

to participate given the UKs newly acquired self-sufficiency in oil, and German concern about the central front, as well as a growing German desire for greater independence from the United States. Such obstacles to Western cooperation would be overcome by the shared Western interest in Gulf stability, an interest which is based upon the common perception of dependency on Gulf oil. Therefore, as long as the consciousness of continuing energy vulnerability lasts, so will the new burden sharing concept. A European military presence in the Persian Gulf area would also be politically and symbolically important. It would emphasize to European constituencies the magnitude of the stake in the area; it would be instrumental in gaining American Congressional and public support for a major US effort in the area, and would consequently improve American-European relations.

The American approach to the Middle East has been and continues to be based on bilateralism, in spite of the "lesson" of Iran. The uncertainty following Anwar Sadat's death underscores the lack of an overall strategy in the region. If Europe and the US succeed in formulating a coordinated Western security policy in the volatile Gulf area by applying this new concept of burden sharing, hope for lasting stability will be enhanced and the region will not become another mirror of the polarized world.

NATO and the Limits of Ambiguity

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During the past eighteen months, antinuclear sentiment in Western Europe has increased dramatically. Veteran unilateralist groups such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament — active in the late 1950s and early 1960s but moribund in the last decade — have been revived with a rapid growth in membership. New movements such as the Campaign for European Nuclear Disarmament and the World Disarmament Conference have arisen, attracting wide support from established civic and religious organizations.¹ Not since the peace marches of the 1950s have

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1. An offshoot of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the Campaign for European Nuclear Disarmament (END) officially favors a multilateral approach to disarmament with the objective of establishing a nuclear weapons free zone in Europe, excluding the Soviet Union. Therefore, the organization actively opposes NATO's TNF modernization program but pays little attention

demonstrations against nuclear weapons been as visible and vocal as they are today. The spectre of a neutral Europe has been raised and the trend toward neutrality has been criticized at the highest policy levels in Washington.

At first glance, the driving force behind the antinuclear sentiment appears to be the highly emotional protest directed against the NATO modernization decision of December 1979, which called for the deployment of 572 long-range Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles in Western Europe. Opposition to implementing this decision has been the rallying point for large-scale demonstrations in the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain, and Italy — the three basing states which have agreed to station these new missiles on their soil. In the other two basing states designated in the mobilization plan, the Netherlands and Belgium, widespread opposition both within and outside the government coalitions has forestalled any final decision in favor of accepting the assigned deployments.²

The present nuclear debate in Europe appears to be centered on the immediate issue of modernization. This debate is dominated by such questions as: Are long-range theater nuclear forces necessary for deterrence or do they simply add fuel to the arms race? Is NATO attempting to achieve a first strike or nuclear war-fighting capability with these weapons? Will the planned deployments make nuclear war more likely by lowering the nuclear threshold or by decoupling the US strategic arsenal from the defense of Europe? Do the deployments, to paraphrase the German protesters, make Europe a "shooting gallery" which will permit the superpowers to fight a limited nuclear war on European soil?

to Soviet deployments of SS-20 missiles which are not deployed in the defined area. The World Disarmament Campaign (WDC), founded in 1980 by Lord Noel Baker and other well known disarmament activists, also formally supports multilateral disarmament. However, similar to END, a large number of WDC members advocate unilateral disarmament.

2. Although the communique announcing the December 1979 decision states that NATO ministers were unanimous in their support for the modernization plan, reservations were submitted by the Netherlands and Belgium. The Netherlands agreed with the need for modernization but reserved the right to postpone for two years a final decision to accept cruise missile deployments on Dutch soil. This decision, according to government officials, would be made in light of the progress in arms control, but fierce domestic opposition to modernization — from the population as a whole, from the opposition political parties, and from within the ruling coalition itself — makes it unlikely that a positive decision will be taken in December 1981. The Belgian government endorsed the modernization decision in December 1979 but withheld approval of deployments on Belgium territory pending confirmation in six months. Because of several delays, including a change in governments caused by linguistic, economic, and constitutional problems, no decision was made until September 1980. At that time, Belgium reaffirmed its intention to accept deployments contingent upon the absence of progress in arms control. The ambiguities of this contingent decision reflect the growing political opposition to modernization, especially within the Flemish Socialist Party. Simon Lunn, "The Modernization of NATO's Long-Range Theater Nuclear Forces," Congressional Research Service, 31 December 1980, pp. 37-39.

Changing Perceptions of NATO Policy

Despite this focus on modernization, it is becoming apparent that opposition to the introduction of Pershing II and cruise missiles may be only a catalyst for an even more significant shift away from the fundamental strategic principles of the Alliance, in particular the rejection of all theater nuclear forces (TNF) in the defense effort. This shift can be attributed to several factors including: (1) the perceived dangers of war stemming from the sharpening of East-West tensions over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, over the uncertainties of the Polish situation, and over the demise of SALT II and the escalation of the nuclear arms race; (2) a general dissatisfaction with defense policy and criticism of the overall level of military spending during a period of rising pressures on social sector expenditures; and (3) the growing suspicion that the United States, after abandoning the policy of detente, has embarked upon an arms buildup which emphasizes a nuclear war-fighting capability and doctrine. The popular mood, characterized by an increasing perception of vulnerability to the risks of nuclear destruction, is one of disillusionment with orthodox approaches to defense and the traditional conduct of foreign policy. This disillusionment and the underlying questions concerning the commonality of US-European values and goals, as well as the most appropriate means to ensure the security of the Alliance, present a fundamental challenge to the future of NATO.

Disillusionment with past approaches and the impact of the associated rise in antinuclear feeling is best evidenced by the acute political polarization within the NATO governments themselves. In the UK the opposition Labour Party, now under the leadership of the left-wing faction headed by Foot and Benn, has repudiated not only the Trident decision of the Thatcher government but the very need for Britain to maintain an independent strategic deterrent force. Since the defection of the moderates and the creation of the Social Democratic Party, Labour has become even more critical of TNF modernization and has begun to question the utility of any nuclear forces in Alliance policy.³ In the Federal Republic of Germany the solidarity of Schmidt's ruling coalition has been weakened from the strains of the modernization issue. The deep divisions within the Social Democratic Party over NATO's nuclear policy and the defense budget threaten not only the ability of the government to continue in

3. Michael Foot, a one-time prominent member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, was elected to replace James Callaghan as Labour Party leader at the November 1980 Party Conference. The conference called for unilateral nuclear disarmament, the withdrawal of all US nuclear weapons from the UK, and the creation of a nuclear weapon free zone "from Poland to Portugal." Divisions within the Labour Party over nuclear policy were a major contributing factor to the formation of the SDP in 1981 by alienated Labour moderates. Lawrence Freedman, "Britain: The First Ex-Nuclear Power?" *International Security*, vol. 6, no. 2 (Fall 1981), pp. 99-101.

power but have also raised serious concerns about the Party's ability to survive in its present form. In Italy, Berlinguer's Communist party, until recently neutral on TNF modernization, has become active in opposing the December 1979 decision, which included deployment of cruise missiles in Sicily, and may soon assume the currently fragmented leadership of the Italian antinuclear movement.

Also indicative of European dissatisfaction with Alliance nuclear policy are the increasing divisions among NATO governments. In this regard, several of the smaller member states — Denmark, Holland and Belgium, in particular — have pushed for a major reduction in the Alliance's nuclear stockpile through arms control limitations and, much to the consternation of their larger partners, through unilateral cuts. Officially sponsored proposals for the creation of nuclear free zones in Europe are even more at odds with NATO policy. On the northern flank of the Alliance, for example, Norway's former Labour government voiced strong support for a Nordic nuclear weapons free zone, while to the south, Greece's recently elected Prime Minister Papandreou ran on a foreign policy platform which included a proposal for the establishment of a Balkan nuclear-free zone.⁴ Moreover, although it now appears the new socialist PASOK government will not push for the immediate withdrawal of Greece from NATO, Papandreou's commitment to forbid the stationing of nuclear weapons on Greek territory seems firm.

The overall trend against the stationing of nuclear weapons in Europe is clear. It is equally clear that, although the antinuclear movement is often led by the left, the trend is not a phenomenon of the left or reflective of a massive shift in public opinion toward neutrality or anti-Americanism. European public opinion remains strongly in favor of maintaining the NATO Alliance.⁵ However, large segments of the center of the political spectrum are attracted to the proposition that the nuclear weapons in Europe do not enhance security but, rather, only serve to increase the risk of total destruction. While the risks and potential costs are apparent, the utility of TNF in Alliance strategy is obscure.

NATO's military and political leaders, while actively attempting to rebut criticism and answer questions related to the specifics of TNF modernization, have been unable to formulate a cogent argument to

4. Papandreou has become less vocal in advocating a nuclear free zone, and, more importantly, the proposal is now being tied to significant Soviet concessions with respect to force withdrawals from the defined zone. An effort of the Soviet Union to promote a Nordic nuclear free zone may have suffered a major setback as the result of the recent violation of Swedish territorial waters by a Soviet submarine suspected of carrying nuclear weapons.

5. For example, a November 1981 public opinion survey in West Germany found eighty percent of the nationwide sample in support of maintaining German membership in NATO. Only six percent favored withdrawal. *New York Times*, "Germany Pro-American, Schmidt Declares," 11 November 1981, p. 5.

counter the rising calls for the complete rejection of nuclear forces in Europe. An explanation of the functions which theater nuclear weapons serve in Alliance strategy — critical if the utility of nuclear forces is to be established — has not been given. Instead, generalizations about the success of nuclear deterrence in the past and ominous descriptions of the Soviet threat have been offered as justification.⁶ Yet, in the final analysis, the need for nuclear weapons will be accepted and the case for modernization supported only if the functions of TNF can be convincingly explained.

Doctrinal Differences Within the Alliance

The inability of the Alliance leadership to explain the functions of TNF reflects the long-standing controversy over doctrinal preferences within NATO itself. Currently numbering approximately 6000 warheads, the NATO nuclear arsenal holds the potential for destruction of a large percentage of Soviet/Warsaw Pact assets. By posing the risk of massive losses and by complicating Pact planning, the role of TNF in deterring initial aggression is still generally accepted.⁷ However, with respect to doctrine for the use of TNF in the event that deterrence fails, no agreement exists. Differences over doctrine — how TNF should actually be used in combat to restore deterrence — date from the deployment of the first nuclear weapons to Europe in the mid-1950s and continue to divide the United States and Western Europe.

Theater nuclear weapons are intended for use in Europe either at the battlefield, most likely in Western Europe, or against targets in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. If war occurs and the Alliance's conventional forces cannot hold, Europe could become a nuclear battlefield. Although NATO seldom discusses scenarios relating to events after the nuclear threshold is crossed, two general roles for TNF are most often envisioned — escalation and defense. In the escalation role, TNF would be used to send the aggressor a political signal, raising the prospect of high future costs in order to achieve an immediate cessation of hostilities and withdrawal. If ignored, the conflict could escalate rapidly to a central US-USSR nuclear war. In the defense role, TNF would be used to meet the enemy attack militarily, raising the immediate costs for the aggressor in

6. For example, see the discussion of nuclear deterrence in the UK defense publication, *Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1981*, vol. 1 (April 1981), pp. 13-14. For a description of the Soviet threat see the US Department of Defense publication, *Soviet Military Power* (October 1981).

7. Although widely believed since the 1950s, the proposition that NATO's TNF enhance deterrence by presenting Soviet planners with the prospect of high risks and unacceptable costs has recently come under question. A contending and contradictory proposition that TNF actually undermine deterrence by giving the Soviets an incentive to preempt is gaining popular support.

hopes of compelling him to reassess and withdraw. Only if the attack were continued over a protracted period would US strategic forces be engaged.

Although the objective of both the escalation and defense roles is to restore deterrence in the event of aggression, the structural implications of these roles can be seen as placing Western European and US interests in opposition. This potential divergence of interests, primarily a consequence of geography, is reflected in different doctrinal preferences for TNF. In this context, the Europeans would prefer a quick, almost automatic escalation of the conflict to the strategic level to avoid a situation in which Europe would become an extended nuclear battle zone. Nuclear war restricted to Europe over a prolonged period would lay total waste to those countries. Therefore, the preferred role for TNF from the European perspective is not to fight the enemy's forces and in the process destroy Europe, but rather to signal the aggressor of further escalation which would result in unacceptable costs if the attack is continued.

The United States has consistently eschewed declaring a preference for either escalation or defense, arguing that deterrence will be credible only if NATO's doctrine and force posture combine plans and capabilities for both roles. Despite this official stance, many Europeans have come to believe or suspect that, if deterrence fails, the United States would act to confine the nuclear conflict to Europe for as long as possible without escalating to a strategic exchange which would involve substantial destruction to the US homeland. In this view, the United States necessarily prefers the defense role for TNF because it is in the American interest to avoid the tremendous costs of nuclear strikes against its own territory.

In the past, differences in doctrinal preferences related to escalation and defense have either been neglected or, more often, met with carefully crafted ambiguity. The two principal pillars of Alliance strategy — flexible response and coupling — are fraught with ambiguity. The flexible response strategy permits planning for a wide variety of nuclear options, both in terms of the number of warheads and the types of targets, but does not specify which options will actually be employed. This broad range of options is designed to provide the Alliance with a "continuum of deterrence" across the full range of actions which the aggressor might pursue. Equally important, by preserving ambiguity as to numbers and targets, flexible response offers a rationale for the planning and use of nuclear weapons which is sufficiently broad to be interpreted as consistent with either the escalation or defense role for TNF. The difficult choice between the two doctrinal preferences is thereby made unnecessary.

Ambiguities are also inherent in the concept of coupling — that is, the linking of the US strategic arsenal to the defense of Europe. The Europeans desire very direct coupling manifested by the configuration of

US strategic and NATO TNF doctrine and forces in a manner that would rule out confining a nuclear war to Europe. The United States has, since the creation of NATO, given repeated assurances that its central nuclear forces would, if necessary, be used to protect Europe. In the first decade of the Alliance, before the Soviets had developed the capability to strike the United States directly, the US commitment was unchallenged. In the 1960s, when the Soviets came to possess strategic forces capable of destroying American cities, the credibility of the guarantee became more tenuous. Many Europeans, such as de Gaulle in France, questioned whether Washington would be willing to accept major losses for the sake of Europe. With the onset of strategic parity, the question of US commitment to European security has come under increasing scrutiny. It is difficult for many Europeans to accept what is now implicit in the linkage concept — that is, that the United States is willing to commit suicide to defend Western Europe. It was in major part the perceived weakening of coupling — stemming from the emergence of strategic parity as codified by SALT II — which prompted the European initiative for long-range TNF modernization.⁸ Cruise missiles and Pershing IIs capable of striking deep into the USSR would make escalation to the strategic level more likely by denying sanctuary to the Soviet homeland in the event of a nuclear conflict in Europe.

The Effects of Developments in US Policy

In the 1960s and 1970s the ambiguities in NATO strategy were accepted by the United States and institutionalized by Western Europe. However, the underlying and always uneasy intra-Alliance consensus not to choose between the two competing doctrinal preferences of escalation and defense has, according to many Europeans, been broken by the United States. Two decisions in particular — the change in US strategic doctrine to emphasize counterforce targeting and the decision to assemble the enhanced radiation warhead (ERW) or “neutron bomb” — have been interpreted in Europe as confirmation of the suspicion that the United States is pursuing a war-fighting strategy which would confine a nuclear war to Europe at least during an extended initial phase of the conflict. Thus, the United States appears to be acting contrary to European interests and preferences with regard to both flexible response and coupling.

The announcement of the countervailing strategy and its implementing directive, Presidential Directive 59 (PD 59), in the summer of 1980, was viewed in Europe as a revolutionary change in US strategic doctrine.

8. See Helmut Schmidt's October 1977 speech before the International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Survival*, vol. 20, no. 1 (January/February 1978).

Although described by the Carter Administration as an "evolutionary" adjustment which would enhance deterrence and coupling by strengthening defense capabilities, the implications for Europe went far beyond a change in targeting objectives. By emphasizing selective nuclear strikes against Soviet military and political targets, the United States now appeared to be planning a limited nuclear war. The development of extremely accurate strategic systems for all three legs of the Triad — the MX, cruise missiles, and the Trident II — seemed to confirm the belief that the United States intended to achieve a war-fighting capability. To many in Europe these changes in doctrine and force postures reveal a greater propensity to use nuclear weapons. Instead of enhancing deterrence, a strategy of limited nuclear war would, many Europeans fear, only expand the scope and intensity of the first phase of the nuclear conflict, the phase that would be conducted primarily on European soil.

The decision of the Reagan Administration to assemble the neutron bomb has fostered even greater suspicions of US intentions. Designed for use on the battlefield against massed armor, these warheads, more than any other weapon, are viewed as evidence of the American desire to limit the nuclear conflict to Europe. For the United States, ERW would act to deter Warsaw Pact aggression by making the use of nuclear weapons more credible. By improving military effectiveness and by reducing unintended civilian or collateral damage, the Soviets would perceive NATO decision makers as more willing to employ nuclear weapons. For Western Europe, the negative implications of the neutron bomb are even more disturbing than those of the countervailing strategy. Nuclear weapons are perceived not as enhancing deterrence but as lowering the nuclear threshold in a manner which would turn Europe into a nuclear battlezone from which the homelands of the US and USSR could escape. Discussion of the integrated battlefield concept in the United States serves only to reinforce this perception and to provoke further European anxieties.

Several statements by US officials have been interpreted in Europe as confirmation of the fears raised by PD 59 and the ERW decision. Representative of these statements is the recent remark made by President Reagan in Ottawa and repeated during a press conference in November, to the effect that he could envision a tactical nuclear exchange that would not escalate to a strategic exchange.⁹ Although in agreement with long-standing NATO policy and consistent with both the escalation and defense roles for TNF, this statement produced a flurry of criticism in Europe. The extent of European suspicions of US intentions is evident from this

9. *New York Times*, "President's News Conference on Foreign and Domestic Affairs," 11 November 1981, p. 24.

reaction. Even more indicative of these fears is the changing European view toward TNF modernization. As noted above, the first calls for the deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles came from Europe. Modernization was seen as the best way to ensure coupling. Today, modernization is perceived by many as part of a US plan to create a separate European strategic force which would decouple Europe from the American strategic arsenal.

Conclusion: Increasing Understanding Within the Alliance

The pervasive feeling of vulnerability to nuclear destruction, aggravated by fears of TNF modernization and suspicions of US intentions, is an important element of the environment of disillusionment in Europe. Dispelling these fears and suspicions would have a significant impact on changing the course of the present antinuclear movement. Whereas the Alliance leadership is limited in its ability to influence the other principal contributing factors to this environment, including the general increase in the scope and intensity of East-West tensions and the dissatisfaction with defense spending, NATO leaders can take a number of steps to alleviate worst-case interpretations of modernization and US motives. If successful, public approval of Alliance defense strategy and force requirements, including support for the nuclear component, could be enhanced.

First, the deterrent and defense functions of TNF must be explained. In so doing, Western European governments, particularly Bonn, London, and Rome, have a major responsibility. Although it is necessary to understand the ambiguities of flexible response and coupling, it is neither necessary nor desirable that a choice be made between the two doctrinal preferences of escalation and defense. Instead, it is essential that the inextricable relationship between deterrence and defense capabilities be made clear. Without adequate military capabilities and the perceived willingness to use these capabilities, deterrence of initial aggression will be undermined and the restoration of deterrence in the event of war made impossible. The choice in the event of attack could become one of capitulation or extinction. Flexible response and coupling, operating together to ensure deterrence against the spectrum of potential threats, will remain credible only if the Alliance demonstrates its ability — in terms of maintaining effective military options — and its resolve — in terms of risk and burden sharing — to respond to attack at any level. In this regard, the consequences of reversing the modernization decision must also be explained. The defeat of modernization would greatly weaken deterrence by raising doubts about both the capabilities and cohesion of the Alliance.

Second, NATO's military and political requirements for TNF must be explained in terms of the functions which these weapons fulfill. The need for modernization must not be characterized as simply a reaction to the massive Soviet buildup of conventional and nuclear capabilities. Rather, it is necessary to explain how the ability of the Alliance to meet its nuclear deterrent functions has been jeopardized by the Soviet buildup and how modernization will permit these functions to be achieved. Modernization is needed not because of a change of policy but because the requirements to fulfill previously accepted functions have changed as a result of the new threat facing the Alliance.

Third, the United States must be more understanding of, and responsive to, European sensitivities. Washington, as the leader of the NATO Alliance, must present its strategic doctrine and force posture decisions not in the context of how nuclear war can be fought but how war can be prevented. Although the Carter and Reagan Administrations have consistently stated deterrence as the principal US objective, the emphasis has been on improving capabilities as a response to the Soviet strategic buildup. Similar to TNF modernization, there has been no public explanation or rationale as to why these improved strategic capabilities are necessary to fulfill long-established functions. Given the discontinuity in American and Western European preferences and perspectives, the absence of such a rationale has magnified European suspicions that US policy objectives have changed — that the United States is seeking a war-fighting capability which would confine the nuclear conflict to Europe. As with theater forces, the argument must be made that US strategic decisions do not reflect a change in policy but rather that, in light of the changed threat, different requirements are needed to fulfill the deterrent function.

Likewise, Washington must be more sensitive to European attitudes toward arms control. In Europe, US arms control policy is an important component of the popular view of American intentions. Although President Reagan has stated his support for major strategic arms reductions and has reaffirmed the US intention to pursue TNF negotiations with the Soviets as stipulated in the December 1979 decision, many Europeans feel that his Administration has assigned a low priority to arms limitations. Given the emphasis placed on strengthening military capabilities, the perceived inconsistencies between an arms buildup and arms control have tended to undermine the credibility and sincerity of US pronouncements in favor of arms control. To demonstrate its commitment to arms control, these inconsistencies must be reconciled. To do so, US arms limitation proposals, like force posture requirements, must be presented in the framework of fulfilling agreed functions. With respect to TNF negotiations, it is essential that this rationale be explained. TNF arms control