the Warsaw Pact initiative should they decide to turn it down, because the words 'well prepared' and 'reasonable prospect' were so subjective. Moreover, NATO governments agreed, under strong American insistence in particular, not to include the words "the Budapest Appeal" in their final communiqué, implying that the West did not accept the Appeal. The communiqué therefore made no mention of any European security conference.<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, the West could not completely ignore the East's initiative, as they had done before. There were two reasons for this. In the first place, the less offensive tone of the Budapest Appeal made it difficult to reject it out of hand, because the West feared that to do so would be to present the East with an easy propaganda victory. As argued in the previous chapter, this concern had increased with the 1968 student uprisings. Stewart told Rogers that "[i]t was difficult to justify to the younger generation the continued need for the Alliance if we appeared merely to say 'no' in response to a specific proposal."<sup>13</sup> Secondly, it was important for the NATO states to maintain their solidarity. Therefore, they had to take into consideration the fact that some governments wanted détente. The British and French Foreign Ministers thus suggested that NATO should not adopt a negative attitude towards the Budapest Appeal but instead seek to distinguish Soviet propaganda from the USSR's genuine desire for negotiations.<sup>14</sup> The FRG

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<sup>11</sup> TNA. FCO 41/411, tel no.54, Washington to FCO, 11.4.1969.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c690410a.htm>. Later, Italian Foreign Minister Nenni expressed some dissatisfaction with the NATO communiqué and in particular the absence of any specific mention of the Budapest appeal. TNA. FCO 41/411, Record of Conversation between the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Italian Foreign Minister at the Italian Embassy in Washington on Saturday, 12 April at 10 a.m.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Record of Conversation between the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the US Secretary of State, 12 April.

<sup>14</sup> AAPD 1969, Dok.121, Ministerialdirektor Ruete, z.Z. Washington, an das Auswärtige

Foreign Minister Willy Brandt, who had been impressed by the Appeal's less polemic tone,<sup>15</sup> proposed that NATO should declare its readiness to work towards a conference on European security.<sup>16</sup> Then Stewart suggested a study to see which issues could best be dealt through a conference.<sup>17</sup> Fearing isolation in the Alliance, the US government followed the Europeans.<sup>18</sup> As a consequence, in their final communiqué, the Ministers agreed to make a list of issues which "best lend themselves to fruitful negotiation and an early resolution" for the purpose of illustrating NATO's willingness to move towards détente.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the drafting of the List became NATO's small but first declared step towards a European security conference.

### **The Finnish Memorandum**

After the exchange of the Budapest Appeal and NATO's communiqué, the next important step towards a security conference in Europe was taken by a neutral country. On 5 May 1969, the Finnish Government sent a memorandum to all European states, the United States and Canada. In this memorandum, the Finns stated their willingness to act as hosts of a European security conference and any preparatory talks.<sup>20</sup> Although an analysis of neutral and non-allied countries is beyond the scope of this study, their commitment to Cold War dialogue was a new and significant factor in

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Amt, 11.4.1960.

<sup>15</sup> AAPD 1969, Dok.120, Ministerialdirektor Ruete, z.Z. Washington, an das Auswärtige Amt, 11.4.1960.

<sup>16</sup> TNA. FCO 41/411, tel no.54, Washington to FCO, 11.4.1969; Peter Becker, Die frühe KSZE-Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Der Außenpolitische Entscheidungsprozeß bis zur Unterzeichnung der Schlußakte von Helsinki, Lit, 1992, pp. 133-34.

<sup>17</sup> Brian White, Britain, détente and changing East-West relations, London: Routledge, 1992, p. 123.

<sup>18</sup> Kissinger, White House Years, pp. 414-15.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c690410a.htm>

<sup>20</sup> The text of the Aide-memoirs of the Finnish Government: Michael Palmer, The prospects, pp. 88-9; TNA. FCO 41/540, FCO tel no.151 to UKDEL NATO, 5.5.1969.

the 1970s European détente.<sup>21</sup>

Within the Atlantic Alliance, however, there was some suspicion that the Finnish offer might be a plot by Moscow. In fact, the Italian government received information from the Finnish Ambassador that the initiative was indeed taken in response to specific Soviet requests.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, in spite of Nenni's appreciation of the Budapest Appeal, the Italians were sceptical about the Finns' initiative. Moreover, Austria, another neutral country, reportedly, had also been urged by the Soviets to take a similar step, but had refused.<sup>23</sup> The Finns were initially reluctant to respond to the Soviet requests because of a lack of accommodation for such an international conference. After the Austrians refused, the Russians turned to Helsinki again.<sup>24</sup> Later, on 7 June 1969, the Finnish President admitted to the British Ambassador that the Soviet Union would certainly keep up the pressure for a conference. He emphasized, however, that the Finnish government's initiative was entirely its own.<sup>25</sup>

Italy's suspicion was shared by many NATO countries. The British also suspected that the Finns' proposal was launched at Soviet prompting. It was important for them, however, to avoid giving the impression that they were not prepared to hold such a conference in the future, as they believed that this would benefit Soviet propaganda. The British stance was, therefore, "simply to take note politely of the Finnish offer and say we shall bear it in mind". Be that as it may, the British thought that the Finnish initiative would have no important effect.<sup>26</sup> The Netherlands and Belgium agreed with Britain. More radically, the United States, supported by Italy and Turkey,

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<sup>21</sup> As regards the roles of neutral and non-allied countries, Thomas Fischer, "The Birth of the N+NA: Austrian and Swiss Foreign Policy in the CSCE," a paper submitted for the Conference "At the Roots of the European Security System: Thirty Years Since the Helsinki Final Act" (Zurich, 8-10 September 2005).

<sup>22</sup> TNA. FCO 41/540, Golds to Waterfield, 17.5.1969.

<sup>23</sup> TNA. FCO 41/541, Paris to Brimelow, 28.5.1969.

<sup>24</sup> TNA. FCO 41/541, 'The Finnish Ambassador's Call Tuesday. 3 June 4.30 p.m.' 3.6.1969.

<sup>25</sup> TNA. FOC 41/542, Helsinki tel no. 166 to FCO, 7.6.1969.

<sup>26</sup> TNA. FCO 41/540, FCO tel no.156 to UKDEL NATO, 7.5. 1969.

strongly opposed any reply to the Finnish initiative.<sup>27</sup>

Reactions to the Finnish offer were divided. The West German government viewed the Finnish move favourably because the contents of the memorandum were generally similar to the West German view: the necessity of careful preparation for a security conference, and US and Canadian participation from the outset were both acknowledged.<sup>28</sup> Norway, Denmark and Canada also perceived the British line as too negative.<sup>29</sup> The French government saw an advantage in the interest of neutral countries in a European security conference, since possible participants in a conference should not be confined only to members of the two blocs.<sup>30</sup> As a result, NATO decided not to respond to the Finnish memorandum, and individual governments, if they wanted, would reply to the Finns bilaterally and orally in line with the Washington communiqué of April 1969.<sup>31</sup> The influence of neutral countries was still limited at this very early stage.

Nonetheless, the Finnish approach was important in three ways. First of all, it offered the venue for a future security conference, though some Western countries would hesitate to accept Helsinki as a location for the conference. Secondly, it paved the way for the participation of neutral countries in such a conference. Finally, and more significantly, it appealed not only to European governments, but also to European public and Parliamentary opinion. In fact, public pressure would prove to be one of the most influential factors urging the West towards a European security conference.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> AAPD 1969, Dok. 155, Ministerialdirektor Ruete an die Ständige Vertretung bei der NATO in Brüssel, 12.5.1969.

<sup>29</sup> TNA. FCO 41/540, UKDEL NATO tel no.287 to FCO, 15.5.1969.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> TNA. FCO 41/541, Davidson to Waterfield, 27.5.1969.

## **List of Concrete Issues**

In parallel with discussions on the Finnish memorandum, NATO began to produce a list of concrete issues in accordance with the mandate of the Washington NATO communiqué issued on 11 April 1969. This process was important because it kept the Atlantic Alliance committed to the preparation of multilateral European détente in some way or other, although not yet to a European security conference. It is true that with hindsight it becomes clear that, despite all the efforts of diplomats to create a list of issues for East-West dialogue, they accomplished little that was to influence the final results of the CSCE. Therefore, there is no need to scrutinise the list-making process in great detail. However, it is worth looking at a few samples of national contributions to the list, since they reflected the détente policies of each country at this stage.<sup>32</sup>

De Gaulle's France was still hostile to a multilateral European security conference, and in late April 1969, the French Ambassador in Moscow, Roger Seydoux, clearly informed the Russians of France's firm objections to the whole idea. Mentioning the difficulties of the German question, he intimated the necessity of creating an atmosphere of détente on a bilateral basis. In a critical allusion to the Brezhnev doctrine, he also remarked that, in his Government's view, détente implied that all countries in Europe should be

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<sup>32</sup> The list-making process was divided into two stages. The first, finishing in July 1969, was to create a comprehensive catalogue of issues. The second was to assign an order of priority to each item in the list of issues. The first stage began in mid-April 1969. About two weeks after the Spring NATO Council meeting, the NATO Secretary General suggested that the Senior Political Committee of NATO be instructed to draw up a list of issues. On 28 April 1969, the opening Senior Political Committee meeting was held, where representatives agreed to put together a catalogue of issues for East/West negotiations. As regards procedure, they agreed that, in listing the issues, the Committee should use the following sections: (I) Political measures contributing to a reduction of tension, (II) Arms control and disarmament measures, (III) Cultural, economic and commercial issues, and (IV) Germany and Berlin. Some NATO states contributed their own ideas about issues for East/West negotiations. By the second meeting of the Senior Political Committee on 12 May 1969, the US, Britain, West Germany, Italy and the Netherlands had submitted their own lists of issues. France also later tabled their list on 23 May 1969.

free to choose their own foreign policy.<sup>33</sup> A French paper on their list of issues tabled on 23 May 1969, reflected their preferences.<sup>34</sup> At the top of the list, France placed a section concerning economic, cultural, scientific and technological affairs. In particular, the main French interest was in cultural co-operation between East and West.<sup>35</sup> The French list stressed, however, that general economic and political problems between East and West should be tackled bilaterally. The French disliked any form of two-bloc dialogue. Moreover, the French listed 'Codes of Good Conduct' as an item on their list, suggesting that it should include for instance, the respect of the principle of sovereignty, equality of states, non-intervention in internal affairs, etc. Clearly, this was a counter-proposal to the Brezhnev doctrine, which advocated limitation of sovereignty.

The West German contribution was also characterised by the significance it attached to the German question. In their paper, the Germans emphasised the importance of gradual steps when approaching the Eastern bloc.<sup>36</sup> In the first category of "small steps", the Federal Government included *bilateral* negotiations on the renunciation of force initiatives, which they were preparing in early 1969 and would officially propose to the Soviet Union on 3 July 1969.<sup>37</sup> It was dangerous for them, therefore, if the item on the renunciation of the use of force was treated in the same way as other items. Bonn feared that, in the course of the list-making, NATO might undercut their bilateral initiatives with Moscow.<sup>38</sup> Another significant element in the German paper was the insistence that a solution to the German and Berlin problem should be regarded as the final step. The list stated that such a solution could not be envisaged until other issues such as the renunciation of the use of force or mutual and balanced force reductions

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<sup>33</sup> TNA. FCO 41/539, Wilson to Giffard, 29.4.1969.

<sup>34</sup> TNA. FCO 41/552, D  l  gation de la France au Conseil de L'Atlantique Nord, 23.5.1969.

<sup>35</sup> TNA. FCO 41/554, Wilcock to Braithwaite, 14.8.1969.

<sup>36</sup> TNA. FCO 41/552, Pemberton-Pigott to Waterfield, 13.5.1969.

<sup>37</sup> AAPD 1969, Dok. 146, Aufzeichnung des Ministerialdirektors Ruete, 6.5.1969; *Ibid.*, Dok. 164, Bundesminister Brandt an Bundeskanzler Kiesinger, 20.5.1969.

<sup>38</sup> AAPD 1969, Dok. 146, Aufzeichnung des Ministerialdirektors Ruete, 6.5.1969.



were settled with the East, and after a good atmosphere had been created.<sup>39</sup> Bonn's position was also "ultra-cautious".<sup>40</sup> Indeed, Wilhelm Grewe, the FRG's Ambassador to NATO, was sceptical about the convening of a European security conference.<sup>41</sup> Foreign Minister Brandt's position was much more moderate; he stated in a Western European Union (WEU) gathering in June 1969 that "the [Budapest] declaration was one of the most notable recent events in East/West relations and that, since it was issued, Moscow had moderated its polemics against the West". However, Brandt was opposed to the holding of any early conference prior to the conclusion of a *modus vivendi* between the two parts of Germany. It was this that constituted the most significant 'preparation' for a conference, from the West German point of view.<sup>42</sup> Even if a European security conference was desirable for European détente, the problem of East German participation would need to be solved bilaterally in advance.

The British list showed their general interests in 'Arms control and disarmament measures', in particular in 'Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions' and some confidence-building measures.<sup>43</sup> However, Britain's importance was not reflected in the contents of its list, but in its performance in the NATO Senior Political Committee. Britain was the most active state working for the list-making process within NATO, although it was not in favour of paving the way to a European security conference. The British government did not intend to take any positive initiative with the Russians. They thought, however, that the West and Britain itself should not give a negative impression in response to the Budapest Declaration. There were advantages for them, therefore, in using NATO as a shop window for

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<sup>39</sup> TNA. FCO 41/552, Pemberton-Pigott to Waterfield, 13.5.1969.

<sup>40</sup> TNA. FCO 41/552, Pemberton-Pigott to Waterfield, 29.5.1969.

<sup>41</sup> Wilhelm Georg Grewe, *Rückblenden 1976-1951*, propylaen, 1979, p. 671.

<sup>42</sup> Willy Brandt, *People and Politics: the Years 1960-1975*, Little Brown, 1978, p. 187.

<sup>43</sup> The British list contained three headings in the 'Arms control and disarmament' part: (1) 'Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions', (2) 'A Nuclear Freeze' and (3) 'Measures to Foster Confidence and Reduce Tension' including (a) Observation Posts, (b) Additional Observation Arrangements, (c) Advance Notification of Military Movements and Manoeuvres, and (d) Exchanges of Observers at Military Manoeuvres.

Western willingness to envisage East-West negotiations.<sup>44</sup> The British thus worked hard within NATO to appeal to public opinion and Parliament and give the impression that the Alliance was not negative towards détente. Moreover, creating the list of issues together with NATO members was useful for the British, because, they believed, it would serve to channel West German interest in détente into “NATO rather than let it stimulate the Germans into closer ties with the French in the hope that this [might] help them open up a dialogue with Moscow.”<sup>45</sup> With these motivations, London enthusiastically led discussions within NATO.

On 22 July 1969, the NATO Council adopted the provisional list of issues produced by the Senior Political Committee. Inevitably, the list had become rather long and something of a “hotch-potch” of member states’ pet items.<sup>46</sup> Despite it covering a broad range of subjects, the British Ambassador in NATO, Bernard Burrows, noticed that there were few substantially new issues. Some of them had been tried before. Others had been discussed in other international organisations.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, it is worth noting that there were few items concerning human contact or human rights in the list of issues, except for the “Expansion of Tourism”.<sup>48</sup> In fact, the British official documents on the list-drafting contain surprisingly few references to human rights issues. The agenda of “freer movement of people, ideas, and information” was to be one of the most important topics during the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the most significant achievement of the West in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. The subject of human rights, however, still had not appeared during the list-making process. Instead, at first, the concern of NATO states seemed to lie in arms

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<sup>44</sup> TNA. FCO 41/539, Brimelow to Burrows, 26.4.1969.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> TNA. FCO 41/553, Parsons to Pemberton-Pigott, 24.6.1969.

<sup>47</sup> TNA. FCO 41/553, Burrows to Waterfield, 7.10.1969.

<sup>48</sup> In Section IV, Germany and Berlin, there are a few items relevant to human contact, such as “improvements in travel facilities” or “exchange of books and journals, and newspapers”. However, they were aimed exclusively at relations between East and West Germany.

control and disarmament issues.<sup>49</sup>

### **Pompidou's France**

During the second half of 1969, two important administrative changes happened in Western Europe. In France, de Gaulle retreated from the political scene. The new President, George Pompidou would become an ardent supporter of the idea of a European Security Conference. In West Germany, the SPD's leader, Willy Brandt, became Chancellor. He would start a new *Ostpolitik* and make it possible to advance towards multilateral European détente. However, the new government's policies towards the concept of a European conference did not change at once – despite the long-term importance of the changes they carried out. Rather the French, the West German, as well as the US governments continued to pursue détente bilaterally. Instead, it was the British government among the big powers that would incline to multilateral dialogue and lead NATO in this direction.

While NATO was working on making a list of issues, there was a change of leadership in France. Following de Gaulle's departure on 28 April 1969, as a consequence of the rejection in a referendum of the proposals he had put forward for a constitutional reform, George Pompidou became the second President of the Fifth Republic on 15 June 1969. Pompidou had previously been de Gaulle's Prime Minister from 1962 to 1968. He was a staunch Gaullist and inherited his predecessor's détente policy. When West German Foreign Minister Brandt visited Paris on 4 July 1969, Jacques Chaban-Delmas, the new French Prime Minister, also stated clearly that in terms of East-West relations, French policy would stick to the lines laid down

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<sup>49</sup> Italian items included for instance 'organic disarmament programme' and 'cut-off in the production of fissionable material for military purposes'. The Dutch paper was also interested in confidence-building measures. The Canadians supported these topics generally. TNA. FCO 41/552.

by General de Gaulle.<sup>50</sup> The initial French détente policy, therefore, was still aiming to improve the relationship with the USSR bilaterally and not to rush into multilateral, bloc-to-bloc negotiations.

Immediately, the new French government tried to take the initiative to construct a privileged bilateral relationship with Moscow. On 4 July 1969, the French Ambassador in Moscow was instructed to tell the Soviet Government that they thought “[t]he idea of a European Security Conference, as advanced in March, could be a useful means of confronting different positions”.<sup>51</sup> Ambassador Roger Seydoux insisted, however, that it was first necessary to improve the atmosphere of détente by means of bilateral contact. The aim of bilateral talks, he continued, was to determine what subjects might be discussed at such a conference and which subjects might best be dealt with bilaterally.<sup>52</sup> The most remarkable point in the instructions he received from Paris was, however, that the French proposed to treat “questions relating to the protection of human rights, to the freer movement of people, ideas and information, and to the progress of cultural exchange,” along with the exchanges of economic, scientific and technical cooperation, at such a conference.<sup>53</sup> This was probably the first time that the West had raised the issue of human rights in the context of a European security conference.<sup>54</sup> Later, this was to become not only a French idea, but also NATO’s main proposal to the Eastern Bloc in the CSCE.

In any case, the French government was still negative towards

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<sup>50</sup> AAPD 1969, Dok. 222, Gespräch des Bundesministers Brandt mit Ministerpräsident Chaban-Delmas in Paris, 4.7.1969.

<sup>51</sup> Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris (hereafter MAE), Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 277, circulaire no. 308, 4.7.1969. See also TNA. FCO 41/544, Brimelow to Giffard, Waterfield, 28.7.1969.

<sup>52</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 277, circulaire no. 308, 4.7.1969.

<sup>53</sup> “les questions relatives à la protection des droits de l’homme, à la libre circulation des personnes, des idées et des informations, au progrès des échanges culturels”. Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Daniel Thomas has argued that it was in the autumn of 1969 and the Belgian delegation to a meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union that firstly proposed “the freer movement of people, ideas, and information” as a substantive issue that could be addressed by a European security conference. Daniel C. Thomas, The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001, p. 41. However, the 4<sup>th</sup> July French instruction was earlier than Thomas’ opinion.

multilateral détente in Europe at this stage. The French Ambassador's remarks reflected France's tactical decision. By showing a degree of enthusiasm towards a European conference, they thought that they could strengthen bilateral contact with the USSR. At the same time, by insisting on a bilateral dialogue, France under Pompidou sought to postpone the convening of a security conference in Europe. Like General de Gaulle, President Pompidou at first disliked the idea of a European security conference. Later, the French leader clearly told William Rogers that France was opposed to a security conference.<sup>55</sup> "The line they were taking about the need for bilateral exchanges before the holding of any conference," Pompidou explained, "was primarily designed to ensure that the conference was postponed as long as possible."<sup>56</sup>

In further exchanges between France and the USSR, Paris tried to maintain this approach. In October 1969, the French Foreign Minister, Maurice Schumann, visited Moscow. This was the first ministerial contact between Paris and Moscow in Pompidou's Presidency and was therefore a significant opportunity to improve the bilateral relationship. After Schumann returned from Moscow, however, he concluded that the talks with the Soviets "were not very productive".<sup>57</sup> One of the reasons for this was that the arguments over a European conference had been so heated. In drafting the communiqué, the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, had pressed the French to state that they were in favour of a European conference. The French categorically refused. As described above, Paris was still not prepared to accept a conference.<sup>58</sup> The eventual words on the topic were

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<sup>55</sup> Archives Nationales, Paris (hereafter AN), 5AG2 /1022, Entretien entre le Président de la République et M. William Rogers, Secrétaire d'État Américain, le 8 décembre 1969, de 15 h. 15 à 16 h. 40.

<sup>56</sup> TNA. FCO 41/550, Palliser to Brimelow, 19.12.1969.

<sup>57</sup> AAPD 1969, Dok. 299, Anm.8, p.1070.

<sup>58</sup> TNA. FCO 33/532, Palliser to Brimelow, 17.10.1969; FCO 41/546, UKDEL NATO tel no.612 to FCO, 22.10.1969; AAPD 1969, p.1070, Anm.8; Marie-Pierre Rey has underlined that the final communiqué of franco-soviet Foreign Ministers talks showed Pompidou's France's willingness toward a European Security conference. However, his argument is dubious because he has not analyzed the tough drafting process of the communiqué between

“extremely carefully phrased”, hence the tone became neutral.<sup>59</sup> This experience, however, seemed to impress on the French the Kremlin’s eagerness to convene a European security conference. This implied that if France wanted to develop the Franco-Soviet special relationship, it would need to be more positive in regards to a European security conference. The French therefore concluded that they had little choice but to accept the idea of a conference in the long run. In fact, Pompidou himself reportedly admitted during his conversation in November 1969 with Manlio Brosio, the NATO Secretary General, that Paris had come to believe that “a conference on European Security was inevitable, perhaps not in 1970 but in 1971 or 1972.”<sup>60</sup>

### **Brandt’s West Germany**

Besides France, a significant governmental change took place in West Germany, which undoubtedly proved to be of great importance for the history of the Cold War. As a result of the September 1969 general election in the FRG, Willy Brandt became the first Social Democratic Chancellor. Although the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) lost some seats, it was still the leading party in the Federal Parliament.<sup>61</sup> However, the new Brandt Government was born from the social (SPD) – liberal (FDP) coalition which held a slight majority in the *Bundestag*. This social-liberal Government was

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the French and the Russians. Marie-Pierre Rey, “Georges Pompidou, l’Union soviétique et l’Europe,” in Association Geroges Pompidou, Georges Pompidou et l’Europe, Editions Complexe, 1995, pp.151-2.

<sup>59</sup> TNA. FCO 41/546, UKDEL NATO tel no.612 to FCO, 22.10.1969. The communiqué stated that “Les deux ministres considèrent que, dûment préparée, une conférence européenne pourrait constituer un moyen de développer la coopération entre tous les États européens grâce à leurs efforts communs, de mettre fin à la division de l’Europe en blocs, et par là de renforcer la sécurité et la paix. La France et l’Union Soviétique sont décidées à continuer d’échanger des vues à ce sujet entre elles ainsi qu’avec les autres pays intéressés.”

<sup>60</sup> TNA. FOC 1116/16, UKDEL NATO tel no.711 to FCO, 20.11.1969.

<sup>61</sup> CDU/CSU won 242 seats, SPD 224, FDP 30.

to launch enthusiastically its new *Ostpolitik*, which would open a door to the realisation of multilateral European détente. Understandably, Moscow was pleased to see the creation of the SPD-FDP alliance.<sup>62</sup>

In his famous inaugural speech of 28 October 1969, Chancellor Brandt spoke about the new government's *Ostpolitik*.<sup>63</sup> First and foremost, using the phrase "two German states in one German nation", he recognized *de facto* the existence of the German Democratic Republic, although he firmly rejected *de jure* recognition. He also called for agreements on the renunciation of force with the USSR and other Warsaw Pact states, and for a settlement of the problem of access rights to West Berlin on the basis of four-power negotiations. In addition, he announced his intention to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty - a long-standing Soviet demand. The German Federal Government actually signed the treaty one month later, on 28 November 1969. The acceptance of the NPT was an obvious signal to Moscow that the Federal government was preparing to talk seriously with them on German questions.<sup>64</sup>

In regards to the idea of a security conference in Europe, the Federal government's policy was unchanged for the time being. While Brandt's SPD did not expect such a conference to occur, the FDP leader, Walter Scheel, and also Foreign Minister in the new Administration, had strongly supported a security conference between East and West in his election campaign.<sup>65</sup> It was clear, however, that the new Chancellor held bilateral contacts with

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<sup>62</sup> Michael J. Sodaro, *Moscow, Germany, and the West from Khrushchev to Gorbachev*, Cornell University Press, 1990, p. 151.

<sup>63</sup> Ingo von Münch (ed.), *Dokumente des geteilten Deutschland*, vol.2, Stuttgart: Kröner, 1974, pp.167-9.

<sup>64</sup> While supporting Brandt's new policies, the US, UK, and French governments were uneasy about his ways of pursuing *Ostpolitik* and its long-term effects. See, Gottfried Niedhart, "Zustimmung und Irritationen: Die Westmächte und die deutsche Ostpolitik 1969/70," 2003, downloaded from the website "Ostpolitik and CSCE". <http://www.ostpolitik.net/>. See also, Georges-Henri Soutou, 'L'attitude de Georges Pompidou face à l'Allemagne,' in Association Geroges Pompidou, *Georges Pompidou et l'Europe*, Editions Complexe, 1995, pp.272-3.

<sup>65</sup> Helga Haftendorn, *Sicherheit und Entspannung: zur Aussenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1955-1982*, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983, p.428; David F. Patton, *Cold War Politics in Postwar Germany*, Macmillan, 1999, p. 69.

Moscow and Eastern European governments to be a greater priority than a multilateral conference. In his speech, mentioning the Finnish Memorandum to which Bonn had replied on 12 September 1969,<sup>66</sup> Brandt explained that Germany had not changed its policy on a European security conference, and emphasised that such a conference should be preceded by careful preparation.<sup>67</sup> In his governmental declaration on 28 October 1969, a Security conference in Europe was evidently ranked below *Ostpolitik* with the USSR, Poland and the GDR.<sup>68</sup>

Within the Foreign Ministry of the FRG, however, a European security conference was evaluated positively. On 11 June 1969, Brandt still at that time Foreign Minister had ordered the creation of a working group on a "European Security Conference" within his Ministry. In late September 1969 the working group drew up a paper on the subject.<sup>69</sup> Accepting that the Warsaw Pact proposal for holding a European security conference was based on their own motivations, the study, however, stated that the West should not decide its position on the basis of such Eastern aims, but develop its own sense of purpose and support the idea of a security conference. As the name suggested, the paper underlined that this security conference would have to be instrumental in resolving real European security problems. More specifically, this conference would have to deal with measures mutually to protect European countries from the use and threat of force, and from political interference through violence. Therefore it concluded that "a European Security Conference could contribute to a European Security System".<sup>70</sup> The *Auswärtiges Amt's* willingness to contemplate a security conference in Europe was to come to the fore after the conclusion of the Quadripartite Berlin Agreements in 1971. Meanwhile, the Eastern Bloc

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<sup>66</sup> Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, et al. (eds.), *Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa (KSZE): Analyse und Dokumentation, 1973-1978*, Köln: Wissenschaft und Politik, 1978, p. 152.

<sup>67</sup> TNA. FCO 41/547, Bonn tel no.1353 to FCO, 29.10.1969.

<sup>68</sup> Haftendorn, *Sicherheit und Entspannung*, p. 425.

<sup>69</sup> AAPD 1969, Dok.301, Aufzeichnung des Planungsstabs, 24.9.1969.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.



continued to call for its convention.

## **The Prague Declaration**

Soon after the birth of the Brandt-Scheel government, the Warsaw Pact moved to put pressure on the West. On 30 and 31 October 1969, the Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact states held meetings in Prague, and adopted another declaration in which they again called for an "All-European" conference on security and cooperation in Europe, to meet in Helsinki in the first half of 1970.<sup>71</sup> The novel characteristic of the Prague Declaration lay in its proposal of two topics to be discussed at an all-European security conference: the safeguarding of security through agreements on the renunciation of force, and the expansion of trade, economic, scientific, and technical relations among European states.<sup>72</sup> These two topics were chosen because it seemed easy to agree on them, thereby increasing the chances of the conference being a success. Some Warsaw Pact countries had demanded a more ambitious agenda. The Poles, for instance, had proposed a collective European security treaty (territorial status quo, *de jure* recognition of the GDR and its borders) as an item for a conference.<sup>73</sup> The East Germans were also aiming to be recognised by the conference. Moreover, the Rumanians had demanded the elimination of the existing blocs, the withdrawal of foreign troops from European countries, the abolition of foreign military bases, and the renunciation of the use of force.<sup>74</sup> However, the Soviet suggestion of concentrating on the two items mentioned above was supported

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<sup>71</sup> The text of the Prague Declaration (extracts): Michael Palmer, The prospects, pp. 89-90.

<sup>72</sup> TNA. FCO 41/547, Guidance Department, 31.10.1969; AAPD 1969, Dok.338, Anm.4, p. 1198.

<sup>73</sup> The Poles also attempted in vain to persuade their Allies to include references to regional disarmament in the Prague Declaration. TNA. FCO 41/549, Waterfield to Bendall, 21.11.1969.

<sup>74</sup> Vojtech Mastny and Malcolm Byrne (eds.), A Cardboard Castle?: An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991, Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2005, p. 348.

by the Hungarian, Bulgarian and Czechoslovak sides, and these twin aims were finally adopted as the first objectives of any European conference.<sup>75</sup>

The Prague Declaration's impact on the NATO states was limited. The NATO members had already anticipated the Warsaw Pact initiative. In early October 1969, the British FCO had obtained a report that the Eastern Bloc had been preparing in order to advance some issues for a European security conference. The report also accurately anticipated the two Warsaw Pact proposals mentioned above.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, the Prague Declaration was far from satisfactory to Western states. It contained no explicit indication that the Warsaw Pact was prepared to agree to United States and Canadian participation. Although the Declaration talked of preparations for a European conference, the suggested timetable with the conference due to begin in the first half of 1970 would not allow much scope for these. Moreover, the proposed agenda made no mention of the essential question of European security, particularly the German problem and MBFR.<sup>77</sup> For those governments which disliked the idea of a European security conference, therefore, it was not difficult to dismiss the contents of the Prague Declaration. However, they had to deal with the effect of the Declaration on public opinion.

Within a week of the Warsaw Pact Prague gathering, NATO held a meeting of deputy foreign Ministers. NATO members agreed that they should not be deflected by the Prague Declaration from their own study for East/West negotiations. They felt, however, that NATO should "not seem to its own public opinion to be lagging behind the Warsaw Pact in the search for détente".<sup>78</sup> Therefore, the British and West German representatives agreed

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid. See also, MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 277, Varsovie tel no. 1352-1353 to Paris, 19.11.1969.

<sup>76</sup> TNA. FCO 41/556, FCO tel no.357 to UKDEL NATO, 18.10.1969.

<sup>77</sup> TNA. FCO 41/548, Background note: The Warsaw Pact Declaration at Prague, 31 October, undated.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

to pursue the Western proposal for balanced force reductions.<sup>79</sup> At this stage, this disarmament agenda was the only appealing counter-proposal that was available to the West. Therefore there was wide agreement among NATO states on reiterating the MBFR offer.<sup>80</sup>

The Soviets' position towards disarmament détente was still negative. When Mikhail Smirnovsky, the Soviet Ambassador in London, visited Stewart in order to obtain his reply to the Prague Declaration, the British Foreign Secretary countered by asking about the Soviet position on the idea of mutual force reductions. Smirnovsky's answer was evasive, saying that "raising this question in connection with a conference could only seriously complicate and undermine the prospects of a successful and fruitful meeting". He insisted that this regional disarmament problem "could only be considered once the sources of tension in Europe had been removed".<sup>81</sup> This was the first formal response from the Eastern Bloc to the Western initiative for MBFR since it had been launched as the "Reykjavik Signal" in June 1968. This Soviet attitude merely re-confirmed British mistrust of Russian motivations. The FCO concluded that Moscow had no intention of making concessions to the West, nor did it want the Conference to conduct serious negotiations on regional disarmament or Germany. London speculated that the Soviets' main short-term aim was simply to convene an international conference and thereby enhance the status of East Germany without actually discussing European security problems at all.<sup>82</sup>

### **France and Berlin**

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<sup>79</sup> AAPD 1969, Dok. 349, Staatssekretär Duckwitz, z.Z. Brüssel, an das Auswärtige Amt, 5.11.1969.

<sup>80</sup> TNA. FCO 41/548, Background note: The Warsaw Pact Declaration at Prague, 31 October, undated.

<sup>81</sup> TNA. FCO 41/548, FCO tel no. 971 to Moscow, 19.11.1969.

<sup>82</sup> TNA. FCO 41/558, Thomson to Secretary of State, 24.11.1969.

After Schumann's October 1969 visit to Moscow and the issuing of the Warsaw Pact's Prague Declaration, the French Foreign Ministry conducted a review of its policy towards a European security conference, in the process of which they developed a very important basic line, particularly concerning Berlin. In order fully to appreciate the importance of the new French policy, it is necessary briefly to recall the nature of the Berlin problem and the origins of the Berlin negotiations involving the USA, the USSR, Britain and France that were to begin in March 1970.

After the end of the Second World War, the capital of Germany had been occupied by the US, the UK, France and the USSR. Following the division of Germany, Berlin was also split into an Eastern and Western section. West Berlin was taken over by the three Western powers, and East Berlin was controlled by the Soviet Union. As a result, the legal status of Four Power occupation of the whole of Berlin became unclear. Moreover, access routes from West Germany to West Berlin became unstable. Berlin was located in the centre of East Germany and those who wanted to reach West Berlin had to go through the East German territory, but there was no legal guarantee of the access routes. The island in the middle of the GDR was vulnerable. After the 1961 erection of the Berlin Wall, the United States and the Soviet Union continued to discuss the status of Berlin in 1962, but they could not agree on a solution.<sup>83</sup> Again, the problems in and around the city were left untouched until 1969.

It was the Nixon government that started to deal once more with the Berlin problem. Soon after Nixon's inauguration, the so-called Berlin "mini crisis" broke out on 7 February 1969. Opposing the attempt by the members of the Bundestag to hold the elections of the West German President in West Berlin, East Berlin blocked the access of the FRG members of parliament into the city.<sup>84</sup> The East German government strongly rejected the

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<sup>83</sup> van Oudenaren, *Détente in Europe*, p. 5; J.P.D. Dunbabin, *The Cold War: The Great Powers and their Allies*, London: Longman, 1994, pp. 221-4.

<sup>84</sup> William E. Griffith, *The Ostpolitik of the Federal Republic of Germany*, MIT Press, 1978,

connections between West Germany and West Berlin. For the East Germans, the elections were a symbolic event showing the West Germans' "illegal" political actions, because, for the East, the FRG had no legitimacy to act in this manner within the territory of Berlin. However, the West vehemently criticised the GDR's behaviour. When Nixon met the Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin for the first time on 17 February 1969, the US President expressed his deep concern that "[i]f the Berlin situation should deteriorate, Senate approval of the Non-proliferation Treaty would be much more difficult."<sup>85</sup> Probably thanks to Moscow's restraint, East Berlin did not radicalise its attitude, and the elections of West Germany's president were carried out on 5 March 1969 without trouble. However, the Berlin "mini crisis" clearly convinced both the United States and the Soviet Union to tackle the Berlin problem to avoid it becoming an obstacle to improved superpower relations. Nixon's national security advisor Henry Kissinger established a secret dialogue with Dobrynin, and they exchanged views on the former German capital on the day after the elections.<sup>86</sup> While the Soviet Ambassador stated that "the only concern of the Soviet Union was to prevent a change in the status quo in Berlin and elsewhere in Europe," Kissinger stressed that "it was essential to get the access procedures to Berlin regularized."<sup>87</sup> During this conversation, Nixon's national security adviser had the impression that Moscow's attitude was "positive" to discussion of the Berlin question.<sup>88</sup> Then, 20 days later, the US President sent a letter to

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p. 165.

<sup>85</sup> CD-ROM The Rise of Détente, Memorandum of Conversation, Ambassador Dobrynin's Initial Call on the President, 17.2.1969. This electronic document reader was compiled by Mircea Munteanu, Hedi Giusto, and Christian Ostermann in cooperation with William Burr and with the CWIHP's research assistants for the international conference "NATO, the Warsaw Pact and the Rise of Détente, 1965-1972" in Dobbiaco, Italy, on 26-28 September 2002.

<sup>86</sup> As regards the Kissinger/Dobrynin secret dialogue, see Jussi Hanhimäki, The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 34-40.

<sup>87</sup> DNSA, Kissinger's Transcripts, Conversation with Ambassador Dobrynin, Lunch, March 3, KT00009, 6.3.1969.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

Alexei Kosygin, the Soviet Prime Minister, offering to begin negotiations on Berlin.<sup>89</sup> At the same time, the American, British, French and German governments began intense consultations in Bonn to prepare for negotiations.<sup>90</sup> The Berlin “mini crisis” and the problem of the ratification of the NPT made the Americans realise the necessity of settling the Berlin question before successful negotiations would take place.<sup>91</sup>

However, the new French President had a completely different idea. On 10 July 1969, nearly one month after Pompidou’s victory in the presidential elections, Gromyko announced Moscow’s readiness to begin negotiations on Berlin, alongside SALT talks with Washington, and negotiations with Bonn on a renunciation-of-force agreement while at the same time repeating the Warsaw Pact’s call for an “all-European conference”.<sup>92</sup> In response, however, Pompidou’s political adviser, Jean-Bernard Raimond, concluded that talks on Berlin would not bring positive results in the then current situation.<sup>93</sup> The French President himself wrote on 3 October 1969 that “[w]e must not touch the status of Berlin,”<sup>94</sup> and later explained to Nixon that negotiations on Berlin could only serve to reinforce Moscow’s position and accentuate the Soviet rights over West Berlin without obtaining greater Western rights over East Berlin.<sup>95</sup> Yet, despite Pompidou’s misgivings, on 6 August 1969, the United States, Britain and France handed *Aide Mémoires* to the Soviet

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<sup>89</sup> Martin J. Hillenbrand, *Fragments of Our Time: Memoirs of a Diplomat*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998, p.281.

<sup>90</sup> W. R. Smyser, *From Yalta to Berlin: the Cold War struggle over Germany*, Macmillan, 1999, p. 226.

<sup>91</sup> When Pompidou said that he could not understand why the Americans had offered the Soviets talks on Berlin, Kissinger answered untruthfully that it was because they had wanted to help the Christian Democratic Party in the FRG elections in the autumn. AN, 5 AG 2 / 1022, Entretien entre le Président de la République et M. Kissinger, Palais de l’Elysée - le 4 août 1969 de 15h35 à 17h. Probably, Kissinger had to tell a lie in order to hide the existence of his secret dialogue with Dobrynin.

<sup>92</sup> Sodaro, *Moscow, Germany*, p. 150.

<sup>93</sup> AN, 5 AG 2 / 1021, NOTE pour Monsieur le Président de la République, 4.8.1969.

<sup>94</sup> Georges-Henri Soutou, “La France et l’accord quadripartite sur Berlin du 3 septembre 1971”, *Revue d’histoire diplomatique*, no.1, 2004, p. 50.

<sup>95</sup> AN, 5 AG 2 / 1022, Entretien entre le Président Nixon et le Président Pompidou à la Maison Blanche, jeudi 26 Février 1970, 10 h40 - 12 h40.

Foreign Ministry on talks concerning Berlin.<sup>96</sup> Willingly or not, it became unavoidable for the three big Western powers to embark on negotiations on the divided city. It was in this context, in early November 1969, that the *Quai d'Orsay's* undertook a review of a European security conference.

For the French Foreign Ministry (and for others as well), the German/Berlin question was the most significant point which needed to be dealt with in a conference on European security. One of the focal points at a meeting in the Political Director's room in the *Quai d'Orsay* on 8 November 1969 was whether the German problem should be on the agenda of any conference.<sup>97</sup> Although the Eastern Bloc had not mentioned the German problem in the Prague Declaration, East Germany would definitely participate in any conference which occurred, making it all but impossible to ignore the problem. On the other hand, if the German question became an *ordre du jour*, it would be dealt with by all European countries, which had the undesirable implication for the French (and for the other Four Powers) of undermining their privileged status on Germany. Moreover, if the GDR had a seat in a European security conference, it would lead to the recognition of East Germany which, the French thought, would create a problem concerning Berlin, in particular the access routes to West Berlin which would officially fall under GDR sovereignty. For the French Foreign Ministry, French rights on Berlin were tremendously significant since they virtually constituted their only remaining claim to involvement in the regulation of the German question. It was hence very dangerous for the French to see the Berlin problem addressed in a multilateral European conference. Therefore, it was important for the West to make clear to the Soviet Union, before the opening of a conference, that a treaty on the non-use-of-force, while implying the inviolability of frontiers, would not prevent access to West Berlin. It was

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<sup>96</sup> AAPD 1969, Dok.255, Darhterlaß des Vortragenden Legationsrats I. Klasse Blumenfeld, 5.8.1969.

<sup>97</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 277, Note, A/S: échange de vues concernant une éventuelle conférence sur la sécurité européenne (réunion chez le Directeur Politique, 8 novembre), 20.11.1969.

the Eastern Bloc that wanted a conference on European security. The officials of the *Quai d'Orsay* thought, therefore, that convening such a conference constituted a major concession on the Western side simply because East Germany would take part. Thus, they stressed that the French must demand compensation in return for their acceptance of a European security conference. As seen above, the Berlin problem was already going to be discussed amongst the Four Powers. It would therefore become possible for the French to make their acceptance of a conference dependent on the satisfaction of their demands on the Berlin question.<sup>98</sup> Thus French Foreign Minister Schumann made his opinion clear before the US, the UK and West German foreign ministers on 3 December 1969 that the improvement of Berlin's external connections could be a *quid pro quo* for the recognition of East Germany.<sup>99</sup> Keen to maintain bilateral relations with Moscow and the East European capitals, and opposed to the multilateralisation of the East/West dialogue, Paris decided to make the resolution of the Berlin problem the most significant precondition for the increasingly inevitable convening of a European security conference.

### **The NATO declaration and the idea of freer movement**

While France, West Germany and the United States wanted to slow the pace towards a multilateral European conference, Britain was more enthusiastic about making NATO appear positive about détente. Although the British were highly sceptical about the idea of an all-European conference, they pushed the Atlantic Alliance towards multilateral contact with the Warsaw Pact countries by firstly proposing a Declaration on East-West Relations,

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., Dîner quadripartite du 3 décembre 1969 à l'Ambassade d'Allemagne à Bruxelles, Compte Rendu de l'Entretien des quatre Ministres des Affaires Etrangères, M. Schumann, M. Rogers, M. Stewart & M. Scheel.



and secondly by trying to create an alternative framework for East/West communication. Diplomacy within the Alliance gradually accelerated in the run-up to the NATO Ministerial meetings scheduled for 4-5 December 1969.

In order to understand NATO's gradual commitment to the idea of a European security conference, it is important to pay attention to the role of the British Secretary of State. Although high-ranking diplomats in the UK Foreign Office were fairly sceptical of the Eastern initiatives, Michael Stewart gradually saw the concept of a security conference in Europe in a positive light. At a meeting in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in July 1969, he had agreed with the officials' reluctance regarding a security conference.<sup>100</sup> When he visited New York and Ottawa in September 1969, however, the British Foreign Secretary revealed a very positive attitude towards a European security conference during his conversation with the Canadians, remarking that "we should be in a position to examine seriously what a European Security Conference could usefully discuss".<sup>101</sup> When they learned of their Foreign Secretary's statement, FCO officials were upset and commented that it was "going a good deal further than we, at official level, have so far advised or discussed with Ministers."<sup>102</sup> During his conversation with US Secretary of State Rogers on 22 September 1969, Stewart admitted that it was public opinion which had influenced him.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, after he met the Polish vice Foreign Minister on 17 October 1969 and received confirmation that the Warsaw Pact would take a new initiative before 5 November 1969,<sup>104</sup> the British Foreign Secretary told FCO staff that "we should make a constructive reply to any initiatives from the East and that we should not allow the Warsaw Pact governments to go on taking the

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<sup>100</sup> TNA. FCO 41/544, Private Secretary to Brimelow, undated: FCO 41/544, Brimelow to Burrows, 28.7.1969.

<sup>101</sup> TNA. FCO 41/544, Waterfield to Bendall, 17.9.1969.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> TNA. FCO 41/546, Waterfield to Bendall, 2.10.1969.

<sup>104</sup> TNA. FCO 41/556, FCO tel no.356 to UKDEL NATO, 18.10.1969.

lead”.<sup>105</sup> UK diplomats had to follow their political master’s line.

One of the British initiatives was a proposal of a Declaration on East-West Relations. France and West Germany progressively lost interest in the list-making exercise within NATO, their French and West German representatives in Brussels reiterating that the List of Issues was for the preparation of East-West negotiations rather than a European security conference.<sup>106</sup> In contrast, the British were concerned with how the List of Issues could best be reflected in the communiqué of the NATO Ministerial meeting in December 1969.<sup>107</sup> They thus drafted a communiqué using the List of Issues, but it was too long. The part of the statement on European security in the draft was hence detached from the communiqué, and issued as a separate statement, like the Reykjavik Signal of 1968.<sup>108</sup> This reflected Stewart’s preference for appealing to public opinion and countering the Warsaw Pact’s initiative. On 7 November 1969, the United Kingdom presented its draft Declaration on East-West Relations to its NATO partners.

In hindsight, the British idea was transformed in a crucially significant way by the United States and France in the course of November 1969. Unfortunately, the UK draft Declaration contained nothing new. This was mainly because the List of Issues, which formed the basis of the British draft, did not include fresh ideas. It was America’s counter draft that contained the important phrase: “freer movement of people and information between East and West”.<sup>109</sup> This move was a “bolt out of the blue (*coup de theatre*)” for other NATO members.<sup>110</sup> As argued above, France had similar ideas. Indeed, at the very same time, the French Deputy Director of Political Affairs, Jean-Daniel Jurgensen, was discussing with the Yugoslavs during his visit to

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<sup>105</sup> TNA, FCO 41/556, FCO tel no.356 to UKDEL NATO, 18.10.1969.

<sup>106</sup> TNA, FCO 41/554, Wilcock to Braithwaite, 14.8.1969; FCO 41/556, UKDEL NATO tel no.554 to FCO, 2.10.1969.

<sup>107</sup> TNA, FCO 41/556, Davidson to Braithwaite, 25.9.1969.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., FCO tel no. 352 to UKDEL NATO, 16.10.1969.

<sup>109</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 273b, NOTE A/s.: Session ministerielle de l’Alliance. Projet de communiqué américaine, 25.11.1969.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., Repan-Bruxelles tel no. 1694/1710 to Paris, 25.11.1969.

Belgrade on 24-26 November 1969, the “*problème d’information ou la libre circulation des idées et des hommes*.”<sup>111</sup> When he came back to Paris, on 27 November 1969, France also presented another draft of the Declaration which modified the US phrase to “persons, ideas, and information would have the possibility of freer movement between East and West.” Jurgensen was of the opinion that these words “could be a useful counter-proposition to make in any discussion of this subject, not least because it would tend to put the Russians on the defensive”.<sup>112</sup> On 5 December 1969, NATO Foreign Ministers adopted the Declaration on the future development of relations between East and West, which included the final phrase “freer movement of people, ideas, and information between the countries of East and West.”<sup>113</sup> Later this was to develop further into an important Western agenda item at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the so-called “Basket III”.<sup>114</sup> At the end of 1960s, this new idea that had the potential to overcome the status quo of a divided Europe appeared as an official Western proposal. In other words, European détente would work not only as a stabiliser, but also as a framework for transformation.

### **Standing Committee on East-West Relations and the Debate on Procedure**

Another British initiative concerned the procedural aspect of any East-West negotiation. It started as an abortive suggestion that, a ‘Standing Committee

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., Circulaire no. 484, 2.12.1969.

<sup>112</sup> TNA. FCO 41/550, Palliser to Brimelow, 27.11.1969.

<sup>113</sup> The full paragraph including this phrase is as follows: “Allied governments consider that not only economic and technical but also cultural exchanges between interested countries can bring mutual benefit and understanding. In these fields more could be achieved by freer movement of people, ideas, and information between the countries of East and West.” <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/comm6069.htm#69>

<sup>114</sup> Victor-Yves Ghebali, La Diplomatie de la Détente la CSCE, d’Helsinki à Vienne, 1973-1989, E. Bruylant, 1989, pp. 271-3.

on East-West Relations' be established. Unlike the idea of the Declaration which was welcomed by NATO members, Britain's proposal on procedure was highly unpopular. The project of a Standing Committee on East-West Relations (SCEWR) would hence not take shape in the end. Nevertheless, there are two reasons for examining it here. Firstly, procedure was critically significant for the success of the CSCE and it was London's initiative that ignited debate on this question within NATO. Secondly and more importantly in the context of this chapter, the concept of a SCEWR acted as a catalyst driving Britain to lead the Atlantic Alliance towards a commitment to a multilateral European conference.

It is worth stressing that the British invented the idea of a Standing Committee not because they favoured a European security conference, but because they did not want it. While the study of the *issues* for East/West negotiations was reaching its conclusion within NATO, the study of the *procedure* for East/West talks had begun within the British government. The Foreign Office gradually felt pressure to convene a conference on the Warsaw Pact's terms. In order to avoid the format of a *conference*, the British preferred the idea of a Standing Committee, which came from the British Embassy to NATO in Brussels. The British permanent delegation to NATO reported to the FCO that some NATO countries considered that the Atlantic organisation should be more positive towards the European security conference than the British position had been. The problem for them was that "[t]he lack of a procedural alternative to the Warsaw Pact proposal for an early Conference was leading an increasing number of members of the Alliance to accept implicitly that we would have to have a conference sooner rather than later".<sup>115</sup> The UK representative to NATO, therefore, invented the idea of a Standing Committee as a counter-proposal, and concluded that "the sooner we launch the Standing Committee idea here the better".<sup>116</sup> Foreign Secretary Stewart, who was looking for a way of appealing to public

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<sup>115</sup> TNA. FCO 41/558, Waterfield to Bendall, 20.11.1969.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

opinion and resisting Eastern pressures, very much welcomed the new initiative, stating that a Standing Committee concept “seemed to provide the most hopeful and constructive method of moving forward”.<sup>117</sup> The staff of the Foreign Office were then asked to develop this idea before putting it to Britain’s NATO partners.

According to the FCO memorandum a Standing Committee would have several advantages compared with the Warsaw Pact conference proposed. First and foremost, the West could impress public opinion with their constructive intent, and take the initiative in East-West talks. Secondly, by offering a Standing Committee, they could relieve the pressure for a “Conference”, which would demand huge results. Instead, they believed, a standing committee would only need to attain limited outcomes, at least in the early stages. Thirdly, in the Standing Committee the West could probe Soviet intentions. Finally, such a Committee could allow U.S./Canadian participation.<sup>118</sup> For the FCO, presentation was the most important aspect. They thought that NATO Ministers should include an announcement about the proposed Committee in their December Declaration.<sup>119</sup> Because the British were still strongly sceptical about East-West talks, the key aim for London behind this suggestion was not to advance East-West dialogue, but to fend off the Warsaw Pact initiative.

When Stewart met his American, French and West German counterparts on 3 December 1969, he faced strong opposition to the idea of a Standing Committee from the French Foreign Minister in particular. Schumann said frankly that he did not like the British idea.<sup>120</sup> From the French point of view, the British proposal was dangerous “because it might

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<sup>117</sup> TNA. FO 1116/15, Waterfield to Burrows, 29.10.1969.

<sup>118</sup> TNA. FCO 41/558, A Standing Committee on East-West Relations Preliminary Memorandum by F.C.O. officials, undated.

<sup>119</sup> TNA. FCO 41/558, Waterfield to Burrows, 29.10.1969.

<sup>120</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 277, Dîner quadripartite du 3 décembre 1969 à l’Ambassade d’Allemagne à Bruxelles, Compte Rendu de l’Entretien des quatre Ministres des Affaires Etrangères, M. Schumann, M. Rogers, M. Stewart & M. Scheel.

give the impression of preparations for a conference between [the] blocs".<sup>121</sup> Instead, Schumann said that France was open to the idea of a conference that would also include neutral and non-aligned countries. He stressed that the conference should not lead to the consolidation of Blocs.<sup>122</sup> Paris thought that the participation of neutral and non-aligned countries in a conference would serve to blur the image of bloc-to-bloc negotiations. By the same logic, they turned down the British initiative.<sup>123</sup> The FRG Foreign Minister Scheel also hesitated to support Stewart and stressed the necessity to study the SCEWR beforehand in a working group.<sup>124</sup> In consultative talks between British and West German Foreign Ministry officials on 21 November 1969, the Germans had already insisted that before the idea was made public, it was desirable to reach agreement on some difficult questions that the Standing Committee would have to confront, including the participation of East Germany.<sup>125</sup> For the Federal Republic, bilateral regulation of the intra-German question would have to precede any multilateral East/West negotiation. Although the British had been aware of the East German participation problem, they had been unable to persuade the West Germans.

Faced with French and West German opposition, the British Foreign Secretary refrained from proposing a Standing Committee to other partners at the NATO Ministerial meetings on 4-5 December, 1969. Instead, in his speech, he suggested that NATO Ministers recognise that procedural issues merited closer examination and that they establish a working group to consider what sort of arrangements might best serve East/West talks.<sup>126</sup> This diluted British proposal again faced strong French opposition. With the

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<sup>121</sup> TNA. FCO 41/418, tel no. 766, UKDEL NATO to FCO, 5.12.1969.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.; AAPD 1969, Dok. 388, Ministerialdirektor Ruete, z.Z. Brüssel, an das Auswärtige Amt, 5.12.1969.

<sup>123</sup> William Rogers, the US Secretary of State, also sided with the French in the initial debate. TNA. FCO 41/418, tel no. 767, UKDEL NATO to FCO, 5.12.1969.

<sup>124</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 277, Dîner quadripartite du 3 décembre 1969 à l'Ambassade d'Allemagne à Bruxelles, Compte Rendu de l'Entretien des quatre Ministres des Affaires Etrangères, M. Schumann, M. Rogers, M. Stewart & M. Scheel.

<sup>125</sup> TNA. FCO 41/558, Waterfield to Bendall, 20.11.1969.

<sup>126</sup> TNA. FCO 41/549, UKDEL NATO tel no. 754 to FCO, 4.12.1969.

Berlin problem in mind, Schumann retorted that "None of us have intention to be engaged in the way which lead to a conference on European security without a certain number of guarantee that we don't have for the present."<sup>127</sup> Stewart did not retreat however, arguing that "if NATO countries are asked [by the Soviets], 'Well, if you don't want to go to a conference in the way you have been invited to at Prague, what do you want to do?'," the NATO countries would be wiser if they consulted among themselves before replying.<sup>128</sup> The Foreign Ministers of Luxembourg, Canada and Belgium all supported Stewart, and suggested to Schumann that merely beginning to study procedure within NATO would be sensible. The French Foreign Minister eventually accepted a sentence stating that "Ministers recognized that procedure merited closer examination".<sup>129</sup> British Foreign Secretary Stewart regarded this as a French concession in the interests of Alliance unity.<sup>130</sup> Stewart's proposal to study procedure was then included in the Declaration, and he succeeded in securing a foothold in NATO to sell his idea of a Standing Committee on East-West Relations.

Predictably, the debates on procedure within the NATO Council started with a British initiative. Secretary of State Stewart clung to the idea of a SCEWR and made it public during debates on foreign policy in the House of Commons on 9 December 1969 without consulting with his Western partners.<sup>131</sup> Shortly thereafter, a British aide-mémoire, suggesting that a Standing Commission was an alternative to a Conference on Soviet terms, was circulated within the NATO Council.<sup>132</sup> Stewart's preoccupation was

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<sup>127</sup> MAE, *Série Pactes 1961-1970*, carton 273b, Verbatim Extract of Statements made at the Meeting of the Council held on Friday, 5th December 1969 in the course of discussion on the Press Communiqué and Declaration.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid. Schumann also stressed that this sentence should not be in paragraph 14 that referred to a European security conference initially intended by the British. Instead, he wanted to put the sentence on procedure in paragraph 3, implying that the study on procedure was not directly connected to a European security conference. France's position was accepted without dispute.

<sup>130</sup> TNA, FCO 41/418, UKDEL NATO tel no. 767 to FCO, 5.12.1969.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, Waterfield to Bendall, 10.12.1969.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, Burrows to Clcay, 19.12.1969.

still that if NATO's attitude was deemed to be negative it might lose the support of young people.<sup>133</sup> Stewart also felt pressure from his Labour party colleagues and public opinion. He told William Rogers that there was a good deal of interest in East-West relaxation in parliament, especially in his own party, at the Labour party conference and also at meetings in his constituency.<sup>134</sup> Indeed, he had to be particularly careful to respect this because general elections in the UK were scheduled for June 1970. The SCEWR project thus became an important tool for him to demonstrate his positive approach towards détente, avoiding the criticism that Britain was trapped by the Soviet all-European conference proposal.

However, this British concept of a Standing Commission was highly unpopular within the Atlantic Alliance. The French and the West Germans had doubts about it as they had shown at the Brussels Ministerial meeting and the Americans were indifferent to the UK's initiative. When Wilson and Stewart visited Washington in January 1970 and the British Foreign Secretary explained his idea of a SCEWR, Rogers coolly replied that "There is no problem here [the United State] with public opinion."<sup>135</sup> For President Nixon, there was no difference between a conference and a standing commission – both were equally to be avoided. As he put it: "I have one fundamental understanding concerning any conference. A conference in and of itself helps them [the Soviets]; a conference in and of itself does not help us."<sup>136</sup> In addition, Italian opposition to a Standing Commission was even stronger than that of the French and the Americans. After Aldo Moro had become the new Italian Foreign Minister in August 1969, Rome began to oppose a European Security Conference generally and was therefore unwilling to discuss any procedures which might lead to the convening of a

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<sup>133</sup> TNA. FCO 41/740, Brimelow to Redaway, 3.2.1970.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, Record of Conversation between Stewart and Rogers on 27 January 1970. Reportedly, the British Foreign Secretary feared the left-wing of the Labour party might break away. TNA. FCO 41/883, Wiggin to Brimelow, 15.3.1971.

<sup>135</sup> DNSA, Kissinger's Transcripts, Minutes of NSC Meeting on Europe, January 28, 1970, KT00092, 28.1.1970. Wilson and Stewart joined this NSC meeting as special guests.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.



Conference. An Italian official criticised a procedural study including the UK proposal as “premature”, and urged the study of the substance of European security instead.<sup>137</sup> The Italian government preferred the idea of MBFR to a conference, as will be discussed below. To a lesser extent, the Dutch, the Greeks and the Turks shared Italian thinking.<sup>138</sup>

There was another group which did not support the British concept, for almost totally opposite reasons. The Belgians, the Norwegians and the Danish were reluctant to accept a Standing Commission because it was presented as an alternative to a Conference on European Security. They thought that a well-prepared conference would serve to improve European security. They said therefore that they could support the establishment of a Standing Commission only if it would lead to a conference.<sup>139</sup>

Faced with a lack of backing from its Alliance partners, the British government was again forced to retreat. A Standing Commission was supported by only a few governments: Canada, Luxembourg and Iceland.<sup>140</sup> And even amongst these, the Canadians wanted to connect the British initiative with the calling of a European Conference, thereby undermining Britain’s intentions. In the end, the British Foreign Office recommended that Britain should tactically adopt a “soft sell” approach to a Standing Commission. Secretary of State Stewart had to accept the recommendation, though he still hoped that a positive step forward might be taken at the NATO Ministerial Meeting in May 1970.<sup>141</sup>

Even though the British withdrew their proposal tentatively, discussions within NATO on the procedural dimension continued in general

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<sup>137</sup> TNA, FCO 41/558, Braithwaite to Waterfield, 27.1.1970. See also, MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 274, Repan-Bruxelle, tel no. 109/116, to Paris, 22.1.1970.

<sup>138</sup> TNA, FCO 41/737, UKDEL NATO tel no. 30 to FCO, 22.1.1970; UKDEL NATO tel no. 32 to FCO, 23.1.1970.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., FCO 41/737, UKDEL NATO tel no. 30 to FCO, 22.1.1970; Ewart-Biggs to Waterfield 27.1.1970.

<sup>140</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 274, Repan-Bruxelle, tel no. 105/108, to Paris, 22.1.1970; TNA, FCO 41/737, UKDEL NATO tel no. 13 to FCO, 14.1.1970.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., FCO 41/737, Waterfield to Brimelow, 10.2.1970.

terms.<sup>142</sup> From these debates, two important trends appeared. One was a Canadian-French line, which was to result in the French idea of a three-stage conference. Another was a partnership between the British and the Belgians – a core coalition that would do much to make NATO more forthcoming towards détente.

Canada's idea on procedure was the inverse of the British Standing Commission proposal. The Canadians wanted a European security conference on condition that the Eastern bloc also accepted the subsequent establishment of a Standing Commission, though the British had presented its idea as an *alternative* to a conference.<sup>143</sup> In other words, the Canadian government wished to make a conference a permanent institution, not a once and for all conference.<sup>144</sup>

The French, who would formulate a very important procedural concept that would be accepted by the all participants in the CSCE, were firstly stimulated by the Canadian idea.<sup>145</sup> Although France was opposed to the study of procedure, the French Foreign Ministry developed its own ideas because the head of the Ministry, Maurice Schumann, personally believed it was a plain fact that "a conference would take place - the Soviet proposal had

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<sup>142</sup> On 2 February 1970, following a Canadian suggestion, the NATO Council decided to discuss the procedural dimension more generally at its Senior Political Committee (SPC). Each NATO member contributed their own papers and the SPC examined them until 16 April 1970.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., FCO 41/747, Canada's paper, 24.2.1970.

<sup>144</sup> Some East European countries also publicly and privately presented their ideas on procedure, which were similar to the Canadian idea. In February 1970, for instance, the Hungarians and the Poles displayed considerable interest in establishing some form of permanent machinery *after* a conference. TNA. FCO 41/740, Budapest tel no. 39 to FCO, 2.2.1970; Grattan to Elam, 17.2.1970; FCO 41/747, Mallaby to Western Organisation Department, 13.3.1970. The Rumanians made a different suggestion in their aide-mémoires of 9 March 1970 calling for a pre-conference by representatives from each Foreign Ministry for the preparation of an actual conference. However, this idea was unpopular among other Warsaw Pact partners. AAPD 1970, Dok.117, Anm.14, p.465.

<sup>145</sup> The Director of Europe (and later the deputy Director of Political Affairs) in the *Quai d'Orsay*, Claude Arnaud, who was the inventor of the three-stage conference scheme, told his American counterpart, Martin Hillenbrand that "we felt that the [Canadian] idea deserved for us to be studied." MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 278, Réunions franco-américaines des 6 et 7 April 1970, 16.4.1970; Ibid., carton 274, Note a.S. Position française sur les procédures de négociation entre l'Est et l'Ouest, undated. See also, Jacques Andéani, *Le Piège: Helsinki et la chute du communisme*, Paris: Odile Jacob, 2005, p. 51.

gone too far for this to be otherwise” and such sentiment and political judgement were generally shared in the government, though his officials still thought the Soviet proposal was risky and President Pompidou was also very suspicious of it.<sup>146</sup> The importance of the French formula will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5. Here it is sufficient to sketch the *Quai d’Orsay’s* tentative idea that after a preparatory conference, which would be convened to reach agreement on the agenda for the main conference, a subsequent conference, or possibly a series of conferences, would be organised by a standing body or secretariat to deal with other questions of relevance to European security.<sup>147</sup> This idea would subsequently be fleshed out and would go on to play an significant role in making the CSCE substantial.

Another important source of procedural thinking was Belgium, which put forward a number of ideas confluent with the British line. In March 1970, the Belgian representative in NATO proposed a more open idea on procedure, namely the holding of an open meeting (to include the East Germans and neutral countries) at ambassadorial level to explore the possibilities of and prepare for East-West negotiations without preconditions, for example, on progress in other negotiations such as the Berlin talks.<sup>148</sup> While the Belgians wanted an East-West conference to be convened as a result, they deliberately made their proposed procedure vague in order to make it acceptable to all their Atlantic partners: the open meeting was not necessarily presented as a preparation for a conference. The British thought this could be developed into a SCWER.<sup>149</sup> The Belgian proposal suited the British stance, because it was not directly linked to a European security conference. Britain thus attempted to form a united front with the Belgians.<sup>150</sup> From mid-March 1970, the UK representative in NATO approached the Belgian Ambassador and, as will be argued below, they

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<sup>146</sup> TNA. FCO 41/747, Marshall to Giffard, 4.3.1970.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., FCO 41/747, Wilcock to Braithwaite, 6.3.1970.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., FCO 41/747, FCO tel no. 90 to UKDEL NATO, 14.3.1970.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., FCO 41/748, Burrows to Waterfield, 12.3.1970; Waterfield to Brimelow, 24.3.1970.

developed a joint draft communiqué incorporating their ideas.

On the Belgian side, the British approach was welcomed. Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel felt it necessary that NATO take the initiative in the approaching Ministerial meeting in May 1970. When he met the UK Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, George Thomson, on 11 March 1970, Harmel insisted that:

The Allies could not afford in May not to take a public and positive step forward on procedures for collective negotiation and on force reductions, in order to make it clear, especially to the young, that we are not the obstacles to progress. Failure to make positive proposals would undermine our credibility in East and West.<sup>151</sup>

Moreover, the Belgian Foreign Minister also felt that smaller countries had to do something to improve European security:

We could not afford to leave European security to be settled by the American and Russians in SALT, or by the Germans in their bilaterals. European security, including the German question, was a matter for the Alliance as a whole.<sup>152</sup>

In fact, the Strategic Arms Limitation talks between the superpowers had been underway since November 1969. The FRG government had also embarked on its new Ostpolitik, firstly by establishing a secret back channel between Bonn and Moscow.<sup>153</sup> In late January 1970, it sent Egon Bahr, the

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., FCO 41/747, Brussels tel no. 118 to FCO, 12.3.1970.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> The first important step the Federal Chancellor took was his secret letter of 19 November 1969 to Soviet premier Alexei Kosygin. (AAPD 1969, Dok. 370.) The Soviets' reaction was also highly secret. On 21 December 1969, a visitor from the USSR attempted to initiate contact with Egon Bahr. The visitor introduced himself as being sent by Yuri Andropov, the head of the KGB, who had a direct connection with Leonid Brezhnev, and conveyed Moscow's message that the Soviet government was prepared to negotiate seriously with Bonn. The messenger mentioned Brandt's secret letter to Kosygin, which convinced Bahr that he was trustworthy because the existence of the letter was known to only four top persons in the Federal government. As a result, a secret and direct back-channel between Bonn and Moscow was established at the highest level. AAPD 1969, Dok. 412, Aufzeichnung

state secretary of the Chancellor's Office and Brandt's loyal aide, to Moscow as the main negotiator with the Russians for a non-use-of-force agreement and broader problems including the German question and the existing borders. In addition, in February 1970, Bonn began to negotiate with Warsaw as well. Seeing these developments, Harmel probably thought that he also had to commit and contribute to European détente, even if smaller countries had neither the cards to bargain directly with the Soviet Union nor responsibility for the German question.

The first half of 1970 saw the beginnings of further negotiations. On 26 March 1970, the representatives of the USA, Britain, France and the Soviet Union got together in Berlin to discuss the status of the divided city. Three meetings were held in two months, but they made little progress. The sessions were still in their exploratory phase, taking the form of an exchange of set speeches.<sup>154</sup> High-level German-German meetings also took place, although they were no more fruitful. Brandt met his East German opposite number Willi Stoph twice, in Erfurt on 19 March 1970 and in Kassel on 21 May 1970. Their meetings became deadlocked on a fundamental point. While the GDR leader demanded full recognition of East Germany first and foremost, Brandt rejected legal recognition as his closest aide had done in Moscow.<sup>155</sup> Moreover, after the Erfurt meeting in particular, the Soviets directed the East Germans not to make progress at the second German-German session, because Moscow was worried about uncontrollable results.<sup>156</sup> Therefore, during the first half of 1970, these meetings between East and West were still not producing visible outcomes. Nevertheless, the

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des Staatssekretärs Bahr, Bundeskanzleramt, 24.12.1969 ; Vjaceslav Keworkow, Der geheime Kanal: Moskau, der KGB und die Bonner Ostpolitik, Rowohlt, 1995, pp.50-9; M. E. Sarotte, Dealing With the Devil: East Germany, Détente, and Ostpolitik, 1969-1973, University of North Carolina Press, 2001, pp.33-4; W. R. Smyser, From Yalta to Berlin: the Cold War struggle over Germany, Macmillan, 1999, pp. 228-29.

<sup>154</sup> TNA. FCO 33/1153, 'Report on the Four-Power Talks on Berlin', undated.

<sup>155</sup> Sarotte, Dealing With the Devil, pp.48-51, 60-3.

<sup>156</sup> At Erfurt, Brandt received a feverish welcome from the inhabitants of the city. This was more than the Eastern authorities had expected, and they therefore failed to control the people. As a result, the Soviet leadership intervened in the German-German talks and tried to regain it control. Sarotte, Dealing With the Devil, p. 55.

opening of *Ostpolitik*, the Quadripartite negotiations on Berlin, the German-German Summits as well as SALT, created an atmosphere of détente. The era of negotiation seemed to be starting to flourish.

### **German Initiative on MBFR**

For the Western side, the May 1970 NATO Ministerial meetings in Rome were the first major milestone on the road to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. In an atmosphere of relaxation created by the beginning of several negotiations, the NATO ministers would decide to present their commitment to the idea of a European conference, albeit conditionally. At the same time they would issue a Declaration on mutual force reductions. Before exploring the diplomacy which preceded the Rome Ministerial meetings, it is therefore necessary to analyse the debates on MBFR within NATO, paying attention to West Germany's initiative on this topic. The discussions about mutual reductions of force were also significant not only because MBFR was NATO's important counter-proposal, but also because they were to be intertwined with the dispute over procedures leading up to the final communiqué of the NATO Ministerial meeting.

Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions was a less easy project for the West than had been expected. Throughout 1969, NATO had publicly continued to present its commitment to MBFR in its communiqués. However, the more the NATO military experts studied this issue, the clearer it became that the MBFR negotiations would not be easy.<sup>157</sup> Although, NATO's MBFR

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<sup>157</sup> After the Brussels NATO meeting in December 1969, a working group was set up within NATO to carry forward a further study of the issues involved in the various approaches to the MBFR problem including the task of creating force reduction models following the US suggestion. It was carried on at the three meetings of the MBFR working group held from 22 January 1970 to 3 March 1970. As for the account of the five models of the MBFR working group, see Martin Müller, Politik und Bürokratie: die MBFR-Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zwischen 1967 und 1973, Nomos, 1988, pp.63-66. See also, MAE, *Série Pactes 1961-1970*, carton 274, NOTE a.s.: réduction mutuelle et équilibrée des forces, 22.5.1970.

working group produced one symmetrical (or equal percentage) force reduction model and four asymmetrical models, symmetric troop reductions were assessed as liable to damage Western security given the numerical advantage of the Warsaw Pact's conventional forces, while asymmetric force reductions were regarded as unacceptable to the Soviet Union.<sup>158</sup> In short, no models satisfied both negotiability and security.

As a consequence, the NATO countries took different stances. The Canadians and the Danish, concerned about negotiability, believed that the symmetrical model would offer the best approach because they thought it would be a model on which both East and West could start negotiations. The Danish representative was afraid that if the Alliance presented asymmetrical models, the East and the public would view NATO as being negative towards MBFR.<sup>159</sup> Even though they were aware that symmetrical force reductions would endanger NATO's security, the Italians, the Belgians and the Dutch also worried about the problem of negotiability, and were therefore unhappy about the asymmetrical models developed by the working group.<sup>160</sup> On the other hand, the British and the Turks were interested in security and presentational value, and therefore neglected the negotiability of the force reduction models strongly favouring the asymmetrical models. British Foreign Secretary Stewart was assertive, remarking that "If a proposal based on equal security really is 'non-negotiable' (and we do not know this for certain) that is the Russians' fault, not ours."<sup>161</sup> France continued adamantly to oppose the very idea of MBFR.<sup>162</sup> The US government was unable to take a clear stance on this question because of the

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> TNA, FCO 41/682, Wilcock to Alexander, 5.3.1970; UKDEL NATO tel no. 131 to FCO, 6.3.1970.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. On 28 February 1970, the Italians submitted to the working group on MBFRs an original paper on MBFR which, according to them, contained asymmetrical models overcoming the dilemma between negotiability and security. Ibid, FCO 41/682, Waterfield to Brimelow, 24.3.1970.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, FCO 41/682, Waterfield to Brimelow, 24.3.1970.

<sup>162</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 278, Paris tel no. 202/210 to Repan Bruxelles, 30.4.1970.

division of opinion within the Nixon administration.

It was West Germany that acted most enthusiastically on the mutual force reduction problem. Faced with confusion in NATO, the German Ambassador to NATO, Wilhelm Grewe, urged his Foreign Ministry to take the initiative on this topic. On 27 February 1970, he sent a telegram to the *Auswärtige Amt*, underlining his concern that the process of model-making by military experts would stifle MBFR's political value and suggesting that it was time for NATO to renew the MBFR 'Signal' made at Reykjavik in July 1968 in order for the issue to come to the fore of political discussion again.<sup>163</sup> More importantly, the Ambassador also recommended connecting the issue of force reductions to a European security conference by making it the principal subject at the conference.<sup>164</sup> His idea was soon picked up at Ministerial level in Bonn.

It was Defence Minister Helmut Schmidt who led the political arguments about MBFR within the Brandt government.<sup>165</sup> Since the governmental change in the FRG in October 1969 and Schmidt's emergence as Defence Minister, there was a marked change of thinking within his Ministry on MBFR and his officials were now under firm instructions to play a positive part in working towards an agreement.<sup>166</sup> According to the analysis by the British Embassy in Bonn, the reasons why Schmidt was so devoted towards arms limitations were threefold: firstly, his personal interest in mutual force reductions; secondly, his SPD party's interest in disarmament generally; and finally, his sense of rivalry with the Federal Foreign Ministry and the Chancellor's Office, because he had been cut out of the implementation of the new government's *Ostpolitik*.<sup>167</sup> Following the

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<sup>163</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok. 80, Botschafter Grewe, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 27.2.1970.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Helga Haftendorn, *Sicherheit und Entspannung*, p. 536. Schmidt had a direct connection with Grewe. The Defence Minister, reportedly, discussed MBFR with the Ambassador in early February 1970. TNA. FCO41/681, Bonn tel no. 131 to FCO, 10.2.1970.

<sup>166</sup> TNA. FCO 41/681, Bonn tel no. 131 to FCO, 10.2.1970.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.



Defence Minister's initiative, the Foreign and Defence Ministries submitted a joint paper on this topic to the Federal National Security Council on 6 March 1970. This paper reflected Grewe's suggestion mentioned above, proposing to make the subject of mutual balanced force reductions the central topic of a security conference in Europe.<sup>168</sup> At the Security Council, the arguments that MBFR would be a counter proposal to the Soviet Conference initiative and would also be a supporting initiative to lessen US congressional pressure for a unilateral reduction in American troops in Europe, were accepted.<sup>169</sup> This joint paper was adopted and Schmidt's line was endorsed as official Federal German policy.<sup>170</sup>

With the support of the governmental decision, Defence Minister Schmidt firstly sounded out his most important partners: the British and Americans. On 24 March 1970, Schmidt visited London and met his counterpart, Denis Healey, in order to obtain cooperation on the balanced reduction of troops. The German Defence Minister insisted that "it would be essential to make a much more explicit and credible signal to the Warsaw Pact at the Rome meeting." While stressing the necessity of starting from a sound negotiating position and not presenting a substantive proposal at this stage, the British Defence Secretary replied that a renewed call for MBFR could be valuable as a counter to the Soviet demand for a European security conference. In the end, they agreed to keep in close touch on the development of the work on force reductions.<sup>171</sup> Though the British Defence Ministry was sceptical about MBFR, Schmidt had thus obtained conditional support from

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<sup>168</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok. 83, Vorlage des Auswärtigen Amts und des Bundesministeriums der Verteidigung für den Bundessicherheitsrat, 2.3.1970.

<sup>169</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok.94, Aufzeichnung des Parlamentarischen Staatssekretars Dahrendorf, 6.3.1970.

<sup>170</sup> According to British archival information, the Chancellor's Office wanted a more "nuanced" line on a European security conference, because the Soviets' conference proposal was a useful card for advancing *Ostpolitik*. (TNA. FCO 41/684, Bonn tel no. 508 to FCO, 5.5.1970.) Brandt and Bahr might well worry about the possibility that if MBFR, which the Russians disliked, was incorporated into a conference, Moscow might abandon the whole idea of a security conference, thereby depriving the FRG of a valuable card.

<sup>171</sup> TNA. DEFE 13/691, Record of Discussion between the Defence Secretary and Herr Helmut Schmidt, 24.3.1970.

Healey.

Bonn also succeeded in gaining very minimal consent from Washington. When Schmidt and Brandt visited Washington in early April 1970, the reactions of the American leader on MBFR matters were mixed. US Secretary of State Rogers positively welcomed Schmidt's idea of appealing for a renewed MBFR proposal at the Rome NATO meeting. On the other hand, the US Secretary of Defence, Melvin Laird, put forward the opinion that the West was not prepared to negotiate with the Eastern Bloc on the disarmament of conventional forces and that MBFR would be against America's negotiating position on the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. On the Presidential side, Henry Kissinger, the National Security Advisor to the President, replied that the White House had not considered this topic thoroughly, but was not enthusiastic about Schmidt's idea.<sup>172</sup> It was clear that there was no agreed policy on MBFR in the Nixon government. However, when the Chancellor met the US President on 10 April 1970, Nixon, although highly unsympathetic, did not oppose the idea of a renewed MBFR signal, and told Brandt that it could be used but "only as propaganda".<sup>173</sup> The American leader tried to avoid being too negative towards his German partner, although he could not be positive given the division of opinion within the Administration. In any case, it did appear that Nixon had indicated a minimal acceptance of the West German initiative, provided that it did not involve anything substantial. Thanks to this backing by Washington and London, however conditional, the FRG government was able to table its proposal within NATO.

Soon after Brandt's return home, the West Germans submitted a paper on MBFR to the NATO Council on 16 April 1970, attaching a draft

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<sup>172</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok. 146, Gespräche des Bundesministers Schmidt in Washington, 7.4.1970. In fact, Kissinger and Helmut Sonnenfeldt, a member of White House Staff and National Security Council Staff, were sceptical because they believed that the Russians could not withdraw their troops from Eastern Europe and therefore that there was no scope for negotiations of mutual reductions. TNA. FCO 41/684, Waterfield to Alexander, 4.5.1970.

<sup>173</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok. 153, Aufzeichnung des Bundeskanzlers Brandt, 11.4.1970.

Declaration on this subject. Avoiding mention of force reduction models which could be interpreted as a substantive proposal, the draft Declaration focused on the criteria for mutual disarmament and called upon Eastern countries to hold exploratory talks.<sup>174</sup> Within this paper, the Germans formally proposed to combine MBFR with a European security conference or conferences, illustrating that at the first conference, participants would adopt MBFR as a main issue and establish a working group. Then it would tackle this topic in detail and draw up concrete proposals which would be presented at a second conference. The draft Declaration on a renewed MBFR signal, which was written to be attached to the communiqué of the Rome NATO meeting in May 1970, and called upon the Warsaw Pact countries to hold exploratory talks on mutual forces reductions, was Germany's main tool to raise the question of MBFR with the Eastern Bloc and public opinion. Thus, with the new West German government's initiative, the Western proposal for disarmament détente came to the fore again, along with other East-West negotiations in the early 1970s. At the same time, the relationship between a European security conference and MBFR would become one of the contentious points within the Atlantic Alliance.

### **NATO Ministerial Meetings in Rome**

In retrospect, the spring 1970 meetings of NATO Foreign Ministers were the watershed in the establishment of multilateral European détente. It is hence unsurprising that the disputes before and during the meetings were most heated, complex, and confusing. Although each government took a different stance towards East/West relations, the principal controversy was between a UK-Belgium coalition which wanted a communiqué which included a

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<sup>174</sup> As regards the criteria, see, Christoph Bluth, "Détente and Conventional Arms Control: West German Policy Priorities and the origins of MBFR," German Politics, 8/1 (1999), p. 193.

proposal for starting multilateral dialogue, and the stance of the United States and France that insisted on the continuation of bilateral talks.

The permanent NATO Council meeting on 16 April 1970 was the starting point of a dynamic NATO diplomacy towards its Rome Ministerial meeting scheduled for 26-27 May 1970. First of all, as mentioned above, the German delegation submitted the draft Declaration of MBFR. Although Greece, Turkey and Portugal were reluctant to discuss this, and the United States was less than enthusiastic, this German initiative was welcomed by most member states other than France. However, Washington and Paris were strongly opposed to Bonn's idea that mutual force reductions would be an agenda item of a European security conference: the Americans disliked a ESC and the French disliked MBFR and thus both opposed any linkage between the two. Secondly, the Belgian delegation presented a framework for the Communiqué that would be published after the May 1970 Ministerial meeting.

The tone of the Belgian framework was forthcoming and constructive, but the content was highly controversial. There were two significant points. Firstly, the Belgians transformed in masterly fashion the conference agenda proposed by the Eastern bloc in the Prague Declaration of October 1969, re-arranging it to suit Western tastes. The Belgian representative suggested three sets of substantive subjects for East/West talks: Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, the renunciation of force expanded into a code of good conduct, and finally the expansion of the item on economic and technical contacts to include problems of human relations.<sup>175</sup> The last two items were an enlarged version of what the East had presented. For many NATO partners, this was a welcome suggestion. Yet, for others, like the Americans, it sounded unpleasant because it implied the acceptance of the Warsaw Pact's proposal for a multilateral conference. Therefore the latter insisted

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<sup>175</sup> TNA. FCO 41/7481, UKDEL NATO tel no. 204 to FCO, 6.4.1970; AAPD 1970, Dok. 166, Botschafter Grewe, Brussel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 17.4.1970.

that only MBFR should be a topic of East/West negotiations.<sup>176</sup>

Another aspect of Brussels' suggestion was more contentious. André de Staercke, the Belgian Ambassador to NATO, proposed to include in the communiqué an announcement of immediate and unconditional multilateral preliminary negotiation at the ambassadorial level. Many official representatives, including American, French, West German, Italian, Dutch, Turk, Greek, and Portuguese representatives, were strongly against proclaiming the start of multilateral negotiations, because they thought that there had still been no substantive progress since the previous December in the ongoing bilateral talks on SALT, between Bonn and Moscow, Warsaw and East Berlin, and in the Berlin Four Power talks.<sup>177</sup> Among these representatives, the Americans and the French were the most vehemently against any reference in the communiqué to any form of multilateral negotiations.<sup>178</sup> US Ambassador Robert Ellsworth criticised the Belgian idea as "the conference for the conference" and rejected it.<sup>179</sup> The French also argued that it would be dangerous to start a new conversation when talks were still at such a preliminary stage on Germany and Berlin, and that any reference to a multilateral approach would erroneously imply their approval of bloc-to-bloc negotiations.<sup>180</sup> For Paris, bilateral approaches were still appropriate for exchanges with the Eastern Bloc.

On the other hand, the British, Belgians, Canadians, Danish, Norwegians, Icelanders, and Luxembourgers supported multilateral negotiations. Britain and Belgium in particular led this group. As argued above, Britain had already been working with Belgium since mid-March

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<sup>176</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 274, Repan-Bruxelles tel no. 958/966 to Paris, 21.5.1970.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok. 166, Botschafter Grewe, Brussel (NATO), an das Austwärtige Amt, 17.4.1970; TNA, FCO 41/748, UKDEL NATO tel no. 204 to FCO, 6.4.1970; UKDEL NATO tel no. 205 to FCO, 6.4.1970; UKDEL NATO tel no. 208 to FCO, 21.4.1970;

<sup>179</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 274, Repan-Bruxelles tel no. 758/766 to Paris, 12.5.1970.

<sup>180</sup> TNA, FCO 41/748, UKDEL NATO tel no. 256 to FCO, 6.5.1970; MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 274, NOTE a/s : TNAchaine session ministérielle du Conseil de l'Atlantique Nord (26-27 mai 1970), 22.5.1970.

1970. As a result, after the Belgians presented their draft framework on 16 April 1970, London and Brussels jointly drafted a communiqué for the May 1970 NATO Ministerial meeting.<sup>181</sup> In the draft paper, the British concept of a Standing Commission was skilfully inserted as one of the possible forms of permanent machinery for East/West exploratory multilateral talks. The British and Belgians began to sell their proposals to other NATO partners hand in hand, but their starting position within the Atlantic Alliance was undoubtedly weak.

The UK government also attempted to bring West Germany on side through MBFR matters. The British prepared their own draft Declaration on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, which adapted much of the line taken by West Germany's draft, but amended it to suit the Anglo-Belgian draft communiqué.<sup>182</sup> Supporting Germany's idea of a separate Declaration on MBFR and fulfilling FRG's demands, the British draft also suggested offering multilateral exploratory talks immediately after the May 1970 NATO meeting. London hoped to hold such exploratory negotiations on mutual force reductions in a Standing Commission.<sup>183</sup>

The West Germans, however, preferred to begin their exploration of the possibility of real negotiations on force reductions bilaterally, although they wanted to connect MBFR with a European Security Conference when the latter was held.<sup>184</sup> They generally opposed any multilateralisation of détente before their new *Ostpolitik* had been concluded. This stance was shown in a Planning Staff paper, arguing that the Europeanisation (that is multilateralisation) of the German question would reduce Bonn's freedom of diplomatic action because, firstly, East Berlin would use a multilateral

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<sup>181</sup> TNA. FCO 41/747, UKDEL NATO tel no. 221 to FCO, 24.4.1970; UKDEL NATO tel no. 226 to FCO, 25.4.1970.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., FCO 41/684, Draft Declaration on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, 29.4.1970.

<sup>183</sup> The British Foreign Office had already developed the idea to connect the concept of a Standing Commission with MBFR from late March 1970. TNA. FCO 41/682, Waterfield to Brimelow, 24.3.1970.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., UKDEL NATO tel no. 204 to FCO, 16.4.1970.

conference as the forum for its peace offensive, and, secondly, the participants of such a conference would have a say on the German question, even if they had no direct involvement in this problem. The paper recommended, therefore, that the FRG should not enter into discussion of the substance of a European security conference or its procedural problems at the forthcoming NATO Ministerial meeting.<sup>185</sup> The *Auswärtige Amt* was “positive on principle” towards a Conference on European security, because they saw it as “a suitable means to maintain peace, to relax East-West relations, and to overcome intra-German confrontations.”<sup>186</sup> They thought, however, that first of all they should wait for the results of the Quadripartite Berlin talks, inner-German negotiations and bilateral talks in Moscow and Warsaw.<sup>187</sup> Therefore, it was totally unacceptable for the West German Foreign Ministry to launch multilateral talks immediately, even if they were exploratory and at a low level.

Soon after the Anglo-Belgian draft communiqué and the British draft Declaration on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions were submitted,<sup>188</sup> the US government also tabled its own draft communiqué on 4 May 1970. The American counter-proposal was not substantially different from the final communiqué of the December 1969 NATO Ministerial meetings, in other words it was far from forthcoming.<sup>189</sup> The Canadian Ambassador at NATO described it as a “formula of inaction.”<sup>190</sup> There were thus two draft communiqués, which were so different that Manlio Brosio, the NATO Secretary General, lamented the situation, saying that it might be impossible to reach a compromise between the two texts.<sup>191</sup> However, this

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<sup>185</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok. 197, Aufzeichnung des Ministerialdirektors Oncken, 5.5.1970.

<sup>186</sup> Politisches Archiv, Auswärtiges Amt, Berlin, B-40, Bd. 185, Konferenz über die Sicherheit Europas (KSE), Sachstand, 15.5.1970.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> One can find the text of the Anglo-Belgian draft communiqué and the British draft Declaration on MBFR in the file of TNA. FCO 41/626.

<sup>189</sup> TNA. FCO 41/626, Ellsworth to Brosio, 4.5.1970.

<sup>190</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 274, Repan-Bruxelles tel no. 758/766 to Paris, 12.5.1970.

<sup>191</sup> TNA. FCO 41/749, UKDEL NATO tel no. 256 to FCO, 6.5.1970.

negative American draft proved totally counterproductive and actually further stimulated the pre-Rome Council diplomacy.

After the two draft communiqués appeared, some countries began to show signs of changing their positions. Firstly, the Netherlands gradually moved towards the Anglo-Belgian position, although they were not immediately in a position to accept it in full. The Dutch government was dissatisfied with the American draft, because they believed it was important that NATO should be seen by European public opinion to be taking a forthcoming and constructive approach to détente.<sup>192</sup> To the surprise of Bernard Burrow, the UK Ambassador at NATO, by mid-May 1970, the Greeks had also rallied to the British-Belgian draft text.<sup>193</sup>

The Canadians also changed their minds and came to regard the Anglo-Belgian draft communiqué as “ideal but unattainable,” because they thought the Americans would never accept it. In vain, the British delegate at NATO asked his Canadian counterpart to support the Anglo-Belgian text and put pressure upon the US government.<sup>194</sup> Rather, on 11 May 1970, the Canadian government circulated a new draft Declaration on the mutual reduction of forces in order, according to the Canadian delegation, to persuade the reluctant Americans to go as far as they could. There were two points on which the Canadian paper differed from the Anglo-Belgian text. To begin with, Ottawa tried to make MBFR the only subject for a new initiative at the Rome meeting; and then it suggested that Italy, the country chairing the May 1970 NATO meeting, could explore the possibility of negotiation on this topic with the East on behalf of the Alliance, instead of summoning a multilateral exploratory meeting, which the Americans still hated.<sup>195</sup> Interestingly, the Canadian draft paper also prompted a further change.

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., Washington tel no. 1448 to FCO, 12.5.1970; FCO 41/749, UKDEL NATO tel no. 256 to FCO, 6.5.1970.

<sup>193</sup> TNA. FCO 41/628, Ministerial Meeting in Rome 26-27 May, Note for Secretary of State's Meeting on 18 May Present Position and Tactics, 16.5.1970.

<sup>194</sup> TNA. FCO 41/749, UKDEL NATO tel no. 256 to FCO, 6.5.1970.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., FCO 41/684, Pemberton-Pigott to Waterfield, 11.5.1970.



The third important shift of position was brought about by the FRG, because Bonn disliked the second point of the Canadian proposal. The Germans were loath to give the Italians a prominent role in East-West negotiations, probably because they were worried that the MBFR talks would be less easy for them to control and hence would be more liable to interfere with their *Ostpolitik*. Instead, the Federal government preferred the British idea that Italy would just officially inform the Warsaw Pact of the contents of NATO's communiqué and Declaration on their behalf through diplomatic channels but without any soundings being taken.<sup>196</sup> Although West Germany and the Chancellor's Office in particular were still reluctant to accept the reference to "multilateral exploratory discussions" in a MBFR Declaration, the Canadian contribution served to push the FRG towards the Anglo-Belgian side.<sup>197</sup>

Meanwhile, the British strenuously pursued their diplomatic activity. In particular, Stewart, who was desperately keen to appeal to public opinion because of the approaching elections, made extraordinary efforts and showed great firmness. To start with, he agreed with his Foreign Office staff not to make any substantial compromises at official level during NATO Council consultations, despite pressures in the Council and from the General Secretariat to work out compromises before the Ministerial meeting.<sup>198</sup> By mid-May 1970, therefore, the discussion amongst the permanent representatives in Brussels had come to an impasse.<sup>199</sup> Instead, Stewart decided to persuade the US Secretary of State directly, partly because the UK Foreign Office knew that Rogers was interested in MBFR and therefore more flexible than other US leaders.<sup>200</sup> However, when Stewart visited Washington on 15 May 1970, the US Secretary of State was still adamant

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., FCO 41/684, Bonn tel no. 545 to FCO, 13.5.1970.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., FCO 41/626, Waterfield to Brimelow, 8.5.1970

<sup>199</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok.244, Amn. 3, p. 897.

<sup>200</sup> TNA. FCO 41/627, Waterfield to Bendall, 6.5.1970; FCO 41/684, Waterfield to Alexander, 4.5.1970.

and stressed that he wanted to continue bilateral contacts.<sup>201</sup> The ministerial face-to-face conversation did not provide a breakthrough. The UK Foreign Secretary had also sent a letter to the FRG Defence Minister Schmidt, and received a promising reply on 12 May 1970. Schmidt, stating that it was necessary to arrive at a meaningful common statement in the communiqué of the ministerial meeting, welcomed the Anglo-Belgian draft and agreed in principle with the presentation of the “procedural issues” at the Rome NATO meeting.<sup>202</sup> As a result, the Foreign Office believed that the West Germans would be the most useful partner and attached great importance to German support.<sup>203</sup> Within a week, Anglo-German officials met and reached almost complete agreement on a line which they would follow in the May 1970 meeting. The Germans gave general support to the Anglo/Belgian text, but, despite Schmidt’s agreement, Foreign Minister Scheel and the *Auswärtiges Amt* still resisted the use of the word “multilateral” in the communiqué.<sup>204</sup> Nonetheless, a FCO official noted that “The Anglo-Belgian-German front would be pretty strong.”<sup>205</sup>

In addition, the Italians seemed inclined to adopt a constructive stance towards the Anglo-Belgian line. When Moro met Schumann on 20 May 1970, the Italian Foreign Minister firstly stressed that Italy was in favour of a détente policy. In particular, he underlined the significance of offering mutual and balanced force reductions because, according to him, along with the reduction of military costs, MBFR would have a big psychological effect, would be a factor in détente and would be a counter-weight to fight against America’s tendency towards unilateral force withdrawals. As regards a European security conference, Moro expressed his mistrust of Moscow’s motivation and insisted that such a conference should be developed gradually.

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid., FCO 41/627, Washington tel no. 1492 to FCO, 15.5.1970.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., FCO 41/685, Jaffray to Deputy Under Secretary, 14.5.1970.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., FCO tel no. 177 to UKDEL NATO, 14.5.1970.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., Bonn tel no. 570 to FCO, 19.5.1970; FCO 41/628, Anglo-German talks, Bonn 19th May, 1970.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., untitled document written by the Western Organisation Department, 16.5.1970.

As a result, the Italian Foreign Minister opposed the Anglo-Belgian rush to multilateral talks. However, while Moro did not think that the British Standing Commission idea was a good solution, he also considered that he had to respond to public opinion and an introductory exploration of the problems would be necessary.<sup>206</sup>

During the conversation with Moro, Schumann clarified his position towards the idea of European security conference. In the first place, he admitted that “he had been hesitated for a long time but changed his mind because he saw in such a conference a possible opportunity for the Eastern countries to get out of the hold of the Soviet Union and maintain their national personality.”<sup>207</sup> The French Foreign Minister explained that his conviction was reinforced by the conversations he had had with the politicians of Eastern countries. However, Schumann warned that one should not thoughtlessly embark upon a project of a conference on European security. He still thought that “the consecration of the status of Berlin” was “the real key of détente” and this was the pre-condition for the French to accept the convening of the conference.<sup>208</sup> “Eventually,” he concluded, “the problem of the conference on security is the problem of approach: we want this conference but under conditions.”<sup>209</sup> For the French, therefore, the tendency of the many NATO governments inclining to the Anglo-Belgian concept was dangerous. Paris was afraid that France, at worst, might have to dissociate itself from the essential part of a communiqué, if, for example, it contained an element leading to a conference or even multilateral negotiations immediately before the conclusion of the Quadripartite Berlin talks which had begun just two month before. Hence the *Quai d’Orsay* felt that France would have to “lead a game” at the Ministerial meeting in order

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<sup>206</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1961-1970, Italie, carton 401, Entretiens entre M. Maurice Schumann et M. Aldo Moro, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères d’Italie (Paris, les 19 et 20 mai 1970): Compte-rendu de la séance de travail du mercredi 20 mai, 26.5.1970.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

to avoid such a worst-case scenario.<sup>210</sup>

The Declaration on mutual and balanced force reductions was in the end adopted with few problems by all NATO countries except France.<sup>211</sup> The French, the strongest opponent of the concept of MBFR, dissociated themselves from the Declaration. Furthermore, on French insistence, the paragraph on MBFR in the final communiqué of the Ministerial meeting, was separated from that on the issues of a European security conference, implying that mutual reductions of troops would not necessarily be on the agenda of such a conference.<sup>212</sup> While the West German request for an independent Declaration on force reductions was thus fulfilled, the FRG had to moderate its desire for a clear statement connecting MBFR and a European security conference and content itself with a more ambiguous phrase in the face of the vehement opposition from France and the USA.

At the meeting of NATO Ministers in Rome, it became clearer that most Ministers wanted a constructive communiqué. Many of them thought that NATO should pay heed to public opinion and especially the younger generation, by demonstrating NATO's political as well as military importance and its openness towards détente.<sup>213</sup> Even the US State Secretary Rogers said in his speech that "the communiqué of the present meeting should go considerably further than before in showing a desire to negotiate. Our response should be clearly positive and forthcoming."<sup>214</sup> The Americans did not so much as mention procedure.<sup>215</sup> Eventually, the forward-looking basic line of the Anglo-Belgian draft was accepted.

However, opinions were divided on the most controversial point: an

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<sup>210</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 274, NOTE a/s : Prochaine session ministérielle du Conseil de l'Atlantique Nord (26-27 mai 1970), 22.5.1970.

<sup>211</sup> As regards the text of the Declaration on MBFR,  
<http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c700526b.htm>

<sup>212</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 274, a.s. Réunion Ministérielle du Conseil Atlantique, 3.6.1970.

<sup>213</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok. 240, Staatssekretar Duckwitz, z.Z. Rom, an das Auswärtige Amt, 27.5.1970.

<sup>214</sup> TNA. FCO 41/628, Rome tel no. 489 to FCO, 26.5.1970.

<sup>215</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 274, Rome tel no. 1066/1079 to Paris, 26.5.1970.

offer of an immediate start of multilateral exploratory talks without preconditions. At the Rome meetings, only the Danish, the Dutch, the Luxembourgers, and the Norwegians were still supportive of the UK-Belgium initiative. Others favoured the continuation of bilateral contacts. Indeed, West German Foreign Minister Scheel warned in his speech that “the Federal Republic’s talks with Eastern countries and the Quadripartite talks in Berlin should not be hampered by fitting them prematurely into a multilateral framework.”<sup>216</sup> Faced with this situation, Stewart was finally forced to admit the link between the results of the German and Berlin talks and the opening of multilateral negotiations. Yet, the desire of the UK Foreign Secretary to offer “multilateral exploratory conversations” was unchanged.<sup>217</sup> He clung to the multilateralisation of East/West dialogue. It was France, because it placed a high value on bilateralism, which until the very last moment opposed this and attempted to take out the word “multilateral.” At the very end of the meeting, the French, British and Belgian delegations worked out the following paragraph (paragraph 15 of the communiqué):<sup>218</sup>

In so far as progress is recorded as a result of these talks and in the on-going talks – in particular on Germany and Berlin – the Allied Governments state that they would be ready to enter into multilateral contacts with all interested governments. One of the main purposes of such contacts would be to explore when it will be possible to convene a conference, or a series of conferences on European security and co-operation. The establishment of a permanent body could be envisaged as one means, among others, of embarking upon multilateral negotiations in due course.<sup>219</sup>

Even though this was conditional and the wording very precise, the NATO

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<sup>216</sup> TNA. FCO 41/628, Rome tel no. 489 to FCO, 26.5.1970.

<sup>217</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 274, a.s. Réunion Ministérielle de Rome. Discussion du communiqué, 4.6.1970.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c700526a.htm>

Foreign Ministers had finally made public their commitment to multilateral negotiations leading to a European security conference.

The final communiqué was surprisingly constructive. Given the marked reluctance of the Americans, the French and the West Germans to move to a multilateral phase of East/West negotiations, Britain, and in particular Stewart, had had to play a prominent leadership role within NATO. However unpopular the idea of a Standing Commission was, the British Foreign Secretary tenaciously led the Atlantic Alliance towards a positive stance towards multilateral European détente. In a sense, the British unintentionally contributed to pushing the West towards the CSCE, because they had disliked the idea of a European security conference and had invented the concept of a SCEWR as an alternative to a conference. However, British diplomacy alone is not a sufficient explanation for the results of the May 1970 NATO Ministerial meeting in Rome. More significantly, the preoccupation of many Ministers with the necessity to appeal to public opinion, and the younger generation in particular, combined with the growing atmosphere of relaxation arising from the start of *Ostpolitik*, the opening of the Quadripartite talks on Berlin, the German-German summits, and the launch of SALT played an undeniably important role in making NATO's stance more forthcoming. The British initiative and Ministers' concern about public opinion drove the West towards making a commitment to a multilateral East/West conference.

The commitment was conditional, however, and the next two chapters will therefore focus on the conditions. In other words, they will discuss the developments around a European security conference and inter-relationship between the CSCE, MBFR and Berlin.

### **Chapter 3: Increasing priority of an ESC, June-December, 1970**

With the May 1970 NATO Rome Communiqué and the Declaration of Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, the West thought that it had gained the initiative. The Atlantic Alliance had appealed for a positive Western stance towards détente, in particular proposing mutual reductions of forces as well as presenting its commitment to the idea of a European security conference on condition that progress was recorded “in the on-going talks – in particular on Germany and Berlin.”<sup>1</sup> As British Foreign Secretary Stewart explained, “if, as I hope, the neutrals react favourably to the proposal, this could make it more difficult for the Soviet Union to be uncooperative”, and “if the Warsaw Pact rejects our proposals, it will be clear to public opinion that it is they and not we who are blocking progress.”<sup>2</sup>

Within six months of the Rome gathering, the attitude of NATO governments would harden remarkably. This change in the Western stance can be explained by two aspects. Firstly, one of the reasons for the Atlantic Alliance’s negative attitude at the end of 1970 was NATO’s inability to present a further forthcoming position on disarmament matters. The Warsaw Pact’s reply to the NATO Rome communiqué came promptly in June 1970 with a proposal for reductions of foreign troops in Central Europe in connection with an all-European conference. The East for the first time since 1967 indicated their interest in force reductions. This chapter must therefore begin by examining the reactions of the West, in particular concentrating to the MBFR project and an ESC. It will also highlight the division of Western opinion and the postponement of NATO’s decision on the

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> The National Archives (Public Record Office)(hereafter TNA). FCO 41/631, FCO tel no. 491 to Moscow, 28.5.1970; *Documents on British Policy Overseas Ser. III, Vol.I, Britain and the Soviet Union, 1968-72* (hereafter, *DBPO, III, I*), p.238.

question of mutual force reductions.

The second and more decisive reason for NATO's shift to a more conservative attitude was the stalemate over the Berlin negotiations. The latter half of 1970 saw a very important development in the German question: the conclusion of Moscow talks between West Germany and the Soviet Union. The signing of the Moscow Treaty implied the *de facto* recognition of the GDR by the FRG; for Bonn it was *modus vivendi* but a crucial solution of the German question. The ratification of the Moscow Treaty was, however, linked to the settlement of the Berlin negotiations. Together with its linkage to a conference on European security, the Berlin problem became the central subject of détente in Europe. Yet, the Quadripartite Berlin talks made little progress in 1970. As a result, NATO took a very conservative position at the December 1970 Ministerial meeting.

While NATO was taking a tough line, the French government and the President in particular became more favourable to the idea of a European security conference. Indeed, at the December 1970 NATO Ministerial gathering, France insisted on making a Berlin settlement the only precondition for a European security conference. In order to understand why the French adopted such an attitude, it is necessary to examine the inclination of Paris towards a multilateral European conference. France would eventually become the champion of taking multilateral European détente forward.

The British government also stopped opposing the ESC project. The new Conservative government, after winning the general election in June 1970, adopted different policy priorities on a European security conference and MBFR than its predecessor. Unlike the Labour government, the Heath government disliked disarmament, and instead it would begin to regard a multilateral European conference as a lesser evil. The final six months of 1970 would therefore be characterised by two trends: on the one hand NATO hardening its attitude, but on the other hand, France and Britain were more



favourable to a conference on European security.

### **The Budapest Memorandum and force reductions**

Following the forthcoming NATO communiqué of May 1970, the Warsaw Pact also responded in a positive fashion and moved slightly closer to the Western position, in particular on disarmament détente. On 21-22 June 1970, the Foreign Ministers of the Soviet and East European communist countries gathered in Hungary's capital, and issued the so-called Budapest Memorandum. The Warsaw Pact's response was well-thought out; it looked forthcoming, but the East stuck to its basic positions.<sup>3</sup> Three points in the Memorandum are worth being mentioned. To begin with, by calling once again for a European security conference, the Eastern countries for the first time publicly accepted the participation of North American countries in it, something which had only been suggested informally to the West up to that point. In return, they did not forget to insist upon East Germany's participation in a multilateral conference. Secondly, in regards to the agenda of the Conference, the Eastern countries agreed to discuss not only trade, economic, scientific and technical relations, but also cultural aspects of East/West relations including the problem of the human environment. However, they cautiously avoided referring to the "free movement of people and ideas."<sup>4</sup> These two points gave the Budapest Memorandum a cooperative flavour. However, the third point was more significant.

Indeed, the Warsaw Pact indicated its interest in force reductions in

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<sup>3</sup> Helga Haftendorn, *Sicherheit und Entspannung: zur Aussenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1955-1982*, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983, pp.444-445; Ljubivoje Achimovic, *Problems of Security and Cooperation in Europe*, Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands; Rockville, Md., USA: Sijthoff & Noordhoff, 1981, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> The words in the Budapest Memorandum were ambiguous, and Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko and other East Europeans confirmed later that they were opposed to the inclusion of this on the agenda of the conference. TNA. FCO 41/635, Fielding to Braithwaite, 8.7.1970.

Europe.<sup>5</sup> It was the first time since 1967 that the Eastern countries had formally suggested in public a disarmament project. Yet this was a very limited and conditional acceptance. The East offered reductions only for foreign troops, namely American and Soviet troops stationed in Central Europe, and did not include the indigenous forces of European states. In other words, while consenting to the West's disarmament idea, the Russians attempted to make it manageable by reducing it to the sole superpowers. The Warsaw Pact also suggested that the talks on force reductions should be discussed in an "organ" that would be established by a European Conference. Skilfully grasping the West's proposal in its Rome Communiqué for the establishment of a permanent body, the East suggested that the preparatory negotiations on MBFR would start only *after* the convention of a Conference. Exploiting NATO's insistence on force reductions and a permanent body, the Warsaw Pact made a clever response through the Budapest Memorandum to push the West towards the organisation of a conference on European security.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, NATO governments had to consider how to answer the East's proposal for foreign force reductions, because it was one of the key factors that would characterise the next phase of East-West relations.

Yet, the Western bloc did not reply favourably to the East's new stance on disarmament, partly because it caused divisions within the Western Alliance. While the US State Department and West Germany believed that starting conventional force reductions of foreign troops in Central Europe was an attractive idea, others like the Netherlands considered that this was

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<sup>5</sup> Reportedly, the opinions on force reductions among Communist governments were not unanimous. According to a Polish source via Belgium, which was revealed about 8 months later, the Rumanians, Hungarians and Poles had been the key players in Budapest in June 1970 in getting force reductions into the Budapest Memorandum. On the other hand, the East Germans had been against any mention of force reductions. The Soviets had then mediated between the two sides, proposing the compromise Warsaw Pact position which eventually emerged. TNA. FCO 41/828, 2.3.1971, Grattan to Alexander.

<sup>6</sup> Politisches Archiv, Auswaertiges Amt (hereafter PAAA), Berlin, B-40, Bd. 184, Aufzeichnung, Betr. Konferenz über die Sicherheit Europas (KSE), hier: Kommunique der Konferenz der Aussenminister des Warschauer Pakts vom 21./22. Juni 1970 in Budapest, 24.6.1970; MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 278, Repan-Bruxelles tel no. 1196/1208, 1.7.1970.

an unacceptable proposal. Another important reason was the change of British government, which led London's policy on disarmament to become more negative. Finally, the Nixon government was cautious and shied away from taking a clear stance on MBFR. In the end, the Atlantic Alliance would not be able to take a further initiative on the problem of force reductions.

The American assessment and attitude towards the Budapest Memorandum were ambivalent. On the one hand, Washington was one of the Western governments that expressed its strong scepticism about the Warsaw Pact initiative. The US permanent representative to NATO, for instance, described the Memorandum "a trick for splitting the Alliance."<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, the US Department of State was tempted by one element in the Memorandum: namely, the reductions of foreign forces.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the Department saw in the reply from the Eastern Bloc a good chance to counter the persistent congressional pressure for unilateral US troop reductions. Although there was no agreed plan on how and by how much to reduce forces in Europe, this did not matter much to the State Department. When one British foreign official indicated to Martin Hillenbrand, the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs in the US State Department, that there could be a danger that the Soviet Union would agree to MBFR before NATO had sufficiently clarified its own stance, he replied that: "even if the Russians did agree to discuss force reductions, there would be little danger. The experience of the lead up to SALT had shown the Americans that it was possible to play the Russians along for a considerable time before it was necessary to get down to brass tacks."<sup>9</sup> This remark clearly indicates that what the Americans thought it was more important to just start negotiations with the Warsaw Pact countries, rather than conclude an agreement on disarmament, in order to demonstrate to the US

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<sup>7</sup> *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (hereafter, *AAPD*) 1970, R. Oldenbourg, 1999, Dok. 290, Gesandter Boss, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 1.7.1970.

<sup>8</sup> TNA. FCO 41/687, Crowe to Braithwaite, 22.9.1970.

<sup>9</sup> TNA. FCO 41/685, Braithwaite to Bendall, undated.

Congress that they were negotiating with the 'enemy' and therefore could not reduce their troops unilaterally. It was thus not a problem for the Americans to start bilateral force reduction talks with the USSR because they thought they could easily control the speed of the negotiations.

One of the significant problems for the US government was, however, the connection between MBFR and a European security conference, since they saw little if any advantage in the latter. The Rome NATO Ministerial Meeting of May 1970 had illustrated the Alliance's positive stance towards "multilateral preparatory discussions" and this had irritated the United States.<sup>10</sup> Above all, the Warsaw Pact insisted in its Budapest Memorandum that it would be prepared to discuss the subject of force reductions only *after* the holding of a Conference. The Americans therefore tried to separate the two issues by suggesting a new forum in which MBFR would be discussed, implying that force reductions should be negotiated not in a Conference but in another forum, preferably *before* convening a Conference.<sup>11</sup> By proposing Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions as an independent agenda item, the Department of State thought that it would be "a useful concrete alternative to a CES (Conference on European Security) – or if not alternative, a useful device for slowing down consideration of and progress towards it."<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the British Foreign Office observed that: "the Americans seem to believe that, by insisting on MBFR discussions separately from, and before, a conference, the latter can be postponed indefinitely."<sup>13</sup> In any case, for the United States, force reductions had to come first.

In contrast to the United States, West Germany seemed more receptive to the positive parts of the Eastern response to the West, though its examination of the Budapest Memorandum was as cautious as that of America. The FRG Foreign Ministry regarded the Soviet move as essentially

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<sup>10</sup> TNA. FCO 41/685, Waterfield to Bendall, 7.7.1970.

<sup>11</sup> TNA. FCO 41/685, Wilcock to Alexander, 3.7.1970.

<sup>12</sup> TNA. FCO 41/687, Crowe to Alexander, 25.9.1970.

<sup>13</sup> TNA. FCO 41/687, Braithwaite to Cable, 20.10.1970.

tactical: "to counter the NATO Communiqué and to further the prospects of a conference."<sup>14</sup> The Germans thought that by accepting mutual force reductions only in principle, the Soviets were attempting to make the convention of a European security conference more likely. Despite this evaluation, however, Chancellor Brandt publicly welcomed the Memorandum.<sup>15</sup> Bonn's representative to NATO also deemed the Warsaw Pact initiative as "a step in the right direction."<sup>16</sup> The reason for this positive attitude was, predictably, because the Eastern Bloc had shown the first official interest, albeit limited, in the idea of mutual force reductions. As argued in the previous chapter, the West German government was one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the disarmament project, and in order to study this subject more intensively, the *Auswärtiges Amt* established an ad-hoc working group for MBFR on 10 July 1970.<sup>17</sup> At the first meeting of the working group, Hellmuth Roth, the Assistant Under-Secretary supervising the Disarmament Department and the Chair of the group, explained the importance of force reductions in a broader context, that MBFR were composed of political, military and economic elements, and that therefore it should not be seen exclusively from a military point of view. He then stressed that: "MBFR is a complex edifice with the main goal of achieving a starting-base for a further initiative through negotiations over force reductions. MBFR was an important element on the road to a durable peace settlement."<sup>18</sup> Even if the East's intention was mostly tactical, the Budapest Memorandum was of value to the West Germans as they sought to implement MBFR.

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<sup>14</sup> TNA. FCO 41/636, O'Neill to Braithwaite, 2.7.1970. This German's view was also shared by the British Foreign Office.

<sup>15</sup> Brandt was the only Western leader who welcomed the Budapest Memorandum in public. Against this, other NATO countries indirectly complained, stressing that each Alliance partner should withhold to public its opinion on it until NATO would reach at a united evaluation of the Memorandum. The West German representative to NATO felt that this was unmistakably aimed at his government. *AAPD 1970*, Dok.290, Gesandter Boss, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 1.7.1970.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> *AAPD 1970*, Dok. 303, Aufzeichnung des Legationsrats Ederer, 10.7.1970.

This policy was indeed confirmed at the highest level of the Brandt government. On 16 October 1970, the Federal National Security Council (*Bundessicherheitsrat*) met and discussed MBFR. The *Auswärtiges Amt* and the Federal Defence Ministry jointly prepared a memorandum on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, in which they recommended that the concept contained in the Budapest memorandum should be exploited politically: namely they argued that in order to develop the MBFR project, they should accept the Warsaw Pact's offer to discuss the reduction of "foreign forces" only as a first step.<sup>19</sup> During the Grand Coalition era of the late 1960s, the withdrawal of superpower forces from Europe had been totally unacceptable for the CDU/CSU/SPD government. By contrast, the SPD/FDP could accept foreign force reductions as a first stage if it would lead to mutual force reductions including indigenous troops in Central Europe. In addition, there would be a benefit for the FRG in the reduction of superpower troops in Europe, because it could potentially avoid the GDR's participation in multilateral negotiations on disarmament détente until an inner-German agreement was concluded, if only the US-USSR talks had gone ahead at that time. The negotiations for normalising relations between East and West Germanies had already begun. By addressing superpower disarmament first and postponing multilateral force reduction talks to a later stage, it could delay East Germany's entry into international society and the recognition of its formal status, which the FRG wanted to avoid until after the conclusion of a German-German accord. Thus, Bonn could gain time for its bilateral negotiations with East Berlin. Considering these factors, the joint recommendation was approved as Federal Germany's basic position.

Without doubt, the West Germans thought that a European security conference could be a good lever for pulling the Soviets into disarmament

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> *AAPD 1970*, Dok. 452, Vorlage des Auswärtigen Amts und des Bundesministeriums der Verteidigung für den Bundessicherheitsrat, 5.10.1970.

détente in Europe. As discussed in chapter 2, the FRG government wanted to connect mutual force reductions and an ESC in order to secure the Warsaw Pact's commitment to the project to reduce force levels. However, Bonn also noticed that Washington wanted to start MBFR alone, and before a Conference. The joint memorandum drafted by the FRG's Foreign and Defence Ministries therefore proposed a new formula: "We are principally of the opinion that MBFR is a separate and independent subject that can be dealt with independently of a conference on security in Europe. On the other hand, we maintain that any ESC will also have to deal with the subject of mutual balanced force reductions."<sup>20</sup> This new German definition of MBFR/ESC relations was a compromise and covered both the West German and American positions. The *Auswärtiges Amt* officials had carefully consulted about it beforehand with their counterparts in Washington, and the new formula had been accepted by the US government.<sup>21</sup> The convergence of views with the Americans at this stage delighted the West Germans: a German document reported that "obviously, the United States have largely gotten closer towards [West German] opinion of relations between MBFR and a European Security Conference."<sup>22</sup> As will be discussed in chapter 6, however, Bonn would later be forced to retreat from this position.

Since 1967, Britain had been a very good partner of West Germany in its quest to pursue disarmament détente. In the course of the latter half of 1970, however, this changed. The general elections in June 1970 saw a surprise victory for the Conservative Party. In particular, the new administration, headed by Edward Heath, was more preoccupied with defence than détente. Certainly, even in the first few months of the Heath government, the Foreign Office still thought that the subject of mutual force reductions was NATO's most important proposal. The FO and in particular

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> *AAPD 1970*, Dok. 428, Aufzeichnung des Vortragenden Legationsrats Ruth, 14.9.1970.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

new Ministers came to oppose this, however, after a new study on European security emerged. On 16 September 1970, the new report prepared by the Planning Staff and Western Organisation Department in the British Foreign Office, was completed and handed to the new Secretary of State, Alec Douglas-Home. This study paper then became a guiding text for British European security policy in general, and its policies towards a European security conference and MBFR in particular.<sup>23</sup>

The analysis of MBFR at the official level was basically the same as that of NATO, but its policy recommendation was more prudent. The Foreign Office study argued that: "Reductions in NATO's conventional force levels, unless accompanied by very greatly disproportionate reductions on the Warsaw Pact side, will almost inevitably impair NATO's relative position" because NATO's conventional forces were already at the minimum level and because the Warsaw Pact had a geographical advantage in that any Soviet forces which had been withdrawn could come back to the European theatre faster than repatriated US troops. Asymmetrical force reductions were, however, unlikely to be acceptable to the Soviet Union. The British paper confirmed that, in the MBFR project, negotiability and security were incompatible. "Recognising that the concept of MBFRs is full of difficulties and is unlikely to bring NATO many benefits," the document continued, "it might seem that the UK should argue that the subject be dropped for the time being." "This is not now, however, a realistic option," because British partners, especially West Germany and America, were strong supporters of the force reduction initiative, and the Alliance had already adopted a position publicly. The paper recommended, therefore, that in order to pursue less dangerous disarmament, the West should gain "token" troop reductions from the Soviet Union.<sup>24</sup> In short, British officials

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<sup>23</sup> This study contained three documents: (1) the general situation; (2) Mutual and Balanced force Reduction; and (3) a European security conference: tactics. TNA. FCO 41/744, Bendall to Permanent Under-Secretary, Private Secretary, 16.9.1970. As regards the three papers, see also *DBPO, III, I*, pp.262-3.

<sup>24</sup> TNA. FCO 41/744, Bendall to Private Secretary, "European Security Paper 2. Mutual



still preferred to keep any force reduction project at a minimum level in order to maintain the solidarity of the alliance and for the sake of public consistency.

Yet, on defence matters, Ministers were sterner than foreign officials. The Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home rejected the proposal of "token" reductions. Rather, he preferred "the line that only real security has any interest for the allies and that we should begin to run this line in NATO circles."<sup>25</sup> In other words, the Secretary of State ordered his officials to take a very firm stance on military security rather than embrace dangerous disarmament, even of a "token" variety. New Defence Secretary Lord Carrington and his Ministry also disliked the idea of mutual force reductions. When he and Douglas-Home met with the US State Secretary Rogers on 3 October 1970, Carrington made his view clear, stating that "he had the gravest misgivings on military grounds about the idea of force reductions."<sup>26</sup> The British conservative government then firmly retreated from the MBFR concept. Indeed, in order to put the brake on the rush into force reduction talks, on 13 October 1971, the Foreign Office instructed its delegation to NATO to insist to its Alliance partners that the NATO studies of MBFR should be done thoroughly and completely. This implied that the arguments on force reductions would be contained within the Alliance and the start of negotiations on that subject between the two blocs would be prevented at least for a time.<sup>27</sup> London's position on MBFR became much closer to that of Paris, which disliked disarmament détente, and further away from that of Bonn and Brussels.<sup>28</sup> This also meant that "the

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and Balanced Force Reductions", 16.9.1970.

<sup>25</sup> TNA. FCO 41/746, Graham to Bendall, 28.9.1970. As regards the Secretary of State's comments on the papers, see *DBPO, III, I*, p.264.

<sup>26</sup> TNA. FCO 41/687, "Extract from the conversation between the Secretary of State and Rogers"

<sup>27</sup> TNA. FCO 41/687, Bendall to Penberton-Pigott, 13.10.1970.

<sup>28</sup> Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris (hereafter MAE), Série Europe 1966-1970, carton 2031, NOTE A/S. Conference européenne et réduction équilibrée des forces, 23.10.1970. As regards the French reluctance to adopt military détente, see also, Michael Meimeth, *Frankreichs Entspannungspolitik der 70er Jahre: Zwischen Status quo und*

Anglo-Belgian-German front” that had appeared in May 1970 broke up.<sup>29</sup> As a result, the pro-disarmament détente camp in NATO became remarkably weaker.

Within NATO, therefore, it was the West Germans with the highest level of decisiveness, not the British, that tried to lead discussions on MBFR. Not surprisingly, Bonn’s new formula for relations between MBFR and an ESC, namely that MBFR could be discussed separately, but must be addressed in any conference on European security, was generally accepted in the Alliance, because it was well designed to be acceptable for both those who wanted to separate MBFR and a Conference and those who wanted to link them.<sup>30</sup> This West German idea served to hide the potential conflict within NATO about the relationship between MBFR and an ESC. For some, such as the Belgians, MBFR was the only original and substantial element of the Western position.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, it was important for them to incorporate the force reduction project in a conference on European security. Although NATO had already proposed the concept of “freer movement”, it was regarded by policymakers as just a counter-proposal to put the East on the defensive and not something of much substance. Many interviews have confirmed that Western diplomats did not expect the elements of “freer movement” to have a great impact in the Eastern Bloc.<sup>32</sup> By contrast, the disarmament proposal was more concrete and substantial. However, for others, like the French, the Turkish, the Greek, and now the British, MBFR was seen as dangerous for European security. Therefore, it should be abandoned, or at least it should be separated from a Conference in order to

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*friedlichem Wandel. Die Ära Georges Pompidou und Valéry Giscard d'Estaing*, Baden-Baden 1990, pp. 173-187.

<sup>29</sup> TNA. FCO 41/746, Cable to Daunt, 16.11.1970. As for the “Anglo-Belgian-German front,” see chapter 2.

<sup>30</sup> TNA. FCO 41/688, Pemberton-Pigott to Cable, 30.10.1970.

<sup>31</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 278, Repan-Bruxelle, tel no. 1610/1620, to Paris, 15.10.1970.

<sup>32</sup> Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), p.143; Robert Spencer, “Canada and the Origins of the CSCE,” in Robert Spencer (ed.), *Canada and the*

be controlled independently. Yet, the new German formula made it possible to postpone the contention between the two sides on how to treat military aspects in a European security conference.

Another aspect of Bonn's position, namely its insistence on regarding the reductions of "foreign forces" as a first step was, however, far more controversial. This German position was welcomed by Italy, Canada, Denmark, and Norway. The Italians agreed that priority should be given to the further study of "foreign forces" reductions. Canada was of the stronger opinion that NATO had to say something positive at its December Ministerial Meeting about the Warsaw Pact offer on foreign forces, in order not to "altogether close the door on MBFR."<sup>33</sup> The Netherlands, Turkey and Greece, however, opposed the German idea of accepting a discussion of foreign forces as a first step. The Dutch in particular saw a great risk in it, warning that "MBFR, as we had known it, would be pushed out of any discussions," if superpowers bilaterally agreed on force withdrawals as a first step. The Hague was afraid that there would not be a next step.<sup>34</sup> Rather it thought that balanced force reductions should be undertaken multilaterally from the outset. The division of opinion in NATO made it difficult for the West to take a new initiative on MBFR.

Finally, this trend was accelerated by American indecisiveness on this matter. The enthusiasm of the State Department for mutual and balanced force reductions was curbed by the superior decision-making body: the National Security Council (NSC). The State Department had expected that the US government would consider the idea of proposing a 10% reduction of both American and Soviet forces in Europe. US diplomats had thought that this would not have any significant effects on European security, but would have a political impact in countering Congressional pressures.<sup>35</sup> At the 19

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*Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe*, University of Tront, 1984, p. 90.

<sup>33</sup> TNA. FCO 41/687, Grattan to Alexander, 6.11.1970.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> TNA. FCO 41/687, Crowe to Braithwaite, 10.11.1970; TNA. FCO 41/687, Meeting of British and American Officials in London on 19 November 1970.

November 1970 NSC meeting, in which the MBFR problem was considered for the first time at the top level, however, the American leaders agreed to postpone a final decision on MBFR. Kissinger recommended continuing to study models of the asymmetrical reductions or “trade-off packages,” namely different types of cuts including not only conventional forces but also tactical nuclear weapons and tactical aircraft.<sup>36</sup> This meant that the studies would take more time because of the complexity of the mixed package models, and that the 10% model was temporarily shelved. Secretary of State Rogers also argued at the meeting that the Soviets were not thinking about negotiations on force reductions, and stressed that “We should not decide anything on MBFR now.”<sup>37</sup> Consequently, the US government would not push its partners on this subject at the NATO Ministerial meeting. Therefore, although some NATO governments considered the Warsaw Pact’s initiative as a positive step, the Atlantic Alliance decided not to answer with a new proposal. Moreover, it was the log-jam of the Quadripartite Berlin talks that made the West’s attitude towards the East less forthcoming than it might otherwise have been.

### **Ostpolitik and Four-Power Berlin Negotiations in 1970**

While NATO governments discussed MBFR, negotiations on the German and Berlin problems continued in the latter half of 1970. The conclusion of the Moscow Treaty between Bonn and Moscow on 12 August 1970 was the most significant development, and also a historic moment in Cold War history. The importance of the Treaty in this study’s context is twofold. In the first place, West Germany’s *de facto* recognition of East Germany within the agreement between the FRG and the Soviet Union was crucial. The

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<sup>36</sup> The Digital National Security Archives (hereafter, DNSA), Kissinger’s Transcripts, Memorandum of Conversation, KT00211, 19.11.1970.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

negotiations, which had begun in Moscow in January 1970 between the State Secretary in the Chancellor's Office, Egon Bahr, and the Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, had been nominally for a non-use of force accord between the two countries.<sup>38</sup> The talks were not limited to this, however; they were extended to working out the guidelines for the FRG's relations with the Eastern Bloc in general, because Bonn intended to conclude follow-up treaties with other Warsaw Pact governments, in particular with East Berlin. It was vitally important for the Brandt government, therefore, to reach agreement first with Moscow before negotiating with the satellite countries. The relationship between the two Germanies and the recognition of existing borders were thus vital issues in the Moscow negotiations.

West Germany's aim was to make the Soviet Union recognise the special relationship between the FRG and the GDR. Bonn was ready to accept the equal status of the two Germanies. However, West Germany could not recognise East Germany in terms of international law, because it would mean the recognition of the permanent division of Germany, which was incompatible with the FRG's constitution, the Basic Law, which identified German reunification as a fundamental objective. Even if the Brandt government had legally recognised East Berlin, the Parliament of the Constitutional Court of West Germany would have rejected it. Bahr insisted therefore on the importance of *de facto* recognition of the GDR as a *modus vivendi* in a treaty. *De jure* recognition was out of the question.<sup>39</sup> For Bahr, the idea of a European security conference, which the Soviets wanted to hold, was a useful lever for the West Germans to achieve Moscow's agreement, because "There [would] be no ESC without the Federal

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<sup>38</sup> For detailed and archival-based examination of the Moscow negotiations, see Werner Link, "Die Entstehung des Moskauer Vertrags im Lichte neuer Archivalien," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 49/2, 2001; Carsten Tessler, "'Thinking the Unthinkable' to 'Make the Impossible Possible': Ostpolitik, Intra-German Policy, and the Moscow Treaty, 1969-1970," German Historical Institute, Washington, DC, Bulletin Supplement 1, 2004 "American Détente and German Ostpolitik, 1969-1972," downloaded from: [http://www.ghi-dc.org/bulletinS04\\_supp/bulletinS04\\_supp.index.html](http://www.ghi-dc.org/bulletinS04_supp/bulletinS04_supp.index.html).

<sup>39</sup> AAPD 1969, Dok. 412, Aufzeichnung des Staatssekretärs Bahr, Bundeskanzleramt,

Republic.”<sup>40</sup>

The more controversial problem in the Moscow talks, was Bahr's proposal to send a letter to the Soviet government. In order to confirm the *modus vivendi*, over East German recognition, the State Secretary wanted to send a letter to the Russians, stating that the treaty was compatible with the FRG's aim of German reunification. From the outset, Moscow seemed ready to accept Bonn's insistence on non-legal recognition, though Gromyko had demanded the full-legal recognition of East Germany at an early stage in the negotiations. In fact, as early as March 1969, the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, had made it clear to Kissinger that the Soviets did not care about the formal recognition of the GDR.<sup>41</sup> However, Gromyko vehemently opposed Bahr's suggestion for an exchange of letters.<sup>42</sup> For the Soviet Foreign Minister, the mention of reunification was unacceptable because Moscow's official policy since 1955 had been the maintenance of two Germanies. It was the backchannel between Bonn and Moscow that served to break the impasse. On 21 May 1970, Yuri Andropov, the head of the KGB and the master of the secret channel on the Soviet side, directly convinced Brezhnev of the necessity of sufficient accommodation on the question of German unity. With new instructions from the top, Gromyko agreed to accept a letter from the Federal German government.<sup>43</sup> After further negotiations between Scheel and Gromyko in July-August 1970, the two Foreign Ministers, together with Brandt and Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin, finally signed the Moscow Treaty on 12 August 1970.<sup>44</sup>

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4.12.1969.

<sup>40</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok. 8, Aufzeichnung des Staatssekretärs Bahr, Bundeskanzleramt, 14.1.1970.

<sup>41</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Conversation with Ambassador Dobrynin, Lunch, March 3, KT00009, 6.3.1969.

<sup>42</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok. 104, Gespräch des Staatssekretärs Bahr, Bundeskanzleramt, mit dem sowjetischen Außenminister Gromyko in Moskau, 10.5.1970.

<sup>43</sup> Wilfried Loth, *Overcoming the Cold War: A History of Détente, 1950-1991*, Palgrave, 2002, p.108.

<sup>44</sup> According to Sarotte, there were three major reasons for the Kremlin's enthusiasm for the Moscow Treaty: firstly, the stabilisation on the USSR's European "front" by the agreement on the status quo in Europe, in worrying about a China threat; secondly,

Within the Treaty, along with mutual renunciation of force, Bonn and Moscow agreed to respect the “inviolability” of the existing frontiers. By this stipulation, the Brandt government *de facto* recognised the existence of the GDR and the Oder-Neisse line as Poland’s Western border. At the same time, the West Germans accepted the equality of the FRG and the GDR. Yet, with Brandt’s letter, which was sent on the day of the signing, the Chancellor was able to make clear that, from the Federal German point of view, the Moscow Treaty was compatible with the Basic Law and its aim of future reunification. Thanks to the backchannel between Bonn and Moscow, the two governments were able to reach mutual acceptance of the reality of two Germanies.

Although the Moscow Treaty was in essence the confirmation of the status quo in Europe, it was vitally important for paving the way towards multilateral détente. As argued in chapter 1, the realisation of multilateral détente in any form had been prevented by the German question throughout the 1960s. Thanks to the Moscow Treaty, the German problem was given a provisional solution: the *de facto* recognition of East Germany.<sup>45</sup> With this settlement, the FRG could in principle accept the participation on equal status of the GDR in a multilateral conference. The Treaty indicated that Moscow would not demand the *de jure* recognition of East Berlin in multilateral conferences. Brandt expected the Bonn-Moscow Treaty would lead to disarmament détente through MBFR.<sup>46</sup> However, the West Germans did not rush into a European security conference. The German-German negotiations were still far from complete, and Bonn thought that the convention of a multilateral conference before the conclusion of

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economic benefits expected by the good relations with West Germany; thirdly, its hope for the FRG’s inclination toward neutrality. M. E. Sarotte, *Dealing With the Devil: East Germany, Détente, and Ostpolitik, 1969-1973*, University of North Carolina Press, 2001, pp. 69-70.

<sup>45</sup> Needless to say, the true settlement of the German question for West Germany was German reunification and a peace treaty between a unified Germany and its former enemies.

<sup>46</sup> Tessmer, “Thinking the Unthinkable,” p. 61.

inner-German talks would work to East Berlin's advantage. Moreover, in order to reach agreement with the GDR, the Brandt government had to solve the problem of Berlin: the divided city within East Germany.

### *The Quadripartite Berlin Talks in 1970*

The second significance of the Moscow Treaty was the linkage between the Treaty and the Quadripartite Berlin negotiations. As discussed in chapter 2, the West, the French in particular, had already made the progress of German and Berlin talks a precondition for the opening of multilateral preparations for a European security conference. In addition, the West Germans also made the settlement of the Berlin problem the precondition of the ratification of the Moscow Treaty. Scheel had made this clear during his negotiations with Gromyko,<sup>47</sup> and after the signing of the Treaty, Brandt also made this point in public in his interview with *Newsweek*, underlining the link between a "satisfactory" settlement of the Berlin problem and ratification of the Treaty.<sup>48</sup> This connection was dubbed the "*Junktim*." As a result of these linkages, the Berlin question became the very centre of the whole détente process in Europe. It was the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union, not East and West Germany, let alone smaller countries, however, that had the prerogatives and responsibility with regard to Berlin; hence the FRG (and the GDR) could only participate indirectly in the formal Quadripartite talks. Understanding the process of European détente thus needs an understanding of the problem of Berlin and of the Four-Power diplomacy in dealing with the city.

The Berlin question was highly complex and took much longer to be settled than the Moscow negotiations. Although there were many problem

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<sup>47</sup> See for example, *AAPD 1970*, Dok. 335, Gespräch des Bundesministers Scheel mit dem sowjetischen Außenminister Gromyko in Moskau, 27.7.1970.

<sup>48</sup> Honoré M. Catudal, *The Diplomacy of the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin: A New Era in East-West Politics*, Berlin Verlag, 1978, p.118.



areas to be solved in order to achieve a final Berlin agreement, three points were most fundamental.<sup>49</sup> The first problem was the definition of the status of Berlin. While the US, France and the UK argued that the Four-Power responsibility for Berlin covered all the city, the Soviet Union insisted that the negotiations and a final agreement on Berlin must be limited to the Western Sectors, because, according to the USSR, the Soviet Sector had already been delegated to East German sovereignty. Yet, the Western Three did not recognise the GDR as a member of international society; hence, they could not accept Moscow's stance. In particular, the three Western governments were afraid that full diplomatic recognition of the GDR would erode the Allied legal position in Berlin.<sup>50</sup> The basic positions of East and West on the status of Berlin were completely incompatible.

The second major contention on Berlin was the problem of access to West Berlin, which the Western Three regarded as the most important issue. The West contended that rights of access were included in the Four-Power prerogatives to the city; therefore all access to it must be free from restrictions. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, countered that only the military access of the Allies to West Berlin was included and, thus, civilian access had to be controlled by the GDR authorities because the transit routes were through the East German territory. The third crucial problem was the relationship between West Germany and West Berlin or the problem of Federal presence. From the Western point of view, and for the West Germans in particular, the connections between the FRG and the Western Sectors were vital for people living in West Berlin, an isolated island in communist territory. For a long time, however, the USSR and East

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<sup>49</sup> Political scientist Honoré Catudal has pointed out ten major problem areas in the Berlin negotiations, which demonstrates how complex the talks were: (a) the status of Berlin; (b) recognition of the GDR; (c) relations between West Berlin and the Federal Republic; (d) FRG representation of West Berlin abroad; (e) visits by West Berliners to East Berlin and East Germany; (f) access to Berlin; (g) the question of exclaves; (h) improvements in external communication; (i) increased Soviet presence in West Berlin; and (j) the consultation mechanism. *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 245-6.

Germany strongly contended that West Berlin was "an independent political entity" existing under Four-Power status. The presence of West Germany in West Berlin was hence considered "illegal" by the East.<sup>51</sup> Resolution of these three controversial and difficult points were essential for concluding an agreement on Berlin among the "Big Four." Yet the still more significant reasons why the negotiations on Berlin, which had begun in March 1970, made little progress in their first year, was the reluctance of the Western Three to allow an early conclusion and Moscow's hesitation about making substantial concessions that would damage the integrity of the official Soviet position concerning Berlin and East Germany.

It was the Russians who first indicated willingness to compromise. At the early stage of the Berlin negotiations, both sides had fruitlessly continued to reiterate their basic stances and presented them "without even a hint of willingness to compromise."<sup>52</sup> After the conclusion of the Moscow Treaty, however, Moscow evidently took a positive position in order to allow the Quadripartite talks to advance. When Brandt visited Moscow for the signing of the Treaty on 12 August 1970 and emphasised the *Junktim* between the ratification of the Moscow Treaty and the Berlin negotiations, Brezhnev replied to the Chancellor that he did not exclude the possibility of reaching a solution of the Berlin problem acceptable to all concerned, but he also warned that it would depend on whether giving the impression that the USSR was being subjected to pressure could be avoided.<sup>53</sup> More clearly, three weeks after the signing, Pyotr Abrasimov, the Soviet Ambassador in East Berlin and the USSR negotiator of the Quadripartite talks, reportedly asked his American counterpart, Kenneth Rush, to accelerate the negotiations.<sup>54</sup> Abrasimov also approached the French Ambassador, Jean

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<sup>51</sup> David M. Keithly, *Breakthrough in the Ostpolitik: the 1971 Quadripartite Agreement*, Westview Press, 1986, p. 120.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Sarotte, *Dealing With the Devil*, p. 72.

<sup>53</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok. 388, Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Brandt mit dem Generalsekretär des ZK der KpdSU, Breschnew, in Moskau, 12.8.1970.

<sup>54</sup> Archives Nationales (hereafter AN), 5 AG 2 / 1009, NOTE a.s. Etat des negociations

Sauvagnargues, and pressed him to agree to draw up a bilateral Franco/Soviet paper on the possible shape of a new Berlin agreement, although the French Ambassador declined.<sup>55</sup> Still more importantly, the Soviet Foreign Minister made a more concrete proposal when he met with the US President Nixon on 22 October 1970. Having assured his host that the Soviet Union had no intention of weakening the status of the Allied powers in West Berlin, Gromyko indicated that the Soviet government was ready to find a favourable solution to the access problem. At the same time, while implying Moscow's acceptance of economic, cultural and financial links between the FRG and West Berlin, he demanded the curtailment of West German *political* activities in the Western Sectors and listed FRG activities not to be permitted in West Berlin, such as meetings of the West German Bundestag in Berlin, meetings of various Bundestag committees, and the activities of the West German Chancellor in West Berlin.<sup>56</sup> In retrospect, the proposal of a deal which exchanged the acceptance of unrestricted access to West Berlin for a reduction in the FRG's political links with the city would become the basis for the final agreement on Berlin. However, the negotiations did not accelerate as the Russians had expected.

The Western Three did not want to hasten the Quadripartite talks. In particular, the United States and Britain were not going to make compromises so as to reach an early conclusion. They thought that their negotiating position was stronger, and they had no incentive to rush into an agreement. Rather, they wanted to keep controlling the pace of the development of détente.<sup>57</sup> In replying to the Soviet Foreign Minister, Nixon

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quadripartites sur Berlin -addendum-, 16.9.1970.

<sup>55</sup> TNA, FCO 41/744, Mallaby to the Western Organisation Department, 9.10.1970. As regards the Soviet approach to the French, see also *AAPD 1970*, Dok. 453, Aufzeichnung des Vortragenden Legationsrats I. Klasse van Well, 7.10.1970; Georges-Henri Soutou, "La France et l'accord quadripartite sur Berlin du 3 septembre 1971," *revue d'histoire diplomatique*, no.1, 2004, p. 60; Sarotte, *Dealing With the Devil*, p. 74.

<sup>56</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Memorandum of Conversation [between Nixon and Gromyko], KT00202, 22.10.1970.

<sup>57</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Memorandum of Conversation [Meeting of the National Security Council], KT00198, 14.10.1970.

stressed that “the umbilical cord between the city and the FRG could not be cut.”<sup>58</sup> Without rejecting Gromyko’s proposal, the US President however presented a tough stance: “We could not agree to eliminating all political ties for the simple reason that we could not sell this to the FRG any more than the FRG could sell this to its own people.”<sup>59</sup> In fact, Nixon had lost his incentive to settle the Berlin problem in the latter half of 1970, as the White House’s decision – National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 91 – clearly stated that “the President considers the present arrangement to be an adequate basis for fulfilling our obligations. A new four power agreement is, therefore, not an essential requirement in terms of our interest or our policy.”<sup>60</sup> Although, as described in the previous chapter, it had been Nixon who had originally shown an interest in the Berlin problem in early 1969, after 20 months of his presidency, the US President seemed to have grown accustomed to the existing Berlin situation. Indeed, NSDM 91 illustrated Washington’s intention to make few concessions. US Secretary of State Rogers also told British Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home on 3 October 1970 that: “the Russians were anxious that the Soviet/German treaty should be ratified, and they knew that the Federal German government want this. This was therefore a good time for the West to get something concrete in return.”<sup>61</sup> To put it another way, the Americans understood that they were in a strong position in respect to the Soviets in the Berlin talks; they therefore decided to take a stance of just waiting for Moscow’s surrender.

The British position was close to the one of the Americans.<sup>62</sup> When the Soviet side showed a clear desire to accelerate the negotiations at the end of September 1970, the Foreign Office instructed the British Ambassador,

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<sup>58</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Memorandum of Conversation [between Nixon and Gromyko], KT00202, 22.10.1970.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> DNSA, Presidential Directives, National Security Decision Memorandum [91: United States Policy on Germany and Berlin], PD01229, 6.11.1970.

<sup>61</sup> TNA. FCO 41/687, Extract from the conversation between the Secretary of State and Rogers, [3.10.1970].

<sup>62</sup> Catudal, *The Diplomacy of the Quadripartite*, p. 98.

Roger Jackling, to oppose any move towards intensive negotiations.<sup>63</sup> When Gromyko visited London on 27 October 1970, Douglas-Home's attitude was very reserved on Berlin matters.<sup>64</sup> Relations between Britain and the USSR had worsened anyway because of the Soviets' espionage activities in the United Kingdom.<sup>65</sup> Partly because of this, London also continued to take a hardline stance in the Quadripartite talks. As Jackling put it: "The best Allied tactic seems to be to stand fast and insist that Soviet concessions are inadequate."<sup>66</sup> Although the West Germans as well as the Russians wanted to move quickly, the Americans and the British kept putting a brake on the Berlin negotiations.

Compared with the United States and Britain, France, and the *Quai d'Orsay* in particular, was ready to give some ground on Berlin.<sup>67</sup> For Paris, the relations between the FRG and West Berlin were less important than the problem of access and the Four-Power prerogatives on the city. The French tended to stress the separation between Bonn and West Berlin more than the Americans or the British and were therefore reluctant to emphasize even the non-political ties between the two.<sup>68</sup> However, the French President did not want to quicken the tempo of the talks. He thought that "Brandt went too fast."<sup>69</sup> When Foreign Minister Schumann proposed to make public the French positions on the Berlin matters, for example, Pompidou rejected the idea and instead instructed Schumann to wait and explore Moscow's intentions. "After seeing [the Soviet] reactions," he continued, "we will see what we have to do."<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *DBPO, III, I*, Doc. 52, fn. 7, pp. 265-6.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, Doc. 53, Record of conversation between Sir A. Douglas-Home and Mr. Gromyko at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, 27 October 1970.

<sup>65</sup> See Geraint Hughes, "Giving the Russians a Bloody Nose": Operation Foot and Soviet Espionage in the United Kingdom, 1964-71," *Cold War History*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2006.

<sup>66</sup> *DBPO, III, I*, Doc. 55, fn. 15, p. 284.

<sup>67</sup> Catudal, *The Diplomacy of the Quadripartite*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>68</sup> DNSA, Presidential Directives II, Four Power Negotiations on Berlin, PR00688, 18.1.1971.

<sup>69</sup> Eric Roussel, *Georges Pompidou 1911-1974, Nouvelle édition, revue, augmentée, établie d'après les archives du quinquennat (1969-1974)*, J.C. Lattes, 1994, p. 404.

<sup>70</sup> AN, 5 AG 2 / 1009, Annotation du Président, 2.11.1970.

Another significant point concerning the French was their mistrust of the Germans, which led to an important French procedural proposal. As early as September 1969, Pompidou's diplomatic advisor, Jean-Bernard Raimond, had already pointed out a dangerous effect of the FRG's détente policy, arguing that: "the foundations of the presence of three Allies in West Berlin could be called into question if the recognition of 'reality' went too far. Even if the Bonn government succeeded in controlling its rapprochement policy with the East, the juridical and political balance in Berlin, which is fragile, would be at risk of being shaken."<sup>71</sup> The East German declaration of its willingness to resume German-German talks at expert level on 29 October 1970 increased French anxiety that the GDR and the USSR might attempt to make an agreement on Berlin between the two Germanies and not amongst the Four-Powers, and then present the British, Americans and French with a *fait accompli*.<sup>72</sup> Schumann then warned Scheel on 2 November 1970 that "the Four-Power negotiations should not be emptied by German expert talks."<sup>73</sup> The French were not solely concerned with the East, but also with the West Germans. They worried that the Brandt government might make unacceptable concessions on Berlin so as to obtain the ratification of the Moscow Treaty. Indeed, Raimond wrote to Pompidou on 2 November 1970, cautioning that "probably, one must envisage a rapid sliding of the Bonn government towards new concessions on Berlin."<sup>74</sup> When the French President met his American counterpart on 12 November 1970, Pompidou also emphasised his doubts about the ability of the West

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<sup>71</sup> AN, 5 AG 2 / 1009, Note pour Monsieur le Président de la République, 8.9.1969.

<sup>72</sup> A recent study has revealed that it was the Soviets that suggested the East Germans resume inner-German talks in October 1970. Sarotte, *Dealing With the Devil*, p. 85. According to Sarotte, East Berlin hoped that "the German-German accord would stand on its own and that the Soviet Union, in its dealings with the three Western powers, would merely take official note of it," though Gromyko did not respond directly to the GDR's concerns. Sarotte, *Dealing With the Devil*, p.102.

<sup>73</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok. 506, Gespräch des Bundesministers Scheel mit dem französischen Außenminister Schumann in Paris, 2.11.1970.

<sup>74</sup> AN, 5 AG 2 / 1009, Note pour Monsieur le Président de la République, 2.11.1970.

Germans to stand firm.<sup>75</sup> For the French, therefore, it was imperative to keep control of the developments relating to the Berlin question in order to retain their rights on the city.

Hence the procedure by which to deal with the Berlin problem became highly significant for the French government. Indeed, Paris contrived a three-stage process to complete an agreement on Berlin,<sup>76</sup> which is also significant because, as will be argued in the next chapter, it would affect the process towards the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The first stage of the procedure was the Four-Power negotiations on and around Berlin, which would establish basic principles for the city. The second stage was to be a more detailed and technical arrangement on transit between the two Germanies, the negotiations between the FRG and the GDR being conducted according to a mandate prepared by the Big-Four. And the third stage would be the signing of a final protocol by the Four Powers, which would tie up the whole package and bring into force the first stage Quadripartite Agreement, together with the second stage inner-German arrangement. By dividing the level of negotiations into two, namely the Big-Four level and two-Germany level, the French tried to exclude the Germans from the first main talks concerning the Allied prerogative on Berlin. According to this procedure, the Germans would have a space for negotiations only within the principles agreed by the Four-Powers; hence, the latter would be able to maintain their basic rights on Berlin. In addition, the Final Quadripartite Protocol would work as the confirmation of the Big-Four's superiority over the two Germanies and Berlin. The Bonn government had to accept the procedure because it had no legal basis on which to deal with the problems of the divided city.<sup>77</sup> Bonn had connected

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<sup>75</sup> AN, 5 AG 2 / 1022, Entretien entre le Président Pompidou et le Président Nixon, 12.11.1970."

<sup>76</sup> Andreas Wilkens, *Der unstete Nachbar: Frankreich, die deutsche Ostpolitik und die Berliner Vier-Mächte-Verhandlungen 1969-1974*, R. Oldenbourg, 1990, p. 140; Soutou, "La France et l'accord quadripartite," p. 61.

<sup>77</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok. 506, Gespräch des Bundesministers Scheel mit dem französischen

the Berlin agreement to the ratification of the Moscow Treaty. If the Berlin negotiations had failed, the Moscow Treaty would automatically have been aborted – a development which might have brought down the Brandt government. However, they could not be directly involved in the quadripartite talks, and, with this procedure, they could only be involved in a limited way. This was a major dilemma for Bonn.

Moscow also seemed to be facing something of a dilemma. Although the Soviets had indicated their readiness to improve access procedures, they could not meet the Allied requirements for the inclusion of agreed specific additional improvements in a Four Power agreement without weakening their traditional position that there were no quadripartite responsibilities over access and undermining GDR claims to sovereignty over the access routes.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, the Soviets insisted at the 16 November 1970 Quadripartite meeting that “there were no such thing as four-power agreements about [transit] and that an agreement with the GDR would be unavoidable.”<sup>79</sup> The Western Three could not accept such a position because they did not recognise East Germany as a sovereign state capable of negotiating in its own right. The Allies also insisted that the problem of access should be solved first, but the Soviet Union wanted Western concessions on the problem of the relations between the FRG and West Berlin before this. Moreover, the Soviet negotiators continued to contend that Allied jurisdiction applied only to West Berlin.<sup>80</sup> As a result, 1970 saw little development in the Berlin negotiations. Although the Soviets had indicated their forthcoming attitude and had suggested a way to advance the Four-Power talks, they would not compromise on some vital points. The Soviet stance made it easier for the Americans, the British, and the French to maintain a tough line because they did not want a rapid conclusion and

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Außenminister Schumann in Paris, 2.11.1970.

<sup>78</sup> *DBPO, III, I*, Doc. 55, fn. 15, p. 283.

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Sarotte, *Dealing With the Devil*, p. 73.

<sup>80</sup> Catudal, *The Diplomacy of the Quadripartite*, p. 125.



they thought that they were in a stronger position in the negotiations. As will be seen in the next chapter, the situation would move only through the informal channels between Washington, Moscow and Bonn. Until they could reach a settlement, therefore, what other NATO members and those who wanted multilateral détente in particular could do was highly restricted.

### **The December 1970 NATO Ministerial Meeting**

Six months earlier, in May 1970, NATO ministers had taken a forthcoming attitude to a conference on European security and disarmament détente with the MBFR declaration. At their last meeting in Rome, Ministers had agreed that: "In so far as progress is recorded as a result of these talks and in the on-going talks - in particular on Germany and Berlin - the Allied Governments state that they would be ready to enter into multilateral contacts with all interested governments." Although some NATO governments wanted to maintain a positive stance towards détente either on multilateral talks or on disarmament, six months later, the stance of the Atlantic Alliance had become rather negative. The lack of progress in the Quadripartite Berlin negotiations in particular hardened the attitude of NATO ministers at their semi-annual meeting, because the Berlin negotiations were regarded as a test case of the Soviets' sincerity towards détente.

Some smaller countries wanted to continue NATO's positive presentation at its December 1970 meeting. At preliminary discussions of the North Atlantic Council, representatives from Belgium, Denmark and Norway recommended that the Alliance adopt a positive attitude on East-West negotiations in order to keep the initiative on détente. They still wished in vain that a last-minute advance might be made in the Four-Power

talks on the status of Berlin.<sup>81</sup> The Danish representative even insisted on 18 November 1970 that “unless developments during the next two weeks were very negative there should be a step forward.”<sup>82</sup> Moreover, in order to push the West towards an ESC, the Finnish government sent the governments concerned a new aide-mémoire on 24 November 1970, asking NATO and other governments to instruct their heads of mission in Helsinki to consult with the Finns about multilateral gatherings.<sup>83</sup>

A few NATO members also looked forward to positive developments in MBFR matters. When the Foreign Ministers gathered in Brussels on 3-4 December 1970, for example, Italian Foreign Minister Moro was the strongest supporter of the view that NATO should take a new initiative on MBFR. He thus proposed to invite the Warsaw Pact countries to take part in multilateral talks on this issue.<sup>84</sup> Canadian Foreign Minister Sharp also indicated his interest in the Warsaw Pact’s proposal for the reduction of foreign forces as “an important indicator of their willingness to come to grips with the problem of European security.”<sup>85</sup> The FRG Foreign Minister Scheel made a positive statement on balanced reduction of forces too. At the same time, however, he did not believe that the Alliance should “enter into multilateral contacts, whether on MBFR or general questions for a conference.”<sup>86</sup> The Bonn government had come to place more emphasis on its bilateral negotiations and the Berlin questions than on disarmament détente.

The USA and Britain had also agreed that NATO should be conservative at the next NATO Ministerial meeting.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, they were confident that they could fend off pressures from the smaller countries. The

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<sup>81</sup> TNA. FCO 41/746, UKDEL NATO tel no. 614 to FCO, 12.11.1970.

<sup>82</sup> TNA. FCO 41/746, UKDEL NATO tel no. 627 to FCO, 18.11.1970.

<sup>83</sup> MAE, Série Pactes 1961-1970, carton 278, circulaire no. 373, 24.11.1970. see also, *AAPD* 1971, Dok. 11, fn. 14, p. 43.

<sup>84</sup> TNA. FCO 41/638, UKDEL NATO tel no. 683 to FCO, 3.12.1970.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Spencer, “Canada and the Origins of the CSCE,” p. 59.

<sup>86</sup> TNA. FCO 41/638, UKDEL NATO tel no. 682 to FCO, 3.12.1970.

<sup>87</sup> TNA. FCO 41/746, Record of a meeting between Mr Nairne and Mr Bendall and Mr

US Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Hillenbrand believed that "other NATO countries would be guided by our own presumably negative assessment of the Berlin negotiations."<sup>88</sup> This remark demonstrated that the Berlin question, an issue which was addressed exclusively within the West by America, Britain, France and West Germany, was a useful instrument for the United States to control their smaller partners. Holding the reins of the Berlin negotiations enabled the Western Three to restrain other Alliance members. The Belgians were well aware of this situation and, with Canadian support, complained that "the three Western powers should consult NATO before each fresh round in the Berlin talks."<sup>89</sup> Yet, faced with the Four-Power prerogative on Berlin, smaller countries were impotent.

It was thus the Americans and the British in particular that prevented the Atlantic Alliance from making any headway. As described above, the US government had already decided not to take the initiative on MBFR at the NSC meeting of 19 November 1970. Hence State Secretary Rogers just stated that "We should reaffirm the policy stated at Rome."<sup>90</sup> Still more importantly, one of the most significant reasons for the muted statement on MBFR in the December 1970 Communiqué was the caution of British Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home. He believed that the military disadvantages involved in the MBFR project were more significant than its political advantages. At the NATO meeting, therefore, Douglas-Home warned his partners not to enter into any negotiation without a pre-established united negotiating position. "Therefore for the time being we should continue our own technical studies and explore bilaterally the views of Warsaw Pact countries," he suggested.<sup>91</sup> The opinion that foreign force reductions could be a "first step" towards MBFR was also opposed by many

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Springsteen in the State Department at 9 30 am on 25 November 1970.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> TNA. FCO 41/746, Cable to Daunt, 16.11.1970. The Belgians reiterated this criticism in February 1971. *AAPD 1971*, Dok. 73, Botschafter Grewe, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 23.2.1971.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

NATO members. Eventually, the NATO Ministers simply “re-emphasized the importance they attach to mutual and balanced force reductions as a means of reducing tensions and lessening the military confrontation in Europe and recalled the Declarations on this question issued at Reykjavik in 1968 and at Rome earlier this year.”<sup>92</sup> The change in the British government’s position undoubtedly contributed to the low-key tone of this Communiqué.

Still more notable at the Brussels NATO meeting was the new French initiative. Before his colleagues, French Foreign Minister Schumann strongly contended that the Berlin settlement should be the only condition for the multilateralisation of East-West talks, arguing that “it was essential not to make questions other than Berlin pre-conditions for a European Security Conference. To do so would diminish the scope of our efforts and would not help the Federal Republic’s *Ostpolitik*.”<sup>93</sup> As will be discussed below, this was the first concrete indication that Paris had become more proactive towards the idea of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The new French initiative met opposition, however, and Schumann was forced to compromise. While the majority of participating Ministers did not oppose the French suggestion, the United States and the Netherlands firmly insisted on the importance of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks; therefore they were not be able to accept the French Foreign Minister’s proposal to make the Berlin agreement the only prerequisite for a multilateral conference.<sup>94</sup> In the end, the final phrase of the Communiqué read as follows:

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c701203a.htm>

<sup>93</sup> TNA. FCO 41/638, UKDEL NATO tel no. 685 to FCO, 4.12.1970; *AAPD 1970*, Dok. 586, Botschafter Grewe, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 4.12.1970.

<sup>94</sup> *AAPD 1970*, Dok. 586, Botschafter Grewe, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 4.12.1970.

[Ministers] affirmed the readiness of their governments, as soon as the talks on Berlin have reached a satisfactory conclusion and in so far as the other on-going talks are proceeding favorably, to enter into multilateral contacts with all interested governments to explore when it would be possible to convene a conference, or a series of conferences, on security and co-operation in Europe.<sup>95</sup>

Although this wording reflected France's preference to underline the significance of Berlin as opposed to other negotiations, it also contained the reference to "on-going talks" that could be interpreted variously as a reference to SALT, the German-German talks, etc. More importantly, however, compared with the sentences in the Rome Communiqué of 27 May 1970 that "In so far as *progress* is recorded as a result of these talks and in the on-going talks - in particular on Germany and Berlin," the NATO Ministers now used a stronger expression in the Brussels Communiqué; namely "*satisfactory conclusion of Berlin agreement*," – a formula which had first been employed by Brandt. In the end, Paris accepted this compromise at the December 1970 meeting.

As a result of the strong expression on the Berlin negotiations as well as "on-going talks" and the repetition of a MBFR proposal, the Brussels Communiqué in December 1970 appeared rather conservative. Foreign Ministers agreed to it "in a short time and without major controversies."<sup>96</sup> The major reason for this was undoubtedly that the Quadripartite Berlin negotiations had achieved little. All NATO members recognised the importance of Berlin in European détente; hence, most of them except Denmark and, to a lesser extent, Norway, could easily concur with the distinctly cautious stance towards the East.<sup>97</sup> Although, thanks to the signing of the Moscow Treaty, the latter half of 1970 saw a decisive step

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<sup>95</sup> <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c701203a.htm>

<sup>96</sup> *AAPD 1970*, Dok. 586, Botschafter Grewe, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 4.12.1970; see also, TNA. FCO 41/638, UKDEL NATO tel no. 686 to FCO, 4.12.1970.

<sup>97</sup> *AAPD 1970*, Dok. 586, Botschafter Grewe, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt,

towards multilateral European détente, the Berlin problem still remained to be solved. On this point, the West had no intention of retreating.

### **The French Inclination towards a European Security Conference**

Yet, 1970 also witnessed positive developments leading towards multilateral European détente. Firstly, by explaining why France insisted at the December NATO Ministerial gathering on making a Berlin agreement the only pre-condition for a European security conference, this section will show how the French had become a more positive supporter of the idea of a security conference in Europe than they had been before. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Foreign Minister Schumann had already begun to incline towards the concept of a Conference. However, President Pompidou, who had been very suspicious of the Soviet proposal in the first half of 1970,<sup>98</sup> also gradually accepted it during the second half of 1970. Consequently, France would become one of the champions of the idea of an ESC among Western countries. Pompidou changed his mind for a variety of reasons. For a start, Jacques Andréani, a French diplomat, points to the deterioration of US-French relations.<sup>99</sup> At that time, the two countries were opposed on Middle Eastern issues. While the Americans supported Israel, the French backed Arab countries. When Pompidou visited the United States in February/March 1970, the American people, and US Jews in particular, vehemently protested against the French President's attitude on the Arab-Israeli conflict. This culminated in Chicago, on 28 February 1970, when an excited man spat at Pompidou's face. This incident gave the leader

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4.12.1970.

<sup>98</sup> See, for example, the attached document entitled "French Views on a European Security Conference," undated, to TNA. FCO 41/747, Marshall to Giffard, 4.3.1970

<sup>99</sup> Garret Martin's interview with Jacques Andréani, 15 February 2006.

of France a very bad impression of the Americans.<sup>100</sup> The French delivery of Mirage fighter aircrafts to Libya also exasperated America.<sup>101</sup> The clash of interests between Washington and Paris partly explains why the latter sought closer relations with Moscow.<sup>102</sup> And in order to establish better ties with the USSR a change in the French attitude towards an ESC was useful.

The second reason was the success of Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. In preparation for Pompidou's official visit to Moscow scheduled in October 1970, the Secretary General of the *Quai d'Orsay*, Hervé Alphand, and the French Ambassador to Moscow, Roger Seydoux, at first considered accepting Brezhnev's proposal to conclude a treaty of friendship and a non-aggression pact between France and the USSR. After the signing of the Moscow Treaty, however, they lost interest in such treaties. The French President himself also opposed the Kremlin's suggestion, noting on 28 September 1970 that "they [the Soviets] have to understand that I absolutely do not want the word 'treaty'; [...] I don't want to look like I am running after Brandt."<sup>103</sup> Yet, the French leader wanted to maintain good relations with the Soviet Union. When he was in Moscow, therefore, Pompidou agreed with the Russians to institutionalise regular political consultations at the Foreign Minister as well at the highest official levels. The idea of a European security conference was considered to be one of the most promising and constructive agenda issues, within such bilateral consultations. Still more importantly, the French President sought a way of restoring France's

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<sup>100</sup> Roussel, *Georges Pompidou*, pp. 365-66.

<sup>101</sup> Garret Martin's interview with Jacques Andréani, 15 February 2006. See also, Yves-Henri Nouailhat, "Les divergences entre la France et les États-Unis face au conflit israélo-arabe de 1967 à 1973," *Relations Internationales*, no. 119, 2004, p. 337.

<sup>102</sup> As regards the overview of the French-US relations in Pompidou era, see Georges-Henri Soutou, "Le Président Pompidou et les relations entre les États-Unis et l'Europe," *Journal of European Integration History*, Vol.6, No.2, 2000; Maurice Vaisse, "Les 'relations spéciales' franco-américaines au temps de Richard Nixon et Georges Pompidou," *Relations Internationales*, no. 119, 2004. Both articles pay attention to the more positive aspects of the relations, in particular in military cooperation between the French and US governments.

<sup>103</sup> Marie-Pierre Rey, "Georges Pompidou, l'Union soviétique et l'Europe," in Association Georges Pompidou, *Georges Pompidou et l'Europe*, Editions Complexe, 1995, pp. 155-56.

original role in an era of détente.<sup>104</sup> Given that Brandt pursued his Eastern Policy and Nixon the SALT negotiations with the Soviets, Pompidou thought that the French could play a leading role in the convening of an ESC.

Finally, Pompidou's change of mind seems also to have been caused by the arguments of pro-détente supporters within the French government. In particular, Gaullist "détentists" such as Hervé Alphand, Roger Seydoux, and Foreign Minister Maurice Schumann helped push the President into adopting a cooperative attitude towards the Soviet Union.<sup>105</sup> Shortly before the Franco-Soviet summit in Moscow, Pompidou privately told a journalist on 13 October 1970 that "Between you and me, [...], if I accepted the conference on European security, this would be an attempt to give a little air to the satellites. The Rumanians, in particular, very much desire to see this conference held."<sup>106</sup> This was the logic that Schumann had in mind.<sup>107</sup> The visit of the Romanian President, Nicolae Ceausescu, to Paris in June 1970 had perhaps convinced Pompidou that his Foreign Minister's opinion was plausible. As he claimed later in March 1972 when he met British Prime Minister Heath, Pompidou regarded a European security conference as a chance to spread "the virus of the liberty" in the Eastern bloc. He told Heath that "this is a bet, but it has chances to be progressively won."<sup>108</sup> Although the French leader was still sceptical about the Kremlin's motivations in proposing the Conference, he was clearly affected by the détente supporters around him.

France then faced a dilemma. On the one hand, the French government increasingly took a positive attitude towards the idea of a European security conference. On the other hand, the convening of such a

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<sup>104</sup> A note written by Pompidou's diplomatic advisor indirectly indicates that pursuing a European security conference was thought as French foreign policy initiative. AN, 5 AG 2 / 1018, NOTE pour Monsieur le Président de la République, 8.6.1972.

<sup>105</sup> Garret Martin's interview with Jacques Andréani, 15 February 2006.

<sup>106</sup> Roussel, *Georges Pompidou*, pp. 403-404.

<sup>107</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>108</sup> "c'est la un pari, mais il a des chances d'être progressivement gagné." AN, 5AG2/1014, Troisième tête à tête entre Monsieur Pompidou et Monsieur Heath à



conference was dependent on the improvement of the Berlin situation, which was, as described above, in a dead end. For the French, however, the Berlin question was so important that it was not easy to make concessions to the Soviets, in particular on such vital points as the problem of transit. Consequently, Paris was to take a new approach at the NATO Ministerial meeting in Brussels.

Making Berlin the only pre-condition for a European security conference was a way to solve the dilemma. On the one hand, with this initiative, France expected to encourage concessions from the Soviet Union in the Quadripartite negotiations. In order to impress and put pressure on Moscow to break the deadlock at the Berlin talks without corresponding compromises on the Western side, the French government tried to make it clear that the Berlin problem was the most important barrier to an ESC. On the other hand, Schumann made an ESC more likely by abstaining from increasing the number of conditions.<sup>109</sup> By doing so, France could pursue both the conclusion of the Berlin talks and the convening of a European security conference. And the French could do so because they had less or no interest in other subjects, such as MBFR, SALT or even the inner-German negotiations. As described above, Paris eventually came to terms with the US and Dutch insistence on the importance of "on-going talks." However, this agreement was also the starting point of conflict between France and America over the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe from 1971.

### **A Change of British Policy Priorities**

Behind the scenes of the logjam of the Berlin negotiations, Britain also

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Chequers Court, le 18 mars 1972, de 10 h. 30 à 13 h, 19.3.1972.

<sup>109</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1966-1970, carton 2031, Paris tel. to Moscou, Varsovie, Bucarest, Budapest, Prague, Sofia, Repan, Washington, London, Bonn and Berlin, 4.12.1970.

stepped closer, albeit less enthusiastically, towards the idea of a European security conference. This was the result of a change of priorities in the British Foreign Office within six months of the new government taking office, in particular an adverse change of priorities between a European security conference and MBFR. Soon after Alec Douglas-Home became the Foreign Secretary, he retreated from his predecessor's idea of the Standing Committee, which had been proposed as an alternative to a European security conference. On 7 July 1970, the Foreign Secretary told FCO officials that:

I have always been rather attracted to the idea of the security conference as a platform for Yugoslavia, Rumania, etc. But it will be no good without something solid for discussion. That might be the Standing Machinery for which there is something to be said and we might argue or insist that "thinning out" should be its first business. I therefore think we should move gradually towards multilateral exploratory contacts.<sup>110</sup>

Compared with the former Secretary of State Stewart, however, Douglas-Home was not enthusiastic about détente with the East. Rather, the new Secretary of State saw an ESC as a useful tool to divide the opposite bloc. In addition to that, he thought that Britain had no major issue area which could be settled with the Soviet Union, and therefore it could not take the initiative. In Douglas-Home's view, "[t]here is nothing we can give the Russians which is comparable in value to them to the French partial withdrawal from NATO and the West German acceptance of the European *status quo*. Nor is Britain a super-power like the USA."<sup>111</sup> Moreover, at the beginning of the new government, the Foreign Office still opposed the idea of a conference on European security.

Yet, the evaluation of an ESC concept within the Foreign Office

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<sup>110</sup> TNA. FCO 41/743, Graham to WOD, 8.7.1970.

<sup>111</sup> *DBPO, III, I*, p. 310.

gradually changed. Firstly, an internal study on European security, which had been conducted by the Planning Staff and the Western Organisation Department in the Foreign Office and submitted to the Secretary of State in September 1970, confirmed the inevitability of the convening of an East-West conference, stating that "it cannot be ignored that proposals for a 'European Security Conference' have now acquired a certain political momentum, and that there would be complications, both between the Western Allies and vis-à-vis public opinion, if HMG were now to argue publicly that no such conference is necessary."<sup>112</sup> Secondly, the study concluded that, while a European security conference would not serve UK or Western interests, it would be unlikely to harm seriously them.<sup>113</sup> In other words, the Foreign Office began to think that a Conference would be less dangerous if it was sufficiently well prepared, though still not attractive. This became Britain's basic perception of the project of an ESC from 1971 onwards.

By the end of January 1971, furthermore, Britain reviewed their whole position towards a European security conference and MBFR in order to be more consistent. The British viewed the French inclination towards the idea of an ESC in a serious light, and anticipated that Schumann's proposal at the December 1970 NATO Ministerial meeting to reach a satisfactory conclusion of the Berlin talks as the only precondition to progress towards a conference, would be accepted by other members of the Alliance including West Germany. In the light of this trend, UK diplomats now thought that Britain should not oppose its partners preferring a multilateral European conference because such a conference would not be harmful for the West.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, as argued above, the British had already regarded the concept of mutual force reductions as dangerous for Western security. Therefore, "if we

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<sup>112</sup> TNA. FCO 41/744, Bendall to Private Secretary, "European Security: Paper 3. A European Security Conference: Tactics", 16.9.1970.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> TNA. FCO 41/882, Cable to Peck, 25.1.1971.

have to make ourselves unpopular with some members of the Alliance by pouring cold water on the idea of MBFR, there is no reason why we should make matters worse by also opposing a European Security Conference," a UK foreign official suggested.<sup>115</sup> Eventually, in an instruction to the British delegation to NATO, the Foreign Office completely changed the order of priority between an ESC and MBFR:

because we have come to regard talks on MBFR as potentially dangerous, our earlier view that they would be a suitable quid pro quo for our agreement to a European security conference and our other earlier idea that offering discussions on MBFR might be a way of delaying the conference, have both lost their appeal to us at official level. On the contrary, a conference might be a lesser evil than the discussion of MBFR.<sup>116</sup>

London had thus totally reversed its whole European security policy – supporting a ESC, albeit without enthusiasm, and opposing MBFR – because of the perception of dangerous disarmament détente together with a harmless conference project to which many other NATO members were tilting.

This shift of Britain's position also meant the convergence of British and French policy priorities on the CSCE and MBFR. France had been opposed to disarmament détente for a long time and had recently begun to be more positive towards a European security conference. The order of British priorities came to coincide with that of France, though London was far less keen about an ESC and cared more about the solidarity of the Atlantic Alliance than Paris. This also meant that the new British stance would come into collision with that of America, which disliked a European security conference, and favoured more the idea of mutual force reductions. The British were well aware of this possibility. They therefore tried to

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid. See also, *DBPO, III, I*, p. 315.

<sup>116</sup> TNA. FCO 41/882, Cable to Peck, 25.1.1971.

appear as open-minded as possible.<sup>117</sup> As will be argued in chapter 6, however, the potential British-French partnership, based on a growing policy consensus, was to be one of the significant foundations for the central role which the Europeans were to play in the preparation for the CSCE from 1972.

In conclusion, there were three important developments in the period covered in this chapter. Firstly, the Warsaw Pact began to indicate its acceptance of a force reduction project, though it was still highly conditional. Secondly, the signing of the Moscow Treaty undoubtedly represented a significant advance for the German question, and hence for multilateral European détente. Finally, the French government became more enthusiastic about the idea of a multilateral European conference, and the British government decided to treat it pragmatically and constructively. However, mainly because of the stalemated Berlin talks, which was now linked not only with an ESC but also with the ratification of the Moscow Treaty, NATO's public stance towards the East became severe. The Berlin question became a central issue in European détente, namely, without a resolution of this problem, all further East-West rapprochements in Europe would be blocked. The next chapter will therefore focus on the problem of the divided German city and its relations with the CSCE and MBFR.

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

## **Chapter 4: Berlin, MBFR, and a European Security Conference,**

### **1971**

Without doubt, Brandt wanted progress in the Berlin talks. He had been disappointed by the fruitless results of the first nine months of negotiations. While he had been able to successfully conclude the Warsaw Treaty with Poland on 7 December 1970, the last Ambassadorial meeting of the year on a Berlin agreement on 10 December 1970 had finished without tangible progress and the negotiations had gone into the Christmas recess. In order to make advances in the situation, the Chancellor wrote identical letters to Nixon, Heath and Pompidou on 12 December 1970, proposing that the Berlin talks should be given a “conference-like character.”<sup>1</sup> The FRG leader’s recommendation was regarded as quite vague and even the German Embassies in London and Paris were not able to give any elucidation of it.<sup>2</sup> However, pressure from Bonn on the Western Three to take a further initiative was apparent. This chapter will begin with the French President’s reply to this letter.

By mid-1971, NATO would return to take a positive attitude on East-West relations. There were three factors behind this. Firstly, West Germany agreed with French opinion mentioned in the last chapter that the Berlin settlement should be the only pre-condition for the opening of multilateral preparatory talks for a European security conference. In other words, the FRG government dropped other pre-conditions, in particular the conclusion of the on-going German-German talks. In order to understand the reason for Bonn’s concession to Paris, it is necessary to scrutinise Pompidou’s response to Brandt’s letter and the reactions of the West German leaders.

The second part of this chapter will describe the other two reasons:

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<sup>1</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok. 600, Bundeskanzler Brandt an Premierminister Heath, 15.12.1970. See also Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 800; Egon Bahr, *Zu meiner Zeit*, K. Blessing, 1996, p. 354.

<sup>2</sup> TNA. FO 1042/302, Paris tel no. 1279 to FCO, 17.12.1970.

progress in the Berlin negotiations and Brezhnev's general acceptance of the West's force reduction proposal. In particular, it will pay attention to how the impasse of the Berlin talks was broken, and demonstrate the importance of the West German role in the secret negotiations between Washington and Moscow. With Bonn's compromise with Paris, the breakthrough in the Berlin talks, and the Soviets' new attitude towards MBFR, the Atlantic Alliance issued a forthcoming communiqué at its Lisbon Ministerial meeting in June 1971.

After the Lisbon meeting, there seemed a chance that a conference on European security might have been held earlier than it actually was. London took an initiative connecting an ESC and MBFR in order to postpone the beginning of the negotiations about the latter, because the British disliked the idea of mutual force reductions. As the third part of this chapter will demonstrate, this British approach gained much support; hence multilateral preparations for a conference might have begun after the conclusion of the Berlin problem.

However, this possibility vanished because of Moscow's counter initiative, the so-called reverse *Junktim* connecting the ratification of the Moscow Treaty and the signing of the final Berlin protocol. In order to grasp its implication for multilateral European détente, the final part of this chapter will examine the Western reactions to the reverse linkage and the disputes among the big powers about when multilateral preparations for an ESC would start. In the end, the reverse *Junktim* was interpreted by the West as the postponement of the "satisfactory" conclusion of the Berlin talks, because the final Berlin protocol was not to be signed until the Moscow Treaty was ratified in the West German parliament; as a result, the convention of a conference would also be suspended for a time.

### **Franco-German Partnership?**

At the beginning of 1971, the FRG leaders came to terms with the French position on the relations between a European security conference and the Berlin/German problem. The West Germans needed French help to settle the Berlin question, which had become the precondition for the success of *Ostpolitik*. For that, Brandt and Scheel had to deflect Pompidou's anger, which had been caused by the Franco-German controversy over European monetary integration. Brandt's letter cited in the opening paragraph of this chapter had added fuel to the fire.

Although the tone was polite and friendly, Pompidou's reply to Brandt's message – sent on 21 December 1970 – was discouraging and wholly non-committal about the Chancellor's proposal to give the Berlin talks a “conference-like character.” It merely suggested that this could be discussed when Brandt visited Paris on 25/26 January 1971.<sup>3</sup> According to the French President's diplomatic advisor, Jean-Bernard Raimond, Pompidou took an unfavourable view of Brandt's proposal partly because, as mentioned in chapter 2, the French leader disliked being involved in the Berlin question and therefore was annoyed by the pressure from West Germany. For Pompidou, moreover, it seemed unwise to show Western willingness to accelerate the Berlin talks when the Soviets had still not made enough concessions.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, however, discord between Paris and Bonn over monetary integration had also particularly influenced Pompidou's attitude.

The French leader's irritation towards Brandt's letter was clearly expressed in his brief instructions about the Berlin problem, which he gave to Raimond on 23 December 1970 – the day after Pompidou sent his reply to the Chancellor:

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<sup>3</sup> TNA. FO 1042/302, Paris tel no. 1290 to FCO, 19.12.1970; Andreas Wilkens, “Accords et désaccords. La France, l'Ostpolitik et la question allemande 1969-1974”, in *La République Démocratique Allemande et l'Occident*. Ed by Ulrich Pfeil. Paris: Publications de l'Institut Allemand, 2000, p. 372.

<sup>4</sup> TNA. FO 1042/302, Paris tel no. 1279 to FCO, 17.12.1970; TNA. FO 1042/302, Paris tel no. 1290 to FCO, 19.12.1970.



I have had enough of Berlin. Let us take a step back and let the Americans break loose. We compromised ourselves excessively in Brussels.<sup>5</sup>

The sharp analysis of the British Minister at the UK Embassy in Paris, Michael Palliser, surprisingly corresponded to and thus explained the meaning of this brief and somewhat mysterious remark (especially the final sentence). In his dispatch to Deputy Under-Secretary Thomas Brimelow, Palliser examined the attitude of the French President towards the Chancellor's proposal, and pointed out the importance of antagonism between France and the FRG over economic and monetary union (EMU) in explaining Pompidou's exasperation.<sup>6</sup> The creation of European economic and monetary union had been proposed at the EC summit in The Hague in December 1969 and had been studied in the committee chaired by Pierre Werner, the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, which produced the so-called Werner Plan in October 1970. EC Ministers then began to discuss the Plan from November 1970.<sup>7</sup> French and German policies towards economic and monetary union were fundamentally at odds. The antagonism between the two culminated at the EEC Council of Ministers meeting in Brussels on 14/15 December 1970 chaired by the German Economic and Financial Minister Karl Schiller.<sup>8</sup> According to the UK Minister in Paris, Pompidou believed that what the Germans had done at the meeting was unfair. The French President reportedly thought that "the Germans [had] made a

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<sup>5</sup> "J'en ai assez de Berlin. Mettons-nous en réserve et laissons les Américains se déchaîner. Nous nous sommes compromis à l'excès à Bruxelles." AN, 5 AG 2 / 1009, Instructions du Président de la République pour Monsieur Raimond, 23.12.1970.

<sup>6</sup> TNA. FO 1042/302, Palliser to Brimelow, 21.12.1970.

<sup>7</sup> As regards European economic and monetary union, see Gérard Bossuat, "Le président Georges Pompidou et les tentatives d'Union économique et monétaire," in Association Georges Pompidou, *Georges Pompidou et l'Europe*, Editions Complexe, 1995; Robert Frank, "Pompidou, le franc et l'Europe 1969-1974," in *ibid.*; Andreas Wilkens, "Westpolitik, Ostpolitik and the Project of the Economic and Monetary Union. Germany's European Policy in the Brandt Era (1969-1974)", *Journal of European Integration History*, 5/1 (1999).

<sup>8</sup> Haig Simonian, *The Privileged Partnership: Franco-German Relations in the European Community, 1969-1984*, Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 90.

deliberate set at the French during these discussions and seemed to take French readiness to make certain concessions as an indication that if they pushed hard enough the French would give way completely.”<sup>9</sup> Pompidou’s swift and discouraging response to Brandt’s letter – a step taken without consultation with Schumann and other senior officials in the *Quai d’Orsay* <sup>10</sup> – was a result of the personal resentment of the French President at Bonn’s way of conducting monetary integration matters.

The importance of this episode lies in the fact that it would lead to the German leaders’ inclination towards France on relations between the Berlin question and CSCE matters. Probably aware of Pompidou’s animosity to the recent approach of West Germany, Brandt and Scheel made two concessions when they visited Paris in late January 1971. Firstly, on economic and monetary union, the Chancellor accepted that EMU should have a strictly inter-governmental character, something which the French President, who disliked the supra-nationality contained in the Werner Plan, had strongly demanded in a speech made four days before the Paris-Bonn summit.<sup>11</sup> The point is that this compromise was made because the FRG leader needed French support for his *Ostpolitik* and the Berlin problem.<sup>12</sup> The backing of France, which had the prerogatives and responsibility with regard to the German and Berlin questions, was indispensable for the success of Brandt’s Eastern policy. For Brandt, *Westpolitik* was the cornerstone of *Ostpolitik*.<sup>13</sup>

Still more significant in the context of this study was Bonn’s concession on the relationship between a European security conference and the Berlin negotiations. At the 25 January 1971 biannual Franco-German consultation, the West Germans also accepted the French insistence that a satisfactory

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<sup>9</sup> TNA. FO 1042/302, Palliser to Brimelow, 21.12.1970.

<sup>10</sup> At that time, Schumann was in Morocco together with the Director of Political Affairs Jacques de Beaumarchais. Under State Secretary Hervé Alphand was in Washington.

<sup>11</sup> *AAPD 1971*, Dok. 27, Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Brandt mit Staatspräsident Pompidou in Paris, 25.1.1971.

<sup>12</sup> Simonian, *The Privileged Partnership*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>13</sup> Brandt, Willy, *People and Politics: the Years 1960-1975*, Little, Brown, 1978, p. 154, 254.

Berlin agreement should be the only prerequisite for the opening of preparatory talks for an ESC.<sup>14</sup> This implied that the Federal German government had dropped the conclusion of an inner-German agreement as a precondition for CSCE preparations. Washington and London were surprised by this and interpreted it as Bonn's surrender to pressure from Paris.<sup>15</sup> As Petri Hakkarainen points out, one reason for the compromise made by the FRG was because Brandt and Bahr had thought that the CSCE 'card' for extracting concessions from the Soviet Union had already served its major purpose in the FRG-USSR negotiations leading to the Moscow Treaty.<sup>16</sup> Yet, an equally significant reason for Bonn's concession was to allay Pompidou's indignation in order to gain his support for advancing the Berlin negotiations, which was the sine qua non for the ratification of the Moscow Treaty. By accepting the French position that the settlement of the Berlin question was the only prerequisite for the start of multilateral preparations for an ESC, Brandt and Scheel attempted to avoid Pompidou becoming too negative about the negotiations on the divided city. Given that, as the French President's instruction quoted above demonstrated, Pompidou considered the Berlin talks and the question of European monetary integration – the cause of his resentment – together, it was understandable why the West German leaders, who desperately wanted the conclusion of the Quadripartite negotiations, went "unnecessarily far to meet French desires."<sup>17</sup> As a result, thanks to their approach to the French positions, Bonn and Paris seemingly came to take the same position on CSCE matters at the beginning of 1971. And it would serve for NATO, at the next Ministerial gathering in Lisbon, to demonstrate its positive stance towards the idea of a multilateral European

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<sup>14</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 29, Deutsch-französische Konsultationsbesprechung in Paris, 25.1.1971.

<sup>15</sup> Petri Hakkarainen, "From Linkage to Freer Movement: The Federal Republic of Germany and the Nexus between Western CSCE Preparations and Deutschlandpolitik, 1969-72", in Andreas Wenger, Vojtech Mastny, Christian Nünlist (eds.), At the Roots of European Security: The Early Helsinki Process Revisited, 1969-1975 (forthcoming, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Hakkarainen, "From Linkage to Freer Movement."

conference by dropping the pre-condition of “on-going” talks.

Yet, Franco-German cooperation did not go well during much of 1971, though West German Ministers tried to maintain good relations between the two countries on multilateral European détente. Certainly, at Ministerial level, the FRG agreed not to insist on inner-German progress as a prerequisite for the CSCE. At an official level and hence at a practical level, however, as will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, the West German Foreign Ministry, which was unhappy about the compromise made by Brandt and Scheel in Paris, would attempt to postpone the start of preparatory talks for an ESC for as long as possible, in order to gain time for the German-German negotiations. The German foreign officials thought that the participation of the GDR in a multilateral conference would be a disadvantage for the FRG in the inner-German talks. Therefore they disliked the French preference for an early opening of such a conference. Rather, the *Auswärtiges Amt* would incline towards the Americans whose attitude to the idea of an ESC was highly negative. As a result, Franco-German cooperation, in particular within the framework of European political cooperation established in October 1970, did not work well in 1971. Its development had to wait until the beginning of 1972 when a compromise between Paris and Bonn on the procedural problems of the CSCE was made.

### **The Breakthrough of the Berlin talks**

Meanwhile, the United States and the Soviet Union secretly began to prepare for a stage on which the Berlin problem – now becoming the central issue of the whole European détente process – was to be resolved. However, the real key player on the stage was not the superpowers but West Germany.

#### *The US-Soviet Backchannel at Work*

Since the publication of Kissinger's memoirs in 1979, it has been well-known that the real negotiations on the Berlin problem were conducted through the Washington-Moscow backchannel and among three key figures: Kenneth Rush, Egon Bahr, and Valentin Falin, the Soviet Ambassador to Bonn.<sup>18</sup> Although, as argued in chapter 2, the secret channel between Kissinger and Dobrynin had been established in early 1969, it had produced few eye-catching results in its first two years of existence. In order to make the channel operational, both sides had to change their stances. On the American side, West German pressure for advancing the Berlin negotiations was important in bringing about this change.

In particular, Brandt's letter of 12 December 1970 had a positive effect on the Americans, though it worked negatively on the French President. Immediately after sending the letter, the Chancellor also dispatched Bahr and State Secretary Horst Ehmke, the head of the Chancellery, to Washington on 21 December 1970, presumably because the FRG leader knew that it was the Americans who took the toughest stance on the Berlin question. Ehmke's trip had a double purpose: to dispel America's doubt about *Ostpolitik*, and to urge further progress in the Berlin negotiations.<sup>19</sup> In order not to give the Americans a false impression that Bonn was carelessly rushing into a resolution of the Berlin question, the State Secretary chose his words carefully. Referring to Brandt's letter proposing a continuous conference for the Berlin problem, he emphasised the necessity of the "intensification," rather than "acceleration," of the Quadripartite talks, and reiterated that "the Western Powers must not wait too long lest the Soviets lose interest in reaching an agreement."<sup>20</sup> Although the Americans rejected

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<sup>18</sup> Henry Kissinger, *White House Years*, Little Brown, 1979, pp. 800-833.

<sup>19</sup> Andreas Wilkens, *Der unstete Nachbar: Frankreich, die deutsche Ostpolitik und die Berliner Vier-Mächte-Verhandlungen 1969-1974*, R. Oldenbourg, 1990, p. 144.

<sup>20</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Memorandum of Conversation, KT00220, 21.12.1970. As regards the Ehmke/Kissinger conversation, see also *AAPD 1970*, Dok. 610, Botschafter Pauls, Washington, an das Auswärtige Amt, 22.12.1970; Stephan Fuchs,

a move into a conference-type of negotiation, when Kissinger met Bahr on the same day, Nixon's national security advisor gave his support for the intensification of the Berlin talks.<sup>21</sup> Clearly the West German approach had an influence on Kissinger. Evidence of this is the National Security Study Memorandum 111 which he wrote to the US Secretary of State and others eight days later, asking them to "review the four-power negotiations in Berlin and the alternatives [the US] might adopt in the next phase."<sup>22</sup> This memorandum indicated a change in the Americans' stance towards the Berlin talks, when compared to the NSDM 91 of 6 November 1970, which, as argued in the last chapter, had indicated little interest in advancing the negotiations. By the end of 1970, Washington was ready to move forward on the Berlin question.

Of still more importance was the change on the Soviet side. On the one hand, the Soviet Union vehemently protested against NATO's December Final Communiqué, especially paragraph 10 about the "Berlin pre-condition" and the reference to "the other on-going talks." Soviet Ambassadors in West European capitals visited each Foreign Ministry almost simultaneously at the end of December 1970 and complained that the West made the convening of a European security conference too conditional.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the Warsaw Pact Foreign Ministers, at their gathering in Bucharest on 19

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"Dreiecksverhältnisse sind immer kompliziert": Kissinger, Bahr und die Ostpolitik, Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1999, p. 110.

<sup>21</sup> Andreas Wilkens, "Accords et désaccords", p. 372.

<sup>22</sup> DNSA, Presidential Directives, NSSM 111, Study of Four Power Negotiations on Berlin and Implications of Ostpolitik, PD01411, 29.12.1970. As a reference for the memorandum, Brandt's letter was mentioned. This indicated that the Chancellor's approach influenced the US attitude to the Berlin problem.

<sup>23</sup> TNA. FCO 41/638, Bonn tel no. 1576 to FCO, 30.12.1970; Ibid., Paris tel no.1310 to FCO, 31.12.1970. Perhaps in order to split the Western bloc, the Soviets varied their language of accusation. To smaller NATO countries, they insisted that the linkage between a Conference and the Berlin question would prevent the development of détente. To the USA, however, they complained that the Americans forced its smaller Allies to follow Washington's policy. NATO's Political Committee concluded, therefore, that Moscow attempted to cause a division of opinion within the Alliance. AAPD 1971, Dok. 11, Gesandter Boss, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 12.1.1971.

February 1971, publicly denounced the final communiqué.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, Moscow decided to seek an improvement in its relations with Washington at the very end of December 1970.

It was Gromyko and Andropov who took the initiative in the Kremlin according to Dobrynin's memoirs.<sup>25</sup> The two drafted a memorandum on Soviet-American relations and submitted it to the Politburo. While stressing the maintenance of Soviet military capabilities to convince "American ruling circles that it is in the most vital national interest of the United States" to avoid the dangers of a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union, at the same time Gromyko and Andropov emphasised the necessity of reaching agreements with the United States.<sup>26</sup> In other words, in order to pursue an agreement with the Americans, the Russians also had to underline the necessity of military power. In addition, one of the important reasons that the Soviet leadership approved the memorandum advocating a change of policy towards America was a US-USSR summit, about which Kissinger and Dobrynin had exchanged their opinions throughout 1970. At the end of 1970, the Politburo agreed to use the summit 'card' to improve superpower relations, because they thought that it was the Americans who wanted such a meeting, and hence Moscow would be able to play a diplomatic game with Washington.<sup>27</sup>

Understandably, the Berlin problem was the first topic that the Soviet Union tried to solve with the United States, because if a Berlin agreement had been concluded, it would have paved the way to the ratification of the Moscow and Warsaw Treaties as well as the convention of a European security conference. Indeed, on 6 January 1971, the Soviets sent a signal via Dobrynin's note on Berlin to Kissinger. Although the Soviet note accused

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<sup>24</sup> Ljubivoje Acimovic, Problems of Security and Cooperation in Europe, Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands; Rockville, Md., USA: Sijthoff & Noordhoff, 1981, p. 95.

<sup>25</sup> Anatoliy Dobrynin, In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents (1962-1986), Random House, 1995, p. 214.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

Nixon of not committing seriously to the question of the divided city, Moscow's message indicated a change in the Soviet stance on this issue as Kissinger correctly noticed.<sup>28</sup> Then Kissinger, who had already agreed with Bahr to intensify the Berlin talks, met Dobrynin on 9 January 1971, and suggested to the Soviet Ambassador that they discuss the Berlin problem through the confidential backchannel. Nixon's security advisor also stressed that he had to consult with Bahr in parallel with the Kissinger/Dobrynin dialogues.<sup>29</sup> This would lead to the establishment of the secret US-USSR-FRG triangle that would be central to the drafting of the Berlin agreement. For the Russians, the negotiations through the backchannel were very useful because they could offer clandestine concessions that might be opposed by their East European partners, and East Germany in particular, before the final agreement on Berlin was reached. As will be briefly argued below, however, the channel also gave Kissinger great room for manoeuvre to control the pace of the negotiations. In fact, Nixon and Kissinger had decided to link the Berlin negotiations to progress in SALT and at the same time they were exploring the possibilities of an American opening to China.<sup>30</sup> The superpower and US-USSR-China triangular diplomacy would delay the conclusion of a Berlin agreement, and the progress of European détente in general.

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<sup>28</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 801-802.

<sup>29</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Information Memorandum [on Meeting with Dobrynin, January 9, 1971], KT00227, 1.25.1971. Kissinger dispatched his personal staff to Bonn, on 27 January 1971 – soon *after* the Pompidou-Brandt summit meeting mentioned above –, in order to ask Bahr to visit Washington to arrange procedures for the backchannel negotiations on Berlin. Bahr then visited Washington on 31 January 1971. David C. Geyer, "The Missing Link: Henry Kissinger and the Back-Channel Negotiations on Berlin," German Historical Institute, Washington, DC, Bulletin Supplement 1, 2004 "American Détente and German Ostpolitik, 1969–1972," p. 82, downloaded from: [http://www.ghi-dc.org/bulletinS04\\_supp/bulletinS04\\_supp.index.html](http://www.ghi-dc.org/bulletinS04_supp/bulletinS04_supp.index.html). See also, CD-ROM *The Rise of Détente*, Memorandum for the President from Kissinger: Meeting with Egon Bahr, January 31, 1971, 4.2.1971; Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 802-803.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 802. As regards the US approach to China, see Chris Connolly, "The American Factor: Sino-American Rapprochement and Chinese Attitudes to the Vietnam War, 1968-72," *Cold War History*, 5/4 (2005), pp. 514-15; Jussi Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 79-82, 105-09.



## *Deadlock*

In terms of the Berlin talks, the secret channel between the superpowers was important in at least two ways. Firstly, it made more direct West German participation in the dialogues possible. As this section will argue, the existence of the US-Soviet backchannel did not of itself suffice to break the impasse of the problematic Berlin negotiations; it immediately reached a deadlock. Instead, the most significant point was Bonn's direct commitment. As argued in chapter 3, the FRG was excluded from the formal Quadripartite talks because the Four Powers not West Germany had the legal right to deal with the problems of the city, though the West Germans could take part in the Bonn Group, a consultation framework composed of America, France, Britain and West Germany for discussing the German and Berlin problems. Through the backchannel, however, Bahr could convey his or Brandt's opinions more directly to Kissinger and use more flexible tactics than could have been adopted in the Bonn Group because of opposition from Paris, London or the Foreign Ministry of the FRG. Kissinger also respected Bonn's views, confirming, when he met Bahr on 31 January 1971, that "we would not make any move that had not been approved by the FRG," at the same time emphasising that "it was essential to avoid the slightest leak" about the confidential consultations.<sup>31</sup> And Bahr's commitment to the Washington-Moscow talks would become a key to breaking the deadlock.

The second significance of the secret channel was that the Soviets could present a further concession on the transit problem. In the course of 1970, in the formal talks, the Soviet Ambassador in East Berlin had maintained that the problem of access to and from West Berlin should be negotiated with East Germany because the routes were on the territory under the GDR's sovereignty, and had insisted on first discussing the issue of the West

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<sup>31</sup> CD-ROM *The Rise of Détente*, Memorandum for the President from Kissinger: Meeting with Egon Bahr, January 31, 1971, 4.2.1971.

German presence in West Berlin. On 10 February 1971, however, Dobrynin suggested a compromise to Kissinger. While keeping the basic stance on East German sovereignty, the Soviet Ambassador to Washington proposed the face-saving idea that the USSR would unilaterally declare its willingness to shoulder the responsibility for the access problem.<sup>32</sup> In other words, a unilateral declaration implied that the Soviet government would not violate the GDR's sovereign status; but the Soviets would guarantee their commitment to the transit problem and indicated that they were ready to discuss it with the West (and initially in confidence with Washington) in parallel with the problem of the FRG's presence. This was a highly welcome step forward for Kissinger. He then began to exchange opinions with Dobrynin.<sup>33</sup>

Yet the bilateral backchannel negotiations soon reached a deadlock because both sides stuck rigidly to their initial positions. To begin with, responding to Dobrynin's request, Kissinger on 26 February 1971 produced a document outlining a set of access procedures. The Western Three had already submitted a draft Berlin agreement on 5 February 1971 in the formal Quadripartite talks. Kissinger's document had been drafted with Bahr's and Rush's help with reference to the Western Three draft, but also including some Soviet phraseology.<sup>34</sup> However, there was no reaction from the Soviet side for nearly three weeks, perhaps because Kissinger made few concessions on the Federal presence.<sup>35</sup> When the Soviet Ambassador met Nixon's national security advisor on 15 March 1971, Dobrynin demanded that Kissinger make a compromise on the Federal presence, or, as a new

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<sup>32</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Meeting with Ambassador Dobrynin, February 10, 1971, KT00235, 22.2.1971; Kissinger, White House Years, pp. 825-26.

<sup>33</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Meetings with Ambassador Dobrynin February 16 and 22, 1971, KT00239, 27.2.1971.

<sup>34</sup> Kissinger, White House Years, p. 826; CD-ROM The Rise of Détente, letter from Kissinger to Bahr via special channel, 22.2.1971; AAPD 1971, Dok. 75, Staatssekretär Bahr, Bundeskanzleramt, an den Sicherheitsberater des amerikanischen Präsidenten, Kissinger, 25.2.1971. As regards the Western draft of 5 February 1971, see AAPD 1971, Dok. 52, Aufzeichnung des Vortragenden Legationsrats I. Klasse van Well, 8.2.1971.

<sup>35</sup> Geyer, "The Missing Link," p. 84.

proposal, accept some Soviet presence in West Berlin before accepting the Western insistence on access procedures.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, the Soviets wrote their own draft agreement on Berlin, which was handed to the Americans on 18 March 1971, and then formally submitted at the Four-Power meeting on 26 March 1971. The Soviet counter-draft was disappointing and “very far from what could be accepted by the Western side.”<sup>37</sup> The reason for the hardening of Moscow’s position was probably partly because the Russians thought that it was now Washington’s turn to present something new. It was also because the Soviet leadership believed that Nixon wanted Summit meetings with Brezhnev and would hence make more concessions in order to secure this. Indeed, from the outset of the intensification of the superpower backchannel talks from January 1971, Dobrynin had reiterated that the United States and the Soviet Union should try to achieve a Berlin agreement before the Summit.<sup>38</sup> No doubt Moscow was counting upon the usefulness of the Summit card.

Kissinger did not move, though. He flatly replied to the Soviet Ambassador that “it was impossible to make further progress [on Federal presence].”<sup>39</sup> The main reason for the Western stubbornness was the internal political situation in West Germany. As Ambassador Rush reported, Brandt had to agree with the opposition leader Rainer Barzel not to make any concession on the problem of the West German connection with West Berlin at least at that time, and the CDU/CSU in general as well as even some of Brandt’s cabinet members such as Hans-Dietrich Genscher were also hardliners on the issue. Bahr therefore confirmed to Rush that concessions

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<sup>36</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Meeting with Ambassador Dobrynin, March 15, 1971, KT00248, 18.3.1971; Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 826.

<sup>37</sup> CD-ROM *The Rise of Détente*, Memorandum for Kissinger from Sonnenfeldt [Subject: Berlin: Soviets Table a Counter draft Agreement], 27.3.1971. See also, *AAPD 1971*, Dok. 110, Aufzeichnung des Ministerialdirektors von Staden, 29.3.1971; Honoré Marc Catudal, *The Diplomacy of the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin: A New Era in East-West Politics*, Berlin Verlag, 1978, pp.159-62.

<sup>38</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, My January 23 Conversation with Dobrynin, KT00229, 27.1.1971.

<sup>39</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Meeting with Ambassador Dobrynin, March 15, 1971, KT00248, 18.3.1971.

on a Federal presence did not seem to be politically possible at that time.<sup>40</sup> As regards Dobrynin's new suggestion on the Soviet presence in the Western Sectors, Kissinger rejected the establishment of a Soviet consulate that had diplomatic status. All that he could suggest instead to Dobrynin was an increase in Soviet commercial offices.<sup>41</sup> Lamenting the impasse, the Soviet Ambassador complained that: "even in this channel we rather stubbornly clung to our position."<sup>42</sup> "[I]n any event all the channel guaranteed was greater speed, not greater concessions," Kissinger coldly retorted.<sup>43</sup> In the end, both the Americans and the Russians could not present further concrete suggestions. Washington (and Bonn) could not indicate a further concession on a Federal presence before the Soviets accepted the Western proposal on the transit principles. Moscow meanwhile waited for some kind of compromise from the West, believing that these would be the price of their agreement to a summit meeting. Even in the secret consultations, the Berlin problem reached a deadlock.

### *Berlin and Disarmament*

Perhaps in order indirectly to escape from the deadlock and put pressure on the West, the Soviet leader presented a new position on a different issue. In his speech at a meeting of the 24<sup>th</sup> Soviet Communist Party Congress, on 30 March 1971, Brezhnev aired his positive attitude towards disarmament, stating that: "We stand for a reduction of armed forces and armaments in areas where the military confrontation is especially dangerous, above all, in Central Europe."<sup>44</sup> The General Secretary's remarks were not limited to foreign force reductions as proposed in the Budapest Memorandum of June

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<sup>40</sup> CD-ROM *The Rise of Détente*, Telegram from Rush to Kissinger, 16.3.1971.

<sup>41</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, My Recent Conversations with Dobrynin, KT00255, 30.3.1971

<sup>42</sup> CD-ROM *The Rise of Détente*, Memorandum of Conversation, 25.3.1971.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in John G. Keliher, *The Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions. The Search for Arms Control in Central Europe*, Pergamon Press, 1980, p. 25.

1970. Rather, Brezhnev indicated a willingness to accept NATO's proposal for disarmament of conventional forces in Europe, including both foreign and indigenous troops. Subsequent Soviet attitudes towards the MBFR negotiations suggest that Moscow was not necessarily serious about real force reductions. Rather, the aim of Brezhnev's speech was tactical to place pressure on NATO countries to be more forthcoming on the Berlin question or a European security conference by exploring the West's disarmament proposal. Indeed, as will be discussed below, the smaller countries of the Atlantic Alliance seemed to be stimulated by the new Soviet initiative.

While the true negotiations were being conducted via the backchannel in Washington, the official Quadripartite talks in Berlin predictably made little progress throughout the winter and early spring of 1971. Ambassadorial Four-Power meetings resumed in January 1971, and on 5 February 1971 the Western Three tabled a draft Berlin agreement to the Soviets. Initially, this was welcomed as a basis for further discussions.<sup>45</sup> Yet, before long, Soviet Ambassador Abrasimov criticised it as "something of a maximal demand made for tactical reasons" and by the meeting on 9 March 1971 they "showed no readiness to move on any point of substance."<sup>46</sup> Also, the Allies' strategy was to wait for Soviet concessions on an access agreement first, and then discuss the Federal presence. The Soviet Ambassador in Berlin never accepted such a procedural order. Instead, on 26 March 1971, he presented the counter-draft agreement mentioned above, which was less forthcoming from the Western point of view. No one was ready to make substantial concessions at the formal meetings.

Among NATO governments, therefore, pessimism about the prospect of a Berlin agreement was widespread. As early as on 25 January 1971, at a Franco/German summit meeting, Pompidou had expressed his gloomy view, saying that he did not believe the Russians were prepared to make a bold

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<sup>45</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 52, Aufzeichnung des Vortragenden Legationsrats I. Klasse van Well, 8.2.1971.

<sup>46</sup> DBPO, III, I, Doc. 64, fn. 3, p. 328.

compromise on the Berlin problem.<sup>47</sup> When the 26 March 1971 Soviet draft on a Berlin agreement was made available to all other NATO governments, they realised how seriously the Quadripartite talks were deadlocked. As the Canadian representative to NATO put it “any question of a [Berlin] settlement in the near future seemed very unlikely.”<sup>48</sup> Others led by the Belgian representative, also noted that “the chances of failure in the Berlin talks are considerable.”<sup>49</sup> The bleak atmosphere in the Western bloc was such that the British representative reported to London his concern that some members of the Alliance might want to abandon the “Berlin pre-condition”, if it seemed that a breakdown in the Berlin talks might endanger the holding of a European security conference.<sup>50</sup>

Fearing a complete standstill of the détente process, Belgian Foreign Minister Harmel, tried to find a way out of the impasse caused by the difficulties of the Berlin problem. Belgium and other NATO members agreed with the importance of the divided city in Germany, and remained committed to the position that there would be no progress on a conference on European security without a Berlin settlement.<sup>51</sup> Harmel instead proposed another idea, asking at the WEU Ministerial meeting in The Hague on 19 April 1971, whether the West would be prepared to consider discussions with the Warsaw Pact on MBFR quite separate from a security conference.<sup>52</sup> The Belgian Foreign Minister was undoubtedly encouraged by Brezhnev’s 30 March 1971 speech to the 24th Congress of the CPSU calling for negotiations on armed force reductions in Central Europe. The Dutch Foreign Minister also found Harmel’s suggestion “interesting,” and Luns too hoped that NATO

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<sup>47</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 31, “Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Brandt mit Staatspräsident Pompidou in Paris”, 25.1.1971.

<sup>48</sup> TNA. FCO 41/885, Peck to Wiggin, 8.4.1971.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> As regards the Belgian position, see, for example, PAAA, B-40, Bd. 186, Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa: Belgische Haltung, April 1971.

<sup>52</sup> TNA. FCO 41/829, TNA. FCO tel no. 318 to Bonn, 20.4.1971.

would consider it in the Lisbon NATO Ministerial Meetings in June 1971.<sup>53</sup> The stalemate in the Berlin talks had clearly pushed smaller countries that had no right to participate in the negotiations on the divided city, further towards disarmament détente.

It was West Germany, however, that most strongly opposed the Belgian suggestion of multilateralising the MBFR negotiations. Although mutual force reductions still remained an important issue for Bonn, it had begun to think that it was dangerous to rush into negotiations at this stage, partly because up to that time all troops-reduction models produced from a military point of view failed to envisage acceptance by the Warsaw Pact countries.<sup>54</sup> As Scheel told Heath, the FRG Foreign Minister thought that MBFR could be discussed at a European security conference, but not until the NATO members had worked out their position in detail.<sup>55</sup> Yet, it was mainly because of Berlin and East Germany. As the West Germans put it:

[M]ultilateral exploratory talks on MBFR should await the outcome of the Berlin talks, which were a test of Soviet attitudes on all subjects[, ...] because NATO must not allow the Soviet Union to out-flank the Berlin talks via MBFR, and because of the problem of GDR participation.<sup>56</sup>

The FRG government had interpreted the reasons for the new Brezhnev initiative on force reductions as a tactic to bypass the "Berlin pre-condition" attached to the holding of European security conference. Bonn thought that by agreeing to MBFR, Moscow attempted to establish a multilateral conference on the reduction of armed forces without reference to the Berlin problem and to obtain one of the same advantages as it hoped to obtain through an ESC, namely the GDR's participation as an

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 91, Aufzeichnung des Botschaftsrats Sönksen, Washington, 12.3.1971.

<sup>55</sup> TNA. PREM 15/1522, Record of the Prime Minister's meeting with Herr Walter Scheel, German Minister for Foreign Affairs at 11.30 a.m. on Friday 5 February 1971 at 10 Downing Street, 5.2.1971.

<sup>56</sup> TNA. FCO 41/806, UKDEL NATO tel no. 152 to FCO, 4.5.1971.

internationally-recognised sovereign state.<sup>57</sup> From the West German point of view, therefore, Belgium seemed to have fallen into the Soviet trap.

### *Breakthrough*

Meanwhile, there was a crucial breakthrough regarding Berlin. This was due to Egon Bahr who proposed a new idea. He had become worried about the deadlock in the backchannel talks between Kissinger and Dobrynin, when the State Secretary in the Chancellor's office received the Soviet draft agreement on Berlin on 26 March 1971 from Soviet diplomat Falin, not only because the contents of the draft were disappointing, but also because Falin expressed doubts about the American will to conclude a Berlin agreement. Although Bahr rebutted the Soviet diplomat's misgiving, he felt that he had to take an initiative, because the West Germans feared that Moscow would lose interest in a Berlin settlement.<sup>58</sup> Then, when he visited the United States in late April 1971, Bahr suggested to Kissinger that "juridical questions be put aside and that efforts be concentrated on finding a way of bringing about pragmatic improvements."<sup>59</sup> He had for instance noticed that the Soviets were prepared to make practical compromises on the access problem.<sup>60</sup> Brandt's right-hand man therefore calculated that if Moscow was willing to make enough concessions on access, the Brandt government could sell a Berlin agreement even if the West had to make some compromises on the Federal presence a later stage.<sup>61</sup> The problem was how to encourage the

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<sup>57</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 161, Runderlaß des Staatssekretärs Frank, 10.5.1971; TNA. FCO 41/829, Braithwaite to Pemberton-Pigott, 26.4.1971.

<sup>58</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 109, Staatssekretär Bahr, Bundeskanzleramt, an den Sicherheitsberater des amerikanischen Präsidenten, Kissinger, 26.3.1971.

<sup>59</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Memorandum of Conversation [between Kissinger and Bahr]: The Berlin Negotiations (Part I of II), KT00262, 22.4.1971. See also, Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 828.

<sup>60</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Memorandum of Conversation [between Kissinger and Bahr]: The Berlin Negotiations (Part I of II), KT00262, 22.4.1971.

<sup>61</sup> In mid-March 1971, Rush and Bahr had already discussed what possible concessions might eventually be made with regard to the Federal presence, and agreed that "some means of limiting Bundestag committee and Franktionen meetings might in time be found



Soviets to make initial concessions on access.

The importance of Bahr's suggestion was twofold. Firstly, by dropping legal justifications for both sides' positions on Berlin, it could be possible to solve or shelve the most difficult part of the draft agreement on the status of Berlin – an issue over which the juridical points of view of the two sides were completely incompatible. His idea could halt fruitless disputes over the status of the divided city, and it would make it possible to regulate the issue of access procedures pragmatically.<sup>62</sup> Secondly, Bahr's proposal gave Kissinger a new card to break the deadlock. He welcomed Bahr's approach and was able to present it to Dobrynin as a new step, without compromising on the question of a Federal presence, a highly controversial problem in the domestic politics of the FRG.<sup>63</sup> Moscow also accepted the German initiative on 3 May 1971, perhaps because there was a new approach from the West.<sup>64</sup> The negotiations in the backchannel had come to a standstill because neither side was willing to present the next card. Both sides had waited for the other side to begin making concessions. Bahr broke the impasse.

Bahr's approach also provided a new forum: the Group of Three. In order to find a way out of the stalemate, Kissinger had initially proposed bilateral private meetings between Rush and, firstly Abrassimov, the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin, and then Falin who was to be appointed as the Ambassador to Bonn.<sup>65</sup> However, it was the Soviet side that, when it accepted Bahr's approach, also proposed "to conduct in Bonn confidential meetings of the USSR, US and FRG representatives."<sup>66</sup> Perhaps the

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and that it might be possible to establish a single Federal republic office representing the twenty-odd FRG ministerial offices of the republic now in West Berlin." Bahr confirmed, however, that "at present this does not seem to be politically possible." CD-ROM The Rise of Détente, Telegram from Rush to Kissinger, 16.3.1971.

<sup>62</sup> Bahr, Zu meiner Zeit, p. 360.

<sup>63</sup> CD-ROM The Rise of Détente, Message from Kissinger for Rush via special channel, 23.4.1971.

<sup>64</sup> CD-ROM The Rise of Détente, Message from Kissinger to Rush via back channel, 3.5.1971.

<sup>65</sup> Kissinger, White House Years, p. 827. DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Meeting with Ambassador Dobrynin, April 26, 1971, KT00268, 28.4.1971.

<sup>66</sup> CD-ROM The Rise of Détente, Message from Kissinger to Rush via back channel,

Russians had judged that it would be useful for them to include Bahr who might serve as a mediator between Rush and Falin. The three then met in Bonn for the first time on 10 May 1971.<sup>67</sup> They began covert consultations on the basis of a draft written by Bahr that contained juridically neutral formulations and stated only the obligations and responsibilities of both sides.<sup>68</sup> According to Sarotte, there is no formal document recording the drafting process in the Group of Three, but it clearly produced results which were then reflected at the twentieth round of Quadripartite talks on 25 May 1971.<sup>69</sup> Before May 1971, the gap between the Western and Soviet drafts on Berlin had still been hopelessly wide. By the end of May 1971, significant progress had been made "with agreement on common language for more than half a draft working paper."<sup>70</sup> This was outstandingly good news for the forthcoming June 1971 NATO Ministerial meeting.<sup>71</sup>

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3.5.1971.

<sup>67</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 163, Staatssekretär Bahr, Bundeskanzleramt, an den Sicherheitsberater des amerikanischen Präsidenten, Kissinger, 11.5.1971. Shortly before, on the other side of the Iron Curtain, Moscow consented to the resignation of Walter Ulbricht who had been the East German leader for more than 20 years. He had possessed significant power in the GDR, and had therefore often been a difficult person for the Soviet Union to deal with. On 3 May 1971, Ulbricht was forced to resign due to pressure from within the SED and from the Kremlin. His replacement was Erich Honecker, who obeyed Moscow's directions more willingly than Ulbricht, which thus meant that East Germany became more manageable for the Soviet Union during the détente process. Sarotte, Dealing With the Devil, pp.109-111.

<sup>68</sup> Bahr had handed over his draft agreement on Berlin when he had seen Kissinger on 25 April 1971.

<sup>69</sup> Sarotte, Dealing With the Devil, p. 119.

<sup>70</sup> DBPO, III, I, Doc. 67, note 10, p. 346; See also AAPD 1971, Dok. 190, Aufzeichnung des Vortragenden Legationsrats Blech, 27.5.1971.

<sup>71</sup> Catudal has concisely summarised the situation of official Berlin negotiations at the end of May 1971 after the 20<sup>th</sup> Ambassadorial meeting as follows: "Subsequently, in three days of intensive conversations at the experts' level, the first common draft accord was concluded. This text outlined at length those points of common agreement; all issues that remained unresolved were put in footnotes or in brackets. The result of this major effort revealed that substantial progress had been made on the key matters of West German presence in West Berlin, access to the city, its ties with the Federal Republic, representation of West Berlin abroad and communications across the Wall." Catudal, The Diplomacy of the Quadripartite, p. 170.

## **The NATO Ministerial Meeting in Lisbon: 3-4 June 1971**

The most important subjects discussed at the Lisbon NATO Ministerial Meeting on 3-4 June 1971 were, thus, the pre-conditions for a multilateral preparatory conference for an ESC, in particular a satisfactory Berlin agreement, and Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions. Indeed, Brezhnev had, again and more clearly, announced his interest in armed force reductions in his speech for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Georgian Republic in Tiflis on 14 May 1971, stressing the need “to start negotiations.”<sup>72</sup> It had been the NATO side that had proposed MBFR unconditionally in the 1968 Reykjavik Signal and again in the 1970 Rome Communiqué. The West therefore could not ignore the Soviet Union’s clear response.

In the event, a Canadian idea provided the West with a helpful way to reply to the Soviets, and was welcomed by a majority of the Allied partners. At a NATO Council meeting on 18 May 1971, the Canadian representative to NATO had suggested to his colleagues that one NATO representative be appointed to conduct MBFR exploration on behalf of the Alliance as a whole. The main advantage of this idea for the West was that this would postpone the problem of GDR participation in multilateral negotiations.<sup>73</sup> Predictably, for the Belgians, the Dutch, the Italians, and the Scandinavians, who had been strong supporters of disarmament détente from the outset and had pressed for the inclusion of positive words in the MBFR section of a final Communiqué, the Canadian initiative was acceptable. Even more crucially, the US State Department was more enthusiastic because pressure from Congress to reduce the number of US troops in Europe had reached a critical stage. On 11 May 1971, Senator Mike Mansfield again introduced a new

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<sup>72</sup> Keliher, *The Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions*, pp. 25-26; AAPD 1971, Dok. 179, fn. 3, p. 810.

<sup>73</sup> TNA. FCO 41/829, UKDEL NATO tel no. 183 to FCO, 18.5.1971. See also, Robert Spencer, “Canada and the Origins of the CSCE,” in Robert Spencer (ed.), *Canada and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe*, University of Tront, 1984, p. 65.

proposal asking for a 50 per cent reduction in US forces in Europe.<sup>74</sup> The Brezhnev speech in Tiflis gave the Americans a chance to exploit the new Soviet stance in order to evade this pressure.<sup>75</sup> The Department of State, therefore, had a strong incentive to take a more positive stance towards MBFR at the Lisbon NATO Meeting.<sup>76</sup> The West Germans, who were keen to see disarmament, also thought that: "In Lisbon we should take a positive attitude but without committing ourselves to multilateral talks."<sup>77</sup> The Canadian idea was compatible with their desires.

Even the British, who had become one of strong opponents of force reductions, could not allow themselves to be too negative on this issue. They were afraid that if they took a rigid line, they would be ignored. Furthermore, the British government had feared that: "the Americans may be tempted to 'bilateralise' the discussions [with the Russians – something which Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko had hinted Moscow would like], if [the Americans] think their Allies are being too stuffy."<sup>78</sup> In particular, the UK Defence Secretary Carrington was very concerned that the Americans might go off on their own and do a bilateral deal with the USSR about MBFR.<sup>79</sup> In order to avoid such US/USSR bilateralism over MBFR, the British had to show a positive attitude to some extent at least.

Thus, the idea of appointing a NATO representative in order to probe

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<sup>74</sup> Keliher, *The Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions*, pp.25-27.

<sup>75</sup> TNA. FCO 41/830, Bridges to Wiggin, 21.5.1971.

<sup>76</sup> The White House was more prudent about MBFR. The National Security Decision Memorandum 108 dated 21 May 1971 stated that "We should clearly distinguish between (1) diplomatic explorations, which can be pursued at this time; and (2) the first phase of formal negotiations, which we will not begin until further preparations are accomplished." CD-ROM *The Rise of Détente*, Kissinger to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, National Security Decision Memorandum 108, Subject: Guidance on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, 21.5.1971.

<sup>77</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 161, Runderlaß des Staatssekretärs Frank, 10.5.1971; TNA. FCO 41/829, UKDEL NATO tel no. 175 to FCO, 17.5.1971.

<sup>78</sup> TNA. FCO 41/829, FCO tel no. 152 to UKDEL NATO, 18.5.1971.

<sup>79</sup> Before the Lisbon Meeting, Carrington sent a letter to Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home and gave him a warning about superpower conduct of the force reduction problem. (TNA. FCO 41/830, the Secretary of State for Defence to Douglas-Home, 28.5.1971.) The Italian government was similarly concerned about US/USSR bilateralism over MBFR, and conveyed this directly to the US government. TNA. FCO 41/829, Washington tel no. 1867 to FCO, 28.5.1971.

the Eastern bloc's attitude towards MBFRs was appealing for many NATO governments in order to give a response to the Brezhnev speech in positive fashion, while at the same time avoiding the problem of the GDR's participation. Ministers then agreed this line in general, and four months later, at the special Deputy Foreign Ministers meeting on 5 October 1971, the Atlantic Alliance appointed the Secretary-General of NATO, Manlio Brosio, as an "explorer" to visit the USSR and other Eastern countries, to probe the possibility of MBFR negotiations.<sup>80</sup>

At the Lisbon Ministerial meeting, the French again demanded that the final communiqué be "a little more forthcoming than last time towards a CES [conference on European security]," and asked for the reference to "on-going talks" to be dropped in order to make the convention of a Conference less conditional.<sup>81</sup> For Paris, the addition of "on-going talks" as a pre-condition for an ESC also reduced the significance of the Berlin condition. As the British cynically observed: "if the pre-condition of other on-going talks fell through, there would be no tears shed in Paris."<sup>82</sup> Although the German-German question was still important for the West Germans, as discussed above, the FRG leaders had already given their support to the French position for political reasons.

France gained support from most of the smaller countries as well. The Belgians and Canadians had already insisted that NATO should remove any ambiguity over "on-going talks."<sup>83</sup> The Italian Foreign Minister also stood by Schumann. In the course of early 1971, Moro, who had opposed the idea of an ESC during 1970, had become more positive to it largely because of domestic politics and in particular the need to obtain support from the Italian

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<sup>80</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok.348, Aufzeichnung des Vortragenden Legationsrat I. Klasse Mertes, 14.10.1971; TNA. FCO 41/838, UKDEL NATO tel no. 468 to FCO, 7.10.1971; Martin Müller. Politik und Bürokratie: die MBFR-Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zwischen 1967 und 1973. Nomos, 1988, pp. 151-54.

<sup>81</sup> TNA. FCO 41/807, Paris tel no. 666 to FCO, 26.5.1971.

<sup>82</sup> TNA. FCO 41/806, UKDEL NATO tel no. 155 to FCO, 6.5.1971.

<sup>83</sup> TNA. FCO 41/806, Peck to Bridge, 28.4.1971.

Communist Party.<sup>84</sup> As a result, he contended that "the only precondition for a European Security Conference which should be retained by NATO should be Berlin."<sup>85</sup> The Danish, the Luxemburgers and the Norwegians also sided with this argument.<sup>86</sup> Clearly, there was a general sense that the Alliance should push the Soviets more on the Berlin issue than on any other.

Only the Americans, the British and the Dutch opposed this trend. For Washington, the SALT negotiations were still one of the greatest concerns; therefore they were keen to retain the precondition of "on going talks."<sup>87</sup> The British also regarded the phrase as "conveniently general and flexible." Furthermore, they saw it as a useful way of meeting the West German foreign officials' preoccupation that a move to a Conference should not take place until there was some clarification of the inner-German relationship, which was also an issue in another set of "on-going talks."<sup>88</sup> However, their opinions were in a minority at the Ministerial meeting. The development of Berlin talks had created a different atmosphere from the previous NATO Ministerial meeting in December 1970, in which Anglo-American conservative opinion had been accepted by the other Alliance members.

Despite Anglo/American/Dutch resistance, the reference to on-going talks was finally dropped. Certainly, the Anglo-Saxons thought that, even if the words disappeared, "in practice it [was] generally recognised that any changes for the worse in the international situation would inevitably affect the prospects for the East-West multilateral talks."<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, they could also derive some satisfaction from a final communiqué in which the relationship between Berlin and a Conference was described less directly than the French wished. Paris had wanted stronger language such as, "as

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<sup>84</sup> PAAA, B-40, Bd. 190, Italiensche Haltung zur KSE, 17.3.1971; MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2921, Note by Arnaud, 17.4.1971.

<sup>85</sup> TNA. FCO 41/806, Bridges to Brimelow, 5.5.1971.

<sup>86</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2921, memo written by Tine. Objet: session ministerielle - question de Berlin, 4.6.1971.

<sup>87</sup> TNA. FCO 41/807, UKDEL NATO tel no. 184 to FCO, 18.5.1971.

<sup>88</sup> TNA. FCO 41/806, FCO tel no. 124 to UKDEL NATO, 30.4.1971.

<sup>89</sup> TNA. FCO 41/808, Lisbon tel no. 262 to FCO, 3.6.1971.

soon as satisfactory progress has been made in the Berlin negotiations' multilateral preparation could begin."<sup>90</sup> Although the final words in the communiqué were softened, in order to appeal public opinion,<sup>91</sup> as some Ministers insisted, the only official condition to multilateral talks for a European security conference now became the satisfactory conclusion of a Berlin agreement. In the communiqué, NATO Ministers stressed their hope that "before their next meeting the negotiations on Berlin will have reached a successful conclusion and that multilateral conversations intended to lead to a conference on security and co-operation in Europe may then be undertaken."<sup>92</sup>

### **Linking MBFR to a Conference on European Security**

After the Lisbon NATO Ministerial meeting, preliminary talks on a conference on security and cooperation in Europe (CSCE) might have begun earlier than was actually the case owing to a new British initiative. The Western project of Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions had been tabled as a counter-proposal. Brezhnev's speech calling for starting negotiations about disarmament and the rise of smaller countries' enthusiasm for MBFR also seemed to accelerate East-West relations towards armed force reductions. Britain, which considered the disarmament project as dangerous for Western security, however, was worried by this situation. When it seemed that troop reductions in Europe were unavoidable, the British attempted to delay the start of MBFR negotiations by linking it with a European security conference. Indeed, the UK Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home insisted that force reductions should be discussed in a body set up by a CSCE in order to

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<sup>90</sup> TNA. FCO 41/807, Paris tel no. 666 to FCO, 26.5.1971.

<sup>91</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2921, memo written by Tine. Objet: session ministerielle - question de Berlin, 4.6.1971.

<sup>92</sup> The Lisbon Final Communiqué. <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c710603a.htm>

postpone MBFR for as long as possible by pushing it behind the conference.<sup>93</sup> With this idea, the MBFR negotiations were to start after a conference on European security, – a lesser evil for Britain – which would also take place after the conclusion of a Berlin agreement. For the defence-oriented British Secretary of State, the coupling of CSCE and MBFR would be a reasonable way to postpone the beginning of conventional disarmament in Europe.

The British Foreign Office was also influenced by the arguments of smaller countries. Following up the agreement at the June 1971 Ministerial gathering, the NATO Senior Political Committee (SPC) intensified its study of MBFR. Among many points which needed to be discussed, the question of the forum for MBFR negotiations was an important issue. And, at a SPC meeting, Belgium and Canada aired their views about the connection between MBFR and a CSCE. The Belgian representative, for instance, postulated a scenario that: "If a Berlin settlement was reached before explorations on MBFR were completed, then MBFR would clearly feature at an ESC."<sup>94</sup> The Canadian representative also suggested that, in order to satisfy some NATO and neutral countries which would not be directly involved in force reduction negotiations, a wider grouping should be provided in the context of a conference on European security.<sup>95</sup>

Agreeing with the Canadian opinion in particular, the British saw two more advantages in the idea of remitting the study of MBFR to an organ set up at a European security conference. Firstly, by postponing MBFR talks until after a CSCE, the West could avoid the problem of East German participation in multilateral negotiations at least until the conclusion of the talks on Berlin. Secondly, UK diplomats hoped that the link between a CSCE and MBFR would solve the problem of French participation in force

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<sup>93</sup> TNA. FCO 41/833, Braithwaite to Bridges, 15.7.1971; *ibid.*, Record of Conversation between the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the French Ambassador in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on Tuesday 22 June, 1971 at 10.50 am; DNSA, Presidential Directives, Part II, Information Memorandum, MBFR and CES, PR00901, 20.9.1971.

<sup>94</sup> TNA. FCO 41/832, Davidson to Braithwaite, 9.7.1971.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*



reduction talks.<sup>96</sup> The French had repeatedly made it clear that they were not willing to be associated with MBFR talks on a bloc-to-bloc basis, but they repeatedly displayed their growing interest in an all-European Conference. To maintain the Alliance's solidarity – the top priority of British foreign policy – the idea of involving France in MBFR talks via a conference on European security was highly attractive. While the French and British shared the view that MBFR could be dangerous for Western security, London, unlike Paris, thought that the negotiations on MBFR were politically inevitable because of American eagerness for them.<sup>97</sup> Therefore, it would also be an advantage for the British to oppose, or at least reduce the risk of, MBFR together with the French from within the negotiations. The proposed CSCE/MBFR link was thus the only device for Britain to dispose of both the Berlin and French problems simultaneously.<sup>98</sup>

The major source of difficulty for this attempt to establish a CSCE/MBFR connection was expected to be opposition from Washington. Postponing MBFR talks until after the holding of a Conference might not meet the American domestic political timetable because the US State Department in particular wanted to start talks on force reductions as early as possible, in order to allay domestic pressure demanding withdrawal of US troops in Europe.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, Mansfield's amendment calling for such force reductions was already on the table. To wait until a European security conference had been convened might thus be too slow for the USA.

The first chance to probe American thinking on this subject came on 22 July 1971, when Anglo-American official talks were held in Washington. The British side argued on the one hand that: "It was difficult to see any solution [to the GDR participation problem] except to postpone MBFR talks until at least after a Berlin and possibly also a German *modus vivendi*."<sup>100</sup> On the

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<sup>96</sup> TNA. FCO 41/833, Braithwaite to Bridges, 15.7.1971.

<sup>97</sup> TNA. FCO 41/888, FCO tel no. 659 to Paris, 27.9.1971.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> TNA. FCO 41/833, Braithwaite to Bridges, 15.7.1971.

<sup>100</sup> TNA. FCO 41/834, Anglo-US Talks on MBFR in the State Department on 22 July, 1971

other hand, they stressed the advantages of treating MBFR in a forum set up by a conference on European security, insisting that: "Possibly the only way to solve this problem over the French would be to combine MBFRs with a CES, or perhaps to make MBFRs dependent on a prior CES".<sup>101</sup> Although Martin Hillenbrand, the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs in the US Department of State, agreed with much of the British argument, he expressed American concern that the Berlin negotiations would thereby continue more slowly. Certainly, the Assistant Secretary did not reject the British idea, stating that were the Berlin talks to be satisfactorily concluded by the end of 1971, "the MBFR and CES negotiating tracks would tend to merge and MBFR talks would be assimilated into the European Security talks." But he described this scenario as the most optimistic hypothesis.<sup>102</sup>

In fact, at that time, the formal Quadripartite talks were again stagnant because Kissinger had stopped the backchannel negotiations. As early as May 1971 when the Group of Three talks had begun, Nixon's national security advisor had advised Rush "to avoid being stampeded into too rapid a pace," in order to "keep the Berlin talks and SALT in some sort of balance."<sup>103</sup> This was despite Brandt's wish for speedy negotiations.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, Nixon and Kissinger had wanted to use their China card more effectively. They had already received an invitation from the People's Republic of China on 27 April 1971, and Kissinger was going to make a clandestine trip to Peking in early July 1971. Although Dobrynin pushed Kissinger with the Summit card, the latter instructed Rush that: "It is imperative that you do not come to a final agreement until after July 15 for reasons that will become apparent to you."<sup>105</sup> Without progress in the secret

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at 10.15 AM.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> CD-ROM *The Rise of Détente*, Message from Kissinger to Rush via Special Channel, 24.5.1971.

<sup>104</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok.185, Staatssekretär Bahr, Bundeskanzleramt, an den Sicherheitsberater des amerikanischen Präsidenten, Kissinger, 24.5.1971.

<sup>105</sup> Quoted in Geyer, "The Missing Link," p. 89; Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 829.

negotiations, there would be no advance in the formal Quadripartite talks. When the Anglo-US talks were held on 22 July 1971, therefore, the official Berlin negotiations at the Ambassadorial level were still in limbo. Thus, Hillenbrand could not be so optimistic.

Yet, the development of the Berlin talks from August 1971 made the Americans view the British proposal of linking MBFR and a conference on European security more favourably. After Nixon's announcement on 15 July 1971 of his visit to the PRC for China-US summit meetings the following spring, in other words after Moscow's summit card had been offset by Washington's China card, the secret talks resumed and the Group of Three reached tentative agreement on 28 July 1971 at an informal level.<sup>106</sup> This was followed by what Rush termed the "final phase," with sequential Ambassadorial meetings taking place from 10 August 1971 onwards until midnight on 18/19 August 1971 when, after fourteen hours of marathon drafting, the four Ambassadors in Berlin completed the provisional Berlin agreement.<sup>107</sup> As a result, the US Department of State gradually began to regard the British proposal of linking the mutual force reduction project and a Conference as an appealing idea.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, US State Secretary Rogers confirmed this inclination in his press conference on 3 September 1971, stating that: "we are prepared to consider both [a CSCE and MBFR]. Whether they might take place at one time or separately has not been determined. We would be willing to consider either possibility."<sup>109</sup>

France and West Germany also indicated their acceptance of the British suggestion. Predictably, the French were very encouraged by the results of the Quadripartite talks and they felt the need to do something by

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<sup>106</sup> CD-ROM *The Rise of Détente*, Telegram from Rush to Kissinger, 29.7.1971.

<sup>107</sup> TNA. PREM 15/396, MacGlashan to Unwin, 19.8.1971; DBPO, III, I, Doc. 70, fn. 7, p. 361; *Ibid.*, p.376. See also, Catudal, *The Diplomacy of the Quadripartite*, pp. 174-77.

<sup>108</sup> A number of reports from the British Embassy in Washington suggest that the Americans were finding the idea of combining a security Conference and MBFR talks increasingly attractive. See, *Ibid.*, Crowe to Braithwaite, 18.8.1971; Crowe to Braithwaite, 19.8.1971; Cape to Bridges, 26.8.1971; Butler to Bridges, 3.9.1971.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, Braithwaite to Bridges, 7.9.1971.

way of preparations for a European security conference.<sup>110</sup> Reportedly, at the French Council of Ministers meeting on 1 September 1971, the French leaders decided to be more active in favour of a multilateral conference.<sup>111</sup> As a first public reaction, after the meeting, the spokesman of the Council announced that the French government was interested in the communiqué issued by the Finnish government on 24 August 1971 which had stated that the conclusion of the Berlin agreement would open the door to the multilateral preparatory phase for a conference on security and cooperation in Europe.<sup>112</sup> The French enthusiasm also clearly affected their attitude towards the British approach. On 8 September 1971, Jean Jurgensen, the Deputy Director of Political Affairs at the *Quai d'Orsay*, told the British Minister in Paris, Michael Palliser, that the French thought that MBFR should be discussed in a permanent body set up by a European security conference in the hope that they “went on a very long time and became increasingly bogged down.”<sup>113</sup> Although the French disliked disarmament détente, they thought that if a CSCE was to be held as soon as the Berlin agreement was concluded, they could accept the connection between a Conference and MBFR, and the latter could be aborted after the Conference.

The Federal German Chancellor also shared with the British policy. At first, the West Germans, at least at an official level, were hesitant about connecting a CSCE and MBFR. However, Brandt still maintained the FRG's basic line of a CSCE/MBFR link, which had been formulated eleven months before at the Federal Security Council. When he visited the Soviet Union and met Brezhnev at his summer residence at Oreanda on 17 September 1971, the Chancellor suggested the same idea as the British proposed, namely connecting MBFR with a European security conference, in order to persuade the Soviet leader of the significance of force reductions in Europe. The Soviet

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<sup>110</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2922, Note pour le Ministre, 30.8.1971.

<sup>111</sup> TNA. FCO 41/887, Simpson-Orlebar to Braithwaite, 6.9.1971.

<sup>112</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2922, Circulaire no 317, 1.9.1971.

<sup>113</sup> TNA. FCO 41/836, Simpson-Orlebar to Bridges, 8.9.1971.

General Secretary replied by stressing the importance of accelerating the process towards a Conference, and not surprisingly agreed with the idea of treating the issue of force reductions within a committee set up by the Conference, because this had originally been proposed by the Warsaw Pact in the Budapest Memorandum of June 1970.<sup>114</sup>

The US Department of State, France, and West Germany as well as the Soviet Union were thus lending their support to the British proposal for linking a conference on European security and MBFR. Although the White House disliked the idea of a European security conference, and in principle insisted on keeping MBFR and a CSCE separate,<sup>115</sup> Washington might have been forced to concur with the British had it found itself totally isolated in NATO. This would have been quite likely given that the smaller countries would probably have rallied to the UK position. As will be discussed below, however, due to Soviet's counter proposal on the Berlin problem, the British initiative would vanish into the void.

### **The First Quadripartite Agreement and the Reverse *Junktim***

The Quadripartite Agreement was signed in Berlin on 3 September 1971.<sup>116</sup> For the Western Bloc, however, this was still not a "satisfactory" conclusion.

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<sup>114</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 311, Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Brandt mit dem Generalsekretär des ZK der KpdSU, Breschnew, in Oreanda, 17.9.1971.

<sup>115</sup> For example, CD-ROM *The Rise of Détente*, Kissinger to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, National Security Decision Memorandum 108, Subject: Guidance on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, 21.5.1971.

<sup>116</sup> Because of translation problems at the final stage in September 1971, the official version of the Quadripartite Berlin Agreement was written only in English, French and Russian, and the German version was excluded in the end. Sarotte, *Dealing With the Devil*, pp. 121-122. Probably because of this experience, the West Germans began to make great efforts to make German an official language in the future CSCE. Indeed, this was the top priority of the *Auswärtiges Amt's* policy in discussions within NATO and with the Soviet Union in the course of late 1971 to 1972. As regards the importance of the German language in the CSCE, see Kristina Spohr-Readman, "National Interests and the Power of 'Language': West German Diplomacy and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1972-1975", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 29/6 (2006).

As described in the last chapter, the Berlin negotiation was envisaged in three stages. The first stage was a Four Power agreement on the principles in and around Berlin, which was now concluded. The second stage was a detailed arrangement on transit between the two Germanys. The final stage would be a signing of a protocol by the Four Powers. From the Western point of view, and in particular for the United States, Britain and West Germany, the completion of all these three stages would constitute a “satisfactory” settlement of the Berlin question. France, a keen supporter of a multilateral European conference, opposed this interpretation. Yet, by the end of 1971, the Washington-London-Bonn opinion was confirmed because of a Soviet counter-linkage proposal.

This new Soviet stance was called the “reverse *Junktim*.” When Brandt visited Moscow in mid-September 1971, the Soviet General Secretary stressed, at the end of their conversation on 17 September 1971, the fact that the Soviet side had made a lot of concessions on the Berlin Agreement, and they did so for the Moscow and Warsaw Treaties.<sup>117</sup> The implication of Brezhnev’s final remarks seemed not to have been well understood by the West Germans at that time. It was at the meeting between the FRG and Soviet Foreign Ministers on 27 September 1971 in New York that Moscow’s intention was elucidated. In his conversation with Scheel, Gromyko revealed the new Soviet policy of establishing a connection between the ratification of the Moscow Treaty and the signing of the final protocol on Berlin.<sup>118</sup> To counter Bonn’s *Junktim* – the link between a “satisfactory” settlement of the Berlin talks and ratification of the Moscow Treaty – and NATO’s Berlin pre-condition for a CSCE, the Russians made another linkage, insisting that they would withhold the signature of the final Berlin protocol until the ratification of the Moscow Treaty by the *Bundestag*. Presumably, Moscow

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<sup>117</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 311, Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Brandt mit dem Generalsekretär des ZK der KpdSU, Breschnew, in Oreanda, 17.9.1971.

<sup>118</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 323, Ministerialdirektor von Staden, z.Z. New York, an das Auswärtige Amt, 27.9.1971.

feared the possibility that, while they made substantial concessions on the Berlin question, the Moscow Treaty, which the Soviets desperately wanted to put into effect, might have been rejected by the West German Assembly, in which the governmental parties enjoyed only a slight majority.<sup>119</sup> In order to secure the Treaty, the Soviets took the final phase of the Berlin talks hostage.

This counter-linkage was a “bombshell” for the West,<sup>120</sup> and its implication was serious for multilateral European détente. First of all, it meant that a conference on European security would be postponed for the indefinite future. NATO’s Berlin pre-condition was that the West would not agree to hold a Conference before a “satisfactory” conclusion of the Berlin question, namely the completion of the three stages. According to the “reverse *Junktim*,” however, the final stage would be fulfilled after the ratification of the Moscow Treaty. Before the ratification, of course, discussion and examination of the Treaty in the *Bundestag* were needed, and they were expected to start after the signing of the Final Quadripartite Protocol (FQP). Without an agreement on Berlin before examinations of the Treaty began in the *Bundestag*, Hillenbrand worried that “it was very doubtful whether Brandt could get the Moscow Treaty ratified at all.”<sup>121</sup> In other words, while the Soviet Union demanded the ratification of the Moscow Treaty first for the FQP, the West and the Bonn government in particular needed the FQP so as to secure the ratification of the Moscow Treaty in the Assembly. Therefore, it became difficult to foresee when the Berlin problem would be settled; this in turn meant that it became highly obscure when a European security conference would be convened.

However, the French government wanted to start the preparations for a CSCE regardless of the reverse *Junktim*. When Brezhnev visited Paris in October 1971, the French President disregarded the USSR’s counter linkage

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<sup>119</sup> Catudal, *The Diplomacy of the Quadripartite*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>120</sup> TNA. FCO 41/837, Washington tel no. 3235 to FCO, 29.9.1971.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

and told his guest that the multilateral phase of preparatory talks should open at Helsinki in the shortest possible time.<sup>122</sup> Pompidou reportedly said that “nothing stand in the way” of the opening of multilateral preparations for a Conference.<sup>123</sup> Then Paris began to insist that the multilateral phase should start as soon as the inner-German phase of the Berlin talks was complete (stage 2), and *before* the ratification of the Moscow Treaty and the signing of the Final Quadripartite Protocol on Berlin (stage 3). By taking this stance, the French attempted to avoid Moscow’s reverse *Junktim* affecting a CSCE.

Despite the Soviet counter linkage, British and West German Ministers were not at first opposed to the French position immediately. Officials in the UK Foreign Ministry thought that NATO had no need to rush into multilateral preparation for a CSCE, and stressed that the satisfactory conclusion of the Berlin agreement meant the signing of the FQP.<sup>124</sup> However, the British Secretary of State indicated on 6 November 1971 that he was considering accepting the French policy.<sup>125</sup> About one week later when French Foreign Minister Schumann visited London on 12 November 1971, Douglas-Home agreed that, once stage 2 of the Berlin agreement had been concluded, there would be no insuperable objection from the British point of view to an early move to a multilateral preparatory discussion about a conference on European security, on condition that the West German government was willing to it.<sup>126</sup> For the British, a CSCE itself had already become less dangerous. Rather, of much more importance were the solidarity of the Atlantic Alliance and the interests of Britain’s partners. Therefore,

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<sup>122</sup> AN, 5 AG 2 / 1018, Second tête-à-tête entre le Président de la République et Monsieur Brejnev, le 26 octobre 1971, Elysée, 16 h. 50 à 20 h. 15; TNA. FCO 41/890, Paris Tel No. 1279 to FCO, 26.10.1971.

<sup>123</sup> TNA. FCO 41/891, Bonn Tel No. 1377, 27.10.1971; AAPD 1971, Dok. 354, Gesandter Blomeyer-Bartenstein, Paris, an das Auswärtige Amt, 19.10.1971.

<sup>124</sup> TNA. FCO 41/894, Bridges to Private Secretary, 26.11.1971;

<sup>125</sup> PAAA, B-28, Bd. 1572, Betr.: Ausserungen BM über zeitlichen Zusammenhang zwischen Berlin-Regelung und Beginn multilateraler KSE-Vorbereitung sowie über “Gegenjunktin” in Bracciano am 6.11.1971, 9.11.1971.

<sup>126</sup> TNA. FCO 41/894, Bridges to Private Secretary, 26.11.1971.



Douglas-Home cared about the opinions of both Paris and Bonn.

West Germany was also ready to accept the French line. The FRG Foreign Ministry thought that multilateral preparation for a Conference could start after the second stage Berlin talks between the two Germanies had finished if that was the wish of the majority in NATO: but such preparation should not be concluded until the Bundestag had ratified the Moscow Treaty.<sup>127</sup> In other words, even if preparatory talks began, the West Germans intended not to agree to enter into a Conference itself if the Moscow Treaty was still not ratified. With this formula, the FRG attempted to control the pace of multilateral European détente. Before concurring with Paris, Bonn had to prove Moscow's intention again. Indeed, when Scheel met Schumann on 19 November 1971, the FRG Foreign Minister suggested that NATO would be able to take a flexible attitude on the timing of the beginning of preparatory talks as the French wished, if the Soviets would indicate their flexibility about the reverse *Junktim*.<sup>128</sup>

The USSR remained stubborn, however. It thus made the FRG inflexible. Soon after Scheel met Schumann, the West German Foreign Minister flew to the Soviet capital on 25 November 1971, and had several conversations with Soviet leaders until 30 November 1971. Scheel attempted to persuade the Soviets to be less obstinate on the reverse *Junktim*, but Gromyko did not change his opinion that the Final Quadripartite Protocol on Berlin would be signed when the Moscow Treaty was ratified.<sup>129</sup> This Soviet attitude clearly affected the West German decision on 3 December 1971 to oppose the beginning of multilateral preparations for a CSCE in advance of

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<sup>127</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 412, Ministerialdirektor von Staden an die Ständige Vertretung bei der NATO in Brüssel, 23.11.1971; TNA, FCO 41/893, Paris Tel No. 1429 to FCO, 17.11.1971.

<sup>128</sup> MAE, Série Secrétariat Général, Entretiens et Messages, 1956-1971, Compte Rendu de l'Entretien entre M. Schumann et M. Scheel à Paris, le 19 novembre 1971, Séance d'après-midi, 25.11.1971; AAPD 1971, Dok. 403, Gespräch des Bundesministers Scheel mit dem französischen Außenminister Schumann in Paris, 19.11.1971.

<sup>129</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 416, Gespräch des Bundesministers Scheel mit dem sowjetischen Außenminister Gromyko in Moskau, 28.11.1971; *Ibid.*, Dok. 417, Gespräch des Bundesministers Scheel mit dem sowjetischen Außenminister Gromyko in Moskau, 28.11.1971.

the signing of the Final Quadripartite Protocol. Günther van Well, the head of the German Question Department in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, explained to his NATO partners that, in order to obtain parliamentary approval in Bonn for the ratification of the Moscow Treaty, they thought it was important not to start multilateral preparations, in which the GDR would participate, because this would introduce further negative factors whilst the difficult parliamentary process was going on.<sup>130</sup> If the Soviet Union had not advocated its reverse *Junktim*, the Final Quadripartite Protocol would have been signed soon after the second stage of inner-German talks on Berlin before or during the parliamentary ratification process. The conclusion of FQP would therefore have positive effects in the *Bundestag* discussions. Because of Gromyko's reluctance to soften his attitude on the reverse *Junktim*, however, the West German government could not move towards a Conference before the Berlin question was settled, in order not to give a further bad impression to their parliament.

In the end, France was isolated. When the French, American, British and West German Foreign Ministers had a dinner meeting on 8 December 1971 – immediately before the Ministerial NATO Council meeting in Brussels –, Schumann tried in vain to persuade his counterparts to announce that NATO was now prepared to begin multilateral preparations for a Conference.<sup>131</sup> US State Secretary Rogers did not change the American position, which had been authorised at the National Security Council meeting held on 1 December 1971, that the West should not agree with moving towards a CSCE before the signing of the FQP.<sup>132</sup> Rogers firmly opposed Schumann's idea, saying that "If we agreed to start multilateral

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<sup>130</sup> TNA. FCO 41/894, Bonn Tel No. 1606 to FCO, 4.12.1971.

<sup>131</sup> As regards the record of the Quadripartite Dinner conversations, see *AAPD 1971*, Dok. 436, Ministerialdirigent van Well, z.Z. Brüssel, an Bundeskanzler Brandt, z.Z. Oslo, 9.12.1971 ; TNA. FCO 41/810, Record of a Conversation at the Quadripartite Dinner in the German Embassy, Brussels, at 9 p.m. on 8 December 1971, 8.12.1971.

<sup>132</sup> DNSA, Kissinger's Transcripts, NSC Meeting--December 1, 1971 on MBFR and CES, KT00396, 1.12.1971; DNSA, Presidential Directives, Part II, Presidential Guidance on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions and a European Conference [NSDM 142], PR00138, 2.12.1971.

preparations before the FQP this would mean that we had give in to the Russians.”<sup>133</sup> Scheel and Douglas-Home, who had intimated their support to Schumann before, also took the US Secretary of State’s side. Under strong American and German pressure, at the Brussels Ministerial meeting on 9-10 December 1971, other NATO Ministers also generally agreed to the US insistence, in return for the inclusion in the final communiqué of wording to committing the Alliance to accept the Finnish Government’s offer of Helsinki as the site for CSCE preparation, to which the Americans had long hesitated to agree.<sup>134</sup> The Soviets’ reverse *Junktim* proposal gave strong justification of the American line. Thus the French argument was not convincing to others.

Soviet adherence to the reverse *Junktim* also scuppered the British proposal to link MBFR and a conference on European security because it destroyed the optimistic scenario of the Berlin talks being satisfactorily concluded by the end of 1971. The MBFR/CSCE link ceased to be attractive to the Americans, because the *Junktim* in reverse would suspend any progress towards a Conference, thereby automatically postponing the linked force reduction talks too. In order to hold the discussions on force reductions as early as possible, it would thus become convenient for the US government

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<sup>133</sup> TNA. FCO 41/810, Record of a Conversation at the Quadripartite Dinner in the German Embassy, Brussels, at 9 p.m. on 8 December 1971, 8.12.1971.

<sup>134</sup> All but the US favoured accepting in principle the Finnish invitation to hold multilateral discussions in Helsinki. France, who lost on the timing dispute, in particular, joined by the Scandinavians, strongly argued for approval Helsinki now and for language that would give impression preparations for meeting in Finland would proceed promptly. (TNA. FCO 41/809, Telegram from the US Department of State, dated 11.12.1971.) Only US Secretary of State Rogers tenaciously opposed to any endorsement of Helsinki as the venue of a Conference. The Americans had been unpleasant of the Finns who had sent the memorandum to the GDR and the FRG despite the absence of diplomatic relations with either. He had to accept a compromise to some extent, however. In the end, NATO said in its communiqué that the Alliance “took note” of the invitation of the Finnish Government, and “appreciated” its initiative, mentioning that “they [NATO Foreign Ministers] will keep in touch with the Finnish Government in order to consult on this matter”. (As regards the text of the final communiqué of NATO Council in Brussels in December 1971, <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c711209a.htm>). Although this was not formal approval and left the final decision to be taken, the Americans were forced to show its moral support to Helsinki’s initiative.

to de-link MBFR and a European security conference. Indeed, after the 1 December 1971 NSC meeting, US Secretary of State Rogers made it clear in a speech that the US government did not support the concept of the agenda of an ESC including MBFR.<sup>135</sup> Again, the relationship between the mutual reduction of forces and a Conference became blurred, and an opportunity to give the Nixon administration an incentive to hold a CSCE at an earlier stage was lost.

The era of negotiations was an era of linkages. Issues and projects between East and West were connected implicitly and explicitly. In particular, as this chapter has illustrated, the relations between the Berlin question, MBFR, and a CSCE were inseparably linked. Or, rather, each government attempted to connect these subjects to each other by applying various conditions, in order to develop negotiations and produce results which would be in their own national interests. Certainly, 1971 saw a vital advance on European détente mainly because of the signing of the Quadripartite Berlin Agreement. However, a multilateral European conference – a subject which was regarded as relatively less important than the Berlin problem or the Moscow Treaty – was in the end put aside by the big powers. In the meantime, however, the West was working significant issues which would characterise the CSCE. These issues will be considered in the next chapter.

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<sup>135</sup> Christoph Bluth, *The Two Germanys and Military Security in Europe*, Palgrave, Hardback, 2002, p. 139.

## **Chapter 5: Emergence of European Political Cooperation,**

### **1971-1972**

Western pre-diplomacy on the road to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe should be analysed on two levels – firstly, as argued in the previous two chapters, the developments and disputes around the project of a multilateral European conference (in particular, the German and Berlin questions as well as Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions) and, secondly, the preparation and debates within the Western Bloc about the agenda and procedure for the CSCE. This chapter will consider thus second level of analysis. Before the West governments embarked upon a conference, they wanted to prepare a common position on procedural questions and six issues: the principles governing relations between states; economic, scientific, and technical cooperation; human environment; freer movement of peoples, ideas and information; MBFR; and possible machinery for future East-West-relations. However, to discuss in detail each item is not the purpose of this chapter.<sup>1</sup> Instead, in order to look at the dynamics of intra Western diplomacy, three essential themes that characterised the CSCE will be highlighted.

This chapter will begin by considering the first half of 1971 when differences of French and American policy orientation towards a European security conference became more apparent. While the Americans still strongly disapproved of the idea of a CSCE, the French had become a champion of it. Above all, the confrontation between the two countries was reflected in their different opinions about how to proceed towards and how to organise a conference. Therefore the first part of this chapter will explore the procedural problems concerning a CSCE. Indeed, such problems were

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<sup>1</sup> As regards discussions about these subjects, see for example: Robert Spencer, "Canada and the Origins of the CSCE," in Robert Spencer (ed.), Canada and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, University of Tront, 1984, pp. 64-72.

amongst the main issues that divided the Western bloc and prevented cooperation among EC countries during 1971.

One of the major reasons that the 1975 Helsinki Final Act of the CSCE was celebrated is that it contained a clause about human rights, a principle which had not previously been agreed in the context of East-West conflicts. Yet, such a clause was not a Western proposal from the outset. How and why did it come to the fore in discussions among NATO governments? The second part of this chapter will deal with this question by examining the Western debates about two significant agenda items – the principles governing relations between states and the item of freer movement of people, ideas and information.

The third important topic of this chapter is European Political Cooperation (EPC), which had been established in November 1970 by EC members as a consultation framework for coordinating foreign policies. It is also well-known that EPC played an active role in the preparatory talks for the CSCE and at the conference proper. Yet, EC cooperation did not work well from the beginning. Therefore, focusing again on the question of CSCE procedure, the final section of this chapter will analyse how EPC developed the basis of cooperation for a multilateral European conference.

### **Procedure for a Conference on European Security**

The most prominent dispute in NATO in 1971 was over procedure. Although the problem of how to organise the conference has been paid less attention so far, it was a very important issue. Firstly, the Western idea of procedure for the conference, which was initially proposed by France, was vital in making the CSCE meaningful and constructive. By contrast, the preferred Soviet idea of procedure – brief preparation and a short conference in which the principles of the renunciation of force and the inviolability of frontiers would

be agreed – would have restricted substantial discussion between East and West; it would have thus merely served to consolidate the status quo. Secondly, the procedural problem was a fundamental point in debates among Western governments, and is one of the most significant issues for understanding the pre-conference diplomacy in the Western Bloc. Without knowledge of this problem, it is difficult to understand, for example, how European Political Cooperation became a decisive player in multilateral European détente.

The principal axis of confrontation was between Paris and Washington. The French and the Americans advocated significantly different procedures for preparing for and conducting a Conference on European Security. On the one hand, the United States preferred long and intensive preparatory negotiations and a brief one-off conference at Foreign Minister level. In order to make the preparatory talks as long as possible, the US government proposed dividing the multilateral phase of preparation for a CSCE in two: the exploratory and preparatory phases. According to this American concept, the exploratory phase would be informal and would be used by officials to discuss the conference agenda. If the agenda and other technical problems were successfully agreed, then they would move on to the preparatory phase. This would see officials working on substantive issues, such as the text of a declaration on principles between states, to the point where Ministers would need to do little more than endorse at the Conference itself the work which had already been done.<sup>2</sup> The essence of this US idea was that *before* a ministerial level Conference could convene, detailed preparing work needed to have been done. The Americans insisted that such lengthy preparation would enable the NATO countries to maintain full control over the process. For Washington, according to a British document, it was important that “If it appeared at any point during the preparatory proceedings that the prospects of a conference achieving worthwhile results were minimal, it would be

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<sup>2</sup> TNA. FCO 41/884, US Delegation. Procedures, 6.4.1971.

possible to break off the process.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, the Americans wanted retain the possibility of putting a stop to multilateral European détente.

French procedural ideas were the total opposite of America’s. The French government wanted a short preparatory phase and a long three-stage conference. As discussed in chapter 3, Paris had become an enthusiastic supporter of the idea of a multilateral European conference. The French thus wanted to begin multilateral preparations for a conference as soon as possible after the conclusion of the FRG-GDR negotiation phase of the Berlin talks. At the same time, they did not want to deprive the conference itself of substantive role. France therefore preferred a relatively brief preparatory stage, in which heads of missions in Helsinki would merely arrange agenda items and procedural matters and would not discuss substantive matters. In addition, the *Quai d’Orsay* developed the concept of a single conference in three phases: first a Foreign Ministers’ meeting would take place, in which Ministers would express their ideas and opinions freely – a highly important point for the French because Paris wanted each government to behave independently of its bloc – and a number of working committees would be established. The second stage would be composed of intensive negotiations at the committee level, in which substantial agenda items would be discussed. And finally, the Ministers would meet again to approve the work of their officials.<sup>4</sup> Compared with the American proposal on procedure, the point of the French proposal was that the main negotiations of the Conference would be conducted *after* the first ministerial meeting. By this means, France sought a rapid opening of a constructive European conference.

The different procedural ideas emanating from France and the United States clearly reflected the two governments’ different attitude towards a CSCE and European détente in general. As already argued, the Americans disliked the idea of a European security conference and they were more

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<sup>3</sup> TNA. FCO 41/890, Procedure for a Conference on European Security: US Views, undated.

<sup>4</sup> TNA. FCO 41/891, Delegation de la France. Questions de Procédure concernant de la déroulement de la conférence sur la sécurité et la coopération en Europe, 21.10.1971.



suspicious of Moscow's motivation than other NATO countries. Therefore Washington wanted to leave room to break off the Conference should it go wrong. They thought that it would be easier to call it off during the exploratory/preparatory stages than at a ministerial meeting. A longer preliminary phase would thus be favourable for the Americans, allowing more time for the West to test Soviet sincerity. Moreover, exposing Soviet wickedness through longer exploratory/preparatory phases would serve to dampen any euphoria bought about by a CSCE and would be helpful in reducing Congressional pressure on the US government to withdraw troops from Europe unilaterally.<sup>5</sup> In the US view, such euphoria would also deprive the European members of NATO the incentive to strengthen their defence arrangements and shoulder more of the common defence burden.<sup>6</sup> In other words, this US thinking logically implied that some tensions in Europe were implicitly preferable for the Americans so as both to maintain US forces on the Continent and encourage the West Europeans to make more effort towards for their own defence. According to Washington, the French procedural idea would lead to an uncontrolled rush towards a Conference, and an unjustified wave of euphoria.<sup>7</sup> For this reason they did not want an early start for the conference.

Naturally, France strongly opposed the US policy. At NATO's Senior Political Committee meeting on 28 April 1971, the French delegate conveyed his government's clear opposition to any distinction between the exploratory and preparatory phases of preliminary discussions.<sup>8</sup> Paris complained that the US idea of lengthy exploratory/preparatory phases could produce interminable arguments, and make Western public opinion believe that the West was trying to avoid a Conference altogether. In the French view, the American concept of multilateral preparation could produce interminable

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<sup>5</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1069, a US document dated 14 March 1971 given to Brimelow by Galloway of the US Embassy.

<sup>6</sup> TNA. FCO 41/890, Procedure for a Conference on European Security: US Views, undated.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> TNA. FCO 41/885, Grattan to MacDonald, 29.4.1971.

argument on points of substance which could have the effect of indefinitely postponing the conference itself.<sup>9</sup> For the French, the American concept was too negative and “unrealistic”; by contrast, they thought that their idea of procedure was more pragmatic and publicly appealing.<sup>10</sup>

The row over procedure between America and France also divided the members of NATO. When the French concept on this subject emerged, the Danes and the Norwegians broadly supported the French approach.<sup>11</sup> In private, the British also sympathised with the French line.<sup>12</sup> They had ceased to oppose the idea of a CSCE and thought that once a East/West multilateral preparation for a Conference had started it would not be at all easy for the West to break off the exchanges.<sup>13</sup> London thus regarded the idea of a three-stage conference as sensible in general.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, when the British Secretary of State met the French ambassador in London on 22 June 1971, Douglas Home agreed with the French idea that the preparatory work for the conference should be brief. UK support was to be important for the eventual adoption of the French procedural proposals, and it would also help the establishment of an agreed European policy towards a CSCE. However, British Foreign Office officials preferred a longer preparatory phase because it would give more time to the FRG to conclude the inner-German negotiations before a multilateral conference began. In addition, they did not want to add fuel to the controversy in the Alliance. Moreover, they felt that it was unnecessary to make concrete NATO's position on procedure for the time being.<sup>15</sup> In consultations within the Atlantic Alliance, therefore, London did not give its clear support to the French idea of a three-stage conference. On the other hand, other NATO members could not accept a shorter preparation period. The Turks and the Greeks as well as the Dutch and the West

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<sup>9</sup> TNA. PREM 15/1522, Paris tel no. 1109 to FCO, 17.9.1971.

<sup>10</sup> TNA. FCO 41/885, SPC Report on East-West Negotiations, undated.

<sup>11</sup> TNA. FCO 41/893, Lever to Braithwaite, 5.11.1971.

<sup>12</sup> TNA. FCO 41/888, Bridge to Pemberton Pigott, 23.9.1971.

<sup>13</sup> TNA. FCO 41/890, Procedure for a Conference on European Security: US Views, undated.

<sup>14</sup> TNA. FCO 41/888, Bridges to Wiggin, 23.9.1971.

<sup>15</sup> TNA. FCO 41/891, FCO tel no. 366 to UKDEL NATO, 27.10.1971.

Germans in particular favoured the US idea of long and careful preliminary talks, and they insisted that all preparation must be thoroughly done before a conference at Ministerial level was convened. Opinions within the Atlantic Alliance were thus divided and it could not agree on procedural matters during 1971.

Of still more significance for the main argument of this chapter was that at first the French position was not supported by other EC members. The EC Six – France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg – had decided at the December 1969 Hague Summit to examine ways of establishing a new political consultation framework among Community member states. Indeed, at the Summit meeting, FRG Chancellor Brandt had identified the Warsaw Pact proposal of holding a security conference as an issue which the EC countries should discuss in the framework of any foreign policy coordination mechanism.<sup>16</sup> After intensive negotiations, the Six agreed in November 1970 to institutionalise their political consultations and chose the CSCE as one of the first tasks for them to tackle.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, EPC set up a working group on a CSCE on 1 March 1971.<sup>18</sup> The French government then chose the subject of procedure and produced a working report on the issue for the first discussion in the working group.<sup>19</sup> From the late 1960s, the *Quai d'Orsay* had not placed a high value on consultations within NATO.<sup>20</sup> Given their disagreement with the

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<sup>16</sup> Peter Becker, Die frühe KSZE-Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Der Außenpolitische Entscheidungsprozeß bis zur Unterzeichnung der Schlußakte von Helsinki, Lit, 1992, p.124.

<sup>17</sup> AAPD 1970, Dok. 564, Runderlaß des Ministerialdirektors von Staden, 23.11.1970; Simon Nuttall, European Political Co-operation, Oxford: OUP, 1992, p. 55.

<sup>18</sup> Hanns-Jürgen Küsters, "Die außenpolitische Zusammenarbeit der Neun und die KSZE," in Helga Haferndorn, u.a., (Hrsg.), Verwaltete Außenpolitik. Sicherheits- und entspannungspolitische Entscheidungsprozesse Bonn, Köln, 1978, p. 87; Götz Von Groll, 'The Nine at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe,' in David Allen, Reinhardt Rummel and Wolfgang Wessels (eds.), European Political Cooperation: Towards a Foreign Policy for Western Europe, Butterworth Scientific, 1982, p. 63.

<sup>19</sup> TNA. FCO 41/883, Palliser to Cable, 5.3.1971; MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2921, circulaire no. 119, 8.4.1971.

<sup>20</sup> When Mr. Andréani was nominated as the French deputy representative to NATO, the General Secretary of the French Foreign Ministry, Hervé Alphand, told him that "you go to

Americans on procedural issues, the French might have expected to obtain support from other EC governments. Yet, EPC did not produce the expected results during 1971 mainly because of German and Dutch reluctance to cooperate.

West Germany disliked the French procedural concept for different reasons from that of the US. As argued in the last chapter, the FRG leaders had attempted to maintain good relations with Pompidou, by agreeing with the French insistence that the resolution of the Berlin problem should be the only pre-condition for the opening of multilateral preparations for a CSCE. However, at the *Auswärtiges Amt* level, foreign officials were dissatisfied with ministers' concessions to France, because it implied that a conference might be held earlier – as indeed the French wanted. The inner-German negotiations were still on the table. The FRG Foreign Ministry was of the strong opinion that, before a European security conference, in which East Germany would inevitably participate, took place, the problem of the relationship between the two Germanies had to be resolved. Therefore, Bonn preferred America's longer preparatory phase concept to the rival French idea. Prolonged and comprehensive preparation was in West Germany's interests since it would delay the opening of the conference itself.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, FRG officials were also afraid of French dominance in EPC. They thought that Paris wanted to strengthen the French position within the European consultation machine; therefore Bonn thought that it should take care not to offend America and to act as a spokesman of American opinions within EPC.<sup>22</sup> Although, as will be discussed below, Bonn's attitude towards Paris would gradually change, West Germany had more than enough reasons not to be cooperative at the outset of EPC consultations.

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NATO, namely, you will have a complete vacation for three years, because there is nothing to do there." Garret Martin's interview with Jacques Andréani, 15 February 2006.

<sup>21</sup> PAAA, B-40, Bd. 187, Aufzeichnung. Betr.: KSE; hier: Verfahrensfragen, 4.10.1971; TNA. FCO 41/888, Palliser to Simpson-Orlebar, 24.9.1971.

<sup>22</sup> PAAA, B-40, Bd. 189, Sachstand. Thema: KSE - französische und deutsche Haltung; Koordination durch die Sechs, 16.2.1971; MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2921, Paris tel nos. 190-193 à Repan-Bruxelles, 8.4.1971; AAPD 1971, Dok. 128, Anm. 3, p. 612.

The Netherlands was also highly uncooperative among EC members. The Dutch had for a long time been a determined rival of the French within the European Community.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, it had been The Hague that had frustrated de Gaulle's European Political Union project, the so-called Fouchet Plan in the early 1960s.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the Dutch government had been highly negative about the idea of political cooperation as soon as it had been raised again by the Germans in 1969.<sup>25</sup> Within EPC, the Dutch thus argued forcefully that the main discussions about the preparation for and handling of a European security conference should take place in NATO, thereby effectively blocked any agreement in EPC.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore the Dutch delegation in NATO was instructed by The Hague to isolate France in NATO's Senior Political Committee discussions.<sup>27</sup> The Dutch thus opposed France's procedural ideas and ardently supported America's long preparation approach. The Italian, Belgian and Luxembourg Foreign Ministers also hesitated, initially at least, to accept the French idea that preparations for a CSCE should confine themselves to a quick agreement on the agenda.<sup>28</sup> In the end, throughout 1971, the procedural problem and FRG and Dutch attitudes prevented EPC from speaking with "one voice" on the subject of the CSCE.<sup>29</sup> As a result of the division of opinions in EPC, an Italian diplomat commented that, "the discussions in the Political Committee of the Six had

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<sup>23</sup> N. Piers Ludlow, The European Community and the Crises of the 1960s: Negotiating the Gaullist Challenge, London: Routledge, 2006, pp. 64-5, 158-160.

<sup>24</sup> Jeffrey W. Vanke, "An Impossible Union: Dutch Objections to the Fouchet Plan, 1959-62". Cold War History, 2/1 (2001).

<sup>25</sup> Anjo Harryvan and Jan van der Harst, "Swan Song or Cock Crow? The Netherlands and the Hague Conference of December 1969". Journal of European Integration History, 9/2 (2003).

<sup>26</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2921, circulaire no. 119, 8.4.1971; TNA. FCO 41/888, Palliser to Simpson-Orlebar, 24.9.1971.

<sup>27</sup> TNA. FCO 41/885, Grattan to MacDonald, 29.4.1971.

<sup>28</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 3791, NOTE. a.s. Discussion relative à la Conférence européenne sur la sécurité et la coopération en Europe au cours de la réunion des ministres des affaires étrangères des Six, 12.5.1971.

<sup>29</sup> TNA. FCO 41/888, Palliser to Simpson-Orlebar, 24.9.1971; MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2922, Note. a.s. Rapport du Comité politique sur la CSCE, 30.10.1971; AAPD 1971, Dok. 409, Aufzeichnung des Ministerial direktors von Staden, 22.11.1971.

been [of] very little use.”<sup>30</sup>

## **The Principles Governing Relations between States**

The second important consideration of this chapter is the emergence of human rights as a major subject for discussion within a CSCE. It has been regarded as the most important aspect of the CSCE that the principle of human rights, along with the issue of freer movement of people, ideas and information (the so-called Basket Three), were incorporated in the final result of the conference, and these two have often been dealt with together.<sup>31</sup> After all, it would appear likely that the principle of human rights and the freer movement item were closely related. However, the origins of the two were different. The origins of the freer movement issue have already been discussed in chapter 2. This chapter thus explores how the principle of human rights emerged in the context of a European security conference. Indeed, as a British document reveals, it was West Germany that first proposed the inclusion of human rights as one of the principles governing relations between states which would be agreed at a CSCE.<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, as will be argued below, the FRG government was also highly cautious about pushing the freer movement question intensively at a conference on European security. The focal point is thus why Bonn advocated the principle of human rights, despite its reluctance on the subject of freer movement. In order to understand this question, this section will illustrate first that the Brezhnev Doctrine rather than human rights was the central issue in the discussions in NATO about the principles governing relations between states. Initially, human rights were not necessarily regarded by the West as a

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<sup>30</sup> TNA. FCO 41/888, Rhodes to Braithwaite, 24.9.1971.

<sup>31</sup> For example, Daniel C. Thomas, The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.

<sup>32</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1043, Lever to Ramsay, 21.4.1972.

principle governing relations between states. This section will then consider the Western debates about freer movement of people, ideas and information. Disputes about this subject amongst NATO governments generated the human rights clause.

When the Warsaw Pact had called for an all-European Conference in 1969, it had proposed to discuss renunciation-of-force agreements together with economic and technological cooperation. According to an analysis in NATO, there were two basic Soviet objectives behind this: firstly, the Western recognition of present frontiers, particularly those of the GDR and of the territory acquired by the USSR as a consequence of the second world war; secondly, the Western acceptance of the political *status quo* in Central and Eastern Europe – an implicit acknowledgement of the Soviet sphere of control over Warsaw Pact countries. The West therefore strongly suspected that the Soviets would use a conference to obtain a tacit acknowledgement of the Brezhnev Doctrine, a recognition of their right and obligation to intervene in a socialist country in order to restore the regime of socialism.<sup>33</sup> In order to avoid falling into this Soviet trap, the West had to use a European security conference to challenge this concept of limited sovereignty.

NATO countries thus wanted to criticise the doctrine and make its application more difficult. NATO's counter-proposal published in the final communiqué of the May 1970 NATO Council in which it was suggested that a conference should discuss "the principles which should govern relations between States", was a way to avoid recognising the status quo in terms of the Brezhnev Doctrine. By flanking the renunciation of the use of force with principles such as "sovereign equality" and "non-interference and non-intervention in the internal affairs of any state," the West tried to demonstrate its opposition to the doctrine.<sup>34</sup> For instance, the principle of sovereign equality implied that the USSR had no right of intervention in the

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<sup>33</sup> TNA. FCO 41/884, Helman to Newton, 31.3.1971.

<sup>34</sup> James E. Goodby, Europe Undivided: The New Logic of Peace in U.S.-Russian Relations, Washington, D.C., 1998, p. 54.

domestic affairs of other Warsaw Pact countries – thus contradicting the Brezhnev Doctrine. In addition, the West insisted that it was not only these principles which should be emphasised, but their application; as a result, it was important that such principles should be applied to any state, *regardless of its political or social system*.<sup>35</sup> The NATO governments, however, thought that the Soviets would never renounce the Doctrine, even if they publicly admitted the principles of state sovereignty and non-use-of-force.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, a British paper on the Brezhnev Doctrine warned against giving Western public opinion “the impression that the Alliance expected to be able to use a Conference to kill the doctrine,” because it would “cause subsequent disappointment, as well as criticism of NATO’s handling of the doctrine at the conference.”<sup>37</sup> While it was politically difficult for the West to recognise the status quo and the Brezhnev Doctrine, Western governments also realised that there was no way quickly to change the status quo and prevent the application of the Doctrine.

NATO’s position towards the Brezhnev Doctrine was also weakened by another factor. Some NATO members suggested that the West should seek a treaty-like agreement in a CSCE, because a treaty would be more legally binding than a mere declaration; this would therefore be more embarrassing for the Russians in relation to the Brezhnev doctrine. The Americans firmly opposed such a course, however, because a treaty would need ratification in Congress, which might have demanded unilateral reductions of US troops in Europe as a condition for the ratification of a treaty signed by governments in a CSCE.<sup>38</sup> West Germany also disliked the idea that a conference should culminate in to a treaty. One of the most significant points for the FRG concerning a European security conference was that such a conference

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<sup>35</sup> DBPO, III, I, doc. 62, The Brezhnev Doctrine and a European Security Conference, [16].3.1971.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.; TNA. FCO 41/884, the US paper entitled “principles governing relations between states,” 31.3.1971.

<sup>37</sup> DBPO, III, I, doc. 62, The Brezhnev Doctrine and a European Security Conference, [16].3.1971, p. 320.

<sup>38</sup> TNA. FCO 41/884, Grattan to Braithwaite, 25.3.1971.



should not be a kind of a peace conference.<sup>39</sup> Bonn had insisted that the final boundaries of Germany were to be confirmed by a peace treaty. It was therefore important that a multilateral European conference including East Germany must not conclude with any treaty recognising the GDR and the borders between two Germanies since this might be deemed to constitute a peace treaty. Britain and other countries also thought that a treaty was premature at this stage of East/West relations.<sup>40</sup> As a result, NATO agreed to make a draft declaration on principles, not a treaty. But by so doing and by rejecting a treaty, Western governments were unilaterally giving up a way of putting the Soviet Union under stronger legal constraints.

The contents of any draft declaration were also controversial. In the drafting process which began in the latter half of 1971, it became clear that there was a basic divergence in the Western bloc about the question of which principles should be included in a declaration. This agenda item was a way to regulate politically European international relations and create a stable system in the European theatre. The disputes in NATO on this subject sharply reflected the divergent opinions of how much the West could promote détente in Europe. On the one hand, the Americans, who did not want euphoria in Europe, insisted that a declaration should restrict itself simply to contradicting the Brezhnev doctrine, thus concentrating on the principles of the equality of sovereign states and non-intervention. This US approach was supported by and large by the West Germans. On the other hand, the Scandinavians, backed by the Italians and the Belgians, emphasised that the declaration should include reference to other principles, such as cooperation or disarmament, in order to make the tone of a declaration milder and not to be too provocative towards the Soviets.<sup>41</sup> NATO governments thus failed to

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<sup>39</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 366, Runderlaß des Staatssekretärs Frank, 25.10.1971.

<sup>40</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 386, Aufzeichnung des Vortragenden Legationsrats Dahlhoff, 8.11.1971; TNA. FCO 41/889, Ramsay to Pembaerton-Pigott, 15.10.1971.

<sup>41</sup> TNA. FCO 41/893, UK Delegation to NATO, Conference on European Security and Co-operation: Negotiating Approaches," 17.11.1971; MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2923, De Rose to Schumann. A/s: Principes régissant les relations entre États,

agree on the text of a draft declaration and the controversy about the content of a declaration would not be settled until the multilateral preparatory talks for the CSCE had begun.

However, the most important point here is that as late as October 1971, the term 'human rights' did not feature at all in discussions within NATO about the principles governing state relations. It was only in early November 1971 that the West Germans for the first time proposed "human rights and fundamental freedoms should be universally respected by states," as one of the principles.<sup>42</sup> In order to explain the reason for Bonn's initiative, it is necessary to examine the debates about the freer movement issue.

### **Human Rights and the Freer Movement of People, Information and Ideas**

Another agenda item the Warsaw Pact had proposed in October 1969 had been economic, technical and scientific cooperation. NATO had again made a counter-proposal, insisting that the Eastern proposal should be extended to cultural exchanges including freer movement of people, ideas, and information. Since then, the freer movement of people, ideas, and information had become the most important Western proposal. Indeed, when intensive study on freer movement of people, ideas and information started in March 1971 and the French and the Americans contributed substantial papers on this topic, these contributions were largely complementary.<sup>43</sup> No NATO governments opposed this agenda item, and at first there was seemingly no significant controversy in consultations within NATO about

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<sup>42</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1065, German Delegation. Draft Declaration on Principles Governing Relations between States, 5.11.1971.

<sup>43</sup> These French and American papers are held in TNA. FCO 41/896. The NATO document which was produced by the amalgamation of these papers was destroyed and has not survived in the UK National Archive (PRO).

this subject.

However, the Western governments' potentially divergent attitude towards a conference on European security also surfaced over this subject. While all NATO governments agreed on the importance of this topic in a CSCE, they had different opinions about how far they should go in demanding concessions from the East. The West well understood that the Warsaw Pact would be highly reluctant to make concessions in these fields, where the West had much to gain. The American and Dutch representatives in Brussels therefore stressed that their authorities regarded the freedom of exchanges a strong Western card and therefore quite a significant subject.<sup>44</sup> In particular, the US government, which wanted to make a maximalist claim, suggested prioritising the most difficult items for the East, such as jamming foreign broadcasts or travel restrictions.<sup>45</sup>

West Germany, however, preferred a progressive approach. While accepting the importance of the freer movement agenda, the FRG regarded its completion as a long-term goal. For Bonn, "an intensification of an exchange of people can only be obtained step by step."<sup>46</sup> This did not mean that the West Germans undervalued this subject. On the contrary, it was highly significant for them because of their *Ostpolitik* and *Deutschlandpolitik*. They thought, however, that human contacts between the FRG and the GDR had to be improved steadily even if progress was slow and gradual. Maximum demands on freer movement would encounter strong opposition from Moscow; this in turn might raise the possibility of the whole agenda item of freer movement being dropped or of the whole CSCE ending up in failure. By contrast, the FRG Foreign Ministry thought that "agreements in the [CSCE] framework can have favourable repercussions on the implementation of human improvements in Germany."<sup>47</sup> Moreover,

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<sup>44</sup> TNA. FCO 41/896, Pöter to MacDonald, 8.4.1971.

<sup>45</sup> TNA. FCO 41/896, Pöter to Braithwaite, 11.8.1971.

<sup>46</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok.313, Ministerialdirigent Diesel an die Ständige Vertretung bei der NATO in Brüssel, 17.9.1971.

<sup>47</sup> Petri Hakkarainen, "From Linkage to Freer Movement: The Federal Republic of Germany

piecemeal progress on human contacts between the two Germanies was also domestically significant for the Bonn government so as to counter opponents of *Ostpolitik*.<sup>48</sup> Brandt and Scheel had to demonstrate that their Eastern policy was leading to some real improvements, especially in the ease of movement between the two Germanies. Hence, the West Germans badly needed to avoid a radical approach.

The French, supported by the Canadians, also took a similar line. The French representative in NATO suggested that the items of freer movement of people, ideas and information should be divided into two categories, primary and secondary, and insisted that "we [the West] should seek to create a favourable climate for the CES by first raising those items which were unlikely to cause difficulty to the other side."<sup>49</sup>

However, West German and French attitudes were strongly opposed by the US and Britain. In particular the Germans clashed forcefully with the Americans. The US State Department viewed Bonn's approach of postponing difficult subjects to a later stage as a serious tactical error, which could jeopardize allied positions.<sup>50</sup> The British also felt that they should not throw away their strongest cards and that the question of whether or not a demand would be acceptable to the East was not the reason for avoiding the issue.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, the UK Foreign Office had calculated that "Obviously the West is in a fairly commanding position here and has little to lose by playing as hard as it can for considerable concessions from the East."<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, Prime Minister Heath had become a keen supporter of the freer movement agenda, arguing that "it would be possible to put the Russians on the defensive such as freedom of information and freedom of movement in the interests of better

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and the Nexus between Western CSCE Preparations and Deutschlandpolitik, 1969-72," in Andreas Wenger, Vojtech Mastny, Christian Nünlist (eds.), At the Roots of European Security: The Early Helsinki Process Revisited, 1969-1975 (forthcoming, 2007).

<sup>48</sup> TNA. FCO 28/1678, Luxembourg tel no. 86 to FCO, 29.2.1972.

<sup>49</sup> TNA. FCO 41/897, UKDEL NATO Tel no. 457 to FCO, 30.9.1971.

<sup>50</sup> Goodby, Europe Undivided, p. 58; Hakkarainen, "From Linkage to Freer Movement."

<sup>51</sup> TNA. FCO 41/897, Ramsay to Porter, 24.9.1971.

<sup>52</sup> TNA. FCO 41/896, Ramsay to Porter, 2.9.1971.

European relations.”<sup>53</sup> It was in this situation that the Brandt government brought up the principle of human rights.

Why did the West Germans insist on human rights as a principle at this stage? The answer is that, for them, the human rights principle was an alternative to the issue of freer movement. A FRG paper on freer movement of people, ideas and information clearly stated that:

Independently of this concrete inclusion in the various fields of substance, a basic statement reflecting the outstanding importance of the principle of freer movement should be included in an East-West declaration of principle in which freedom of movement is presented as a practical example of the realization of the generally recognized human rights and basic freedom of the individual.<sup>54</sup>

Bonn thought that the spirit of freer movement should be attained through a general principle of human rights and basic freedom of the individual, instead of through a concentration of the more concrete and provocative field of freer movement. In other words, West Germany considered that the human rights principle which was couched in general terms would be less provocative and hence more acceptable to the East than the detailed contents of the freer movement agenda item. The principle would also serve as an agreed long-term goal of freer movement. Thus, by proposing human rights as an alternative, the Bonn government attempted to persuade Washington and London to retreat from their radical position on freer movement. This was the origin of the human rights clause in the declaration of principles governing relations between states. In cold war history, the emergence of the human rights norm in the Helsinki Final Act of the CSCE was an innovative incident. It was to encourage dissidents as well as

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<sup>53</sup> TNA. PREM 15/1522, Moon to McCluney, 27.8.1971.

<sup>54</sup> TNA. FCO 28/1679, German Delegation. Conference on security and cooperation in Europe - freer movement of people, ideas and information, 7.4.1972; Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Bundeskanzleramt files, B136/6419, Konferenz für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa. Grössere Freizügigkeit für Menschen, Ideen und Informationen, 17.5.1972.

ordinary people in the Warsaw Pact countries. However, the process giving birth to the principle of human rights indicated that it was not necessarily expected to affect East-West relations immediately. West Germany's major aim was to moderate the Western attitude on freer movement, in order to maintain the enduring success of its *Ostpolitik* and *Deutschlandpolitik*.

On the freer movement subject, Paris and Bonn built up an effective partnership. During the first half of 1972, West Germany's insistence on the inclusion of the principle of human rights and basic freedom of the individual in a declaration was accepted by NATO governments in general, albeit without great enthusiasm particularly on the part of the French.<sup>55</sup> However, the controversy within the Alliance over freer movement continued throughout 1972. Yet, the debates were essentially reduced to a dispute over the title of the agenda item; the US, the UK and the Netherlands thus clung to the phrase "freer movement of people, ideas and information," whereas the FRG suggested a softer formula such as "improvement in communication."<sup>56</sup> Paris also supported Bonn by proposing another milder heading – "development of contacts among people and the diffusion of information," – although the *Quai d'Orsay* explained that it wanted to change the title only out of tactical considerations, without modifying the contents of any agreement on freer movement.<sup>57</sup> Yet, the French privately thought that they should content themselves with underlining their interests in cultural exchange and human contacts, and they should not entertain exaggerated hopes from the agenda item of freer movement.<sup>58</sup> These French attitudes were closer to that of the FRG. They were undoubtedly helpful for the gradual development of Franco-German cooperation in European Political Cooperation. In order for EPC fully to play an important role in the

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<sup>55</sup> TNA, FCO 41/1043, Lever to Ramsay, 21.4.1972.

<sup>56</sup> PAAA, Zwischenarchiv 109304, Sondersprechzettel. Thema: Freer movement of people, ideas and information, 29.5.1972; Hakkarainen, "From Linkage to Freer Movement."

<sup>57</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2923, Paris tel nos. 418-22 to London, 9.3.1972.

<sup>58</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2923, NOTE. A.s. - CSCE elements de discussion, 17.2.1972; Ibid, Alphand to Bruxelles (OTAN), 10.4.1972.

Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, however, the different opinions between Bonn and Paris over the procedural problem had to be settled.

### **Towards Unity in European Political Cooperation**

It has been widely believed that the EC countries played a significant role in the preparations for the CSCE and in the Conference itself, through their consultation framework of foreign policy, European Political Cooperation.<sup>59</sup> However, as argued above, EPC did not work effectively during 1971. Therefore it is important to examine how the members of the Common Market developed their cooperation concerning the CSCE. The breakthrough was a rapprochement between France and West Germany on the procedural problem. After the signing of the Quadripartite Berlin Agreement of 3 September 1971, the possibility of the convening of a European security conference significantly increased. Both West German and French governments needed each other to realise their own policies. Paris wanted Bonn's support over procedural matters. Bonn wanted Paris's backing about the problem of freer movement. Therefore, both sides gradually exchanged concessions after the Berlin Agreement.

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<sup>59</sup> For instance, Schwerin, von Otto Graf, "Die Solidarität der EG-Staaten in der KSZE," Europa-Archiv 15 (1975); Hanns-Jürgen Küsters, "Die außenpolitische Zusammenarbeit der Neun und die KSZE," in Helga Haferndorn, u.a., (Hrsg.), Verwaltete Außenpolitik. Sicherheits- und entspannungspolitische Entscheidungsprozesse, Bonn, Köln, 1978; Philippe de Schoutheete, "La Conference sur la Securite et la Cooperation en Europe," in Philippe de Schoutheete, La coopération politique européenne, Bruxelles: Editions Labor, 1980; Götz von Groll, 'The Nine at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe,' in David Allen, Reinhardt Rummel and Wolfgang Wessels (eds.), European Political Cooperation: Towards a Foreign Policy for Western Europe, Butterworth Scientific, 1982; Alfred Pijpers, "European Political Cooperation and the CSCE process," Legal Issues of European Integration, Vol.1, 1984. A. Bredimas, 'La Coopération Politique Européenne à la Conférences sur la Sécurité et la Coopération en Europe et aux Conférence sur le Règlement Pacifique des Differends,' in C. Stephanou (ed.), La Communauté Européenne et ses états membres dans les enceintes internationales, Athens: Triantafielis, 1985; Clarke, Michael, "Britain and European Political Cooperation in the CSCE," in Kenneth Dyson (ed.), European Détente: Case Studies of the Politics of East-West Relations, F. Pinter, 1986.

The initial step was for the West German government to show the first sign of change in its policy on the procedure for a CSCE. As described above, the FRG's opinion on freer movement had been strongly opposed by the US and Britain. In order to strengthen their position, therefore, the West Germans sought the backing of fellow EC members and in particular of the French, who had indicated that the opinion of Paris on freer movement was closer to that of Bonn. In order to restore Franco-German cooperation in EPC, however, they had to narrow the difference of opinion between the two governments over the procedural problem. Indeed, in September 1971, the Germans hinted to the *Quai d'Orsay* that they had begun to consider France's concept of a three-stage conference. However, they also stressed that Bonn preferred that a preparatory phase should continue for several months.<sup>60</sup> It was still difficult for the Germans to accept the French idea of a shorter preparation phase, because the German-German talks were still on-going.

The Brandt government then attempted to persuade France and other EPC members, albeit unsuccessfully, with a new initiative. This began with an idea aired by the Chancellor. When Brandt met Brezhnev in Oreanda in September 1971, the FRG leader suggested the holding of a pre-conference (*Vorkonferenz*) before a CSCE met at Ministerial level.<sup>61</sup> The German Foreign Ministry seized upon Brandt's idea and used it to advance reconciliation between Bonn and Paris (and Washington) over the procedural question. The idea of the *Auswärtiges Amt* was that, firstly, multilateral exploratory talks at Ambassadorial level would be held in Helsinki; then a pre-conference at a State Secretary or vice Foreign Minister level would take

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<sup>60</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2922, circulaire no. 344, 23.9.1971.

<sup>61</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 311, Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Brandt mit dem Generalsekretär des ZK der KPdSU, Breschnew, in Oreanda, 17.9.1971. The exchanges of opinion between Brandt and Brezhnev about the idea of *Vorkonferenz* did not advance. Brandt thought that pre-conference and preparatory talks for a CSCE were different forums, but Brezhnev, accepting the idea, tried to give a twist to it, interpreting a *Vorkonferenz* as the preparatory phase. Therefore the Chancellor stopped discussing it further and changed the topic of their conversation.



place; and finally a European security conference at a Ministerial level would be convened.<sup>62</sup> This new concept respected Bonn's interests and was close to Washington's idea, because, in essence, it suggested a longer explanatory/preparatory phase. However, the West Germans explained to the French that by upgrading Ambassadorial meetings to deputy Foreign Minister level at a certain point during the preparatory phase, it would be able to give the impression that the preparatory talks were developing.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, they tried to sell their idea at the 7 October 1971 meeting of EPC's working group for a CSCE, arguing that the *Vorkonferenz* concept conformed to the French three-stage approach.<sup>64</sup> In the end, Bonn's new initiative was rejected by Paris and other EC governments in late 1971 because they considered that a pre-conference would not be needed for a CSCE.<sup>65</sup> The efforts made by West Germany to advance cooperation with France, however, did not come to nothing, because the French side also tried to meet the Germans half-way.

France also invented a new idea for obtaining support from its EPC partners. It had been clear that EC members and in particular West Germany opposed the French opinion that a preparatory phase for a CSCE should be brief. The French realised that they had to modify this point if they were to secure other aspects of their procedural ideas. By autumn 1971, they had thus begun to retreat from their original position that a preparatory phase should decide only agenda items and should not touch on the substance of them. At the Franco-German study group meeting on 1 October 1971, Jean-Daniel Jurgensen, the Deputy Director of Political Affairs at the *Quai d'Orsay*, indicated to the Germans that multilateral preparatory talks would tackle the contents of a conference to some extent, but he also

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<sup>62</sup> PAAA, B-40, Bd. 187, Aufzeichnung. Betr.: KSE; hier: Verfahrensfragen, 4.10.1971.

<sup>63</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2922, Paris tel nos. 1317/1320 to Bonn, 5.10.1971.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., Paris tel nos. 1342-45 to Bonn, 11.10.1971.

<sup>65</sup> PAAA, B-40, Bd. 193, Aufzeichnung. Betr.: Sitzung des Unterausschusses KSE des Politisches Komitees der Sechs in Brussel, 15.12.1971.

emphasised that such talks should not be so thorough as to create a situation in which Foreign Ministers would only sign a completed text at the conference itself.<sup>66</sup>

Of still more significance was a new French proposal made first at the CSCE sub-committee meeting of EPC on 10/11 December 1971, that a mandate for the committees – political and security, cultural, and economic committees – to be set up by the Conference should be drawn up during the preparatory work, and they would be endorsed by the Foreign Ministers at the first multilateral Ministerial conference.<sup>67</sup> This French idea meant that a preparatory phase would be very substantial but the three-stage conference that followed would also be important. In fact, it was to serve to fix the direction of negotiations in a CSCE in a favourable manner for the West. Drafting terms of reference for a conference also meant that the period of preparation would be longer than in the original French approach. Therefore, by January 1972, West Germany dropped their *Vorkonferenz* idea, and accepted the French idea of a three-stage conference.<sup>68</sup> Consenting to begin multilateral preparations for a CSCE in line with the French concept, the FRG thought to link the preparatory phase with the FRG-GDR negotiations; if East Berlin stonewalled in bilateral negotiations, Bonn would not finish a mandate-drafting process in preparatory talks until the inner-German negotiations were settled.<sup>69</sup> Italy, Belgium and Luxembourg also supported France, and the French procedural concept for a CSCE prevailed in EPC. Thanks to the settlement of the procedural question, French and West German positions on a European security conference converged except on the problem of relations between MBFR and a CSCE.

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<sup>66</sup> PAAA, B-40, Bd. 190, Vermerk. Betr.: Sitzung der deutsch-französischen Studiengruppe in Bonn am 1. Oktober 1971, hier: Behandlung des Themas KSE, 4.10.1971.

<sup>67</sup> PAAA, B-40, Bd. 193, Aufzeichnung. Betr.: Sitzung des Unterausschusses KSE des Politisches Komitees der Sechs in Brüssel, 15.12.1971.

<sup>68</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2923, NOTE. A/S: Évolution récente conversations sur la Conférence sur la sécurité et la coopération en Europe, 26.1.1972; TNA. FCO 41/1052, Bonn tel no. 170 to FCO, 9.2.1972.

<sup>69</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1041, Bonn tel no. 392 to FCO, 17.3.1972.

This Franco-German rapprochement was to serve as a basis for the development of cooperation amongst the West European group.

In particular, Bonn's acceptance of the French idea of a three-stage procedure was crucially significant, not only for Franco-German cooperation, but also for cooperation among EC partners. As argued above, within NATO, the controversy on the procedural question between France and the United States was acute; thus, studies on the CSCE within the Atlantic Alliance could not sufficiently deal with the contents of a preparatory phase. The large gap between opinions on procedures stymied NATO's attempts to make concrete and detailed preparations for the pre-conference stage. EPC was different. While the Dutch still supported the American line, the majority within the political consultation machinery agreed with the French approach.<sup>70</sup> This made it possible for them to discuss a CSCE on the basis of the 3-stage procedure by adopting it as a "working hypothesis."<sup>71</sup> Based on the "working hypothesis", the members of the European Community could practically develop their studies on the Multilateral Preparatory Talks (MPT). The most significant point is that, thanks to the well-prepared EPC work on procedures, the European political consultation group was able to take an initiative in the MPT. And the success of it was to encourage EPC members to advance further cooperation during the CSCE negotiations. In this sense, procedural matters were highly important for understanding the development of European Political Cooperation.

Of additional importance were three factors which made cooperation in EPC easier than in NATO. Firstly, meetings in EPC were conducted, not by permanent representatives as in the Atlantic Alliance, but by delegations from each capital. These were not bound by rigid instructions, and thus were able to discuss problems freely and in a spirit of give and take.<sup>72</sup> A second factor was that EPC was a fairly homogeneous group of opinions, because

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<sup>70</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1052, Braithwaite to Brimelow, 10.2.1972.

<sup>71</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1065, Staples to Braithwaite, 19.7.1972.

<sup>72</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1052, Braithwaite to Tickell, 1.3.1972.

there were no extreme views to the right or left, such as those of the Americans and the Scandinavians.<sup>73</sup> Progress was thus much easier to achieve. Finally, not only West Germany, but also other member countries still viewed EPC in a positive light. As a Dutch official observed in January 1972, "although this process of political consultation wasted a lot of time and had not yet produced concrete results, there was a general feeling in the member countries that it was the fore-runner of a closer relationship, which might really involve effective coordination, and that this made it worth while."<sup>74</sup> These factors made it possible for the political consultation committees to work in a businesslike way, thereby accumulating encouraging results.

The only uncooperative country among the EPC members was the Netherlands. The Dutch were still opposed to the French idea of a 3-stage procedure of the CSCE and were determined to be a faithful supporter of the American view of procedure during the first half of 1972. However, by late autumn that year, Amsterdam accepted the French approach and became more cooperative in the political consultations framework. There were four reasons which explain the change of the Dutch attitude. First and foremost, the Netherlands' taking over the Presidency of the Council of the EC was important. It meant that the Dutch automatically became the chair-country of EPC meetings. Undoubtedly, this role required them to adopt a more conciliatory position so as to be able to coordinate different opinions. Therefore Amsterdam could not continue to be as rigid about one of the key factors for cooperation in EPC: the procedural problem.

The second reason for the Netherlands' change of position was the British participation in EPC discussions. One of the major excuses for the uncooperative attitude adopted by the Dutch in EPC during 1971 had been the absence of the British. They had defended their attitude, arguing that

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1052, Faber to Mason, 7.1.1972.

political consultations were quite useless if the British were not included.<sup>75</sup> Yet, after the negotiations for the UK's entry into the EC were successfully concluded, Britain was permitted to join EPC talks from February 1972. The Dutch thus lost one of the best justifications for their uncooperative attitude. Moreover, as argued before, British policies toward a CSCE were in general closer to the French ones. Indeed, in September 1972, the UK government made it publicly clear that it officially accepted France's three-stage-conference procedure.<sup>76</sup> London's participation in the EC's political consultations therefore increased the extent of Amsterdam's isolation. As the Chair of EPC discussions, it would be difficult for the Netherlands to maintain its isolated stance.

Thirdly, the modification of America's attitude towards a CSCE may also have been a factor in the Netherlands' change of attitude. Another concern for the Dutch was the probability of the widening gap between the EPC group and NATO. When the EPC Foreign Ministers met in Luxemburg on 27 May 1972, for example, Dutch Foreign Minister Norbert Schmelzer energetically stressed his preoccupation with the relationship between EPC and NATO.<sup>77</sup> In order to prevent a situation in which the Europeans found themselves lined up against the Americans, Amsterdam had made efforts to speak for Washington in EPC meetings. By the summer of 1972, however, the US government was inclined to take a more reconciliatory approach to the Europeans over the CSCE. By then, the White House had concluded that the results of a CSCE could be predicted and that they were not likely to be important. For instance, one memorandum written by Kissinger's staff argued that a declaration of principles would be an amalgam of platitudes; some minimal restraints might be adopted on military movement; the agenda item of freer movement would be hailed as an important beginning,

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<sup>75</sup> TNA. FCO 41/888, Rhodes to Braithwaite, 24.9.1971.

<sup>76</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2922, circulaire no. 400, 9.9.1972.

<sup>77</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1053, EEC Political Consultations/Ten Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Luxembourg, 27 May 1972, undated.

but nothing much would change, because the East would parry with a general promise.<sup>78</sup> The key aspects of European security, such as SALT, MBFR and German-German negotiations, were and would continue to be handled independently of a European security conference. In particular, as will be explored further in the next chapter, the United States was able successfully to separate MBFR from a CSCE during 1972; thus, for Washington, a multilateral European conference had been reduced at most to “a symbolic act, more important for its psychological atmospherics than its content.” The memorandum then recommended that:

The main issue for the United States, therefore, is one of alliance management rather than East-West bargaining or debating:

-- we must come out of this exercise with a minimum of illusions and a maximum of allied unity.

-- this means being willing to defer to a European consensus in NATO.<sup>79</sup>

Once the Americans began to move towards the French line on the procedure of a European Security Conference, Dutch intransigence on this matter in the EPC meetings would have significantly lost its meaning. It is still not clear how much the Dutch government noticed the gradual modification of the US position towards Western Europe over the CSCE. However, the trend was clearly shifting towards France's approach which had gained the support of the majority. In such a situation the Dutch found themselves pushed back towards the mainstream of EC members.

Finally, a personal factor also made it easy for the Netherlands to be constructive about European cooperation. The former Dutch Foreign Minister, Joseph Luns, was a famous hardliner towards the Soviet bloc. However, new Foreign Minister Schmelzer, who had succeeded Luns in July 1971, was more sympathetic to détente and political cooperation in Europe

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<sup>78</sup> CD-ROM *The Rise of Détente*, Memorandum for Kissinger from Sonnenfeldt. Subject: (CSCE) Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 25.8.1972.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

than his predecessor.<sup>80</sup> Although compared with other Alliance partners, the Netherlands was still a hardliner and the transition from Luns to Schmelzer did not bring about immediate noticeable policy changes, the Dutch Foreign Ministry under Schmelzer was able to adjust relatively smoothly to majority opinions and was able to be more cooperative and flexible than hitherto.

The Dutch concession on the procedural problem finally paved the way for EPC's common approach to the Multilateral Preparatory Talks for a CSCE. At the political consultation meeting of the sub-committee on the CSCE on 5/6 October 1972, the Netherlands at last agreed to the French formula of a three-stage procedure, on condition that the final decision on this question was made in NATO.<sup>81</sup> There still remained some controversial points such as the extent to which the substance of agenda items should be discussed in the Multilateral Preparatory Talks, and the "freer movement" agenda.<sup>82</sup> However, thanks to the Netherlands' concession, the EPC members reached a significant agreement which would make it possible for the political consultation group to push ahead with its preparations and play a leading role in the MPT. And, finally, EPC Foreign Ministers approved two basic documents prepared by the CSCE sub-committee and the ad hoc Group for a CSCE during their meeting in The Hague on 20/21 November 1972.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Jan van der Harst, "The Netherlands, the Gaullist challenge and the evolving Cold War, 1966-1973", in *European Integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik-Westpolitik, 1965-1973*. Ed. by N. Piers Ludlow. London: Routledge, (forthcoming, 2007).

<sup>81</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2924, circulaire no. 445, 10.10.1972; TNA. FCO 41/1054, FCO tel no. 298 to UKDEL NATO, 9.10.1972.

<sup>82</sup> See for example, *DBPO, III, II*, Doc. 18, 24.11.1972.

<sup>83</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 3791, NOTE sur CSCE, 16.11.1972; *ibid.*, carton 2925, circulaire no. 532, 21.11.1972. Using the EPC agreement, the French insisted that the EPC members should stick to their text in NATO discussion and not to re-open any of the disagreements. They thought that "Apparently the West could not, [...], form a bloc at the CSCE, but it was perfectly alright to form a bloc vis-à-vis the Americans in NATO." (TNA. FCO 41/1055, Butler to Tickell, 8.11.1972.) In addition, the French government instructed to its Embassies in Western Europe that "no amendments should be accepted unless these had been agreed by all the Eight", and that "amendments which would upset the political balance of the documents should be rejected." (TNA. FCO 41/1055, FCO tel no. 368 to UKDEL NATO, 16.11.1972.) However, such a French attitude was vehemently opposed by other partners. They could not accept forming a bloc of EC members in the Atlantic Alliance, as the Political Director of the West German Foreign Ministry, Berndt von Staden, put it: "the Nine could not adopt a take it or leave it position in NATO." (TNA. FCO

In addition, EPC countries had already agreed during their discussions that they would continue to consult during the Multilateral Preparatory Talks at Helsinki.<sup>84</sup> As a result, EPC was to become a frontline base in Helsinki during the MPT.

1972 saw the emergence of the most important elements concerning the CSCE. When the East had proposed an all-European conference, the form of such a conference had been highly vague. By the end of 1972, by contrast, the French procedural idea – a set of preparatory talks in which a mandate for a conference was to be drafted and a three-stage conference – was about to be accepted by other Western partners. While the agenda item of freer movement of people, ideas and information (the so-called Basket III) had appeared as early as 1969, the human rights clause in the declaration of principles governing relations between states (the Basket I) was proposed by West Germany in 1971 and accepted in 1972 by its NATO partners. Political cooperation amongst EC members, which had not worked well during 1971, advanced remarkably well in 1972. As this chapter has shown, the Western bloc was not monolithic. On the contrary, there were numerous controversies among NATO governments. Nonetheless, they steadily developed ideas concerning the CSCE, and prepared ways of making the conference meaningful and constructive, thereby transforming the quality of multilateral European détente. Yet, there are two more important elements to be put in place: the timing of the opening of the Multilateral Preparatory Talks, and the relationship between a CSCE and MBFR or military aspects

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41/1055, Butler to Tickell, 8.11.1972.)

<sup>84</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1055, FCO tel no 367 to UKDEL NATO, 15.11.1972. By contrast, the French strongly opposed establishing a NATO caucus in the Finish capital during the Multilateral Preparatory Talks. While they did not deny NATO discussions in Brussels, they attempted to keep the EPC machinery's leading role in the MPT. Officially, this French insistence was accepted. NATO countries did not formally institutionalise their meetings in Helsinki. Indeed, for instance, Britain was also afraid that if NATO visibly acted as a bloc in Helsinki, it might give the Russians an excuse for imposing bloc discipline on their East European allies, and it also might frighten the neutrals into forming an intermediary group of their own. (TNA. FCO 41/1055, FCO tel no 367 to UKDEL NATO, 15.11.1972.) However, in Helsinki, the representatives of NATO members except France unofficially but regularly gathered and exchanged opinions during the MPT.



of the conference. The next chapter will explore how these two issues affected multilateral European détente.

## **Chapter 6: The Battle for a Good Start, January 1972 – July 1973**

Détente in Europe had developed on three pillars: status quo détente, economic and cultural détente and disarmament détente. While the first two had clearly been reflected in the idea of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the third pillar had been embodied as the MBFR proposal. However, in late 1971, the relationship between CSCE and MBFR was still controversial and divided opinion in the Western bloc. While some like West Germany, Belgium, Italy and The Netherlands were enthusiastic supporters of MBFR, others such as Britain, France, Greece and Turkey opposed conventional force reductions. Some wanted to connect a CSCE and MBFR. Others desired to separate the two. Yet, after the signing of the Quadripartite Berlin Agreement on 3 September 1971, NATO members felt the necessity to settle the question over the CSCE/MBFR relationship, because it seemed almost inevitable that a multilateral European conference would be held. Should a conference on European security deal with military aspects or not?

As is well known, the military issue to be discussed at the European security conference was the introduction of so-called Confidence Building Measures (CBM). The first part of this chapter will therefore explore how the concept of confidence building measures came to the fore, and how as a result of consultations within the Atlantic Alliance, CBM became the only military agenda item in the CSCE. As will be demonstrated, this result was in essence a retreat from fully-fledged disarmament détente.

This will lead logically to the further examination of the relationship between CSCE and MBFR. Indeed, in order to understand how the subject of mutual force reductions became separated from a CSCE, the second part of this chapter will pay attention to the American idea of the parallelism of CSCE/MBFR talks. With this new concept, the United States, a strong

advocator of a complete split between the two, would attempt to persuade the Soviet Union to commit itself to the MBFR project irrespective of the fate of the Conference. The separation of MBFR from a CSCE by parallelism meant a quasi-death of the possibility of conventional force reductions in Europe, because the West had few means other than a CSCE – Moscow's desideratum – to urge the Warsaw Pact countries to accept asymmetrical disarmament – the only substantial way to reduce military levels in Europe acceptable to the West. Although the Soviets also disliked treating disarmament matters in a CSCE, the idea of parallelism was, however, not attractive enough to force Moscow to fix the opening date of MBFR exploration. Therefore, this part of the chapter will also demonstrate that there was a secret agreement between the superpowers behind the timetable of CSCE/MBFR which Kissinger and the Soviet leaders agreed in autumn 1972.

The third part will then turn to the Multilateral Preparatory Talks (MPT) for a CSCE, the opening of which was permitted once the Soviets gave their consent to the start of MBFR exploratory talks. The result of the MPT – the so-called Final Recommendations or the Blue Book – was a significant success for the West, laying the foundations which would make the CSCE itself constructive and fruitful. Although the positive prospect of disarmament détente had virtually disappeared, NATO and EPC members could successfully incorporate the principle of human rights and the agenda item of human contacts into the Final Recommendations. This section will thus ask how the Western bloc was able to obtain such favourable results in the MPT.

Returning to the CSCE/MBFR question, the final part of this chapter will analyse the resistance of non-superpower countries to the US/USSR agreement attempting to fix a deadline for the conclusion of a CSCE. The superpowers had agreed to complete a CSCE by autumn 1973 and to begin MBFR one month after that. This meant that the duration of the Conference would be considerably shortened, and that its contents would thereby risk

becoming superficial – totally unacceptable to the West Europeans and the Canadians. Faced with their vehement opposition, the Americans and the Soviets were in the end forced to back down. As a result, the effective time limit on the CSCE disappeared, thus allowing the Final Recommendations – the West's great success – to develop into the Helsinki Final Act without significant dilution.

### **Retreating to Confidence Building Measures**

By 1972, the development of disarmament détente in Europe had significantly slowed down. Most Western Allies had gradually recognised by then that, given the force levels of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, mutual and symmetrical force reductions would be of no advantage to Western security in military terms. It also seemed highly unlikely that the Soviet Union would be content to disarm more Eastern divisions than Western divisions. In fact, Moscow would later call for “equal reductions” of forces.<sup>1</sup> Even the countries most enthusiastic about MBFR – West Germany and Belgium – had acknowledged that conventional disarmament was militarily less attractive at the then present force balance between East and West. Politically, however, it was still appealing for West Europeans; and thus many politicians did not want to renounce the idea of MBFR.

Indeed, the FRG and Belgian governments advocated a gradual approach towards eventual force reductions. The West Germans, for example, assumed that the first stage of the disarmament talks should be an East-West negotiation about a declaration of MBFR principles; this would be followed by talks on the various constraints on the movement and reinforcement of troops in Europe; and it would only be after these

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfram F. Hanrieder, Germany, America, Europe: Forty Years of German Foreign Policy, Yale University Press, 1989, p. 100.

preliminary discussions had been completed that actual force reductions would be negotiated.<sup>2</sup> They also insisted on connecting MBFR and a CSCE, in order to bind the Eastern bloc, which desperately wanted the latter, to the idea of force reductions. Although Brezhnev had promised to start MBFR negotiations, the West was afraid that once a Conference began, the Soviets would not engage seriously with MBFR. Belgian Foreign Minister Harmel, thus, proposed at the December 1971 NATO Ministerial Meeting that “certain military aspects of security” – for example, constraints on troop movement – be initially discussed in a CSCE, and that MBFR negotiations should begin at a later stage in a separate but parallel forum restricted to those countries with troops in Central Europe.<sup>3</sup> Brussels demanded that some of the elements of MBFR be included in a CSCE agenda in order to ensure that the disarmament project survived. Harmel’s proposal was generally supported by the FRG and other NATO Ministers, with the exception of the French Foreign Minister.<sup>4</sup> It was clear, however, that the prospect of disarmament détente in the near future had been significantly watered-down to “collateral constraints” to accompany force reductions in MBFR. Furthermore, Washington was keen to cut substantial links between a CSCE and MBFR.

The United States had developed a different idea about a European security conference. After the signing of the Quadripartite Berlin Agreement, the State Department had intensively worked on reviewing US CSCE policy, assuming that the movement toward a Conference could not now be

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<sup>2</sup> TNA. FCO 41/810, Brief no. 3, Background, The Work of the Political Committee, undated (November 1971); AAPD 1972, Dok. 28, Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Brandt mit Staatspräsident Pompidou in Paris, 10.2.1972.

<sup>3</sup> TNA. FCO 41/894, UKDEL NATO Tel No. 578 to FCO, 29.11.1971; *ibid.*, Lever to Bridges, 1.12.1971; TNA. FCO 41/809, UKDEL NATO Tel no. 625 to FCO, 9.12.1971; AAPD 1971, Dok. 439, Botschafter Krapf, Brüssel (NATO), an das Auswärtige Amt, 10.12.1971.

<sup>4</sup> The final communiqué of the December 1971 NATO Ministerial meeting thus stated in general fashion that “These Ministers emphasized the importance they attach to measures which would reduce the dangers of military confrontation and thus enhance security in Europe. They noted that a Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe should deal with these aspects in a suitable manner.”

<http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c711209a.htm>

stopped.<sup>5</sup> Although, as repeatedly argued in the previous chapters, the Americans had disliked the idea of a European security conference, they had begun to search for a way in which they would be able to use a Conference for some US long-term interests. The Department of State thus proposed a “New Approach,” which was presented in its study paper submitted on 3 November 1971, attempting to regard a CSCE as “a step toward maintaining a US role in Europe.” It suggested two main ideas. The first one was “increased emphasis on permanent machinery to provide an institutional framework involving the US intimately in a long-term process of East-West negotiation of issues of security and cooperation.”<sup>6</sup> This concept of permanent machinery was, however, to be strongly opposed by many EPC countries because they thought that such a continuing institution would be exploited by the East to impede the progress of European integration.<sup>7</sup> The White House too seemed not to be interested in this first idea. By contrast, Kissinger and his staff did take note of the second major idea of the “New Approach”: an initiative to add weight to issues of security by borrowing some measures of the collateral constraints from MBFR.<sup>8</sup>

As a result, the United States could accept the phrase “certain military aspects of security,” which was incorporated into the final communiqué of the December 1971 NATO Ministerial meeting, but its aim was different from that of Belgium or the FRG.<sup>9</sup> The National Security Council preferred a stricter approach on this subject. Although the proposal of the Department of State was closer to Belgium’s one, the White House and the Department of Defense wanted definite separation between a CSCE and MBFR. Therefore,

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<sup>5</sup> On 2 October 1971, Nixon ordered “to examine all the issues related to a conference on European security.” DNSA, Presidential Directives, Part I, NSSM 138: European Security Conference, PD01442, 2.10.1971. See also, James E. Goodby, Europe Undivided: The New Logic of Peace in U.S.-Russian Relations, Washington, D.C., 1998, pp. 58-9.

<sup>6</sup> DNSA, Presidential Directives, Part II, Response to NSSM-138, PR00910, 3.11.1971.

<sup>7</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1052, Luxembourg tel no. 86 to FCO, 29.2.1972. In general, NATO governments also had serious reservations about establishing any permanent organ. DBPO, III, II, p. 78, footnote 18.

<sup>8</sup> DNSA, Presidential Directives, Part II, SRG Meeting on European Security Conference, PR00911, 18.11.1971.

<sup>9</sup> See footnote no. 4.

Washington categorically opposed the idea of the CSCE being used to draw up a declaration on MBFR principles, and proposed to other NATO partners that the CSCE discuss only “collateral constraints” such as advance notification of military movements and manoeuvres, exchange of observers at military manoeuvres and the establishment of observation posts.<sup>10</sup> The Americans believed that these general and collateral measures – soon to be called “confidence building measures” for CSCE purposes – would have no direct influence on the actual negotiations on force reductions. More importantly, they thought that these constraints would have marginal value from a military point of view.<sup>11</sup> Rather, they attempted to give a military flavour to a CSCE, in order to placate its allies who insisted that a *security* conference in Europe should deal with *military* aspects and thus demanded a connection between the CSCE and MBFR.<sup>12</sup> As the US deputy director of the Office of the Secretary General of NATO in 1970-73, John Maresca, put it later, “The United States supported the confidence-building measures concept more for reasons of allied solidarity than because of anticipated military or arms control benefits.”<sup>13</sup>

In the end, the idea of “confidence building measures” became the only military content of the CSCE. A majority of NATO members wanted a definite and official link between the CSCE and MBFR, not merely a very tenuous one. For the Dutch, Belgians and others, the purpose of a CSCE/MBFR link was to use the Russians’ desire for the former as a lever to get them negotiating about the latter.<sup>14</sup> The West Germans in particular prepared and presented a concrete example of a “Joint Declaration on MBFR

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<sup>10</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1039, U.S. Delegation, Consideration of Stabilization measures (“Collateral Constraints”) in the CSCE context, 1.2.1972; TNA. FCO 41/998, U.S. Mission to NATO, MBFR and CSCE: A Proposed Relationship, 13.4.1972.

<sup>11</sup> John J. Maresca, To Helsinki—the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1973-1975. Duke University Press, 1985, p. 169.

<sup>12</sup> DNSA, Presidential Directives, Part II, MBFR and CSCE, PR00918, 3.20.1972.

<sup>13</sup> Maresca, To Helsinki, p. 169.

<sup>14</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1046, Braithwaite to Thomson, 17.7.1972.

Principles,” in order to press their partners to discuss it.<sup>15</sup> For the Greeks, Turks and Italians, it was a matter of their security. Although the area affected by MBFR was limited to Central Europe, these Mediterranean countries were particularly worried that conventional force reductions in Central Europe would have harmful side effects in the southern flank, because they believed that the Western Alliance’s military strategy was designed as a whole.<sup>16</sup> Even the British, who disliked conventional disarmament but prioritised the unity of the Atlantic Alliance, thought that some sort of link between a CSCE and MBFR might be desirable in order to satisfy countries not directly involved in MBFR negotiations.<sup>17</sup> However, the French adamantly opposed the whole concept of MBFR, although, at a later stage, they would accept the confidence building measures concept that would be unconnected with MBFR, and thereby not affect the military situation in Europe.<sup>18</sup> As Pompidou said to Heath on 19 March 1972, “the French Government had always maintained that the question of MBFR

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<sup>15</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1041, German Delegation, Re.: Joint Declaration on MBFR Principles, 23.2.1972; Martin Müller, Politik und Bürokratie: die MBFR-Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zwischen 1967 und 1973. Nomos, 1988, pp. 178-79. The MBFR Principles proposed by Bonn included, for example: “all reduction measures should be so balanced that they do not operate at any stage to the military disadvantage of any one states or group of states and that undiminished security is ensured equally for all parties.”

<sup>16</sup> TNA. FCO 41/999, Wiggin to Thomson, 16.5.1972.

<sup>17</sup> TNA. FCO 41/998, Tickell to Thomson, 18.4.1972. Britain tried to reconcile different positions in the NATO Alliance. The British conciliatory scheme linking MBFR to a CSCE was to set up a security commission in the Conference at a Ministerial level to negotiate a declaration and agreement on some confidence building measures. This commission would set up a sub-group to negotiate substantial MBFR, and the group would consist of only those countries in Central Europe whose forces were directly involved. Through this procedure, the British thought they could mollify those countries not directly involved. The nub of London’s idea was, however, that the CSCE should not have authority over MBFR. (TNA. FCO 41/1045, British paper on “Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE)”, 19.6.1972.) Unfortunately for Britain, no one was satisfied with this proposal. (MAE, Europe 1971 - juin 1976, vol. 2924, Rose à Europe Orientale, 27.7.1972.) The UK delegation to NATO lamented “In short, our proposals are likely to be shot at from almost every side.” (TNA. FCO 41/1046, Thomson to Tickell, 11.7.1972.)

<sup>18</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2923, Paris tel no. 111-116 to Repan Bruxelles, 23.5.1972 ; AN, 5 AG 2 / 1011, Premier entretien entre M. Pompidou et le Chancelier Brandt, à Bonn, le 3 juillet 1972 11 h -13 h 10, 3.7.1972. See also Georges-Henri Soutou, L’Alliance Incertaine: Les Rapports Politico-Stratégiques Franco-Allemands 1954-1996, Fayard, 1996, p. 336.



should be kept outside the framework of the Security Conference: the latter should be concerned with the political and human conditions necessary for the creation of security in Europe and not with problems of relative disarmament.”<sup>19</sup> Not only Washington, but also Paris thus refused any connection between CSCE and MBFR. Moreover, the Americans and the Soviets advanced a *fait accompli* about the procedural relationship between the two projects, which would force other NATO governments to be satisfied with only confidence building measures being included in a CSCE.

### **CSCE/MBFR Parallelism and the Superpower Hidden Bargain**

From the US perspective, the key objective was to obtain a commitment from the USSR to begin exploratory discussions of MBFR before the CSCE had concluded its work.<sup>20</sup> It is conventional wisdom that Kissinger was interested in the mutual force reduction project only to resist Congressional pressure for the unilateral withdrawal of US troops in Europe.<sup>21</sup> However, this had not necessarily been his opinion from the outset. In fact, Kissinger had clearly argued in autumn 1971 that “I’m not in favor of getting into discussions [about MBFR] with the Soviets to try to placate Congress.”<sup>22</sup> Rather, it was State Secretary Rogers and the Department of State who had insisted upon the usefulness of MBFR to counter this pressure. Yet, by the end of 1971, the White House accepted this thinking and moved more actively on this subject. US domestic pressure for force reductions remained intense. Although Senator Mansfield’s November 1971 effort to force an

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<sup>19</sup> PREM 15/904, Record of conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the French Republic at Chequers at 10.30 a.m. on Sunday, 19 March 1972, 22.3.1972.

<sup>20</sup> DNSA, Presidential Directives, Part II, NSDM 162: Presidential Guidance on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions and a European Conference, PR00154, 5.4.1972.

<sup>21</sup> Raymond L. Garthoff, Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan, Rev. ed., Brookings Institution, 1994, pp. 132-33.

<sup>22</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Minutes [Verification Panel Meeting on MBFR], KT00353, 21.9.1971.

amendment calling for a 60,000 cut through the Senate was defeated, the margin became smaller than a similar amendment tabled in May 1971. Moreover, the upcoming US/Soviet summit, which, after the 15 July 1971 announcement about the US President's visit to Beijing, the USSR had proposed to take place in May or June 1972,<sup>23</sup> was also a highly significant factor which pushed Nixon and Kissinger to commit to the MBFR issue more directly. In order to obtain Moscow's agreement to fix the opening date of MBFR negotiations, Washington was first to propose the idea of parallelism of CSCE/MBFR talks and, then secretly to concur with a sequential CSCE/MBFR timetable.

For Nixon and Kissinger, their direct encounter with the Soviet leaders would be a crucial opportunity to move MBFR forward in return for the US commitment to a CSCE. The German-German transit talks on Berlin had already concluded on 17 December 1971. If the West German Parliament ratified the Moscow and Warsaw Treaties, the Final Quadripartite Protocol would be signed; then the West would have to set a date for beginning the multilateral preparations for a CSCE. However, the Soviets had continued to refuse to talk to the former NATO Secretary General, Manlio Brosio, who had been authorised by the Atlantic Alliance in October 1971 to explore a possible basis for MBFR with the USSR, because, for Moscow, a representative of NATO meant that the dialogue would become a "bloc to bloc" negotiation.<sup>24</sup> Also there was little that was new about disarmament in the resolution issued at the Communist Party leaders' meeting of 25-26 January 1972 in Prague.<sup>25</sup> It was clear that the Warsaw Pact would not agree to mutual force reduction talks, unless NATO took another approach

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<sup>23</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 310.

<sup>24</sup> *AAPD 1971*, Dok. 416, Gespräch des Bundesministers Scheel mit dem sowjetischen Außenminister Gromyko in Moskau, 28.11.1971; *AAPD 1972*, Dok. 32, Gesandter Boss, Brüssel (NATO), an das Ausärtige Amt, 15.2.1972; Helga Haftendorn, *Sicherheit und Entspannung: zur Aussenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1955-1982*, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983, pp. 554-56.

<sup>25</sup> As regards the text of the 26 January 1972 resolution of the Prague meeting of the Political Consultative Committee,  
[http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/documents/collection\\_3/PCC\\_docs/1972/1972\\_9.pdf](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/documents/collection_3/PCC_docs/1972/1972_9.pdf)

on this subject. In brief, MBFR matters were procedurally deadlocked. This indicated that the preparatory talks for a CSCE would begin without a clear agreement on MBFR. Although Kissinger did not want immediate force reductions in Europe, he thought that progress towards MBFR should be maintained so as to resist future Mansfield resolutions. Indeed, the White House expected that, while there would be no problem about Congress in 1972, the US government in 1973 would have to hold off Congressional pressure demanding unilateral withdrawal of US troops from Europe.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, it was highly desirable for Washington to advance MBFR in parallel with a CSCE in order to separate these two projects more substantially. Otherwise, Moscow might continue to eschew MBFR, and NATO members might become more demanding about a CSCE/MBFR link. Therefore, if the Americans wanted to keep MBFR and at the same time isolate it from a European security conference, "exploring MBFR at the summit [was] preferable and almost unavoidable."<sup>27</sup>

At the US/USSR summit, however, Nixon would have only limited success regarding MBFR. Just five days before he flew to Moscow, the Eastern Treaties between Bonn and Moscow had successfully been ratified in West Germany on 17 May 1972 owing to the abstention of the CDU/CSU parliamentarians. Without doubt, this served to make the atmosphere before the meeting between the leaders of the superpowers favourable. Nixon and Brezhnev were also able to sign the SALT I and Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaties, which was the central subject at the summit.<sup>28</sup> Yet, as regards a CSCE and MBFR, the Soviet leader was a tough negotiator and the US President's scope to obtain concessions from Brezhnev was limited; although Nixon made clear that the US government was ready to accept a European security conference in general, he also stressed it was impossible to hold it in 1973 because of the presidential elections. Nixon wished to slow down

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<sup>26</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1002, Thomson to Wiggin, 20.9.1972.

<sup>27</sup> DNSA, Presidential Directives, Part II, MBFR and CSCE, PR00918, 20.3.1972.

<sup>28</sup> Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, pp. 335-38.

progress towards a European security conference as far as possible, but further delay was of course far less appealing to the Kremlin. Then, when Nixon suggested that “there be parallel discussions on force reductions, going forward at the same time as the discussions on the European conference,” Brezhnev was initially sceptical, arguing that “it perhaps should not be done in parallel fashion. Perhaps it was better to get the European conference subjects out of the way and then move on to force reductions.”<sup>29</sup> Faced with Nixon’s objection that “if we waited until the end of the conference we might never get to force reductions,” the Soviet General Secretary finally but vaguely replied that “the discussions could be conducted in parallel but in different bodies.”<sup>30</sup> Nixon did thus succeed in securing Brezhnev’s agreement to the idea of parallelism in principle. However, he could not set a date for opening the multilateral preparation for MBFR. Nor did the Joint American-Soviet Communiqué mention parallelism. It merely stated that “Appropriate agreement should be reached as soon as practicable between the states concerned on the procedures for negotiations on this subject [MBFR] in *a special forum*.”<sup>31</sup> The concrete details of the parallelism concept were also left to Kissinger and Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko. The questions of when the preparatory talks for the CSCE and MBFR would begin and how the two discussions would progress in parallel had to be solved later.

Parallelism, together with the confidence building measures concept, was a decisive factor in breaking the connection between CSCE and MBFR. Although many Ministers asked for a clear and effective CSCE/MBFR link at the Bonn NATO meeting on 30-31 May 1972, they agreed that multilateral explorations for MBFR would be undertaken either before or in parallel with

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<sup>29</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, European Problems, Memorandum of Conversation [between Nixon and Brezhnev], KT00495, 24.5.1972.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Emphasis added. John G. Keliher, The Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions. The Search for Arms Control in Central Europe, Pergamon Press, 1980, p. 31.

the multilateral preparatory talks on a Conference.<sup>32</sup> After this gathering, the United States and the Soviet Union made no further concessions on this issue. For Moscow, if it was to accept the idea of parallelism, a CSCE and MBFR would have to be clearly separated. For Washington, such separation was highly welcome too.<sup>33</sup> The superpowers' interests coincided. Soon after the NATO Ministerial meeting in Bonn, the West German Foreign Ministry also began to acknowledge that if a CSCE and MBFR were to develop in parallel, the degree of substantive linkage between the two could be flexible.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, in the course of the regular Franco-German consultations, the FRG Foreign Minister Scheel confirmed his acceptance of parallelism and of the absence of organisational connections between CSCE and MBFR.<sup>35</sup> Smaller and neutral countries would continue to call in vain for linkage between the two. Eventually, the participating countries would have to content themselves with the confidence building measures unconnected with MBFR and the principles governing relations between states including the renunciation of the use of force. It is difficult to argue what would have actually happened if a binding connection between CSCE and MBFR had been established. However, it is clear that, once parallelism was accepted, the West lost a possible lever which might have forced the Soviets to make a compromise over disarmament in favour of Western security – namely considerably larger force cuts by the Warsaw Pact than by NATO. The MBFR negotiations were thus doomed to deadlock.

By the summer of 1972, fixing the opening date of MBFR exploratory talks became imperative for America. To begin with, Finland proposed to start Multilateral Preparatory Talks in Helsinki from 22 November 1972 – a date which fitted well with the US presidential elections (7 November

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<sup>32</sup> AAPD 1972, Dok. 159, Runderlaß des Ministerialdirektors von Staden, 2.6.1972; TNA. FCO 41/969, Bonn tel no. 741 to FCO, 31.5.1972.

<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the Americans insisted on dividing the venues for the negotiations; while CSCE preparations would be held in Helsinki, a MBFR exploration would take place in Vienna.

<sup>34</sup> AAPD 1972, Dok. 189, Aufzeichnung des Botschatters Roth, 27.6.1972.

<sup>35</sup> AAPD 1972, Dok. 199, Aufzeichnung des Vortragenden Legationsrats Steger, 7.7.1972.

1972).<sup>36</sup> The ratification of the Moscow and Warsaw Treaties on 17 May 1972, the SALT Agreement and the ABM Treaty on 29 May 1972, the 31 May 1972 NATO Communiqué in which the Atlantic Alliance was publicly committed to enter into the MPT for a CSCE in Helsinki, and the signing of the Final Quadripartite Protocol on 3 June 1972, all encouraged the Finns in July 1972 to invite East and West European, North American and nonalignment/neutral countries to the Multilateral Preparatory Talks. Before accepting the Finnish invitation, however, the NATO countries and America in particular had to make clear the relationship between CSCE and MBFR.<sup>37</sup> In addition, despite the agreement at the Moscow summit, the Soviets began to show their misgivings about parallelism.<sup>38</sup> When Gromyko visited Brussels in July 1972, the Belgians gained the impression that the Russians did not hope to establish parallelism between MBFR and a CSCE.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, before Kissinger's trip to Moscow to follow-up on the Nixon/Brezhnev summit – scheduled in September 1972–, Washington felt that it needed “some sign that [Moscow would] enter into MBFR exploration” including “an indication of Soviet timing and the modalities of the MBFR explorations.”<sup>40</sup> Then Kissinger met Dobrynin on 5 September 1972 and proposed the following programme:

if we were prepared to agree to a European Security Conference on November 22, they would be prepared for MBFR exploratory discussions by the end of January. And if then the European Security Conference would take place during the summer of 1973, the MBFR conference would take place in the fall

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<sup>36</sup> John van Oudenaren, *Détente in Europe: the Soviet Union and the West since 1953*, Duke University Press, 1991, p. 321.

<sup>37</sup> After the Bonn NATO Council meeting in May 1972, this topic was extensively debated among Western Allies. For example, see MAE, Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2924, Rose à Service des pactes et du désarmement, 11.7.1972. Yet, it was the superpowers that had a decisive influence on this problem.

<sup>38</sup> MAE, Europe 1971 - juin 1976, carton 2924, Washington tel no. 5756-70 to Paris, 25.8.1972.

<sup>39</sup> Vincent Dujardin, *Pierre Harmel: Biographie*, Brussels: Le Cri, 2005, p. 512.

<sup>40</sup> CD-ROM *The Rise of Détente*, Memorandum for Mr. Kissinger. From: Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Subject: Relaunching MBFR, 25.8.1972.

of 1973.<sup>41</sup>

In order to make it easy for the Soviets to accept a fixed timetable, as illustrated in this proposal, the Americans made a concession: the MBFR discussions would not have to start on the same date as a European security conference. This concession was to be of great significance and would later become a controversial issue between the United States and its NATO partners.

The importance of Kissinger's September 1972 visit to Moscow did not only lie in Brezhnev's confirmation of the timetable suggested by the Americans, but in a secret agreement between the superpowers. The most important point was that they agreed when a CSCE would be concluded. Brezhnev stressed that "We are prepared to enter into these [MBFR] consultations with a view to holding a conference *after the completion of the European Security Conference*."<sup>42</sup> Kissinger replied:

The actual [MBFR] conference should be *after the completion of CSCE* if it starts at the end of June, the MBFR conference could be about the end of September -- somewhere in September-October. If these principles are agreeable we will then agree to the November 22 starting date for CSCE preparations.<sup>43</sup>

"Let us agree," the Soviet leader consented. Clearly Kissinger and Brezhnev confirmed that the CSCE would start at the end of June 1973 and finish before September-October 1973 when the MBFR conference would start. The superpowers agreed not only when the CSCE and MBFR would begin, but also when the European security conference would end – all without consulting their allies and even before the start of the preparatory talks.

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<sup>41</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Memorandum of Conversation [with Dobrynin], KT00551, 5.9.1972.

<sup>42</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Memorandum of Conversation [Discussion with Leonid Brezhnev of U.S. Businesses, European Security, and Arms Control], KT00562, 12.9.1972. (emphasis added).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. (emphasis added).

Kissinger, who had little interest in a multilateral European conference, gained Moscow's commitment to MBFR. Brezhnev, on the other, successfully elicited Washington's assent to complete the CSCE in less than three months, implying that the contents of the Conference would be as thin as the Soviets wanted.

Of further interest, Kissinger asked Brezhnev to propose this CSCE/MBFR timetable as if it was presented from the Soviet side.<sup>44</sup> Then, on his way home, Kissinger went to Paris on 15 September 1972, explaining to the French President that the Soviets had handed him a note briefly outlining four points regarding the timetable:

1. preparatory talks for the European Security Conference will begin in Helsinki on 22 November 1972;
2. the Conference itself will start in Helsinki at the end of June 1973;
3. preliminary talks for MBFR will begin at the end of January 1973; and
4. a Conference for MBFR will start in September or October 1973.<sup>45</sup>

Kissinger stressed that he had not responded to this note before consultations with NATO partners.<sup>46</sup> Of course, he never said to President George Pompidou that he had already agreed with the Soviets to conclude the CSCE before the beginning of MBFR talks.

However, suspicion towards the superpowers gradually spread. The Soviet note, which was also shown to other NATO countries as a not-yet-agreed text, was at first welcomed in general by them, because it clearly showed that Moscow finally accepted the opening of negotiations on

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> AN, 5 AG 2 / 1022, Audience de M. Henry Kissinger, Conseiller du Président Nixon, le 15 septembre 1972, 17 h. 30 - 18 h. 55, 15.9.1972.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. Before Paris, Kissinger had visited London and took the same stance, when he met the UK Secretary of State Douglas-Home. DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Record of a Conversation between the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and Dr. Henry Kissinger at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at 4:00 p.m. on 14 September 1972, KT00564, 14.9.1972.



force reductions which NATO had been demanding for a long time.<sup>47</sup> Yet, some of them began to suspect the existence of the US/USSR secret agreement. In fact, Gromyko hinted to Dutch Foreign Minister Schmelzer on 29 September 1972 that "a preparatory conversation on MBFR could begin at the end of January, while the substance could be broached after the CSCE."<sup>48</sup> Gromyko's remark indicated that the Russians would not agree to convene a conference for MBFR *before* the conclusion of the European security conference. France in particular was concerned with Moscow's intention to finish the CSCE before the MBFR negotiations, and repeatedly opposed any mention of June 1973 as the opening date for a CSCE, because Paris (rightly) guessed that the Soviet note implied that each of the four stages in the Soviet scenario should be completed before the next stage began.<sup>49</sup> A West German diplomat, who had visited Moscow at about that time, also told British diplomats of his impression that the Russians intended CSCE and MBFR discussions to be in strict sequence, namely that once the CSCE was over MBFR negotiations could take place.<sup>50</sup> The British side too showed their suspicion towards not only the Soviets but also the Americans, insisting that:

[W]e should find that our whole thesis of a serious conference with a long committee stage would risk coming under attack not only from the Russians, who wanted a quick and simple conference anyway, but also from those such as the Americans who wanted a visible start to MBFR negotiations next autumn.<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, the British Foreign Office had obtained (probably from the US Embassy in London) a note that the Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin had delivered to the US State Secretary Rogers, which contained the clear

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<sup>47</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1002, UKDEL NATO tel no. 375 to FCO, 15.9.1972.

<sup>48</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, vol. 2924, speaking note 'Conversation between the Netherlands and Soviet Ministers of Foreign Affaires on CSCE', undated.

<sup>49</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1003, UKDEL NATO tel no. 389 to FCO, 27.9.1972; TNA. FCO 41/1002, UKDEL NATO tel no. 403 to FCO, 5.10.1972.

<sup>50</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1005, Anglo/German Talks on MBFR: Bonn Friday, 20.10.1972.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

phrase: “the *agreement* achieved in the talks with Mr. Kissinger last September in Moscow.”<sup>52</sup> A British diplomat underlined the word ‘agreement’ with his pen. While Kissinger explained that the Soviet note was not an agreed text, the British gained evidence indicating there could be a secret agreement between the superpowers. Therefore, the British, French and West Germans conveyed their strong opposition to the Soviets, saying that they could not accept the idea that MBFR would take place after a CSCE. Though the Americans also agreed with their partners’ opinion, they did not (or in fact could not) tell the Russians so.<sup>53</sup> This became a source of European mistrust of the Americans and fed into wider anxieties about a superpower condominium in Europe.

### **Multilateral Preparatory Talks**

On 22 November 1972, as proposed by the Finns, the Multilateral Preparatory Talks for a CSCE began in Helsinki. Putting to one side their misgivings about the US/USSR bargain, the NATO governments accepted the Finnish government’s invitation. There was no reason for the NATO governments to postpone the MPT any more after the Soviet acceptance of the opening of MBFR negotiations. The preparatory talks continued for about two hundred days and on 6 May 1973 worked out the Final Recommendations – a record of agreements on mandates and all procedural issues.<sup>54</sup> In fact, this result was a promising first step for the West. It contained all of the key issues that the West had proposed should be discussed in a Conference, including in particular respect for human rights

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<sup>52</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1048, a secret document, untitled, undated. (emphasis added)

<sup>53</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1055, ‘Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Nine 20/21 November in The Hague. Agenda item 1: Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe,’ undated.

<sup>54</sup> The text of the Final Recommendations of the MPT is printed in John Maresca, To Helsinki—the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1973-1975, Duke University Press, 1985, pp. 211-225.

and fundamental freedoms, and equal rights and self-determination of peoples in a list of principles governing the relations between states. It also set up the celebrated agenda item which would examine cultural aspects including Western ideas on “freer movement” of people, ideas and information, though the heading of the so-called Basket III was toned-down to “Co-operation in Humanitarian and Other Fields.” In addition, the French idea of a three-stage Conference procedure was also agreed. In return, NATO/EPC governments had to accept the principle of the inviolability of frontiers and agree to discuss the “Follow-up to the Conference,” a reflection of the long-standing Soviet demand for the creation of permanent machinery.<sup>55</sup> Of these results, however, one high-ranking British official commented “So far the West has done surprisingly well.”<sup>56</sup>

The detailed process of negotiations in the MPT has been documented elsewhere.<sup>57</sup> Suffice it here to make four main points which, according to the British Ambassador in Helsinki, T.A.K. Elliott, account for the West’s success in the preparatory talks.<sup>58</sup> The first reason was the careful advance preparation carried out in NATO and in European Political Cooperation. On many subjects, the opinions of the Western countries differed and clashed. However, the endeavours made by Western diplomats and experts scrutinising all issues relating to a European security conference during the years 1969-1972 clarified problems and points of dispute, thereby narrowing the divergences of view within the Western bloc. Based on such preparation, the EPC countries then took the initiative in the MPT by tabling the draft

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<sup>55</sup> PAAA, B-28, Bd. ZA109292, Konferenz für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa, undated.

<sup>56</sup> DBPO, III, II, p. 136, fn.2.

<sup>57</sup> Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, Report on a Negotiation. Helsinki-Geneva-Helsinki 1972-1975, Alphen aan den Rijn-Geneve, 1979, pp. 9-40; Robert Spencer, “Canada and the Origins of the CSCE,” in Robert Spencer (ed.), Canada and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, University of Tront, 1984, pp. 84-94; Kristina Spohr-Readman, “National Interests and the Power of ‘Language’: West German Diplomacy and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1972-1975”, Journal of Strategic Studies, 29/6 (2006), pp. 1098-1116.

<sup>58</sup> DBPO, III, II, Doc. 37, Mr. Elliott (Helsinki) to Sir A. Douglas-Home, 13.6.1973.

terms of reference for the committees which were to be set up in a CSCE.<sup>59</sup>

Secondly, the neutral countries were generally on the West's side in the multilateral preparatory talks. Of course, they had their own ideas and opinions. However the so-called "N+NA (Neutral and Nonaligned)" countries supported all agenda items proposed by NATO members. In addition, it was Switzerland and Austria that grouped many proposed subjects into four Baskets: 1) policy and security matters; 2) economic and related issues; 3) human contacts, culture and information; and 4) follow-up to the Conference.<sup>60</sup> Together with giving some consideration to the Warsaw Pact's views, the N+NA played an undeniably effective role in the preparatory phase to produce Final Recommendations which were in essence favourable for the West.

The third reason for the West's success was the resolution of the enlarged EC Nine (the original Six members plus Britain, Ireland, and Denmark) not to accept an opening date for the Conference until it became clear that the MPT had produced satisfactory results. In addition, cooperation on tactics helped to strengthen this resolution. While the West sought daily consideration of Basket III, it attempted to guide discussion of Basket I items towards such time-consuming subjects as the Swiss proposal for the peaceful settlement of disputes, the question of the Mediterranean and the military aspects of security, in order to avoid a discussion of the principles governing relations between States – the main Basket I item on which the East put the highest priority – until progress on Basket III was clearer.<sup>61</sup> The tactics of avoiding early discussion of the principles was also important for the West, because there was still Allied disagreement on the subject. For instance, while West Germany regarded the principle of self-determination as very important because it strengthened their call for

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<sup>59</sup> DBPO, III, II, Doc. 20, Minute from Mr. Tickell on CSCE Preparatory Talks, 25.1.1973.

<sup>60</sup> Thomas Fischer, "The Birth of the N+NA: Austrian and Swiss Foreign Policy in the CSCE," a paper submitted for the Conference "At the Roots of the European Security System: Thirty Years Since the Helsinki Final Act" (Zurich, 8-10 September 2005).

<sup>61</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1296, Burns to Wiggin, 11.5.1973.

the future reunification of Germany, Canada opposed it because of Quebec separatism.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, it was convenient for NATO to deal with the problem of the principles at a later stage after such disputes had been settled within the Atlantic Alliance. The Warsaw Pact countries by contrast thought it was important to reach a conclusion as quickly as possible.<sup>63</sup> It was the Eastern side that felt most pressure from the timetable agreed between Kissinger and Brezhnev in September 1972, which set the opening date of the CSCE as the end of June 1973. Western resolution and tactics thus worked. While there were some disagreements among the NATO members, this resolution and these tactics made it possible for the West to gain maximum concessions from the East and minimise those made by the West.

The final and decisive reason for establishing a good foundation for the following multilateral European conference was the maintenance of the West's cohesion in the negotiations. The West's cooperation was essential in order to bring their advance preparation into play in the negotiation with the East. If opinions within the Western camp had been divided, their leverage would have been weak. This point was crucial in multilateral negotiations. Within the Eastern bloc, Romania, which emphasised its independence and sovereignty in the preparatory talks, was an embarrassing factor for the Soviet Union, though other East European countries were under the strict control of the Russians. By contrast, "The performance of the Nine at Helsinki [was] extremely effective."<sup>64</sup> How the EPC countries came to cooperate was discussed in the previous chapter. However, how and why did the EPC cohesion work in the Multilateral Preparatory Talks? For a start, America's attitude was a key contributory factor. Once the preparatory talks began, the US delegation refrained from positive intervention in the

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<sup>62</sup> PAAA, B-28, Bd. ZA111531, Betr.: KSZE-Prinzipienerklärung, 2.2 1973.

<sup>63</sup> "Report on the Consultation of the Warsaw Treaty Countries' Deputy Foreign Ministers Held in Moscow on 15 November 1972" in The Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact Home Page.

[http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/documents/collection\\_3/DepFM\\_docs/translations/721115-Moscow.pdf](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/documents/collection_3/DepFM_docs/translations/721115-Moscow.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> DBPO, III, II, Doc. 29, Sir A. Douglas-Home to Mr. Elliott (Helsinki), 28.3.1973.

negotiations. They had received an instruction from Washington not to challenge the positions agreed among the Nine. In particular, the White House's interest in a CSCE was quite low.<sup>65</sup> The US thought that it would not be wise to confront both their EC friends and the USSR on CSCE matters, especially given their attempt to maintain good relations with Moscow since the 1972 Nixon-Brezhnev summit.<sup>66</sup> This American stance put the non-EC countries of NATO in an uncomfortable position, because they were sometimes forced to accept the Nine's agreement as a *fait accompli*.<sup>67</sup> Without support from the US government, the voices of non-EC states like Greece or Turkey were feeble. As a result, EPC consultations functioned as the main forum for preparing for the West's position in the MPT.

As Elliott points out, the French attitude was also significant for the effectiveness of EPC in the preparatory talks. Although France continued consultations with the USSR and the East European countries, it remained loyal to the positions worked out with its EPC partners and defended them actively not only in the multilateral debate but in private conversation with the Soviet Union.<sup>68</sup> The principal tactics of the Soviet Union for reaching an early conclusion of the MPT were to use bilateral relations.<sup>69</sup> The Pompidou-Brezhnev summit of January 1973 was regarded by the East as a good opportunity to extract concessions from the French.<sup>70</sup> However, it was not the French but the Soviets who had to compromise. During the summit, the French President insisted on the idea of drafting mandates for the

<sup>65</sup> TNA. FCO 41/ 1069, Washington tel no. 3435 to FCO, 21.11.1972.

<sup>66</sup> Goodby, *Europe Undivided*, p. 62; Jussi Hanhimäki, "They Can Write it in Swahili": Kissinger, the Soviets, and the Helsinki Accords, 1973-1975," *The Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 1/1 (2003), p. 45; See also, Jacques Andréani, *Le Piège: Helsinki et la chute du communisme*, Odile Jacob, 2005, p. 87.

<sup>67</sup> TNA. FCO 41/ 1068, Helsinki tel no. 846 to FCO, 19.12.1972; See also, Spencer, "Canada and the Origins of the CSCE", pp. 83-84.

<sup>68</sup> DBPO, III, II, Doc. 37, Mr. Elliott (Helsinki) to Sir A. Douglas-Home, 13.6.1973.

<sup>69</sup> Andréani, *Le Piège*, p. 86.

<sup>70</sup> "Telegram by the Romanian Foreign Minister, 15.1.1973" in The Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact Home Page.

[http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/documents/collection\\_3/CMFA\\_docs/CMFA\\_1973/1973\\_2.pdf](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/documents/collection_3/CMFA_docs/CMFA_1973/1973_2.pdf)

Committees in the second stage of the CSCE.<sup>71</sup> In order to make the Conference substantial, it was quite important for the West to prepare terms of reference which clearly defined directions for the Committees (and sub-Committees) which were to be established after the first stage of Foreign Minister Conference. When the preparatory talks had started, however, the East had rejected the creation of such mandates, because a time-consuming process of drafting mandates would hamper a quick conclusion of the MPT. The initial phase of the preparatory talks had thus been stalemated. The French President persisted obstinately in his belief in the necessity of preparing the terms of reference for the CSCE. Faced with Pompidou's strong demand for drafting mandates, Brezhnev finally gave way, accepting in general the drafting of documents which would eventually become the Final Recommendations of the MPT. Subsequent Franco-Soviet bilateral consultations during the CSCE preparatory talks also did not entirely develop in favour of the Russians. In the French/USSR summit, the two leaders had agreed to continue bilateral consultation on the CSCE.<sup>72</sup> Accordingly, several high-ranking exchanges between the French and the Soviet Union Foreign Ministries took place.<sup>73</sup> However, the French side made it clear to the Soviets that it was difficult to decide multilateral things bilaterally, and refused, for example, to draft Franco-Soviet joint mandates.<sup>74</sup> In spite of frequent Paris-Moscow exchanges, the French government did not diverge from the EPC arrangements.

More interestingly, Jacques Andréani, the French delegation leader, observes that NATO functioned as a mutual surveillance mechanism among

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<sup>71</sup> AN, 5 AG 2 / 1019, Tête à tête entre M. Pompidou et M. Brejnev, 12.1.1973.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> For example, MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, 2926, Compte-Rendu de l'Entretien de M. Schumann et M. Gromyko à Minsk, le 12 janvier 1973, 19.1.1973; MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, 3722, Compte-Rendu de l'Entretien de M. Puaux avec M. Oberemko, 22.1.1973 ; *ibid.*, Moscou tel no. 1229 to Paris, 23.2.1973 ; *ibid.*, Moscou tel no. 1264 to Paris, 24.2.1973 ; *ibid.*, Moscou tel no. 1278 to Paris, 24.2.1973 ; *ibid.*, Compte-Rendu de l'Audience accordée par le Ministre à M. Gromyko, 28.2.1973 ; *ibid.*, Entretien du Secrétaire général avec M. Zemskov, Vice-Ministre soviétique des Affaires Etrangères, 28.2.1973.

<sup>74</sup> MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, 3722, Compte-Rendu de l'Entretien de M. Puaux avec M. Oberemko, 22.1.1973.

partners within the multilateral negotiations between East and West.<sup>75</sup> In such a multilateral framework, the Atlantic Alliance members watched each other acutely and sought to verify what other partners thought. This made it highly difficult for NATO members to breach Western agreements during the multilateral preparatory talks in Helsinki. Andréani also reveals that delegations to Finland sometimes gave EPC solidarity preference over instructions from their capitals.<sup>76</sup> This example indicates that close EPC consultations on the spot in Helsinki came to possess their own dynamism. This dynamism and the mutual surveillance mechanism made the West altogether a more solid entity in the MPT.

The preparatory phase lasted over six months mainly because the West exerted pressure to draft mandates for a CSCE proper. The Multilateral Preparatory Talks thus did in the end become a place for substantial negotiations and a crucially important stage in the development of successful multilateral European détente. For the reasons listed above, NATO and EPC members were able to establish a strong foundation for a Conference with the June 1973 Recommendations. However, in order to make the best use of it, the Europeans and the Canadians had to kill off the US/Soviet agreement on the CSCE/MBFR timetable.

### **Withstanding the Superpower Agreement**

At this final stage of the Multilateral Preparatory Talks, the US/Soviet agreement on the CSCE and MBFR again came to the fore. On 6 May 1973, Henry Kissinger visited Moscow to prepare for the planned Nixon-Brezhnev summit in June 1973. He still had to address the timing of MBFR, because, although the preliminary consultations on mutual force reductions had

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<sup>75</sup> Andréani, *Le Piège*, p. 86.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.



already started on 31 January 1973 in Vienna, the Eastern bloc was continuing to oppose fixing the opening date of a MBFR conference. In addition, on 15 March 1973, Senator Mansfield had succeeded in persuading the Senate Democratic Caucus to adopt a resolution calling for a substantial reduction of US troops overseas during the following eighteen months.<sup>77</sup> "Can we at least agree on a time interval between the end of the CSCE and the beginning of MBFR?", Kissinger hence asked when he met Gromyko in Moscow.<sup>78</sup> The Soviet Foreign Minister then consented to Kissinger's one-month-interval suggestion, based on the premise that "by September-October, the all-European conference will be over."<sup>79</sup> The superpowers again made an agreement to commence MBFR talks one month after the completion of the CSCE. It was clear that the Soviets were attempting to reach a quick conclusion of the CSCE by exploiting MBFR. Such an outcome would have eviscerated the important results of the Final Recommendation of the MTP. Therefore, the non-superpower states had to resist strongly such a US/USSR agreement so as to secure a meaningful multilateral European conference.

There is little doubt that Kissinger also wanted to finish the European security conference quickly, in order to launch a MBFR conference. When he met Bernd von Staden, the newly appointed West German Ambassador to Washington, on 12 May 1973, the US National Security Advisor conveyed the result of his trip to Moscow, explaining that it was the Kremlin's intention to begin MBFR negotiations one month after the conclusion of CSCE – despite the fact that it had actually been Kissinger who had suggested this timetable.<sup>80</sup> At the same time, Kissinger made his opinion clear that such a

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<sup>77</sup> Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Volume III: Détente in Europe, 1972-76, p. 35.

<sup>78</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Memorandum of Conversation [with Gromyko], CSCE, MBFR, Nuclear Agreement, U.N. Membership for FRG and GDR, 6.5.1973.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> AAPD 1973, Dok. 137, Botschafter von Staden, Washington, an Ministerialdirektor van Well, 12.5.1973; DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Discussion with Ambassador von Staden of U.S.-European Relations, KT00721, 12.5.1973.

Conference should be finished as quickly as possible and not be delayed.<sup>81</sup> He had little intention of making the CSCE longer in order to make it substantial and meaningful for the West.

Yet, the idea of a one-month interval between the end of the CSCE and the start of the MBFR was absolutely unacceptable to the FRG government. Although disarmament was an important element in the whole *Ostpolitik* concept, a conference on European security was also significant to Brandt and Scheel as it would help make their Eastern policy sustainable. Therefore, a CSCE should be substantial. The Soviets might have thought that the West Germans would have accepted a quick CSCE conclusion in exchange for an early MBFR start, because the last time Brandt had met Brezhnev in September 1971, the Chancellor had enthusiastically stressed the importance of MBFR.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, Egon Bahr, Brandt's diplomatic advisor, still regarded "MBFR negotiations as very much more important than the CSCE."<sup>83</sup> However, Foreign Minister Walter Scheel, whose Free Democratic Party had supported the idea of a CSCE for a long time, unequivocally rejected such a timetable linkage between the CSCE and MBFR when he met Gromyko on 18 May 1973.<sup>84</sup> Brandt was also never convinced by the Soviet leader's bilateral approach. When Brezhnev met Brandt on 21 May 1973 and insisted on finishing the CSCE before the MBFR could be seriously negotiated, the Chancellor gently rejected the idea that a CSCE could be completed before the spring of 1974 – a very different timetable from that

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> AAPD 1971, Dok. 310, Aufzeichnung des Bundeskanzlers Brandt, z.Z. Oreanda, 17.9.1971.

<sup>83</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1340, Audland to Tickell, 31.1.1973. See also Timothy Garton Ash, In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent, Random House, 1993, pp. 80-81.

<sup>84</sup> PAAA, B-28, Bd. ZA 111516, Delegationsgespräch zwischen Minister Scheel und Minister Gromyko am 18. Mai; AAPD 1973, Dok. 146, Gespräch des Bundesministers Scheel mit dem sowjetischen Außenminister Gromyko, 18.5.1973. The Free Democratic Party had been the strongest supporter of the realisation of a European Security Conference among political parties in West Germany since the mid-1960s, Helga Haftendorn, Sicherheit und Entspannung: zur Aussenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1955-1982, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983, p. 428; David F. Patton, Cold War Politics in Postwar Germany, Macmillan, 1999, p. 69.

sought by the Soviets.<sup>85</sup> In brief, Bonn had no intention of shortening the length of CSCE negotiations for the sake of an early start to the MBFR talks.

Other NATO countries also vehemently opposed the superpower agreement.<sup>86</sup> The Soviet (or US/Soviet) timetable would have led to a short and therefore superficial Conference. If it had been adopted, the West would have had to finish the Conference in less than three months so as to permit the opening of MBFR. The British thought, however, "The longer the CSCE talks last and the deeper they probe the more embarrassing it is for the Soviet Union both tactically and substantively."<sup>87</sup> The French government also maintained that a multilateral European conference should develop its own rhythm.<sup>88</sup> For the majority of West European states, therefore, the negotiations of a CSCE had to be conducted independently without any time pressures. If the conclusion of the CSCE had been connected to the opening of MBFR, the West would have been exposed to internal pressures, in particular pressure from the US government which wanted an early launch of force reduction negotiations to counter Mansfield's offensive. In order to avoid a Conference being hijacked by the American demand for an early start of MBFR, it was indispensable for other NATO countries to fix the opening date of MBFR negotiations in advance and independently of a CSCE schedule.

The first way to oppose Moscow's CSCE/MBFR step-by-step timetable, adopted by EPC countries in particular, was to establish another parallelism. Gromyko envisaged that the second stage of a CSCE (negotiations at the official level centred on drafting the final text) would begin within a few days of the end of the Ministerial CSCE stage I, namely in early July 1973, and

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<sup>85</sup> AAPD 1973, Dok. 152, Aufzeichnung des Bundeskanzlers Brandt, 22.5.1973.

<sup>86</sup> They were informed about the Soviet idea of the timing of MBFR on 21 May 1973. TNA. FCO 41/1226, UKDEL NATO tel no. 334 to FCO, 21.5.1973.

<sup>87</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1226, Moscow tel no. 615 to FCO, 24.5.1973.

<sup>88</sup> AN, 5 AG 2 / 1019, Entretiens Franco-sovietiques 25-27 juin 1973 : Note synthèse, 20.6.1973.

would continue only for two months.<sup>89</sup> However, most EPC governments felt that stage II of the CSCE should start at the earliest in September 1973 – after the European holidays in August.<sup>90</sup> This European timetable was well calculated to prevent CSCE/MBFR linkage since the Soviets themselves had identified September or October 1973 as the best starting date for the MBFR negotiations in their timetable note of September 1972, which had already been shown to France and other EPC members. Given that the final two stages of the CSCE were unlikely to be completed within a month, the Soviets would only be able adhere to their own suggested schedule for the MBFR discussions by accepting that these run in parallel with the latter stages of the CSCE.<sup>91</sup> By preparing another parallelism between the CSCE/MBFR talks, the EPC thus tried to oppose the US/Soviet agreement.

Another way of countering the superpowers was simply not to embark on a CSCE. The Netherlands and the Canadians were indeed the hardliners, who suggested that NATO should not agree on the date for the CSCE stage I Ministerial meeting before the Soviets had accepted the October date for MBFR sought by the Americans.<sup>92</sup> At the end of May 1973, the delegations to the preparatory talks for a CSCE in Helsinki felt that the preparation for a Conference was approaching its conclusion. The East was pressing to fix a date for the first stage Ministerial Conference, and the end of June or early July had already been considered.<sup>93</sup> However, the Canadian and Dutch governments thought that bargaining on the date for CSCE stage I was the West's main leverage for getting the Russians to set an autumn date for MBFR.

Other NATO members were slightly less radical than The Netherlands

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<sup>89</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1226, UKDEL NATO tel no. 344 to FCO, 24.5.1973.

<sup>90</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1226, FCO tel no. 132 to Vienna, 17.5.1973.

<sup>91</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Memorandum of Conversation [between Kissinger and Douglas-Home], KT00719, 10.5.1973.

<sup>92</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1226, UKDEL NATO tel no. 351 to FCO, 28.5.1973. See also AAPD 1973, Dok. 158, fn. 13, pp. 803-4. As regards the Canadian government's reactions, see Spencer, "Canada and the Origins of the CSCE," pp. 92-3.

<sup>93</sup> Ferraris, Report on a Negotiation, p. 40. The preparatory talks for MBFR had already started since 31 January 1973.

and Canada, but their tactics were similar. They doubted the tactical wisdom of delaying the CSCE stage I at this final stage of the MPT.<sup>94</sup> Technically, it would have been awkward to re-arrange the schedules of 35 Foreign Ministers and the preparations of the Finnish conference organizers at such a late stage of the MPT. Politically, a decision not to set an opening date might also have provoked a backlash from the neutral countries, which had been good partners for the West during the MPT. Therefore, there was wide sympathy for the Belgian idea that if the Russians continued to refuse a date for MBFR, the West could simply refuse to start the second phase of the CSCE at the official level in which the substance of the Conference was to be discussed.<sup>95</sup> Nonetheless, the Dutch and Canadians were still adamant and adhered to their opinions. As a result, on the final day of the MPT negotiations, all NATO countries except the USA agreed in general that while accepting the date of 3 July 1973 as the opening of CSCE stage I as *ad referendum*, they would not be in a hurry officially to reply to the Finnish conference invitation.<sup>96</sup> Only the American representative in NATO demurred.<sup>97</sup> The US government was isolated.

The US and the USSR were thus forced in the end to change their agreement on the CSCE/MBFR. Irrespective of their differing preferences in terms of tactics, the West European countries and Canada were all strongly opposed to the US/Soviet agreement on the timing of opening the MBFR negotiation. If Moscow had stuck to the idea that MBFR would begin only one month after the end of the CSCE, there was the danger that neither the CSCE nor MBFR would have been convened at all. As a result, the two

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<sup>94</sup> PAAA, B-28, Bd. ZA 111516, Vermerk, Betr.: Sowjetische Haltung zum Ergebnis der MV, 25.5.1973; TNA, FCO 41/1226, UKDEL NATO tel no. 363 to FCO, 30.5.1973.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> TNA, FCO 41/1226, UKDEL NATO tel no. 422 to FCO, 8.6.1973. Later at the Copenhagen NATO Ministerial meeting on 14/15 June 1973, the NATO Foreign Ministers formally accepted 3 July 1973 as the opening date of the CSCE stage I, before the opening date of MBFR was fixed. However, while stressing that MBFR should start in October 1973, the NATO Foreign Ministers insisted that "a decision on the opening date for the second phase of the Conference remains to be taken." NATO Final Communiqué, <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c730614a.htm>

<sup>97</sup> TNA, FCO 41/1226, UKDEL NATO tel no. 422 to FCO, 8.6.1973.

superpowers had to rethink their plans. According to the British Embassy in Washington, Kissinger confidentially told the British on 4 June 1973 that "The Soviet government has now suggested informally that if the Americans will agree that the CSCE should be concluded by the end of the year, they would agree to a fixed date for MBFR."<sup>98</sup> It seems that through the backchannel, Kissinger and Dobrynin had dealt with this problem. Perhaps, this was not only a Soviet suggestion, but an agreement between the superpowers, or there is a possibility that, as before, this was Kissinger's own suggestion to the Soviet side dressed up as an offer from Moscow. In any case, when Brezhnev visited the United States in late June 1973, he and Nixon finally agreed to begin the MBFR negotiations on 30 October 1973.<sup>99</sup> In other words, the CSCE/MBFR step-by-step timetable had been dropped.

As regards this result of the US/Soviet summit, John Keliher has argued that "Brezhnev may have wanted Nixon to pressure the Allies to get on with CSCE in exchange for Soviet agreement to start MBFR," but "Brezhnev achieved only limited success on this point."<sup>100</sup> However, the "limited success" was not to Nixon's credit. It was the Europeans and the Canadians who eventually limited or rather prevented the US/Soviet "success". Brezhnev zealously attempted to set a terminal date for a Conference, but Nixon could not agree because his NATO partners were opposed to it, replying to the Soviet leader that "All I can say is that we can press forward to get a conclusion as soon as possible."<sup>101</sup> More importantly, the Soviets had to yield to the Western pressures to fix the MBFR opening date before the completion of the CSCE, implying that the Eastern camp lost

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<sup>98</sup> TNA. FCO 41/1226, Washington tel no. 1745 to FCO, 4.6.1973. British Prime Minister Edward Heath strongly opposed any US/Soviet agreement about the date for finishing CSCE. TNA. FCO 41/1227, Bridges to Alexander, 8.6.1973.

<sup>99</sup> See the Joint Communiqué issued at the end of Nixon-Brezhnev summit, in the European NAVigator (ENA) Home Page:

<http://www.ena.lu/mce.cfm>

<sup>100</sup> John G. Keliher, The Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions. The Search for Arms Control in Central Europe, Pergamon Press, 1980, p. 41.

<sup>101</sup> DNSA, Kissinger Transcripts, Memorandum of Conversation [Discussion of Leonid Brezhnev and Richard Nixon on Arms Control and European Security], KT00762, 20.6.1973.

had its most important (and probably the only useful) card to put pressure on the West to force early completion of the security Conference. Even if there was a secret agreement between the superpowers, the other Western countries could conduct the second stage negotiations of the CSCE at their own pace, independently and free from pressure.<sup>102</sup> It made it possible for the Western side to discuss problems such as “freer movement,” longer, more substantially, and more thoroughly – until the East made acceptable concessions.

Although initially disarmament détente had been pursued primarily by the West, it significantly retreated to what became the concept of Confidence Building Measures by early 1972. CBMs were originally the collateral elements of MBFR and their military value was regarded as low. The project of MBFR was also completely separated from the CSCE; hence the prospect of its future advance was crucially curtailed. However, West Europeans secured the true value of the security Conference. The West succeeded in making the East recognise drafting mandates for the CSCE and incorporate humanitarian elements in the terms of reference. And by defeating the superpowers’ secret timetable for the CSCE and MBFR, West European countries were able to maintain to a significant extent the integrity of a multilateral European conference.

## **Epilogue**

From 3 to 7 July 1973, Foreign Ministers from thirty-five countries gathered in the Finlandia Hall, Helsinki, and the first stage of the Conference on

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<sup>102</sup> In the meeting between Gromyko and Michel Jobert, the new French Foreign Minister, on 26 June 1973, the Soviet Foreign Minister insisted that “The second phase must not be ‘artificially prolonged’ and could be terminated at the end of November.” Jobert however retorted that “In particular, we do not desire to fix a date for the end of works of commissions to which we attach the greatest importance.” MAE, Série Europe 1971 - juin 1976, 2926, Paris tel circulaire 388, 30.6.1973.

Security and Cooperation in Europe took place. It marked the opening of a concept of the three-stage Conference as foreseen by the French. The five-day meeting was a formal affair, largely dominated by speeches by Ministers.<sup>103</sup> And the propaganda exchanges in this first stage indicated hard and long negotiations ahead. On the whole, the communist speakers were on the defensive, and repeatedly insisted on the two different systems in Europe and the inviolability of the frontiers between them. Gromyko, in particular, virtually asserted the right of national veto over any movement of information, ideas or people.<sup>104</sup> According to the UK Ambassador in Helsinki, the Soviet Foreign Minister's speech "was written as if nothing had happened in the last nine months [the MPT phase and after], and certainly seemed designed to ensure that nothing happened in the next."<sup>105</sup> However, the thirty-five Ministers approved the Final Recommendations prepared in the MPT without modification, and the mandates in the Blue Book would effectively regulate the direction of the CSCE process.

Beyond everyone's expectation, the second stage of the CSCE lasted for almost two years. The Soviets had not insisted that stage II begin immediately after the Ministerial gathering in July 1973, and it started as the West had proposed from 18 September 1973 in Geneva. According to the approved June 1973 Recommendations, representatives from thirty-five nations set up the Co-ordinating Committee, three main Basket Committees, plus several Sub-Committees and Working Groups.<sup>106</sup> In short, they institutionalised the terms of reference in the Blue Book and established a footing according to which the officials from participating countries negotiated in detail the content and language of the final text. The Eastern countries could not escape from the framework established in the Multilateral Preparatory Talks. Moreover, they failed to achieve a speedy

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<sup>103</sup> AAPD 1973, Dok. 221, Runderlaß Vortragenden Legationsrats I. Klasse Dohms, 10.8.1973.

<sup>104</sup> TNA. FCO 41/ 1317, Helsinki tel no. 735 to FCO, 6.7.1973.

<sup>105</sup> DBPO, III, II, Doc. 42, Mr. Elliott (Helsinki) to Sir A. Douglas-Home, 16.7.1973.

<sup>106</sup> As regards the organisational structure for stage II of the CSCE, see DBPO III, II, p. 480.



completion of work in stage II. At first, the Soviet Union tried to give priority to the agenda item of a Declaration of Principles which lay at the heart of Basket I and push issues in Baskets II and III to a later phase in the hope that the latter would be wrapped up quickly and under substantial time pressure. However, the Warsaw Pact had no leverage to force the West to accept such Eastern negotiation tactics. The opening date of the MBFR conference had already been fixed for 30 October 1973 and there was no reason for NATO governments to finish this vitally important second stage in a premature fashion. In mid-November 1973, the UK representative at the second stage CSCE in Geneva saw the situation as follows: "It seems clear that the Russians have now given up their hope of forcing an early conclusion to the second stage and are now thinking in terms of working until the spring [1974]."<sup>107</sup> Yet, in the end, it was not completed until summer 1975.

On security matters, the achievements of the West were relatively limited. For a start, the principles securing the status quo in Europe, such as the renunciation of the threat of or use of force and the inviolability of frontiers were confirmed. The final agreement on confidence building measures – prior notification (21 days) of large military manoeuvres (of more than 25,000 troops) up to a distance of 250 km from the frontier of a neighbour; and an exchange of observers at such manoeuvres – was less satisfactory for the West Europeans, partly because these CBMs would be carried out only on a voluntary base, and partly because, in May 1975, Kissinger personally negotiated with Gromyko a larger number of troops and a smaller number of prior notification days and distance than the US's partners had expected to obtain.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, the negotiations on mutual

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<sup>107</sup> DBPO, III, II, Doc. 54, Mr. Hildyard (UKMIS Geneva) to Sir A. Douglas-Home, 17.11.1973.

<sup>108</sup> Kenneth Dyson, "The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Europe before and after the Helsinki Final Act". in European Détente: Case Studies of the Politics of East-West Relations. Ed. by Kenneth Dyson. F. Pinter, 1986, pp. 97-98; DBPO, III, II, Doc. 136, Mr. Hildyard (UKMIS Geneva) to Mr. Callaghan, 25.7.1975; DNSA, Kissinger

force reductions, which had begun on 30 November 1973 outside of the CSCE framework, in the end continued inconclusively until the late 1980s. While NATO demanded balanced force cuts, the Warsaw Pact insisted on equal reductions, namely the consolidation of the current imbalance of force levels in Europe. This divergence of opinion proved impossible to overcome during the Cold War.

The result of the battle over the Basket II – Co-operation in the Field of Economics, of Science and Technology and of the Environment – was a draw. The main difference of opinion was on principles between Most Favored Nation (MFN) treatment and reciprocity in trade. While the Eastern bloc desired comprehensive European cooperation based on the principle of MFN treatment, a step which would have removed quantitative restrictions from East-West trade, the Western bloc, and EC countries in particular, gave priority to the principle of reciprocity in trade relations, and ways and means of improving business contacts and the flow of economic information, because the NATO side thought that MFN would benefit only the East and would be of little value to the West. Indeed it could even harm the latter by undermining the EC's Common Agricultural Policy.<sup>109</sup> Both sides made concessions in the last month of the stage II negotiations, agreeing on formulae which vaguely and clumsily incorporated both sides' views, such as: "on the basis of equality and mutual satisfaction of the partners, and of reciprocity permitting, as a whole, an equitable distribution of advantages and obligations of comparable scale."<sup>110</sup> Although such an unclear compromise helped to complete the second stage of the CSCE, it amounted to no real agreement in the economic field. Indeed, it was highly difficult to convert these abstract words into concrete economic practice. The actual impact of such a multilaterally agreed text on East-West economic relations

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Transcripts, Memorandum of Conversation, CSCE, KT01627, 19.5.1975.

<sup>109</sup> Dyson, "The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe," p. 98.

<sup>110</sup> A phrase in the preamble of the Basket II in the Helsinki Final Act. Maresca, *To Helsinki*, p. 239; *DBPO, III, II*, Doc. 135, Letter from Dr. Fielder (UKMIS Geneva) to Mr. T. Alexander, 21.7.1975.

was, therefore, marginal for both camps.<sup>111</sup>

On humanitarian aspects of the CSCE, however, the West and EPC in particular gained a high score. They had already successfully included the outstanding principle of the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the declaration on principles guiding relations between participating states. The Soviet Union and its allies had tenaciously tried to dilute the contents of the Basket III of human contacts and information by, for example, drafting preambles which would make it possible to use the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs as an excuse to restrict the application of Basket III to concrete cases. However, the EC Nine continued carefully to thwart such Eastern manoeuvres.<sup>112</sup> Kissinger, who disregarded the humanitarian dimension in East/West relations, preferred a quick conclusion of the CSCE in order to retain good relations with the Soviet Union. Yet, when he tried to persuade America's allies not to be intransigent on the subject of human contacts, he had no legitimate means to pressurise them once the MBFR had started.<sup>113</sup> The start of the force reduction talks before the conclusion of the CSCE, insisted upon by West European countries and Canada, had already deprived the US of its ability to force its Allies to accept a text of little substance. Moreover, it was Brezhnev who, after the long haul of the second stage, ultimately lost patience. In early March 1975, he wrote to the principal Western leaders, proposing that the "final stage of the Conference at the highest level" should begin on June 30 1975.<sup>114</sup> This Soviet move gave a great opportunity to the West to exploit the deadline in order to push Moscow on the Basket III issues in return for an acceptance of the summit meeting. Hence, at the end of May 1975, the Warsaw Pact countries eventually made substantial concessions and accepted the Western

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<sup>111</sup> Philip Hanson, "Economic aspects of Helsinki," *International Affairs*, 4/61 (1985).

<sup>112</sup> Alfred Pijpers, "European Political Cooperation and the CSCE process". *Legal Issues of European Integration*, 1 (1984), p. 142.

<sup>113</sup> *DBPO, III, II*, Doc. 94, Mr. Elliott (Helsinki) to Mr. Callaghan, 29.7.1974.

<sup>114</sup> Maresca, *To Helsinki*, p. 142; *DBPO, III, II*, Doc. 115, p. 388, footnote 3.

proposals regarding human contacts and information.<sup>115</sup>

The final stage of the CSCE Summit opened on 30 July 1975 and continued for three days. The chiefs of state and heads of government returned to the same place where their Foreign Ministers had gathered two years earlier. The leaders of the main Western countries had already changed. Heath, Brandt and Nixon had all left power and Pompidou had died. New faces, Harold Wilson, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Helmut Schmidt and Gerald Ford, came to the capital of Finland. However, the outcome of the efforts of diplomats and experts since 1969 came to fruition as the Helsinki Final Act. On 1 August 1975, this historic document was signed and marked a significant step for the long-term change of the Cold War.

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<sup>115</sup> DBPO, III, II, Doc. 123, Mr. Hildyard (UKMIS Geneva) to Mr. Burns, 30.5.1975; Ljubivoje Acimovic, Problems of Security and Cooperation in Europe, Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands; Rockville, Md., USA: Sijthoff & Noordhoff, 1981, p. 133.

## **Conclusion: Organising Multilateral European Détente**

This study has focused on 1969-1973, the period which led up to the opening of the CSCE. The four years were crucially important for organising multilateral European détente. Previous scholarship had largely analysed the CSCE itself and its aftermath. However, exploring the period 1969-1973 offers an account of how the Conference came to be held and how it was arranged. The way in which the CSCE was organised was highly significant because it made the Conference meaningful and transformed it into something which contributed to ending the Cold War conflict in the long run.

The first task of this concluding chapter will be to present an overview of the development of détente in Europe from 1963 to 1973, and underline the importance of multilateral European détente. It will then ask why the CSCE took place from the Western point of view. Furthermore, it will underline the importance of the procedural aspects of the Conference, which on the one hand made European Political Cooperation the forefront of the West in the CSCE negotiations, and on the other made the Conference practical and meaningful. And finally it will highlight the way in which the CSCE, which represented an element of both the status quo and economic-cultural-humanitarian détente, provided a framework which gradually eroded the Eastern bloc system, thereby contributing to the ending of the Cold War.

## **Uncontrollable Multilateral European Détente**

To start with, it is important to recognise that détente had multiple meanings. As argued in Chapter 1, in the 1960s, the three pillars of détente were the status quo, economic-cultural exchanges, and arms control and disarmament. By recognising current borders and regimes, status quo

détente was intended to pursue stability. East/West economic and cultural exchanges were expected to improve the atmosphere between the blocs and increase mutual understanding. In order to reduce the danger of military confrontation, arms control and disarmament were also important subjects of détente.

It was in the nuclear arms control domain that the first concrete result of détente in the early 1960s appeared: the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963. It was also the beginning of the separation of superpower and European détente. In fact, the test ban treaty was primarily accomplished bilaterally by the USA and the USSR, and their European allies played little role. More significantly, the superpowers were able to reach agreement on the test ban owing to their detachment of the German question from their détente. In the 1950s, the German question and the issue of arms control/disarmament had been closely linked. The Western powers had insisted that arms control and disarmament détente would come only after the settlement of the German problem. In order to stabilise superpower relationships, however, the US government decided to pursue only the subject of nuclear arms control. For this purpose, the Americans isolated the nuclear test ban talks from the German question, although conventional disarmament still continued to be attached to the problem of the division of Germany. In addition, Washington and Moscow skilfully shelved the problem of East German recognition, which would have accompanied the signing of a test ban treaty. By leaving aside such a highly difficult problem in Europe, the United State and the USSR were able to concentrate on the nuclear issue. In this sense, the LTBT was the birth of superpower détente.

This meant that the German question was still an overwhelming obstacle to multilateral European détente. Since the 1950s, the Soviet Union had pursued a status quo détente through the recognition of the two Germanies. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, however, West Germany continued to resist accepting the existence of East Germany. As long as the

Eastern bloc wanted the recognition of the status quo including East Germany, it was rather difficult to develop European détente multilaterally, because the participation of the GDR in multilateral institutions or conferences automatically meant the recognition of another Germany as a formal member of international society. Such a step was unacceptable to the FRG, and other Western partners had to respect Bonn's vital interests.

Some European countries thus attempted to promote economic-cultural contacts bilaterally with the Eastern governments. The most spectacular example was de Gaulle's approach to the Soviet Union and East European countries, which culminated in his 1966 trip to Moscow. However, bilateral French détente in the end had little political impact on East-West relations. Although it is likely that few East or West European countries were completely satisfied with the superpowers' domination, they also wanted to maintain their respective Alliances. When de Gaulle visited Warsaw in 1967, for instance, Gomulka underlined the significance Poland attached to keeping close relations with other Warsaw Pact countries. On the Western side, de Gaulle's unilateral initiative towards the East, together with France's withdrawal from NATO's integrated military command, caused a crisis in the Atlantic Alliance. As many historians have argued, however, the General's challenges contributed to the consolidation of the Western bloc with the adoption of the flexible response strategy and the Harmel report in 1967, even though the aim of the General's détente policy had been to dissolve the two blocs.<sup>1</sup>

Multilateral proposals were ignored. From 1966 onwards, the Warsaw Pact countries began to advocate convening a pan-European conference. But

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<sup>1</sup> Frederic Bozo, "Detente versus Alliance: France, the United States and the Politics of the Harmel Report (1964-1968)", *Contemporary European History*, 7/3 (1998); Helga Haftendorn, "The Adaptation of the NATO Alliance to a Period of Détente: The 1967 Harmel Report," in Wilfried Loth (ed.), *Crises and Compromises: The European Project 1963-1969*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2001; Andreas Wenger, "Crisis and Opportunity: NATO and the Miscalculation of Detente, 1966-1968", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 6/1 (2004); James Ellison, "Defeating the General: Anglo-American Relations, Europe and the NATO Crisis of 1966", *Cold War History*, 6/1 (2006).

NATO never replied officially to such Eastern initiatives. In fact, no communiqué issued by NATO Ministers in the 1960s mentioned a multilateral European conference. The report on "The Future Tasks of the Alliance" – the Harmel Report – identified deterrence and détente as NATO's roles. However, it did not contain any new approach towards the German question. Hence, the Atlantic Alliance's move towards a multilateral conference was still highly restricted. Certainly, in 1968, the West also proposed a multilateral disarmament project: Mutual Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR). However, it was mainly aired for the purpose of countering US domestic pressure for unilateral US troop withdrawals from the European continent. MBFR was also proposed in the expectation that the Warsaw Pact would not respond to it immediately. This proved to be a correct assumption as the Eastern bloc ignored the Western initiative on mutual reductions of conventional forces until 1970.

In practice, the 1969-1972 period was still dominated by bilateral détente. Although in March 1969 the Warsaw Pact again proposed the holding of a pan-European security conference, the West's first reaction to the East's initiative was to keep probing the motivations of the Warsaw Pact countries through bilateral contacts. The superpowers also began the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) bilaterally. Moreover, the Federal Republic of Germany embarked on a new *Ostpolitik* with the Soviet Union, Poland and then the East Germany. Arms control, economic-cultural exchanges and the recognition of the status quo were still pursued mainly through bilateral channels.

Yet this era of bilateral détente was an indispensable precursor of multilateral détente since for the first time the West Germans tackled the German question in a practical manner. The Brandt government at last recognised the existence of East Germany *de facto* as well as accepting the Oder-Neisse line between East Germany and Poland. The 1970 Moscow Treaty between Bonn and Moscow – the most successful outcome of



*Ostpolitik* – cleared away the long-standing obstacle to a multilateral European conference.

The success of West Germany's Eastern policies did not automatically lead to the CSCE. The Berlin problem also had to be resolved before the Conference could be held. The West had made the settlement of the Berlin talks, which had begun in March 1970 between the Four Powers, a precondition for the opening of multilateral preparations for the CSCE. Brandt also made it a precondition for the ratification of the Moscow Treaty in the *Bundestag*. As a result, the Berlin question was the central problem with regard to European détente. Without its settlement, no other set of talks could advance. Yet, the negotiations on the divided city of Berlin were highly difficult. Although the real talks on this subject were conducted through the backchannel between Kissinger and Dobrynin, even these secret communications soon became deadlocked. As highlighted in Chapter 4, it was Egon Bahr who broke the impasse by providing Kissinger with an ingenious idea: shelving the juridical problem of the status of Berlin and concentrating on pragmatic improvements in the city's situation. This idea made it possible not only to draft a Berlin arrangement pragmatically, but also to change the circumstances in which neither the Americans nor the Soviets wanted to make the first concession. In the end, the Quadripartite Berlin Agreement was signed on 3 September 1971. The resolution of the German question through the Moscow Treaty, Warsaw Treaty and the Berlin Agreement then paved the way for multilateral European détente.

The most sensitive problems – Germany and Berlin – were thus dealt with exclusively in a bilateral manner (or at most trilateral: Washington-Bonn-Moscow). The result of the bilateral talks was in essence the recognition of the status quo – i.e. of existing status and existing borders. Neither side sought radical change in these negotiations. Stability was preferred. This was also the case for the bilateral superpower agreements on nuclear matters such as the LTBT, the NPT and the SALT. For Washington,

Bonn and Moscow, these important and sensitive subjects had to be controlled carefully. In other words, bilateral (and sometimes secret) arrangements were easily controllable. And such controlled negotiations naturally resulted in agreements confirming and maintaining current politico-military circumstances. Within such bilateral talks, there was little space for new elements which would explicitly change the existing situation.<sup>2</sup> By contrast, only within the framework of multilateral détente, could humanitarian agenda items be incorporated, co-existing alongside status quo-orientated issues such as the inviolability of frontiers.

The United States and the Soviet Union also attempted to control multilateral projects bilaterally, and succeeded to some extent. For example, they agreed to separate completely the CSCE from MBFR. Although smaller NATO members and neutral countries wanted to connect the two sets of talks, the superpowers refused to compromise on this point. Washington and Moscow also tried to fix the timetable for the CSCE and MBFR. In fact, the timing of the opening of the multilateral preparatory talks for the CSCE and the exploratory talks for MBFR was significantly influenced by the arrangement made by Kissinger and Gromyko in September 1972.

However, in a multilateral context new elements of détente emerged, and the superpowers were not able to exercise a dominant influence over the procedure of the CSCE and MBFR. As early as late 1969, within NATO, the idea of the freer movement of people, ideas and information appeared as an issue to be discussed between the East and the West. This was originally a French idea, picked up by the Americans and jointly presented to other NATO partners. The issue of human relations was then proposed as an

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<sup>2</sup> The studies focusing on bilateral détente, therefore, tend to emphasise that détente served to consolidate the status quo, implying prolonging the Cold War. For example, Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*. Rev. ed., Brookings Institution, 1994, pp. 1171-74; Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003, pp. 258-9; M. E. Sarotte, *Dealing with the Devil: East Germany, Détente, and Ostpolitik, 1969-1973*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001, pp. 174-77; Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent*. New York: Random House, 1993, chapter 8.

expansion of economic and cultural exchanges. Moreover, the West Germans suggested incorporating a reference to human rights in the principles governing the relationship between states. Bonn wanted a gradual development of human contacts between the two camps and the two Germanies in particular. "Freer movement" sounded too concrete and hence too radical, however. Therefore, the FRG government preferred the more general principle of human rights, which would serve as a long-term norm. Although many Western diplomats did not expect such a human rights principle to have a substantial effect on East/West relations, it is undeniable that this step introduced a vital new humanitarian factor into the Cold War division of Europe. In the medium term this was to have a decisive effect in undermining the legitimacy of the Eastern Bloc regimes.

Moreover, once multilateral *détente* began to progress in Europe, the US and the Soviet Union found that they were not able to manipulate it completely. Washington and Moscow shared an interest in finishing the CSCE quickly. The Soviets wanted a brief Conference which would produce only vague declarations confirming the status quo. The Americans and Kissinger in particular had little interest in a multilateral European conference. Instead, in order to secure Moscow's commitment to the MBFR project, Kissinger had secretly agreed with Brezhnev to complete the whole CSCE process by autumn 1973 after only two or three months of discussions, and then begin the MBFR negotiations after the conclusion of the CSCE. For Kissinger, therefore, a short security Conference was desirable so as to start MBFR as soon as possible. This was a superpower timetable that West Europeans and the Canadians could not accept. They thought that the longer the European security conference continued, the more embarrassing it would be for the Soviet Union both tactically and substantively; hence it would be to the West's advantage to have a security Conference which lasted for much longer than the two or three months envisaged by the USSR and the US. The CSCE had to be allowed to develop at its own pace. Therefore, they strongly

resisted the Kissinger/Brezhnev agreement fearing that such a brief CSCE would make it superficial and with little substance for the West. Faced with vehement European and Canadian opposition, the superpowers were finally forced to back down, agreeing to the opening of MBFR talks before the completion of the CSCE. As a result, the latter Conference could continue its negotiations for a full two years without serious American or Soviet pressure to finishing it earlier in order to begin conventional force reduction talks.

The two-year negotiations were significant since they allowed the West to extract concessions from the East on the issues of human rights and freer movement of people, ideas and information. The superpowers could not dilute the importance of humanitarian elements in the CSCE context. As long as the Soviets wanted the CSCE, they could not avoid including the human rights issue on the agenda. Kissinger disregarded the humanitarian dimension in East/West relations and preferred a quick conclusion of the CSCE so as to maintain good relations with the Soviet Union. However, when he tried to persuade America's allies not to be adamant on the humanitarian subject, he had no legitimate means to pressure them especially after the MBFR had started in October 1973.<sup>3</sup> As is known well, the human rights clause was included in the principles governing relations between states drawn up as part of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. The issue of human contacts, which had been detached from the economic agenda item during the Multilateral Preparatory Talks, was also contained in the Final Act as the famous Basket III. This was also a reflection of the superpowers' inability to control multilateral European détente.

### **Western Commitment to the CSCE**

Why was the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held in the

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<sup>3</sup> DBPO, III, II, pp. 323-4.

early 1970s? As argued above, the settlement of the German question was a first step towards the CSCE.<sup>4</sup> Before convening a multilateral European conference including East Germany, it was necessary to recognise the existence of another Germany. Brandt's bilateral *Ostpolitik* made this possible. The conclusion of the Berlin negotiations was also imperative. The West had first looked at the idea of a European security conference with considerable scepticism. By using the Berlin question, therefore, the NATO countries tried to test the East's sincerity and made the satisfactory settlement of the Berlin negotiations a precondition for the opening of preparatory talks for the CSCE. The settlement of the Moscow Treaty and the Quadripartite Berlin Agreement thus eliminated difficult obstacles on the way to the European security conference.

Yet, however important the settlement of the German and Berlin questions was, it was only a prerequisite or background condition. Of equal importance is to ask why the West accepted the Eastern initiative for a status quo-orientated conference on European security. NATO governments had ignored the idea during the 1960s. Why did they not continue to reject it? And yet at the May 1970 NATO Ministerial meeting – held *before* the success of Brandt's *Ostpolitik* – the Atlantic Alliance publicly committed itself to the idea of the CSCE on condition that progress was made in “the on-going talks – in particular on Germany and Berlin.” As a starting point, Britain's role in the early stages is worth highlighting.<sup>5</sup> The British Foreign Office was initially highly sceptical of the Soviet proposal for a European security conference. Nonetheless, the then Foreign Secretary, Michael Stewart was more inclined towards détente in general. He felt pressures from within his Labour party. Equally, the British Foreign Secretary was concerned about underlying student criticism of the Western Alliance and their demands for good East/West relations. As a result, he supported the idea of establishing a Standing Committee on East-West Relations (SCEWR)

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<sup>4</sup> Raymond Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, p. 139.

<sup>5</sup> Chapter 2.

– a formula invented by the Foreign Office. For British foreign officials, it was thought that this idea might serve to deflect the Warsaw Pact's conference proposal. For Stewart, however, the SCEWR was a useful way of showing a positive stance towards détente in public. Selling the SCEWR to Britain's NATO partners, Britain encouraged the Atlantic Alliance not to be negative towards détente and not immediately and bluntly to reject the conference concept. Although the idea of SCEWR itself was not finally accepted, British leadership was vital during 1969/70 in beginning to get NATO to move towards the eventual acceptance of the CSCE. Later in 1972, Kissinger reproachfully told Thomas Brimelow, the Deputy Under Secretary at the UK Foreign Office, that "If they [the USA] had been able to get the support of two or three European countries, they might have prevented it [the CSCE]."<sup>6</sup> President Nixon also told Burke Trend, the British Cabinet Secretary, that "The US government themselves had never wanted the Conference - it was some of the European countries, not least the United Kingdom, who had originally pressed for it."<sup>7</sup> Although the British were not necessarily enthusiastic about the Conference itself, the British initiative had worked – unintentionally to some extent – in pushing NATO towards the CSCE.

In addition to the importance of Stewart's leadership, NATO Foreign Ministers' general preference for détente was highly significant in explaining the growth of support for the CSCE. During 1969-1972 in particular, NATO and the Warsaw Pact had continued a "dialogue by communiqué."<sup>8</sup> In drafting such communiqués during Ministerial NATO Council meetings, many NATO Foreign Ministers wanted to make them as forthcoming as possible. Through positive wording, they wanted to demonstrate that the

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<sup>6</sup> DBPO, III, II, Doc. 12.

<sup>7</sup> PRO. PREM 15/1362, Record of Discussions with Dr. Kissinger at Washington on 28<sup>th</sup> July, 1972.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth Dyson, "The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Europe before and after the Helsinki Final Act," in Kenneth Dyson (ed.), European Détente: Case Studies of the Politics of East-West Relations, F. Pinter, 1986, p.86.

West was willing to promote détente. By so doing, the Atlantic Alliance became publicly involved in the idea of a European security conference because they accepted the Conference in their communiqués, albeit conditionally. As a result, once the negotiations on the Moscow Treaty or Berlin progressed, even those countries that disliked the CSCE gradually came to think that the convening of a security Conference was inevitable. Why did the NATO Foreign Ministers believe that they needed to be positive towards détente? Some, such as Stewart or Harmel, personally supported détente. Others, in particular Ministers of smaller countries, felt public pressures in favour of a relaxation in tension between East and West. In general, though, the feelings of NATO Foreign Ministers are probably best explained by Wenger and Suri's comment that: "Diplomacy and social protest in the 1960s left a legacy of pervasive unrest for policy-makers in succeeding years."<sup>9</sup> Politicians' anxieties about social unrest, British leadership and the settlement of the German question were the reasons for NATO's eventual commitment to the CSCE.

### **Organising the CSCE**

The years between 1969 and 1973 were vitally significant not only for the gradual acceptance that a CSCE would be held, but also for a series of decisions about how the Conference itself would be organised. Indeed, the procedural aspects of the Conference, to which earlier scholarship has generally paid little attention, were important in at least two ways. Firstly, the procedural problem was the key issue to understanding the way in which EPC – a central player of the Western bloc in the MPT and the Conference proper – developed its cooperation on CSCE matters. Secondly, the French

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<sup>9</sup> Andreas Wenger and Jeremi Suri, "At the Crossroads of Diplomatic and Social History: The Nuclear Revolution, Dissent and Detente," *Cold War History*, 1/3 (2001), p. 29.

procedural concept of a three-stage Conference transformed the Warsaw Pact's idea of a "pan-European" conference into a meaningful and substantial project.

In 1970-72, one of the most controversial points concerning the CSCE within NATO was how to arrange any European security conference. In the Western bloc, the American and French ideas on procedure were diametrically opposed. The US government preferred long and intensive preparatory negotiations and a brief one-off conference at the Foreign Minister level. In contrast, the French government, which had become more enthusiastic about the CSCE, wanted short preparatory talks and a long three-stage conference; first, a Ministerial level conference after preparatory talks; second, official level negotiations of some length; and third, a concluding Ministerial conference. Opinions within the Atlantic Alliance on these two ideas were divided. France's EC partners largely preferred the American concept, because they disliked rushing into a conference with only brief preparatory talks. Moreover, when EPC was established, West Germany and the Netherlands in particular wanted to avoid EPC being dominated by France and joined in opposition with America, trying to represent US opinions within the EC's political consultations. As a result, EC cooperation on the CSCE did not develop in its first year.

However, as argued in Chapter 5, the French procedural schema acted as a catalyst for advancing cooperation among EC members. In particular, the convergence of opinion between Bonn and Paris became its core. After the signing of the Quadripartite Berlin Agreement of 3 September 1971, the West German Foreign Ministry began to work harder on preparations for the CSCE so as to exploit it for the FRG's interests. Yet, not all Bonn's views were shared by its partners. Indeed, West German preference for a gradual and steady approach on the issue of human contacts was opposed by the more radical Americans and the British.<sup>10</sup> In order to secure a Western

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<sup>10</sup> The US State Department was keen on the agenda item of freer movement of people,



stance close to the West German view, Bonn needed more support from EPC members and in particular from France than before. The FRG thus began to accept the French procedural concept of a three-stage conference for the sake of Franco-German cooperation in the EPC. France also made a concession so as to gain backing for its procedural plan. A new French idea was critically important; Paris proposed that the Multilateral Preparatory Talks be asked to prepare a mandate for the CSCE, a step which would make the MPT relatively longer and more substantial. The new combination of a mandate and a three-stage conference was finally supported by West Germany and other partners except the Netherlands. Because the majority among the EPC now preferred the French proposal, it then became the working hypothesis on which EPC's studies on the CSCE were developed and accumulated in 1972. By the end of the year, the Dutch had also accepted the French idea. When the MPT began in November 1972, it was thus EPC that led the preparatory negotiations for the CSCE. And EPC's success in the MPT gave its members incentives to be cooperative in the Conference itself in 1973-75. In this sense, the successful resolution of the procedural problem amongst the European Community members was the origin of EPC's "one voice" in the CSCE negotiations.

Another significant aspect of CSCE's procedure was the way in which the Conference became meaningful and constructive owing to the French schema. If one compares the French ideas with the other suggestions on the table, its transformative effect on the CSCE will become clear. The original Soviet idea was for brief preparations and one Summit conference culminating with a general declaration including the inviolability of frontiers. The aim was merely to recognise the status quo in Europe. A status quo détente providing stability might have emerged if a Soviet-type Conference

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ideas and information in 1969-1972. However, after the successful US/USSR summit of May 1972, the White House and Kissinger in particular came to prefer a less confrontational approach towards the Soviet Union to improve humanitarian aspects between East and West.

had been concluded. However, it would not have contained any elements reducing East/West antagonism.

The procedural concept proposed by the Americans was not constructive. The US government wanted a long preparatory phase, because its underlying intention was to retain the possibility of not holding the conference itself at all. Washington disliked the idea of a European conference and therefore insisted on long preliminary talks in order to be able to reject it, should the East, during the preparatory phase, provide it with an excuse to do so such as military intervention somewhere in the world as had happened in Czechoslovakia in 1968. This American approach was criticised by the French in particular since it risked giving the impression that the West was uncooperative towards détente. A long preparatory phase was also unattractive to the Soviets. Moreover, as will be argued below, a single Ministerial conference would not have been enough to elicit enough concessions from the East.

The French formula worked much better than the others. The combination of medium-length preparatory talks for a mandate, a symbolic first-stage Ministerial conference, real and longer negotiations during the second stage, and a final Ministerial/Summit conference, was the key to making the CSCE successful. Firstly, by putting the real negotiations in the second stage of a conference, it made the preparatory phase look as if it could be finished in a relatively short time; This made it appealing for Moscow and lured the Warsaw Pact countries into the French three-stage idea. Secondly, during the preparatory talks, the West succeeded in forcing the East to accept draft terms of reference for the second-stage negotiations. The mandates, which were prepared mainly by EPC, set the direction of talks at the official level and contained the West's main negotiating aims, namely the establishment of a principle of human rights and the inclusion of an agenda item on human contacts. The Eastern bloc, which wanted to hold a Ministerial conference, had to agree to these terms of reference. Thirdly, the

long official level negotiations based on and directed by the mandate, made the Conference more substantive – again something which favoured the West. And finally, after two years of negotiations, partly thanks to Brezhnev's personal preoccupation with holding a *Summit* level conference at the third stage, the Warsaw Pact finally made further compromises over the humanitarian agenda item. When the idea of a pan-European conference had been proposed by the East, there had been little advantage in it from the Western point of view. With the French procedural concept and the inclusion of the humanitarian elements, the CSCE became constructive, substantial and meaningful for détente in Europe.

### **Stability and the Helsinki Effect**

Viewed with the benefit of post-Cold War hindsight, disarmament détente in Europe represented from 1968 onwards by MBFR did not play a significant role in ending the Cold War. The conventional force reduction talks, which had begun in October 1973, were able to reach a conclusion only after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and communist regimes in Eastern Europe.<sup>11</sup> Disarmament talks could not reduce military tension in Europe during the Cold War. The concept of Confidence Building Measures (CBM), which was incorporated in the Basket I of the Helsinki Final Act, was originally merely a “collateral constraint” to accompany force reductions in MBFR. The emergence of the idea of CBM reflected the Western realisation that balanced troop cuts in Europe would be highly difficult. From the beginning, moreover, the military value of CBM was regarded as marginal.<sup>12</sup> Instead, it was the CSCE, including a status quo détente and economic-cultural-humanitarian détente, that in the long run contributed to

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<sup>11</sup> The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) was signed on 19 November 1990 in Paris.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 6.

the lifting of the Iron Curtain.

On the one hand, the stabilising effect of status quo détente in the CSCE explains why there was no immediate drastic change in the East/West division in Europe. The Warsaw Pact governments celebrated the Helsinki Final Act as a triumphant confirmation of “peaceful coexistence.”<sup>13</sup> The Helsinki Accords were a *de facto* World War II peace treaty accepting the post-war borders and the two Germanies in a multilateral framework.<sup>14</sup> The principles on the “inviolability of frontiers” and the “non-intervention in internal affairs” contained in the Final Act were, however, a double-edged sword. While they were criticised as a symbol recognising Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe, they – together with the principle on “refraining from the threat or use of force” – would also serve as a basis for repudiating the Brezhnev Doctrine of limited sovereignty. In any case, the CSCE offered grounds for stabilising state relationships in Europe.

On the other hand, in the relatively stable atmosphere at governmental level, economic-cultural détente including human rights norms encouraged elements which shook the Eastern bloc from below. In the latter half of the 1970s, economic and cultural exchanges between East and West Europe increased. Although the terms of the Helsinki Final Act’s Basket II were not necessary helpful for increasing East/West economic exchanges, the French President Giscard d’Estaing and the West German Chancellor Schmidt in particular energetically developed such cooperation in the atmosphere of détente created by the success of the CSCE.<sup>15</sup> In fact, there was a marked increase in East-West trade in the 1970s.<sup>16</sup> Economic growth in Eastern

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<sup>13</sup> Daniel C. Thomas, The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001, p. 94.

<sup>14</sup> John Maresca, To Helsinki, p. xii.

<sup>15</sup> Wilfried Loth, Overcoming the Cold War: A History of Détente, 1950-1991, Palgrave, 2002, pp. 145-7. See also, Marie-Pierre Rey, “Le retour à l’Europe? Les décideurs soviétiques face à l’intégration ouest-européenne, 1957-1991,” Journal of European Integration History, 11/1 (2005), pp. 19-20.

<sup>16</sup> William V. Wallace and Roger A. Clarke, Comecon, Trade and the West. London: Pinter, 1986, pp. 162-63.

Europe in that decade was extensively funded by Western loans.<sup>17</sup> This gradually changed the societies of the Eastern bloc, increasing the need for Western consumer goods and necessitating further credit support. The autonomy of the closed states was thereby eroded.

More importantly, what Daniel Thomas has called the Helsinki effect, the Final Act's human rights norms affected the peoples of the Soviet Union and Eastern European.<sup>18</sup> The contents of the Helsinki Accords became known by them gradually but steadily. Dissidents in the socialist bloc organised groups and developed networks.<sup>19</sup> Eurocommunism in Spain, Italy and France also asserted its respect for human rights, challenging the ideological legitimacy of the Soviet system. In practice, however, human rights in the socialist regimes did not improve drastically nor immediately after the conclusion of the Final Act. The Warsaw Pact governments tried to stop the effect of the Helsinki Final Act and many activists were arrested and jailed. Yet, there were limits to how far the communist authorities could go in this repression because they wanted to maintain the stability needed for good economic relations with the West and, for that reason, they could not repress the dissidents so blatantly that they were eliminated. While the CSCE stabilised Europe by recognising the status quo, the Helsinki effect started to weaken the foundations of the Eastern bloc.

The final stages of the Cold War at the superpower level needs further explanation.<sup>20</sup> "Why did the Cold War end in 1989" is also an important question to be explored.<sup>21</sup> In the context of the Cold War in Europe, however, the triangle of stability, economic relations, and human rights provided a

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<sup>17</sup> David Reynolds, One World Divisible: a Global History since 1945. New York: W.W. Norton, 2000, p. 551.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas, The Helsinki Effect, chapter 3.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., chapter 4.

<sup>20</sup> A brief and systematic analysis of the end of the superpower Cold War is given in, Jeremi Suri, "Explaining the End of the Cold War: A New Historical Consensus?" Journal of Cold War Studies, 4/4 (2002).

<sup>21</sup> Vladislav M. Zubok "Why Did the Cold War End in 1989? Explanations of 'The Turn'," in Odd Arne Westad (ed.) Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory, London: Frank Cass, 2000.

framework for ending the Cold War. In this framework established by the Helsinki Final Act, many dissident groups such as Charter 77, Solidarity, and Helsinki Human Rights Watch were given encouragement to advance their activities. As long as the Soviet Union and its allies wanted stability and economic exchanges, they also could not escape from the human rights issue in their countries. And the more the Eastern economies struggled, the more the framework mattered. When economic necessity and people power combined, the 1989 East European revolutions happened in this CSCE triangular framework, which had been prepared by multilateral European détente developed in 1969-1973.

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