

NUCLEAR SHARING AND NUCLEAR CRISES:
A STUDY IN ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS, 1957-1963

By

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Abstract

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Between 1957 and 1963, both Anglo-American discussions of nuclear cooperation and the wider debate on nuclear strategy within NATO were often dominated by the question of whether Britain's deterrent would be amalgamated or integrated into a wider NATO or European force, such as the proposed MLF (Multilateral Force). This dissertation discusses the development and impact of competing British and American proposals for "nuclear sharing" within the context of European economic and political integration as well as that of discussions within NATO of the appropriate strategy for the alliance in an age of mutual nuclear vulnerability between the superpowers. Particular attention is paid to the context of successive nuclear crises in world politics during this period, from Sputnik to the Soviet ultimatum over Berlin through the Cuban missile crisis. The divergent opinions among the leaders of the major powers over the appropriate responses to these crises shaped the debate over nuclear sharing and form a previously neglected dimension of this topic.

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Two final debts remain. In the early stages of this project, I came to know Douglas LePan. Over many a long lunch at Massey College, this gifted Canadian diplomat, writer and academic administrator recalled his own brushes with some of the characters in these pages, from his Harvard acquaintance John F. Kennedy to his wartime colleague Hugh Gaitskell. That he did not live to see the product of my researches is a source of keen regret.

Probably the first work by an academic historian that I ever read was the battered copy of Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.'s A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House that I pulled from a high school library shelf. "The presidential perspective on this administration is now tragically and irretrievably lost", he wrote in his foreword, adding "sometime in the future an historian, today perhaps a very young man, will read the volumes of reminiscence and analysis, immerse himself in the flood of papers in the Kennedy Library and attempt by the imaginative thrust of his craft to recover that perspective." It would be presumptuous indeed to see it as providential that the road beginning that day led to this manuscript, dealing in part with the Kennedy years, and with the odd citation from Schlesinger's own writings to boot. But it is a happy coincidence. His death in 2007 prevented me from repaying my debt with a copy of this dissertation, but I gladly acknowledge it here.

Jack Cunningham

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations and acronyms are used in the text.

AEC	Atomic Energy Commission
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labour-Congress of Industrial Organizations
ANF	Atlantic Nuclear Force
BAOR	British Army of the Rhine
BND SG	British Nuclear Deterrent Study Group
BRD	Bundesrepublik Deutschland
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CDU	Christlich-Demokratische Union
CEA	Commissariat a'l'Energique Atomique
CERN	Conseil Europeen pour la Recherche Nucleaire
CINCEUR	Commander-in-Chief, Europe
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDC	European Defense Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Area
ENDC	Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee
EPU	European Payments Union
ESC (E)	Economic Steering Committee (Europe)
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
ExComm	Executive Committee of the National Security Council
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei
FLN	Front de Liberation Nationale
FTA	Free Trade Area
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
IANF	Inter-Allied Nuclear Force
ICBM	Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile
IRBM	Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile
JCAE	Joint Committee on Atomic Energy

JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JPS	Joint Planning Staff
MLF	Multilateral Force
MRBM	Medium-Range Ballistic Missile
MP	Member of Parliament
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NAP	Non-Aggression Pact
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NNF	NATO Nuclear Force
NPIC	National Photographic Interpretation Center
NPG	Nuclear Planning Group
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSC	National Security Council
OAS	Organization of American States
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OEEC	Organization for European Economic Cooperation
PTBT	Partial Test Ban Treaty
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAND (Corporation)	Research and Development (Corporation)
SAC	Strategic Air Command
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander, Europe
SACLANT	Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic
SAM	Surface-to-Air Missile
SEATO	Southeast Asian Treaty Organization
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe
SLBM	Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile
UK	United Kingdom
UKAEA	United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USAF	United States Air Force
USIA	United States Information Agency

USN

United States Navy

USSR

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WEU

Western European Union

Introduction

*“Sleep, baby, sleep;
in peace may you slumber;
no danger lurks,
your sleep to encumber;
we’ve got the missiles,
peace to determine,
and one of the fingers
on the button will be German”
-“The MLF Lullaby”*

Tom Lehrer’s satirical ditty is the best-remembered commentary on the Multilateral Force (MLF), an early 1960s American proposal to amalgamate the nuclear capabilities of several NATO members. The MLF’s architects saw it as an alternative to further national deterrents, subsuming the embryonic French force and forestalling a West German one. They believed that any credible entity had to incorporate most if not all of the only mature nuclear deterrent in NATO other than America’s, that of the United Kingdom. The question of whether Britain’s deterrent would be folded into a European force was central to the debate over Western defensive arrangements during the fluid phase of the cold war that lasted from the late 1950s through the early 1960s.

That debate was initiated by events in 1956-1957 that threw into doubt the military, political, and economic organization of the Western camp. Egypt’s nationalization of the Suez Canal Company in June 1956 created an Anglo-French community of interest, with British oil supplies at Colonel Nasser’s mercy and France seeing him as the inspiration of the Algerian insurrection. Anglo-French forces landed in Egypt that November to retake the canal on the pretext of separating Egyptian and Israeli soldiers clashing in the Sinai. U.S. economic pressure halted the invasion, while Soviet threats of atomic attack on Britain and home drove home their vulnerability to nuclear blackmail without the shelter of the American deterrent. In the aftermath of the Suez crisis, British Prime Minister Anthony Eden stepped down while France moved towards agreement with West Germany on the formation of a common market as the core of a more cohesive European bloc less dependent on American power.¹

The divergence of American and European interests which Suez had revealed and reinforced was exacerbated by *Sputnik 1*’s flight in October 1957. *Sputnik* foreshadowed the joining of nuclear weapons with ICBMs that would erode the security America derived from its insularity and throw into question its nuclear guarantee of European security. In *Sputnik*’s

wake, American policymakers sought to buttress the credibility of extended deterrence and NATO's political cohesion through increased nuclear cooperation with allies. While renewed Anglo-American collaboration was a vital part of the U.S. program, the Eisenhower administration sought bilateral arrangements that could be extended to other allies, not a privileged Anglo-American partnership within NATO or a distinction between allies who possessed nuclear weapons and those who did not.

The government of Harold Macmillan, on the other hand, had restored Anglo-American nuclear cooperation through a bilateral understanding reached at the 1957 Bermuda summit. To secure that agreement, and Britain's independent deterrent, Macmillan had turned his back on the prospect of nuclear collaboration with continental powers. Yet in the late 1950s he was increasingly interested in extending Anglo-American nuclear cooperation to France, in the face of renewed progress towards European political and economic unity. The Prime Minister and many of his advisers feared the birth of a cohesive Europe that might ultimately supplant Britain as America's principal ally. Macmillan was keenly aware that not only Britain's military might but its influence within NATO and in world affairs rested upon possession of nuclear arms, and might decline sharply if new nuclear powers emerged. Since 1958 he favoured Anglo-French nuclear cooperation to purchase French acquiescence in closer British ties with the EEC. In his thinking, *de facto* nuclear tripartism among America, Britain, and France within NATO (along the lines urged by Charles de Gaulle), combined with Anglo-French political leadership of Europe, would allow Britain to remain America's closest ally and its bridge to the European allies. Macmillan supported the coordination of nuclear deterrents, provided they remained under ultimate national control.

British and American policies towards nuclear sharing and the EEC diverged over the last two years of the Eisenhower administration, which supported wider dissemination of nuclear capabilities but was unwilling to go as far in the direction of open tripartism as Macmillan judged necessary to purchase ties with the EEC. At the same time, it was increasingly obvious that Washington had reservations about Macmillan's pursuit of a loose association under which Britain would reap the economic benefits of the common market without sacrificing sovereignty. As the EEC became a stronger economic bloc, American policymakers saw greater political cohesion as necessary compensation for the threat to American economic interests.

Eisenhower himself seems to have believed that direct Soviet aggression in Europe would

quickly escalate to nuclear war, and hence saw little profit in blocking efforts by American allies to acquire their own nuclear capabilities. But within the Department of State an influential school of thought supported central control of nuclear weapons and hoped to prevent the development of additional deterrents outside a strong NATO framework. By the close of his tenure, Eisenhower had initiated measures providing a degree of *de facto* nuclear sharing, leaving a definitive solution to his successor.

The Kennedy administration was more concerned than its predecessor with both the instability additional nuclear deterrents might inject into world politics and America's deteriorating balance of payments in the face of Europe's economic resurgence. It sought a far-reaching revision of Atlantic political and economic structures in which the United States would maintain its commitment to Europe's defense but demand acceptance of American leadership in turn. Under a new division of labour, the European allies would strengthen their conventional forces to augment NATO's ability to respond to Soviet aggression without early resort to nuclear weapons, allowing lower American troop levels on the Continent and improving the balance of payments. Control of NATO nuclear forces would be centralized in American hands, permitting the execution of selective targeting options.² NATO's European members would assume more of the economic burdens of the common defense and form one of the alliance's two pillars, while British accession to the EEC would embed an integrated Europe in a looser transatlantic system and ensure that European political cohesion did not threaten American interests. While early studies presented the proposed "Atlantic Community" as hollow rhetoric to mask continued American dominance of the Western camp, debate over its merits actually dominated the Kennedy administration's relations with the European allies.³

The State Department "Europeanists" who shaped American policy towards Europe in the Kennedy administration feared the emergence of a protectionist Western Europe under the effective leadership of Gaullist France and with a nuclear capacity free of American control. They saw British entry into the EEC as helping to bring about the alternative, a Europe committed to open trade and militarily interdependent with the U.S., and hoped to fold both the British deterrent and the incipient French one into a NATO entity.

Macmillan echoed the view that the future of the EEC and that of Western defensive arrangements were linked. To his own colleagues and representatives of the new administration he presented the division between the EEC and the European states outside it

as not only economic but political, with implications for NATO's cohesion. He justified closer British ties with Europe on geopolitical grounds, as a contribution to Western unity when speaking to the Americans, or a means of preserving Britain's great-power status, when trying to persuade British colleagues of the merits of his European policy. His government formally applied for EEC membership in 1961, the Prime Minister hoping that the prospect of nuclear cooperation would secure de Gaulle's acquiescence while American concern over NATO's unity would translate into strong support for British entry.

Nonproliferation was a higher priority within the Kennedy administration than its predecessor, and its policy on nuclear sharing assumed an ongoing American veto over the use of any MLF. Key policymakers saw such a force as an alternative to future national deterrents and a receptacle for the British one, not a stepping-stone to a purely European entity. When wooing de Gaulle, Macmillan claimed to favour a stronger Europe, less reliant on America, with the British and French deterrents the potential nucleus of a European nuclear capability. Yet he was constrained in what he could offer de Gaulle by dependence on American technological aid and U.S. resistance to overt tripartism. His task grew harder through 1962, as American opposition to either meaningful independence for any European nuclear force or special terms for Britain's accession to the EEC became clear, while de Gaulle's hostility to American political and military leadership in Europe grew more overt. Particularly in the wake of the Cuban missile crisis, the Kennedy administration argued more vehemently for central control of nuclear weapons, while problems in the development of the air-launched Skybolt missile threw into doubt the future of Britain's deterrent after the transition from the bomber to the ICBM as the dominant mode of delivery. Skybolt's cancellation precipitated full-blown crises in Anglo-American relations and British domestic politics, with Macmillan's critics attacking him for reliance upon America for a nuclear capability that was costly, of doubtful independence and brought little influence.

At the year-end Nassau conference, Kennedy and Macmillan concluded an agreement for America to sell Britain submarine-launched Polaris missiles, and Britain to assign its Polaris submarines to NATO. The Nassau agreement was deliberately ambiguous on the distinction between a truly multilateral force (with the forces of participating states integrated and Washington exercising a veto) and a looser multi-national one, in which deterrents were coordinated but ultimate control remained with national governments. The two leaders agreed to extend the offer of Polaris to France, hoping that it might be possible for Britain to

negotiate EEC entry while de Gaulle was ensnared in talks on Polaris. Yet de Gaulle, like Macmillan's domestic critics, saw Nassau as the abandonment of Britain's residual nuclear independence. He rejected American proposals as poorly concealed instruments to perpetuate U.S. nuclear hegemony, vetoed British membership of the EEC and attacked the MLF as a fraud. He then moved to conclude a Franco-German treaty in order to firm up the core of his alternative, autarchic Europe. Fearful that the MLF would cement stronger ties between Bonn and Washington as well as whet the German appetite for a truly independent nuclear role, de Gaulle wooed Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, promising German influence over a European deterrent that would emerge from the chrysalis of the *force de frappe*, and playing on Adenauer's doubts about American policy by claiming the MLF offered Germany no real say in nuclear decisions.

Britain's qualified commitment to an MLF at Nassau gave new momentum to the proposal, which now acquired a stronger institutional base within the State Department. As de Gaulle's attacks on it grew more strident, the force loomed larger in American diplomacy as a means of countering his influence in Germany and more widely in Europe. Yet in the face of widespread doubts about its military utility, Kennedy wondered if it could command more than lukewarm support from the European allies unless the United States was prepared to take the drastic and politically difficult step of abandoning its veto. Macmillan could neither sacrifice the nuclear partnership with America upon which Britain's deterrent depended in order to reach an agreement with France, nor accept the MLF as Washington understood it. Through most of 1963 he exploited the ambiguities in the Nassau agreement by emphasizing Britain's commitment to the parallel multinational force, while evading either a definitive commitment to the MLF or an outright refusal to take part.

He also worked to contain American pressure to fold Britain's deterrent into an MLF by aligning himself with those in the Kennedy administration who saw a test ban treaty as the principal instrument for slowing nuclear proliferation, with the MLF an obstacle to superpower agreement. Kennedy himself was pragmatist enough to distance himself from the MLF, which elicited Soviet opposition and lukewarm allied support, in favour of a superpower agreement to limit nuclear testing. The latter had the merit of being readily achievable, even if the former promised more stringent constraints on the development of European nuclear capabilities and effective centralization of NATO's nuclear weapons.

The conclusion of the Partial Test Ban Treaty in the summer of 1963 posed no threat to

Britain's deterrent, and the agreement imposed no direct burdens on non-signatories such as France and Communist China. By hindering the development of nuclear forces by signatories who did not already possess them, while doing little about those that already existed or were under development by non-signatories, it revived the problem of nuclear inequality. Under American pressure, West Germany signed, tacitly accepting perpetuation of its non-nuclear status. But West German politics was now dividing between Atlanticists who had staked their prestige on the MLF and Gaullists sympathetic to a Franco-German alignment at the heart of Europe. Even if Washington now based its nonproliferation policy on bilateral dealings with Moscow rather than the integration of European deterrents within NATO, it could not afford a precipitate retreat from the MLF, though Kennedy had backed away from active support well before his assassination. The Kennedy administration remained nominally supportive of the MLF, but then resorted to further studies and discussions, the effect of which was to defer formal cancellation while doing little to bring the force any closer to reality. In 1964 the MLF's proponents persuaded Kennedy's successor, Lyndon Johnson, to support it as a hedge against a resurgence of German nationalism leading to the development of a nuclear capability, either alone or in partnership with France. Macmillan and his successor as Conservative Leader and Prime Minister, the former Lord Home, deferred significant action on the MLF.

The election was won by the Labour Party, led by Harold Wilson, who had previously attacked the MLF as a form of proliferation and a goad to German nuclear ambitions. Uninterested in entering the EEC, he did not share Macmillan's hopes of buying membership with nuclear cooperation, and it soon became clear that British participation could not be obtained on acceptable terms. At the December 1964 Johnson-Wilson summit, the President declined to make British participation a *sine qua non* of harmonious Anglo-American relations. However reluctantly, American policymakers had abandoned their efforts to wind up Britain's deterrent while easing its way into the EEC.

There has not yet been a full-length study, rooted in British and American archival sources, of the MLF and the British deterrent's role in the politics of nuclear sharing and economic integration from 1957 to the MLF's supersession as the primary instrument of American nonproliferation policy in 1963. The gap exists in part because the topic straddles the separate literatures on Britain's nuclear ambitions and the emergence of European institutions, in part because many of the salient connections were less apparent to

contemporary commentators than they are in the light of the documentary record.

Furthermore, both literatures have been shaped by Whiggish assumptions that lead even many of the shrewder analysts astray.

Clearly, British policymakers initially underestimated the likely success of proposals for European integration and failed in their later efforts to sabotage or dilute them through entanglement in wider, looser associations. A number of influential preliminary studies were by journalistic, academic, and bureaucratic partisans of the “European movement”, lending them a polemical cast that impedes understanding of the topic. Many early analysts, and later ones occupying the same interpretive ground, view British policy as a series of missed opportunities to shape the movement toward European unity through earlier, more enthusiastic participation. They also tend to view closer integration and supranational institutions as both inevitable and desirable, depicting British resistance in terms of obscurantist failure to recognize and accommodate political, economic, and diplomatic realities.⁴ Britain’s deterrent is either absent from or marginal to these accounts, with the result that British policy seems less coherent than it was.

The gradual release of relevant documentation has inevitably altered early assessments, and more recent accounts of British policy towards European integration demonstrate that British policymakers seriously assessed alternative paths and were keenly aware that relations with Washington were increasingly a function of Britain’s apparent willingness to participate in European institutions.⁵ The MLF does figure in some of the standard accounts of American support for European integration, but primarily as an anti-Gaullist device, and with little attention to strategic considerations.⁶ Marc Trachtenberg’s ground-breaking work on the postwar European settlement places the prevention of a West German nuclear capability and the broader question of nuclear sharing at the heart of Cold War history. Trachtenberg discusses the MLF up to 1963, casting a good deal of light on its origins, and making some use of British archival materials, but he does not explore British policy in detail and neglects entirely the links between nuclear sharing and the EEC.⁷ Recent treatments of the Kennedy-de Gaulle struggle to reshape European arrangements and of the “French problem” during the Kennedy-Macmillan period consider nuclear sharing but as one theme among several.⁸

There is an extensive self-contained literature on the fortunes of the British deterrent. Early accounts, written without access to the documentary record, resemble early studies of British

policy toward European integration in their largely uncritical acceptance of the notion that after 1945 Britain lacked the capacity to act as an independent world power and stood mainly to gain from a greater pooling of sovereignty. They tend to depict Britain's nuclear arsenal, the global role which it underwrote, and the exclusive ties with America on which it came to depend as hindering the necessary adjustment to a reduced but affordable role as a regional power within a cohesive European bloc that might counterbalance American power, a view echoed in several standard surveys of British foreign policy after 1945.⁹ Subsequent works, prepared with the benefit of access to the growing body of available documentation, emphasize the costs and benefits of Britain's preoccupation with gaining access to American nuclear technology and reviving the wartime atomic partnership. As a result, they focus on the ups and downs of Anglo-American nuclear collaboration, with little attention to broader matters of alliance strategy and of Europe's political and economic organization.¹⁰ Andrew Priest covers the MLF in the context of Anglo-American defence cooperation from 1962 to 1968, but says less about connections to European integration.¹¹ Some light is shed on the last chapter of the MLF's story by recent accounts of the Wilson government's turn to Europe and cooperation with Washington against de Gaulle's efforts to disrupt NATO, but their relative inattention to earlier events means they are less than comprehensive.¹²

Those historians who view Britain's nuclear ambitions, postwar attachment to a world role and aloofness from European integration as atavistic misconstrue the underpinnings of British power and its seeming decline since its post-Napoleonic peak. While politicians, journalists and historians have, from time to time, been greatly exercised over Britain's loss of relative economic and political standing, it has been widely exaggerated and to the extent it occurred was largely inevitable.¹³ Its lead as the first industrial nation was bound to fade as others caught up, and the increasing costs of both modern weaponry and imperial defense made it inevitable that Britain would revert to a more "normal" state of affairs than the uniquely propitious circumstances of its imperial apogee, one in which it could not compete on equal terms with far more populous and resource-rich states.¹⁴ And in the years of postwar reconstruction, the adoption of American-inspired techniques of production and management encouraged convergence upon the same rough standards of productivity by almost all Western European economies.¹⁵

In terms of its military power, Britain had never been capable of defending all of its global interests unaided. After 1945, it was left dependent upon the United States not only for

financial assistance but for military support, once America had harmonized its armed might with its economic potential and created its own worldwide network of installations and outposts for the projection of its power.¹⁶ But if Britain's power faltered relative to the superpowers, so did that of every other European state.¹⁷ To be sure, circumstances dictated that Britain make peculiar adaptations all its own. After the First World War, British wealth would not suffice to maintain an adequate British arsenal as well as subsidize the wartime exertions of military allies; the United States would inherit the role of paymaster.¹⁸ Yet recent surveys of Anglo-American relations since 1945 emphasize the extent to which, despite the growing asymmetries of economic and military power, Britain managed to sustain a bilateral relationship characterized by interdependence and mutual benefit.¹⁹ If the concept of a "special relationship" entailed a degree of self-delusion to make the loss of power to America tolerable,²⁰ it also proved a useful tool of diplomacy for Britons on some occasions, for Americans on others.²¹ One promising interpretive possibility is to see Anglo-American differences as falling within the bounds of interdependence, broadly defined, with American policy tending to prefer Anglo-American cooperation as the foundation of a more centralized Western camp under American leadership, British to use bilateral intimacy as the basis of something closer to equal partnership.²²

Furthermore, it is misleading to gauge Britain's stature as a geopolitical unit through the prism of its overall economic performance, rather than the performance of industries directly related to warmaking potential. Britain's arms industry, effectively supported by and integrated with the machinery of state, remained highly competitive even as many civilian industries grew less so. *Pace* the arguments of the "declinists", Britain has been for much of its history a stronger power than if overall economic prowess were determinative.²³ Britain exemplified what David Edgerton has dubbed "liberal militarism", relying on technology- and capital-intensive forces to deploy military might incommensurate with its wealth, avoiding the economic dislocations of conscription and broad-based armament programs.²⁴ Industries connected to military aviation in particular benefited from high long-term investments in fixed capital and research and development as well as disproportionate access to trained technical personnel. They also gained from strong links with foreign, particularly American, counterparts, stretching from the free flow of early aeronautical technology to contemporary collaborative aerospace ventures.²⁵

Even before the advent of the nuclear age, long-term trends in the economics of weapons

technology were problematic for British policymakers. The costs of the most technologically sophisticated weapons systems tended to rise in real terms throughout the Twentieth Century, except where foreign sales made long production runs practical. As a result, it made sense for Britain to produce (and sell abroad) weapons in which it retained a competitive advantage, acquiring others “off the shelf” or through collaborative development with either the United States or European partners.²⁶ Anglo-American collaboration certainly grew more important in the late 1950s, but we should keep in mind that the Cold War was a “supremely transnational effort” when it came to the development and deployment of advanced weaponry.²⁷ In the disparity it created between national wealth and power, Britain’s nuclear deterrent is correctly understood as the logical culmination of a long tradition. Like the earlier naval and bomber deterrents, it exemplified the deployment of advanced weaponry, some of it of foreign provenance, in pursuit of traditional great-power objectives.²⁸ Thus it was not a symptom of terminal decline, but a rational change in strategy for the projection of British power to take the form of progressively smaller, more powerfully-armed forces, a tendency that the two World Wars interrupted, and to some degree masked.²⁹

For Britain, as for other Western states, the years after 1945 provided an opportunity to reconstruct Europe without the mistakes made after World War One, but under conditions in which America was now the predominant Western power. The postwar position of the United States combined strategic and economic predominance to a far greater degree than the *pax Britannica*. Britain, at its peak as a world power, relied upon the capacity to deter threats to European stability and, if need be, organize a coalition to restore the Continental balance; others had never invited it to fill a power vacuum and act as hegemon.³⁰ Postwar America, on the other hand, forged an elaborate network of mutually reinforcing economic and security links among the Western powers. The benefits of wartime mobilization encouraged American policymakers to construct new instruments of domestic economic management as well as international institutions to underpin the restoration of global commerce.³¹ America’s worldwide military presence and nuclear deterrent guaranteed security, while its control of economic coordinating mechanisms across national borders ensured a stable, open trading system.³²

Yet for all the power at their disposal, American policymakers found their apparent hegemony a source of vulnerability.³³ They were no more anxious than their British counterparts to incur quasi-imperial commitments on the European mainland, and looked

to Western Europe's revival as a power of its own. This would distribute the costs of containing Soviet power so that America need not assume burdens for which it lacked the appetite and the resources.³⁴ The early years of the cold war are best understood not in terms of a bilateral system dominated by the superpowers, but as what one scholar has dubbed a "latent tripolar system," with American policy directed to Western Europe's revival as an independent power center (with the Western portion of Germany at its heart), capable of maintaining an acceptable balance of power on the Continent without a large-scale, permanent American military presence.³⁵ Once the foundations of the Atlantic security system were laid, American policy towards Europe grew increasingly ambivalent. U.S. policymakers saw European unity as generating the wealth and political cohesion required to share the costs of containment as well as ensuring a market for American exports within an open world economy. But they doubted the readiness of European leaders to pool the traditional sovereignty of the nation-state or forswear bilateral understandings with Washington. They were also skeptical of the long-term compatibility of a more cohesive European bloc with U.S. interests, fearing the loss of American primacy in Western councils as well as exclusion from European markets and effective competition in global ones. The core of their ambivalence was support for European integration and fear of its results.³⁶

Conviction of the benefits of economic interdependence was one of the strongest influences on American policy towards Europe. In both world wars America had sought to thwart efforts by an expansionist Germany to turn much of the continent into an autarchic bloc.³⁷ Moreover, even in the face of the Soviet challenge, America's deeply rooted antistatism prevented the development of a centrally planned economy at home.³⁸ U.S. policymakers had little more enthusiasm for a dirigiste Europe. Yet after World War Two it seemed that some variant of *Mitteleuropa*, shorn of its political authoritarianism and grosser protectionist tendencies, might be the precondition of a cohesive Western European bloc, with political and economic integration the necessary façade for control of German war-making potential and reassurance to other allies without which German recovery and rearmament would be unacceptable.³⁹

In addition, America's own wartime experience had demonstrated, despite the doubts of some economists, that sustained economic growth was possible in a mature capitalist economy, and American policymakers came to see the cold war as in part a contest between the productive capacities of the capitalist and communist systems.⁴⁰ Increasingly, liberal

trading arrangements were viewed in terms of their contribution to the economic and political strength of the Western bloc as a whole, rather than as a means of easing tensions among its members. As a result, American policymakers were willing to modify their conception of economic multilateralism where imposition of an American model generated too much resentment.⁴¹ In such a competition, a single market embracing Western Europe offered economies of scale. Indeed, since the 1920s programs for European integration had reflected Europeans' desire to replicate the prosperity which these economies, along with modern technologies of transport and communication, had brought to America.⁴² It was to reconcile their contradictory objectives that American officials consistently sought greater involvement in European arrangements by the ally they saw as most likely to share their priorities and promote them in Europe. If Britain were to provide political direction to a steadily uniting Western Europe, the result, they thought, would be a Continental bloc cohesive enough to shoulder much of the economic and military burden of the cold war, but broadly committed to an open trading system.

An early obstacle was that British strategic and economic interests were not confined to Europe. Some elements of the international order dominated by European empires survived formal decolonization for a time, including overseas bases and unequal trade arrangements.⁴³ Britain's vulnerability to aerial bombardment in the age of nuclear weaponry left it more, not less, dependent on what remained of its empire as a power-political unit. After 1945, British defense policy revolved around the development of a nuclear deterrent, and the dispersal of military production and striking power throughout the empire. A projected offensive against targets in the USSR could be launched from bomber bases in the Middle East, while Britain would tap Dominion scientific and technical manpower as well as uranium from Australia and South Africa.⁴⁴ Economic interests also dictated that Britain pay attention to Commonwealth ties. While British policymakers understood that Britain's dependence on export markets created an interest in working with America and others to expand world trade, they did not conclude that this required acceptance of a high degree of economic integration with the Continent.⁴⁵ They saw residual imperial ties and the sterling area as offering an alternative in the form of a "two-world" economic policy that reduced the cost of participation in a dollar-dominated world economy.

The postwar Labour government ran the sterling area as a closed economic bloc, drawing upon cheap Commonwealth raw materials. The logic of this effort held true when the

outbreak of the Korean War and an ambitious American rearmament program created raw material shortages and higher prices. But by the war's end, raw material prices were falling in absolute terms, a trend that continued for the remainder of the decade. The growth of global trade in manufactured goods surpassed that in primary products after 1950, reflecting the abandonment of autarchy, more efficient manufacturing, and rising real incomes that increased demand for manufactured consumer goods.⁴⁶ The other countries of the sterling area were now intent on developing their own industries and attracting American capital, goals that were incompatible with a "two-world" system and a cohesive imperial unit.⁴⁷ It was now clear that trade among the advanced industrial economies would drive world economic growth, and formal arrangements for European economic integration were as much a reflection of this as a cause.⁴⁸ Yet even in the late 1940s Britain could not afford to risk political isolation and exclusion from Continental markets by openly opposing European integration. Instead, British policymakers promoted the expansion of commerce within the intergovernmental Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) framework and spoke favourably, albeit vaguely, of greater economic and political cooperation.⁴⁹

Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was briefly interested in an informal alignment with France, in which the two states and their respective colonial holdings would form a bloc independent of and comparable to the superpowers. This never bore fruit given increased European dependence on American security assistance after 1948, and the divergence of colonial strategies between Britain's decentralized Commonwealth, in which moderate nationalists could exercise relative autonomy, and the tightly centralized French union.⁵⁰ Britain also managed to exert political leadership in Europe by exploiting divisions among its allies. American policy in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War had explicitly favoured both German recovery and a strong France as central to the broader revival of Western Europe.⁵¹ American efforts to forge a partnership with France foundered on French resistance to the restoration of German political autonomy and economic power, obstructionism that provided Britain with opportunities to mediate between Washington and Paris. By 1950, however, it was as clear in Paris as in other Western capitals that the United States was intent on rebuilding Western Germany economically and integrating it firmly into the allied camp. If France continued to resist, it would be isolated and German recovery would take place over its objections. In May, French officials came forward with the Schuman Plan for a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Once French policy

shifted toward containing German power through integration of industries central to warmaking potential within supranational structures, Britain's hand in Europe was weakened. If France could forge a partnership with Germany, it would no longer need British help to obtain American acquiescence in French policies.⁵²

Participation in the Schuman Plan negotiations was conditional on acceptance of the supranational principle, an irreversible commitment the British would not make. By declining, London revealed its profound wariness of European integration. With the formation of the ECSC, western economic and security cooperation would now proceed along separate tracks. NATO, dominated by an Anglo-American axis, provided security within an Atlantic framework, while France and Germany jointly directed an increasingly cohesive Continental economic grouping. Britain could regain the influence it had exercised in European affairs prior to the Schuman Plan only when the Franco-German partnership was strained over particular issues, such as German rearmament.⁵³

French acceptance of German recovery as inseparable from a broader European revival gave Franco-American cooperation a second life. In American eyes it left Britain, not France, as the Western power least supportive of economic interdependence. While the emergence of the Schuman Plan had constrained British freedom of action by forcing a choice that dispelled the ambiguity draped over Britain's European policy, it gave Washington new options. Previously, American policymakers had accepted the need to accommodate British protectionism to some extent, rather than strain the consensus behind Europe's rapid economic recovery.⁵⁴ With the advent of the Schuman Plan they no longer had to choose between allowing Britain to set limits on European integration and alienating it by overriding British preferences. Washington could promote European unity by dealing directly with France and West Germany, bypassing London and thus ending its ability to block closer ties among the European allies. In the short term, more rapid integration without Britain was preferable to continuation of a *de facto* British veto. The Continental grouping would augment Western economic and political cohesion, creating a reality to which Britain would have to accommodate itself. The long-term goal of American policy was closing the gap between the Atlantic security system and European economic structures through greater British involvement in Europe and a downgrading of the "special relationship." American policymakers were prepared to wait for the arrival of a British government that would grasp the unsustainability of Britain's

traditional posture and the cost of aloofness from European institutions. Europe's political and economic revival would ultimately elicit British participation, mitigating its adverse consequences for American interests.

Yet the intensity of American support for European integration had reinforced British wariness of European structures. The stark choice forced by the Schuman Plan reinforced a strong shift against integration within Britain's governing class between 1949 and 1951, as well as an ongoing attachment to the traditional maritime-imperial strategic posture. Despite American backing for integration, British policymakers hoped to recreate the bilateral intimacy between the two Anglo-Saxon maritime powers characteristic of the wartime alliance at its peak.⁵⁵ Britain's contribution to NATO gave some reason to think this was possible. Particularly after the outbreak of the Korean War in September, 1950, Britain's technologically advanced, capital-intensive contribution to Western defenses was seen in Washington as partial compensation for its foot-dragging on European integration.⁵⁶ Moreover, in British eyes the European weakness that saddled Washington with burdensome commitments was not entirely undesirable. In the mid-1940s there had been some enthusiasm on the Labour left for a socialist Europe operating as a "third force" in world politics, equidistant from the superpowers. This waned after Soviet rejection of the Marshall Plan and was thereafter confined to the fellow travelers of the Party's far left, an association that discredited it in the eyes of Labour right-wingers like Bevin.⁵⁷ He and his advisers also looked askance at French proposals for a collective army under a European Minister of Defense, fearing the creation of a French-dominated bloc, united economically by mechanisms such as the ECSC and militarily by a joint army. Such a bloc, they worried, would be strong enough to assert itself in world politics, but too weak to defend itself effectively. Its emergence would tend to undermine the American commitment to European defence, a commitment which enabled Britain to limit its own Continental commitments and maintain the Anglo-American core of the Atlantic security framework.⁵⁸ British suspicions that a tight European grouping would prove less supportive of American interests than American officials themselves assumed would persist into the 1960s.⁵⁹

After 1950, the pace of European integration determined the intensity of Anglo-American disagreement over Western economic and security arrangements. Differences were muted in the early 1950s, but the debates over the European Defence Community and then the formation of the EEC and Euratom would bring them to the fore. At every opportunity,

American policymakers encouraged not only continued integration in the economic sphere but the extension of supranationalism to political and defense arrangements. They also urged Britain to assume a larger role in European arrangements and relinquish its residual imperial burdens and aspirations for an exclusive Anglo-American partnership. That trend was to culminate in the MLF initiative.

This study is in part a work of synthesis. An account of nuclear sharing in Anglo-American relations centred upon the MLF's emergence and defeat illuminates continuities in both British and American policy. These include Washington's consistent support of tighter integration, in Europe's economic arrangements as well as its nuclear defenses, than London preferred. Yet a consideration of the MLF's history as a whole also reveals distinct stages in the linkage between nuclear cooperation and EEC entry. While London and Washington differed from 1958 to 1960 over the nature of any British arrangement with the EEC and the acceptability of overt tripartism, Macmillan had some reason to believe that the Eisenhower administration might acquiesce in a nuclear bargain with de Gaulle that linked nuclear and economic arrangements. The picture was less promising by the close of Eisenhower's tenure, although his successor was initially open to considering a deal of the sort Macmillan envisaged. But by the middle of 1961 Kennedy had concluded de Gaulle was opposed to British entry in any event and that nuclear assistance to France was too risky a course. By mid-1962, the Kennedy administration was simultaneously promoting central control of nuclear weapons and European economic integration as the two components of its "Atlantic Community", despite British preference for looser arrangements in both fields. It was primarily the prospect of a crisis in Anglo-American relations after Skybolt's cancellation that led Kennedy to make the ambiguous offer at Nassau. After de Gaulle's subsequent rejection of British entry to the EEC, the MLF and Atlantic Community loomed even larger in American policy, as elements in the fight for West Germany's political allegiance and against a Gaullist Western Europe. Macmillan successfully evaded a definitive commitment to the MLF, and his goals of nuclear nonproliferation on terms that allowed Britain to retain its deterrent, and eventual British accession to the EEC would both come. Yet they would be separate achievements, less intimately connected than in his original design. Moreover, if, as Marc Trachtenberg contends, the superpowers had agreed upon the outlines of a European settlement had taken shape by the close of 1963⁶⁰, this was a very limited *détente* and linked to discrete objectives.

There is some innovation here in the treatment of nuclear strategy and particularly the crises over Berlin and Cuba that seemed to threaten nuclear war. The standard accounts of Britain's deterrent and Anglo-American nuclear relations for this period often provide close-grained treatment of military and civilian documents about the role of nuclear weapons in national policy and world politics. Yet that is not to say that they accurately reflect the impact of nuclear weapons and the prospect of their use on the decisions leaders took; too often, scholars overestimate what documents about the weapons can tell us about their effects. Official strategic doctrines reflect aspiration as much as reality, are often rooted in speculation about future developments, provide *post facto* rationalizations of actual practice or are known to contradict it.⁶¹ And the Kennedy administration's actual management of nuclear issues did not reflect the strategic assumptions underpinning its official doctrine of "flexible response", a doctrine largely devised as a rationale for denying autonomous nuclear capabilities to American allies.⁶²

The creation and expression of strategic doctrine is inevitably influenced by prevailing geopolitical conditions, and the period under consideration was no exception. In some ways the relationship between geopolitical reality and official doctrine was unusually complex in the years bracketed by *Sputnik* and the Partial Test Ban Treaty. As a provocative analysis by Andreas Wenger points out, where conventional hostilities alone fall within the realm of the thinkable, the actual conduct of a state can be inferred from its military capabilities with a fair degree of predictability. The emergence of mutual nuclear vulnerability between the superpowers in *Sputnik's* wake complicated such calculations. The prospect of nuclear retaliation broke what had seemed a relatively straightforward connection between America's measurable military power and its likely behavior in an international crisis. Subjective estimates of resolve and reliability were now crucial, and strategic doctrines were framed and presented with as much attention to their persuasiveness (in the eyes of ally and adversary alike) as to what was technologically workable or militarily necessary.⁶³

Because they dominated international politics, the protracted crisis around Berlin and the more concentrated one around Cuba inevitably affected public and private debates about nuclear strategy. Berlin looms large in Trachtenberg's account, with Cuba, oddly, receiving only parenthetical treatment.⁶⁴ But neither receives substantial treatment in the standard treatments of Anglo-American nuclear relations, or those of nuclear strategy more broadly. This is no trifling omission, insofar as these crises profoundly affected American policy

towards nuclear weapons and their proliferation, and therefore wider debate within the Western camp over the development of additional deterrent forces. Fear of tensions around Berlin escalating to nuclear conflict propelled the Kennedy administration (with British acquiescence) to energetically seek negotiations with the Soviets, while the need to reassure the European allies that the American nuclear guarantee remained reliable and that they did not need nuclear weapons under their own control shaped the formulation and presentation of the strategy of flexible response in 1962.

The Cuban crisis was arguably more important, and indeed constitutes the principal missing chapter in previous scholarship on nuclear sharing. American and Soviet actions to resolve the crisis amounted to an *ad hoc* superpower condominium in matters nuclear. This paved the way for subsequent bilateral cooperation against further proliferation. As Macmillan had hoped, nonproliferation would be achieved primarily by treaty rather than central control of nuclear weapons within NATO. Yet the seeming irrelevance of Britain's deterrent during the crisis affected the British domestic debate over its retention and the way the Nassau agreement was seen at home and abroad. In addition, the Kennedy administration and de Gaulle moved to aggressively promote their competing interpretations of the crisis, with different implications for the distribution of nuclear power. The debate over nuclear nonproliferation at the end of 1962 was explicitly a debate over the "lessons" of the Cuban missile crisis (tacitly, it remained one for some time) and the place, in its aftermath, of states other than the superpowers.

Yet neither the Cuban crisis nor subsequent interpretations of its significance would lead to Britain's relinquishing its world power role or its nuclear arsenal. When Macmillan, his colleagues of like mind, and their successors, altered Britain's stance towards the Continent, they saw themselves not as abandoning Britain's world power role but as adjusting strategy in order to prolong it. For most of the Twentieth Century, British policymakers had coped with serious economic constraints, and they did not experience those of the late 1950s and early 1960s as qualitatively different. "Overstretch" was a familiar constant, and arguably inescapable for a state operating as a global power.⁶⁵ Even the climacteric of Suez did not shake the consensus within the governing class for retaining the world role. Macmillan presided over the reform of Britain's defense posture not to wind that role down but to put it on a sustainable footing.

Nuclear interdependence with the U.S. and the attempt to forge a new relationship with

the EEC were goals of British policy only to the extent that they eased retention of Britain's traditional position in the world. The interwar advocate of protectionist economics and imperial self-sufficiency Macmillan realized that in the American-governed postwar trading system, its empire moribund as a power-political unit, and its domestic economy faltering, Britain had to pursue its national objectives largely through carefully constructed partnerships with others; that was at the root of both his conception of "interdependence" with the United States and his pursuit of closer links with Europe.⁶⁶ The American "Grand Design" for the MLF was premised upon others' acceptance of a system that was multipolar in its allocation of burdens but bipolar when it came to the making of the most crucial decisions, those of war and peace. And to expect Britain to pool its nuclear capacity within an MLF and its political sovereignty in a European grouping was to fundamentally misunderstand British policy. Britain's determination to retain a world power role and enter the EEC only under certain conditions helped set the limits within which American initiatives could succeed. In the face of that determination it came to seem the lesser evil to accommodate the reality of a Britain with a global role and a special relationship with Washington, rather than exert the pressure required to break Britain's great power pretensions and create the chimera of America's Europe.

Notes

1. As noted by Paul M. Pitman, "'A General Named Eisenhower': Atlantic Crisis and the Origins of the European Economic Community", pp. 33-61 of Marc Trachtenberg, ed., Between Empire and Alliance: America and Europe During the Cold War (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), the Suez crisis was the occasion, rather than the underlying cause of this development. The immediate aftermath of the crisis saw public opinion in both France and West Germany shift in favour of a stronger European voice in NATO, and the supranational arrangements that would make it possible, enabling leaders in both countries to reach agreement on the terms of the European communities.
2. Early accounts taking the American declaratory commitment to "flexible response" at face value include Jane Stromseth, The Origins of Flexible Response: NATO's Debate over Strategy in the 1960s (New York: Macmillan, 1988), Lawrence Freedman, The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy, second edition (New York: Macmillan, 1997), and Beatrice Heuser, NATO, Britain, France and the FRG: Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe, 1949-2000 (London: Macmillan, 1997). More recent accounts in Marc Trachtenberg, A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), and Francis J. Gavin, "The Myth of Flexible Response: United States Strategy in Europe during the 1960s", *International History Review*, 23/4 (December 2001), pp. 847-875, compel revision.
3. Jeffrey Glen Giauque, "Offers of Partnership or Bids for Hegemony? The Atlantic Community, 1961-1963", *International History Review*, 22/1 (March 2000), pp. 86-111 and id., Grand Designs and Visions of Unity: The Atlantic Powers and the Reorganization of Western Europe, 1955-1963 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002) identify the centrality of the Atlantic Community to the Kennedy administration's policies. Earlier accounts, presenting it as a mere pretext for the retention of American hegemony, include Frank Costigliola, "The Pursuit of Atlantic Community: Nuclear Arms, Dollars, and Berlin", pp. 24-56 of Thomas G. Paterson, ed., Kennedy's Quest for Victory (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), and William S. Borden, "Defending Hegemony: American Foreign Economic Policy", *ibid*, pp. 57-85.
4. The *locus classicus* is Miriam Camps, Britain and the European Community, 1955-1963 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964). Similar assessments can be found in Michael Charlton, The Price of Victory (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1983); Richard Mayne, The Recovery of Europe: From Devastation to Europe (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970); Stephen George, An Awkward Partner: Britain and the European Community (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Edmund Dell, The Schuman Plan and the Abdication of British Leadership in Europe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Roy Denman, Missed Chances: Britain and Europe in the Twentieth Century, Second Edition (London: Cassell, 1996).
5. See James Ellison, Threatening Europe: Britain and the Creation of the European Community, 1955-58 (London: Macmillan, 2000) and Wolfram Kaiser, Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans: Britain and European Integration, 1945-63 (London: Macmillan, 1996). The latter pays some attention to British interest in a nuclear bargain with France, but not to the wider debate about alliance strategy. Oliver Bange's, The EEC Crisis of 1963: Kennedy, Macmillan, de Gaulle and Adenauer in Conflict (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000) is narrowly focused on the crisis in the Western camp precipitated by de Gaulle's veto of British entry to the EEC, but does look at earlier consideration of a nuclear deal and at subsequent efforts to use the MLF as a counter to Gaullist influence in Europe. Jacqueline

Tratt, The Macmillan Government and Europe: A Study in the Process of Policy Development (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996) assesses Macmillan's decision to seek full EEC membership, discussing both his consideration of a nuclear arrangement with France and his efforts to link Europe's economic division to the spectre of disunity in NATO, but she is too quick to label any connection disingenuous, and says little about events prior to late 1960 or after 1961.

6. See Pascaline Winand, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the United States of Europe (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), esp. pp. 200-258 and 314-350, as well as Giauque, Grand Designs and Visions of Europe, op cit.

7. Trachtenberg, op cit, esp. pp. 304-351.

8. See Erin Mahan, Kennedy, De Gaulle and Western Europe (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), despite its relative inattention to British policies and sources, and Constantine A. Pagedas, Anglo-American Strategic Relations and the French Problem, 1960-1963: A Troubled Partnership (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

9. Richard Rosecrance, Defense of the Realm: British Strategy in the Nuclear Epoch (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968) and Andrew J. Pierre, Nuclear Politics: The British Experience with an Independent Strategic Force, 1939-70 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) are representative. J.P.G. Freeman's early study, Britain's Nuclear Arms Control Policy in the Context of Anglo-American Relations, 1957-68 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986), relies heavily on interviews with policymakers and repays reading, even though it was written without access to the relevant archival materials. For overviews of British policy, see C.J. Bartlett, The Long Retreat: A Short History of British Defence Policy, 1945-70 (London: Macmillan, 1970); F.S. Northedge, Descent from Power: British Foreign Policy, 1945-1973 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974); and Joseph Frankel, British Foreign Policy, 1945-1973 (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).

10. T.G. Botti, The Long Wait: The Forging of the Anglo-American Nuclear Alliance, 1945-58 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1987) emphasizes British difficulties reestablishing nuclear cooperation following the *caesura* precipitated by passage of the McMahon Act. John Baylis, Ambiguity and Deterrence: British Nuclear Strategy, 1945-1964 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1996) tends to stress the incoherence of British nuclear doctrine in the face of various external and domestic pressures. Ian Clark, Nuclear Diplomacy and the Special Relationship: Britain's Deterrent and America, 1957-62 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1994) emphasizes British retention of the capacity for unilateral action despite technological dependence. Donette Murray's misleadingly titled, Kennedy, Macmillan, and Nuclear Weapons (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001) is above all a study of the procurement of Skybolt and the political crisis surrounding its cancellation, with modest attention to wider topics. Kendrick Oliver, Kennedy, Macmillan and the Nuclear Test Ban Debate, 1961-1963 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998) brings out changes in American thinking on nonproliferation as well as Macmillan's interest in averting the emergence of additional nuclear powers, but tends to take the Prime Minister's high-flown and idealistic rhetoric somewhat more seriously than it warrants.

11. Andrew Priest, Kennedy, Johnson and NATO: Britain, America and the Dynamics of Alliance Policy, 1962-1968 (London: Routledge, 2006). See also id., "From Hardware to Software: The End of the MLF and the Rise of the Nuclear Planning Group", pp. 148-161 of Andreas Wenger, Christian Nuenlist, and Anna Locher, eds., Transforming NATO in the Cold War: Challenges Beyond Deterrence in the 1960s (London: Routledge, 2007); John W. Young, "Killing the MLF? The Wilson Government and Nuclear Sharing in Europe, 1964-66", *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 14/2 (2003), pp. 295-324; Susanna Schraftstetter and Stephen

- Twigge, "Trick or Truth? The British ANF Proposal, West Germany and US Nonproliferation Policy, 1964-68", *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 11/2 (2000), pp. 161-184.
12. Helen Parr, Britain's Move Towards the European Community: Harold Wilson and Britain's World Role, 1964-1967 (London: Routledge, 2005) and James Ellison, Dealing with de Gaulle: Anglo-American Relations, the Atlantic Alliance and Europe, 1963-1969 (London; Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
13. Barry Supple, "'Fear of Failing': Economic History and the Decline of Britain", pp. 9-29 of Peter Clarke and Clive Trebilcock, eds., Understanding Decline: Perceptions and Realities of British Economic Performance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
14. David Cannadine, "Apocalypse When? British Politicians and British 'Decline' in the Twentieth Century", pp. 261-284 of *ibid.* On "declinism" as itself a relic of imperial grandeur insofar as it assumes better economic performance would have enabled Britain to retain a greater world role, see David Edgerton, "The Decline of Declinism", *Business History Review*, 71/3 (Summer 1997), pp. 201-206. The most famous declinist work by a contemporary scholar is Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000 (New York: Random House, 1987), although versions of the argument that great powers are prone to overreach, staking out geopolitical positions beyond what their resources can sustain only to enter periods of decline, can be traced back to Gibbon and even Thucydides.
15. George C. Peden, Arms, Economics and British Strategy: From Dreadnoughts to Hydrogen Bombs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 300-301.
16. *Ibid.* p. 15, and B.J.C. McKercher, Transition of Power: Britain's Loss of Global Pre-eminence to the United States, 1930-1945 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 309-310.
17. David Reynolds, Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the Twentieth Century, Second edition (London; Longman, 2000), pp. 295-310.
18. Peden, p. 349.
19. As suggested by, *inter alia*, Max Beloff, in "The Special Relationship: An Anglo-American Myth", pp. 148-171 of Martin Gilbert, ed., A Century of Conflict, 1850-1950: Essays for A.J.P. Taylor (New York: Atheneum, 1967). Another scholar has suggested that the circumstances under which British decolonization took place (without military defeat, the empire notionally surviving as the Commonwealth, and world power apparently passing to English-speaking kinsmen) blunted decline as a political issue for much of the postwar era. See John Darwin, "Fear of Falling: British Politics and Imperial Decline", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, v. 34 (1986), pp.27-43.
20. Reynolds, *op cit*, pp. 305-310. See also John Baylis, Anglo-American Defence Relations, 1939-1984 (London; Macmillan, 1992); John Dumbrell, A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations from the Cold War to Iraq (London; Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Alan P. Dobson, Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century: of Friendship, Conflict, and the Rise and Decline of Superpowers (London; Routledge, 1995).
21. Reynolds, p. 310 and *passim*.
22. As argued for the Macmillan-Kennedy period by Nigel J. Ashton, Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War: The Irony of Interdependence (London; Palgrave, 2002).
23. John Robert Ferris, "The Air Force Brats' View of History: Recent Writing and the Royal Air Force, 1918-1960", *International History Review*, 20/1 (March 1998), pp. 118-143.
24. David Edgerton, "Liberal Militarism and the British State", *New Left Review*, No. 185 (January / February, 1991), pp. 138-169, and *idem*, Warfare State: Britain, 1920-1970

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

25. Sebastian Ritchie, Industry and Air Power: The Expansion of British Aircraft Production, 1935-1941 (London: Frank Cass, 1997), pp. 2-3. For an earlier attempt by Britain's defence establishment to promote technological improvements in weaponry through links with arms manufacturers, see Nicholas A. Lambert, "Transformation and Technology in the Fisher Era: The Impact of the Communications Revolution", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 27/2 (March 2004), pp. 272-297.

26. Peden, pp. 342-343.

27. Edgerton, Warfare State, op cit, p. 234, points out that the postwar arsenals of the United States, United Kingdom, and Soviet Union largely drew upon the same technological patrimony, including wartime German developments and personnel. For example, all three relied upon slight variations of the same long-range bomber through the 1950s.

28. Simon J. Ball, "Macmillan and British Defense Policy", pp. 67-96 of Richard Aldous and Sabine Lee, eds., Harold Macmillan and Britain's World Role (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996).

29. Peden, p. 348. Even in World War Two, British aircraft production emphasized many small production runs of craft configured to meet precise threats, with more "design outputs" and fewer "production outputs" than the industries of other belligerents. On this, see Erik Lund, "The Industrial History of Strategy: Reevaluating the Wartime Record of the British Aviation Industry in Comparative Perspective, 1919-1945", *Journal of Military History*, 62/1 (January 1998), pp. 75-99. As early as 1963, F.H. Hinsley pointed out that at least as important as cost was the way the increased pace of technological change slowed down the process of producing weaponry. Technical complexity, faster obsolescence, and the difficulty of predicting future innovations all complicated weapons development during the Twentieth Century. The decisive engagements of the Second World War often turned on numerically small margins of local superiority in particular costly weapons systems. See his Power and the Pursuit of Peace: Theory and Practice in the History of Relations Between States (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp. 285-286.

30. Patrick K. O'Brien, "The Pax Britannica, American Hegemony, and the International Order, 1793-2003", pp. 37-53 of William Roger Louis, ed., Yet More Adventures with Britannia: Personalities, Politics, and Culture in Britain (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), esp. p. 43.

31. Eric Rauchway, Blessed Among Nations: How the World Made America (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), p. 169.

32. Charles S. Maier, "The Making of 'Pax Americana': Formative Moments of United States Ascendancy", pp. 389-434 of Richard Ahmann, A. Birke, and Michael Howard, eds., The Quest for Stability: Problems of West European Security, 1918-1957 (Oxford: Oxford University Press / German Historical Institute, 1993), esp. p. 390.

33. Francis J. Gavin, Gold, Dollars, and Power: The Political Economy of International Monetary Relations, 1958-1971 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), pp. 10-11, makes this point with particular reference to the Bretton Woods system. For interpretations of American policy toward Europe as consciously hegemonic, see Costigliola, op cit, and Borden, op cit.

34. John Lewis Gaddis, "Spheres of Influence: The United States and Europe, 1945-1949", pp. 48-71 of his The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) and Lawrence R. Aronsen, "The Economic Foundations of the Cold War Alliance Systems, 1945 to 1953", pp. 65-95 of Michael A. Hennessy and B.J.C. McKercher, eds., War in the Twentieth Century: Reflections at

Century's End. (Westport: Praeger, 2003).

35. James McAllister, No Exit: America and the German Problem, 1943-1954 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 11.

36. John Lamberton Harper, American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean G. Acheson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 338-339.

37. Charles S. Maier, "The Politics of Productivity: Foundations of American International Economic Policy after World War II," pp. 23-49 of Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., Between Power and Plenty: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).

38. Aaron Friedberg, In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America's Antistatist and its Cold War Grand Strategy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 201 and passim.

39. Klaus A. Maier, "The Anglo-Saxon Triangle, the French and Western Integration", pp. 403-412 of Francis H. Heller and John R. Gillingham, eds., NATO: The Founding of the Atlantic Alliance and the Integration of Europe (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

40. Robert M. Collins, More: The Political Economy of Growth in Postwar America (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 15-37.

41. Richard Toye, "Developing Multilateralism: The Havana Charter and the Fight for the International Trade Organization, 1947-1948", *International History Review*, 25/2 (June, 2003), pp. 282-305.

42. Victoria de Grazia, Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth Century Europe (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 87-105.

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44. Wayne Reynolds, "Whatever Happened to the Fourth British Empire? The Role of the Empire in Britain's Quest for Nuclear Weapons", pp. 127-141 of Michael F. Hopkins, Michael D. Kandiah, and Gillian Staerck, eds., Cold War Britain, 1947-64: New Perspectives (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

45. George C. Peden, "Economic Aspects of British Perceptions of Power on the Eve of the Cold War", pp. 238-261 of Josef Becker and Franz Knipping, eds., Power in Europe?: Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany in a Postwar World, 1945-1950 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986).

46. Scott Newton, "Britain, the Sterling Area and European Integration, 1945-50", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 13/3 (May, 1985), pp. 167-183.

47. Catherine R. Schenk, "The Sterling Area and British Policy Alternatives in the 1950s", *Contemporary Record*, 7/ 2 (Autumn, 2002), pp. 266-286, and Tim Rooth, "Economic Tensions and Conflict in the Commonwealth, 1945-c.1951", *Twentieth Century British History*, 13/ 2 (2002), pp. 121-143.

48 Tony Hopkins, "Macmillan's Audit of Empire, 1957", pp. 234-260 of Clarke and Trebilcock, eds., op cit. Of course, a central aspect of the new pattern of economic specialization was West Germany's emergence as an industrial powerhouse after the removal of occupation constraints and integration into the Western camp promoted a more dynamic

economy than Germany had enjoyed under various statist systems since 1914. On this, see Richard J. Overy, "State and Industry in Germany in the Twentieth Century", *German History*, 12/2, (April 1994), pp. 180-189.

49. Peden, "Economic Aspects", pp. 258-259.

50. John Kent, The Internationalization of Colonialism: Britain, France, and Black Africa, 1939-1956 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 331.

51. John S. Hill, "Germany, the United States, and De Gaulle's Strategy for Economic Reconstruction, 1944-1946", pp. 103-115 of Robert Paxton and Nicholas Wahl, eds., De Gaulle and the United States: A Centennial Reappraisal (Oxford and Providence: Berg, 1994).

52. William I. Hitchcock, France Restored: Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944-1954 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), pp. 98-132. After World War One, French efforts to contain the German coal and steel industries through supranational cartels had failed in the face of American and British resistance. See Walter A. McDougall, "Political Economy Versus National Sovereignty: French Structures for German Economic Integration after Versailles", *Journal of Modern History*, 59/ 1 (March 1979), pp. 109-142.

53. R.A.C. Parker, "British Perceptions of Power: Europe between the Superpowers", in Becker and Knipping, eds. op cit., pp. 447-460.

54. Thomas W. Zeiler, Free Trade, Free World: The Advent of Gatt (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), pp. 105-125.

55. Donald Cameron Watt, Succeeding John Bull: America in Britain's Place, 1900-1975 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 115-123.

56. Charles S. Maier, "Finance and Defense: Implications of Military Integration 1950-1952", pp. 335-351 of Heller and Gillingham, eds., op cit.

57. Jonathan Schneer, "Hopes Deferred or Shattered: The British Labour Left and the Third Force Movement, 1945-49", *Journal of Modern History*, 56/2 (June 1984), pp.

197-226. On the Continent, by contrast, erstwhile backers of a Third Force may have retreated from the idea in the face of intensifying Cold War hostilities in the late 1940s, but many came to favour European integration in part as a means of securing the maximum European autonomy under the canopy of an Atlantic security system. On this, see Wilfried Loth, "German Conceptions of Europe during the Escalation of the East-West Conflict, 1945-1949", pp. 517-536 of Becker and Knipping, eds.

58. See Foreign Secretary's Memorandum, "German Contribution to the Defence of Europe", November 24 1950, pp. 293-294 of Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series ii, Volume 1, The Council of Europe, the Schuman Plan and Western European Integration, May 1950-December 1952 (London: HMSO, 1986).

59. See Gaitskell memorandum to John F. Kennedy, December 11 1962, pp. 661-677 of Philip Williams, ed., The Political Diary of Hugh Gaitskell, 1945-1956 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1983).

60. Trachtenberg, ch. 9.

61. Ferris, op cit, pp. 128-129. In particular, a strong case can be made that the main function of the "defense intellectuals" associated with the Kennedy era was to provide a retrospective patina of intellectual respectability and consistency for policies to which their substantive contributions were marginal. See Bruce Kuklick, Blind Oracles: Intellectuals and War from Kennan to Kissinger (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 15.

62. See Trachtenberg, pp. 284-321, and Gavin, "Flexible Response", op cit.

63. Andreas Wenger, "The Politics of Military Planning: Evolution of NATO's Strategy", in

Vojtech Mastny, Sven G. Holstmark and Andreas Wenger, eds., War Plans and Alliances in the Cold War: Threat Perceptions in the East and West (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 165-192, 174-175. The destructiveness of nuclear war and the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence in discouraging direct and decisive military confrontations between the superpowers tended to complicate traditional notions of victory and defeat. On this, see Brian Bond, The Pursuit of Victory: From Napoleon to Saddam Hussein (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 174-175. In the absence of the unambiguous evidence which general war might provide, assessments of relative power inevitably relied more on subjective judgments of resolve as a proxy for demonstrably superior military might.

64. Although Trachtenberg has written elsewhere about Cuba, in “Nuclear Weapons and the Cuban Missile Crisis”, chapter 7 of his History and Strategy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

65. Jeffrey Pickering, Britain’s Withdrawal from East of Suez: The Politics of Retrenchment (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), *passim*.

66. This is ably discussed in E.H.H. Green, “Searching for the Middle Way: The Political Economy of Harold Macmillan”, pp. 157-192 of *id.*, Ideologies of Conservatism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Chapter One: The IRBM Problem

A 1957 article published over the signature of a young Senator from Massachusetts claimed that “whereas the coming of the nuclear age reinforced the bipolar structure of world power, its secondary effects now stimulate a dispersion of strength and influence.”¹ Britain had developed an independent deterrent, France had signaled its desire to do the same, and West Germany and Red China might follow suit. Creation of the European Economic and Atomic Energy Communities could herald either increased interdependence or a protectionist, inward-looking Europe. In areas where the Soviet Union could pursue its aims through limited aggression, America and its allies confronted “the prospect of having to wage a limited war while holding the levers of unlimited destruction.”²

For the three years preceding John F. Kennedy’s election as President, and through his administration, American policymakers devoted much time and energy to the related issues of nuclear proliferation, NATO strategy, and the organization of Western Europe, as they sought to adapt to a new stage in the Cold War. The nuclearization of NATO strategy in the early 1950s had allowed forward defence of the Continent against numerically superior Soviet conventional forces. Heavy reliance on nuclear weapons went back to the closing years of the Truman administration, which was inhibited from trumpeting the expansion of nuclear capabilities lest doing so slow the momentum behind Europe’s conventional rearmament.³ It became official doctrine under the Eisenhower administration, which reduced military spending and manpower in favour of cost-effective strategic striking power that could be projected by air and sea.⁴

Nuclear weapons also helped perform the political function of holding NATO together following French rejection of the European Defence Community and European failure to meet the over-ambitious Lisbon conventional force goals. Early resort to nuclear weapons provided a compromise under which all members could be defended without politically unsustainable spending on less cost-effective conventional forces. Albeit vicariously, nuclear weapons made the costs of the cold war bearable for others, as they did for the superpowers.⁵ NATO’s nuclear strategy solved pressing questions regarding Europe’s defence but in the long term accentuated differences among the allies. With conventional defence impossible and nuclear war horrifically destructive, emphasis on the capacity of nuclear weapons to deter aggression in the first place was the basis of a shaky consensus. But the eventual development of a mature Soviet nuclear arsenal would render deterrence mutual, raising the

question of whether America could plausibly guarantee the security of non-nuclear allies. The credibility of extended deterrence hinged on America's nuclear superiority over the USSR and invulnerability to Soviet nuclear retaliation. Inevitably, this made NATO less of a true alliance and more of a unilateral American guarantee,⁶ with the fate of Europe's non-nuclear states dependent upon American decisions if and when to employ nuclear weapons in their defence. Any progress they made toward deterrents of their own threatened to turn NATO into a true alliance but a two-tier one, divided between those with and those without nuclear arsenals.

Britain persisted in developing its own deterrent after 1947, largely to secure cooperation with Washington in nuclear strategy and leverage over American decisions. Anglo-American defence cooperation reinforced London's preference for bilateral intimacy and its resolve to remain aloof from European integration. Furthermore, a credible nuclear force could revive Britain's position as a second command centre, independent but linked to the U.S., which integration with the Continent would undermine.⁷

The 1946 McMahon Act prohibited the sharing of nuclear information, in order to preserve America's nuclear monopoly. The United States took several steps to deny Britain the resources for a nuclear program, recruiting promising British and Commonwealth scientists for the American program, and monopolizing radioactive ore supplies in the Canadian Shield through long-term contracts. A January 1948 agreement restored limited cooperation, but excluded information on the technology for plutonium production and forbade sharing technology or know-how with third parties.

The restoration of comprehensive Anglo-American cooperation was Britain's preference, but it pursued nuclear collaboration on an imperial basis as an interim measure. Links with Australia and South Africa brought fissile material supplies and testing sites as well as allowing the dispersal of wartime production capability, while RAF deployments to empire air bases provided strategic dispersal for any future bombing offensive.⁸ Britain's nuclear links with the Continent were limited. It took part in the CERN joint accelerator program, after it became clear this would go ahead in any event, and its participation emphasized cooperation among existing national facilities and resistance to supranationalism in nuclear research.⁹ There was Anglo-American cooperation even under the McMahon Act, particularly after the January 1955 formation of the first V-bomber squadron demonstrated the existence of Britain's operational nuclear capability and it became clear that Britain was

close to possession of a fuel cycle meeting its need for plutonium.¹⁰ American officials did not want Britain to develop thermonuclear weapons and had doubts about the military usefulness of the V-Bomber force. They resisted British overtures for a coordinated nuclear strategy between NATO's two nuclear powers as constraining American freedom of action. But the birth of Britain's operational nuclear force shifted American policy in the direction of bringing planning for the use of British nuclear assets under American direction and maximizing dependence on America for the weapons themselves. The USAF shared bomb specifications in order to ease the conversion of RAF bombers to carry American weapons, and in late 1956 the two air forces agreed on bilateral development of a targeting plan, rather than direct integration of the RAF's nuclear-capable bombers into NATO's own planning.¹¹

The centrality of nuclear weapons to NATO strategy and their "conventionalization" under the Eisenhower administration generated pressures for diffusion of nuclear information and capabilities.¹² As *de facto* Anglo-American nuclear cooperation progressed, French policymakers sought to break the Anglo-Saxon nuclear duopoly within NATO. In the summer of 1954, they retreated from the proposal for a European Defence Community integrating West German troops in a European army. French military and political leaders did not share the apparent German commitment to supranationalism in military institutions.¹³ While France had been involved in the wartime atomic bomb project, with French scientists working on uranium fission in Montreal, after American scientists achieved a spontaneous chain reaction it was sidelined from the project and deprived of new information.¹⁴ By 1953, French military circles were turning against the EDC, because the "New Look" demonstrated that possession of nuclear weapons was now the principal measure of national power and a purely French deterrent seemed feasible. The EDC, on the other hand, would allow West Germany to achieve parity with, and then superiority over, France, whose military manpower was already being drained by imperial commitments in Indochina and Algeria.¹⁵ France could not match a German conventional contribution, even if the growing importance of nuclear weapons had not made conventional rearmament less attractive. Nor could it easily bear the cost of an independent nuclear capability. Instead, French officials proposed granting the Federal Republic membership in NATO, but not its Standing Group. They backed creation of a European group within NATO, whose possession of nuclear weapons would place it on an equal footing with the U.S. A European nuclear force, within a wider Atlantic security system, would bring France a voice in the Standing Group equal to that of

Britain as well as weight in alliance councils it could not achieve solely with a conventional contribution.¹⁶

Following the French National Assembly's rejection of the EDC Treaty in August 1954, the British government came forward with a proposal for West German admission to NATO, under which Britain would maintain its existing force levels on the Continent and the Federal Republic would renounce the manufacture of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. The resulting 1955 Paris Agreements allowed German rearmament on terms acceptable to all NATO states, without the creation of new supranational structures, while the Western European Union oversaw German compliance. Despite its fear that the British proposal, given its lack of supranational features, would slow the pace of European integration, the Eisenhower administration had worked behind the scenes to ensure an alternative was in place should the EDC falter. While officials had hinted at an "agonizing reappraisal" of Washington's commitment to Europe's security, they never seriously contemplated reducing the American military presence, seen as likely to precipitate European efforts to reach an accommodation with the Soviets.¹⁷

In the short run, Britain had won a victory over supranationalism by integrating Germany into Atlantic security arrangements at the cost of merely formalizing its current military commitments to the Continent. Yet in the long term, German admission to NATO made Europe safe for renewed progress toward political and economic integration, without the inhibiting fear that Germany would dominate European military institutions.¹⁸ And if West Germany abjured unilateral efforts to revise the postwar *status quo*, it gained an effective veto over the policy of NATO as a whole towards the Soviet bloc. The alliance was now committed to Chancellor Adenauer's insistence on German reunification as a long-term objective and his rejection of recognition of the DDR or the Oder-Neisse boundary.¹⁹ France had been unable to reject a second proposed solution to the problem of Germany's role in European defence without risking isolation in NATO but this solution dispensed with the European grouping it had sought. Neither the Standing Group nor the WEU became an effective locus of planning in the 1950s, and French membership in the Standing Group conferred no additional influence. The command and control of NATO forces was concentrated in SHAPE and SACEUR, and as long as the European allies sheltered beneath the American umbrella there was no military rationale for specifically European nuclear plans. If France were to break the Anglo-Saxon nuclear duopoly, it would need a national

deterrent to do so.²⁰ NATO's cohesion would be further strained by the growth of Soviet nuclear capabilities. Prior to *Sputnik*, the Soviet Union's inability to reach North America with nuclear weapons prevented a direct challenge to the United States, and Chairman Nikita Khrushchev minimized the risks in his early exercises in nuclear saber-rattling by directing them at America's European allies, as in the Suez crisis.²¹

Even those European governments that disapproved of Anglo-French actions during the crisis had been struck by the degree of American dominance of the Western camp, and the danger of superpower collusion at the expense of European interests. At the peak of the crisis and with negotiations among the Messina Six producing little, French Prime Minister Guy Mollet suggested formation of an Anglo-French bloc, including common citizenship, an economic union, French adhesion to the British Commonwealth, and intimate cooperation in foreign affairs and defence.²² Eden's Cabinet saw little point in exploring this option, since it was interested in economic links with Western Europe as a whole, not a close Anglo-French axis, and happy to continue cooperation along existing lines.²³

The assumption that greater economic and political integration would buy greater influence in world affairs provided incentive for renewed progress towards European unity.²⁴ With Britain having acceded to American economic pressure during the Suez crisis and uninterested in new European initiatives, France opted emphatically for partnership with West Germany as the basis of European integration. In November 1956 the two unexpectedly agreed upon the creation of a common market, after which the six members of the proposed European Economic Community would set the pace of integration, with Britain in a reactive posture even when not actively hostile.²⁵ French officials had predicted this would be the case. A memorandum by the *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères* pointed out that it had taken talks among the Six to arouse any British interest in closer links with the Continent, and that future progress would elicit a more forthcoming British attitude.²⁶

Harold Macmillan, who succeeded Eden on January 10, 1957, was widely regarded as supporting closer ties with Europe than his predecessor, but he favoured greater British involvement as mitigating the dangers inherent in European institutions without British representation. After the Conservatives had returned to power in 1951, the then-Minister of Housing and Local Government proposed that Britain actively promote further cooperation along intergovernmental lines, rather than support limited integration from outside. While integration was needed to hold the Federal Republic in the Western camp, he wrote, this

could be accomplished either through a loose grouping, with Britain holding the balance between France and Germany, or a federation where tighter bonds compensated for Britain's absence. He believed Britain's failure to offer the former had forced France and Britain to move towards the latter, starting with the ECSC, but that there was little public support in either country for further integration. If Britain now offered a loose structure for European cooperation, its acceptance would bring London effective leadership of both Europe and the Commonwealth, "able to establish a more equal partnership with the United States." If a full-blown federation emerged without Britain, "instead of playing second fiddle to the United States, we might well have to descend to third fiddle, while the 150,000,000 Continentals took second place."²⁷

Foreign Secretary Eden argued that desire for further integration was stronger in Europe than Macmillan assumed, and concluded "I had rather see France and Germany in confused but close embrace than at arm's length, even though we think we can better influence events that way."²⁸ As Eden's Foreign Secretary, Macmillan had suggested that Britain participate fully in the 1955 Messina conference on European unity, in order to shape its direction, rather than send observers.²⁹ After Eden moved him to the Treasury, replacing him at the Foreign Office with Selwyn Lloyd, the Foreign Office policy of benign abstention from European developments reasserted itself.³⁰

In late 1956 Macmillan and the President of the Board of Trade, Peter Thorneycroft, persuaded the Cabinet to propose an industrial free trade area, open to the Six and any other interested Western European states, appeasing domestic and Commonwealth agricultural interests by excluding foodstuffs from any negotiations.³¹ While the offer was designed in part to demonstrate that Britain was content to modify or contain the EEC rather than oppose it outright, the exclusion of agriculture reinforced European suspicions it sought the best of both worlds.³²

Days before Macmillan assumed office as Prime Minister, the Foreign Office suggested a fundamental recasting of British policy, including formation of a European grouping similar to that which French officials had supported as an alternative to the EDC. The "Grand Design" memorandum, as it soon became known, pointed out that Britain could not easily bear alone the costs of maintaining the full panoply of conventional and nuclear armaments. Pooling resources with the Continental states, including joint research and development in nuclear weaponry, could forge a cohesive European bloc within NATO, possessing its own

nuclear arms and able to deal with Washington on equal terms. Defence cooperation could open the door to political and economic ties, including a free trade area.³³ The Lord President of the Council, Lord Salisbury, had already noted French and German wariness of complete nuclear dependence on America, concluding “there might well be advantage in our co-operating with such European allies in the nuclear field.”³⁴ When Selwyn Lloyd presented his department’s study to the Cabinet, he suggested that with the tensions Suez had created between America and Europe likely to persist, Britain should try to direct the movement toward European unity into acceptable channels. The costs of a further rebuff to the Continental states would be high, he concluded, and if the opportunity were missed they might reshape Europe along lines uncongenial to London.³⁵

An early meeting of Macmillan’s key Ministers agreed that nuclear weapons should not be at the heart of any early overture to Europe. The approach of the missile age and the transition to a new generation of delivery systems would increase Britain’s short-term dependence on American nuclear aid, constraining its ability to share information with any Continental powers. Anglo-American cooperation, on the other hand, might soon be on more favourable terms, since the Eisenhower administration had agreed in principle during the summer of 1956 to pursue IRBM deployments in Britain as an interim measure pending America’s development of an operational ICBM capability.³⁶ Eden had not only insisted on Britain’s acquisition of thermonuclear weapons, but suggested their availability allowed a reshaping of NATO’s defensive posture and significant economies in conventional forces.³⁷

With Britain openly pursuing a thermonuclear capability, and other NATO members likely to explore their nuclear options as Soviet capabilities grew, in March of 1956 the National Security Council had suggested the alternative to uncontrolled proliferation was the gradual integration of nuclear forces within a NATO framework, which would likely require modification of the McMahon Act. Britain, which already had its own deterrent, and was in a position to provide information and assistance to other NATO members, would be the linchpin of any such arrangement.³⁸ In May the incoming SACEUR, General Lauris Norstad, told British officials that on his last visit to Washington he had found widespread awareness of the wasteful duplication inherent in completely separate British and American nuclear research and production programs. Norstad observed that even on Congress’s Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, which the McMahon Act had provided with veto power over any sharing of American nuclear know-how, there was support for furnishing NATO allies

with nuclear weapons, the warheads effectively available to allied forces on the same terms as American ones upon receipt of instructions from SHAPE.³⁹

Macmillan, despite his pro-European leanings, saw restoring Anglo-American amity as his first priority.⁴⁰ When Defence Minister Duncan Sandys visited Washington at the turn of the year he outlined the thinking behind the forthcoming defence White Paper to American officials, particularly the reduction of conventional forces in favour of nuclear arms. He also welcomed the Pentagon's offer of sixty IRBMs under dual-key control while Britain's own Blue Streak missile program went ahead.⁴¹ After President Eisenhower had invited Macmillan to meet him at Bermuda in March, the Ministry of Defence indicated its top priority for the conference would be a firm agreement on IRBMs.⁴²

His experiences as Chancellor and Minister of Defence had convinced Macmillan that the lack of a coherent doctrine caused duplication and excessive spending in Britain's defense program.⁴³ At Bermuda, he informed Eisenhower that Britain could not continue to support its present level of forces. Stationing troops abroad was a burden on Britain's balance of payments, and the concentration of technical manpower in defense-related fields handicapped export industries. Britain proposed to reshape and modernize its military, with total military manpower falling from 750,000 to fewer than 400,000 over four years. Its global network of bases would be rationalized, with fewer troops deployed at fewer strongpoints. Improved air transport would allow rapid reinforcement of any threatened position from a central reserve. In overall force structure, increased firepower would compensate for decreased manpower. The Royal Navy would lose roughly a third of its total number of vessels, and project power mainly through carrier groups. Rather than attempt to provide air cover for large ground forces, RAF Fighter Command would protect Britain's strategic deterrent forces, which would now serve as the core of a rationalized defence posture.⁴⁴

The mass reserve armies of the Twentieth Century had proven effective vehicles for the conduct of hostilities in both World Wars, but the training and maintenance of large numbers of soldiers was costly, and the various forms of conscription or national service generally unpopular, their imposition or retention imposing political costs on democratic governments. Moreover, the complexity of modern weaponry was such that training itself consumed much of the time a given conscript spent in uniform. Technologically advanced weapons and delivery systems made it possible to reduce the political and economic burdens of a powerful

military while increasing firepower and mobility. In particular, the ready availability of deliverable nuclear weapons would allow Britain to lead the shift to what John Lynn has called the “volunteer-technical army”, composed of long-service professionals proficient in the use of advanced weaponry.⁴⁵ As Macmillan had observed to a group of Cabinet colleagues, “the whole basis of the proposed policy of smaller forces equipped with up-to-date weapons, rested on (sic) the assumption that we intended to remain a nuclear power.”⁴⁶ And in the age of thermonuclear weapons, Britain, like the other combatants, would wage a general war with the forces on hand, enabling it to dispense with investments in industrial capacity geared to mobilizing resources for protracted conflict.⁴⁷

At Bermuda, Eisenhower and Macmillan agreed on the deployment of sixty Thor IRBMs in Britain under a bilateral “two-key” arrangement requiring the use of launch keys held by both British and American officers. The Thors never struck either British or American policymakers as having great military value in the long run, but their deployment in Britain was a useful stopgap until the United States developed an ICBM capability that could be based in North America. It was also politically important as a symbol of restored Anglo-American solidarity. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles reminded American reporters that “the Soviets suggested at the time of the Suez crisis that they might attack the United Kingdom with guided missiles.” While “at that stage, there was no capacity to retaliate such as might have created a deterrent,” the Thor deployment “will put the United Kingdom in a stronger position.”⁴⁸ He informed the British press that the United States might be ahead of Britain in warhead production, and the Thor deployment might “enable you to save a good deal of technical development costs and in the actual manufactured production (sic) of this type of weapon.”⁴⁹

Eisenhower regarded the McMahon Act’s restrictions on the diffusion of nuclear technology and information as an unconstitutional violation of the separation of powers and intrusion on the President’s prerogatives as commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Yet he did not believe he had the votes in Congress to liberalize the law, and proposed to circumvent it by retaining formal American custody of weapons that were effectively transferred to allied control.⁵⁰ In preliminary discussions with Britain about IRBMs, Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson observed that while warheads had to remain under *de jure* American control, it might be possible to give Britain *de facto* control.⁵¹ Wilson subsequently told Sandys that amendment of the McMahon Act was impossible for now, so “all that could be done would

have to be by a system of ‘tax avoidance’ and not ‘tax evasion.’”⁵²

As for aid to French nuclear ambitions, the State Department warned before the summit that Britain might favour amending the McMahon Act to make nuclear systems and warheads available to NATO members in peacetime on the condition that they refrain from embarking on military nuclear programs of their own. It concluded that such a direct approach to “fourth countries” was unlikely to succeed, with most potential nuclear powers unwilling to renounce the right to produce nuclear weapons.⁵³ In 1956, Washington had backed the formation of Euratom as a means of reviving European integration after the EDC failure, without British participation. The government of Guy Mollet doubted that a treaty entailing renunciation of national nuclear weapons ambitions would pass in the *Assemblée Nationale*, but had pledged that France would not explode a nuclear device before 1961 (Mollet did not believe France would be ready to do so in any event).⁵⁴ Dulles told Selwyn Lloyd at Bermuda that any uranium America supplied to France under Euratom had to be used solely for civil purposes, indicating displeasure that the treaty permitted members to develop military nuclear programs at the national level. He added that Washington would not help France develop nuclear weapons of its own.⁵⁵ Dulles and Lloyd agreed to a joint note stating that while neither America nor Britain would overtly oppose the development of a French deterrent, since doing so would arouse nationalist resentments, they would refrain from active assistance.⁵⁶ Asked by reporters if France could expect an IRBM arrangement similar to that with Britain, Dulles replied that “any arrangement that was made on the continent would be made with SACEUR.”⁵⁷

The Eisenhower administration’s wariness of exclusive Anglo-American nuclear ties or dramatic cuts to British conventional forces on the Continent reflected concern over the impact of conventional cuts on West German morale as well as its desire to avoid encouraging French desires for an independent nuclear force. Norstad cautioned Sir Richard Powell, Permanent Undersecretary at Britain’s Ministry of Defense, against severe reductions in British conventional force levels, warning that a disproportionate emphasis on the utility of nuclear weapons or any flaunting of Anglo-American nuclear collaboration could only further inflame French ambitions.⁵⁸

Upon Macmillan’s return from Bermuda, he and Cabinet Secretary Sir Norman Brook supervised the redrafting of the White Paper, downplaying the increased reliance on nuclear weaponry so that European allies would not detect an unsettling shift in British priorities. “I

hope you will feel that the bits we have put in with an eye on the foreigner do not spoil your main theme,” Macmillan wrote Sandys.⁵⁹ On the date of publication, April 4, Britain’s Ambassador to NATO, Sir Frank Roberts, told the North Atlantic Council that the shift to voluntary recruitment would prove more efficient than National Service given the technical demands of modern weaponry. He claimed that the White Paper showed “we regard our obligations in Europe as of the highest priority”, pointing out that Britain would retain substantial forces in Germany, with the central army reserve and V-bombers close at hand in the United Kingdom.⁶⁰

Following the Bermuda summit, the leader of the Labour Party, Hugh Gaitskell, and Denis Healey, one of Labour’s rising spokesmen on foreign and defence policy, criticized the Prime Minister for failing to obtain American agreement to amend the McMahon Act. Rather than emphasizing the dependence of Britain’s deterrent on American assistance as a constraint on the freedom with which it could be employed, they linked what they claimed was a failure on Macmillan’s part to Labour’s support for a suspension of nuclear testing. Amendment to the McMahon Act allowing nuclear sharing in NATO, they pointed out, would eliminate the need for other alliance members to conduct tests in order to develop their nuclear capabilities.⁶¹

Britain’s active pursuit of a thermonuclear capability dated to the first American H-bomb tests in 1951. Thermonuclear weapons rendered the superpowers as vulnerable to attack as others, tending to equalize states of otherwise disparate power and adding to the deterrent effect of even modest nuclear forces. Their immense destructiveness reduced the importance of accuracy in targeting, making it easier to destroy those targets deemed particularly threatening to the United Kingdom in the event of war. They also lowered airpower requirements, helpful at a time of rising pressure on the defence budget. An accelerated megaton testing program led to British air-drops of thermonuclear weapons in May of 1957.⁶²

Macmillan had argued for some time that the principal function of the V-bomber force was to persuade Washington that Britain was a strong ally and thus ensure British access to the American ballistic missile program. A force too small to inflict substantial damage by itself would not impress the Americans enough to secure their cooperation. A 1956 Air Ministry study warned that the slow growth of Britain’s bomber force had drawn criticism by American military personnel and “until we have a worthwhile operational force they will not

discuss the allocation of targets and we lose our chance of influencing their plans for the employment of air power.” Nor would Washington see any reason to furnish nuclear bombs for British use, even though American stocks were already sure to exceed what U.S. forces could deliver by themselves in the first stage of a conflict. In a strategic offensive, SAC was likely to emphasize targets in the east and central USSR, and would not necessarily have great interest in those affecting Britain’s chances of survival. “This lack of co-ordination”, the analysis concluded, “seriously weakens the overall value of the deterrent and thus the defence of this country and reduces our influence in NATO affairs.”⁶³

The Eden government had reduced the planned size of the V-bomber force from 240 front-line bombers in late 1955 to 184 in late 1956. (While the power of thermonuclear weaponry might have been used as an argument for a smaller force, it was not, suggesting there was not yet an explicit doctrinal recognition of a small force’s ability to deter a stronger adversary.⁶⁴) Macmillan saw further reductions to the bomber force as impairing its effectiveness as an adjunct to the American strategic deterrent, and within days of becoming Prime Minister formally accepted the need for a deterrent that could be employed unilaterally.⁶⁵ In his view, the V-bomber force had to be large enough for credible unilateral action in order to both obtain American cooperation and convince the Soviets that Britain had a residual capacity to retaliate even in conflicts from which the United States remained aloof and into which its nuclear forces would not be drawn.⁶⁶

The centrality of Anglo-American relations to Macmillan’s conduct of matters nuclear was also reflected in his government’s handling of the Thor deployment. Lloyd had indicated to Dulles that British policymakers, no less than their American opposite numbers, were aware of the system’s limited military value.⁶⁷ Yet its importance as a symbol of renewed intimacy and further cooperation trumped the limited military gains from its deployment at British bases. The Cabinet discussed the political implications of the two-key arrangement, which implied an American veto on the launching of the missiles even if they were equipped with British-manufactured warheads rather than ones procured off the shelf from the United States. Macmillan and his colleagues agreed that if questions were asked in Parliament about the independence of Thor, fitted with future British warheads, the government would declare the question academic insofar as it had no intention of developing warheads for missiles that would obsolesce with the availability of ICBMs.⁶⁸

Macmillan had preempted potential criticism from the Opposition by observing that while

the dual-key arrangement allowed an America veto, “this applies even more strongly to the American bombing force over here, by agreement with the Labour Government, where both the bomb and the means of delivery are under the control of the Americans subject to our veto.” He added that Britain might produce its own rockets and warheads for them to prior before manufacturing any warheads for the Thor system, suggesting experience acquired by British officers on the Thor system would help Britain “concentrate our research and development on more advanced types of our own.”⁶⁹

British nuclear strategy emphasized the effective coupling of American and European defence. Britain had long supported NATO’s declaratory strategy of massive retaliation, but the lack of thermonuclear weaponry and the decentralized nature of defence policymaking prevented force structure from reflecting the nuclear emphasis.⁷⁰ The 1957 White Paper’s more pronounced doctrinal emphasis on strategic nuclear forces assumed that the availability of thermonuclear weapons would allow force structure to follow doctrine more closely. Macmillan also endorsed Sandys’s call for changes to the organization of defence policy, including the creation of a unified Ministry of Defence and the reduction of individual service prerogatives, in order to push through policy changes. Under the White Paper, the Army would revert to an all-volunteer force of 165,000 by 1962.⁷¹ The figure was reached by estimating total recruitment without National Service; the War Office had calculated actual needs of 200,000.⁷² In the House of Commons, Macmillan countered criticism of increased reliance on nuclear weapons by pointing out that, given the manpower demands of large conventional forces, it was a precondition to abolishing National Service.⁷³ Many in the Labour Party doubted that the remaining conventional forces outlined in the White Paper would meet all likely contingencies, but their commitment to ending the unpopular institution left them no way of explaining how higher manpower demands could be met without National Service.⁷⁴

Macmillan and Sandys were prepared to abandon efforts to maintain balanced forces on a national, rather than a collective, basis within NATO, provided that sufficient Anglo-American defence cooperation could be obtained.⁷⁵ Under the White Paper, defence spending was expected to fall from 8% of GDP to a stable 7%. The role of British conventional forces in Europe was reduced to that of an immediate shield, working with other forces on the Continent to contain a Soviet thrust until nuclear weapons could be brought to bear.

The consolidation of nuclear interdependence with the United States over the next year

would affect Britain's capacity for independent military action much more than later, public, events such as the cancellation of Blue Streak and collapse of Skybolt.⁷⁶ But official statements implied no loss of autonomy. Indeed, they downgraded the pre-Suez emphasis on British nuclear forces as a contribution to NATO's collective deterrent capability. Politically, it was prudent to emphasize the national character of British nuclear forces, as a hedge against a future crisis *a la* Suez, in which Britain would be unable to shelter behind the American deterrent. In the House of Commons, Sandys stressed the government's plans for a British ballistic missile capacity, adding that in the meantime "we shall...have the British V-bombers which, with British nuclear bombs, will give us a far from negligible element of nuclear power under our own control."⁷⁷ While the Continental allies disliked the proposed reductions in Britain's commitment to European defense, by the end of the year the British emphasis on nuclear deterrence appeared to have been borne out by America's declared willingness to furnish NATO allies with IRBMs and tactical nuclear weapons.⁷⁸

The limits of Britain's own nuclear capabilities had always constrained targeting options in the event of unilateral British employment of nuclear weapons, with planners consistently favouring action in conjunction with the U.S. and other NATO allies. Yet if British nuclear forces were to impress Washington and deter Moscow with a capacity for unilateral retaliatory action, targeting options suitable for unilateral employment were necessary. Separate targeting doctrines were used for unilateral action and participation in an American-led strategic nuclear offensive. To execute a counter-force strike (one directed against enemy military forces), Britain would require close cooperation with U.S. forces. In a joint offensive with SAC, Britain's Bomber Command would have been among the first wave of attacking planes, striking Soviet targets such as strategic air bases and early warning systems. Acting unilaterally, Britain could launch only a counter-value attack (one directed against the enemy's industrial and population centres), which required less accuracy and could be executed by smaller forces, equipped with thermonuclear forces. Implicit in the assumption that Britain's relatively modest retaliatory force could deter Soviet aggression unilaterally was the concept of "nuclear sufficiency", rooted in earlier assessments of the smaller Soviet force as deterring use of the American nuclear arsenal in Europe's defense.⁷⁹ The Air Ministry concluded effective deterrence might require no more than the capacity to destroy thirty Soviet cities.⁸⁰

The pace of IRBM deployment accelerated after the Soviets launched the first artificial

satellite, *Sputnik I*, on October 4, 1957. If, as *Sputnik's* successful flight suggested, the USSR would soon be able to deliver thermonuclear weapons by inter-continental missile, America's vulnerability to a Soviet strike would undermine its nuclear guarantee to its European allies. The credibility of extended deterrence under conditions of nuclear parity had been a matter of academic debate for some time, but *Sputnik* made it an immediate concern. Eisenhower and Dulles favoured a wider deployment of IRBMs on the territory of NATO allies. They believed that devolution to allied forces of the capacity for a nuclear response to Soviet aggression would restore alliance cohesion and the credibility of massive retaliation as a strategy.

Administration officials saw the strategic bomber deterrent as sufficient until American ICBMs were available for deployment. IRBMs would close a temporary gap in NATO capabilities and, if deployed in short order, would be the only American strategic missiles for some time, but they were not seen as meeting any pressing military need. The offer of Thors to Britain had set a precedent, and generated further pressures for extending the offer to other allies. Moreover, offering IRBMs to other NATO members would enhance equality within the alliance, at a time when some, notably France, were critical of renewed Anglo-American nuclear cooperation as divisive. The American initiative to make the December 1957 session of the North Atlantic Council a heads of government meeting created a political need for the administration to come forward with a substantive program, not anodyne reassurances.⁸¹

Macmillan and Lloyd visited Washington soon after *Sputnik's* flight, to discuss western defences and the changing role of nuclear weapons with the Americans. Eisenhower was emphatic on the need for increased consultation between Britain and America, eventually extending to the alliance as a whole. He expressed regret that there was nothing like the wartime Combined Chiefs of Staff.⁸² They all agreed that the increasing Soviet ability to strike at America and Britain troubled NATO members who did not have nuclear weapons, and that "there is increasing doubt as to whether, in fact, they would take the risks inherent in the use of nuclear power to defend their allies." Dulles suggested increasing allied representation in Washington, since "there would be a greater sense of participation in the creation of community defensive power and decisions as to its use, which is now largely centered in Washington rather than in Paris."⁸³ Meeting with subordinates, Dulles reiterated the argument for improving the representation of NATO allies, calling for a mechanism "to permit them to have a hearing before the decision is made-but without, of course, delegating

U.S. power.”⁸⁴

Eisenhower and Dulles did not view the IRBM offer to Britain as the foundation of a purely bilateral nuclear partnership, and had limited the agreement to measures that could be extended to other allies. By late October Dulles was warning of the need to finalize the arrangement and make it available to other NATO members.⁸⁵ In early November he pressed Deputy Secretary of Defense Donald Quarles to proceed with the IRBM deployments as fast as possible. He and Eisenhower, he explained, were conscious of the program’s psychological impact, and it would be helpful if the President were able to announce its extension at the December NAC meeting.⁸⁶ In Paris, Eisenhower formally offered to make Jupiter IRBMs available under dual-key control to any NATO members requesting them. In addition, he proposed stockpiling nuclear warheads in Europe, making them available to NATO commanders in an emergency. The NAC agreed in principle on the desirability of IRBM forces and a nuclear stockpile, both under SACEUR’s direct command.⁸⁷

In *Sputnik*’s immediate aftermath, substantial revision of the McMahon Act looked like a realistic possibility. The British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Harold Caccia, observed that *Sputnik* had shattered American hopes of ongoing nuclear predominance. While “the United States administration will no doubt still wish to do what they can to prevent a fourth (sic) Western country from becoming producers of nuclear weapons”, increased nuclear cooperation might be possible.⁸⁸ Deputy Undersecretary of State Robert Murphy told Caccia that “if we could get proper cooperation going, perhaps we might be able to do what we achieved on occasion in the war, namely help the Americans to make their own machine work.”⁸⁹ Dulles drew upon this analogy when he advised the President that *Sputnik* had dramatized the need to pool Western scientific and technical resources, but that in its wake Britain would try to bolster its own prestige and recreate the wartime shared direction of allied efforts, probably exploiting the American concern over Soviet prowess in rocketry to press for greater sharing of nuclear know-how and amendment of the McMahon Act.⁹⁰

Yet some influential Americans were skeptical. The Republican leader in the Senate, William Knowland, told Dulles “we should go slow in any commitments which would require Congress to agree to turning over actual nuclear weapons to anyone else.”⁹¹ The Atomic Energy Commission position was that if America did not share nuclear information with them, some allies would manufacture nuclear weapons of their own, albeit less effective and efficient ones than they could develop with American aid. However, “the added defense

capability of such nation would be less valuable to the U.S. than the danger arising from a leak to the enemy of the U.S. secrets so divulged.”⁹²

Caccia subsequently noted that the administration and its Congressional supporters were trying to lay the groundwork for substantial revision of the McMahon Act. Strong opposition was likely, with the outcome dependent upon the administration’s tenacity. In private, “both the President and Mr. Dulles have indicated that they see Anglo-United States cooperation as the core of the grouping, which will extend beyond this core to NATO as a whole. In public statements, at any rate, it is this broader extension which will receive the emphasis.”⁹³

In November, Assistant Secretary of State for Atomic Energy Gerard Smith suggested that the administration inform the NATO allies it did not contemplate altering the McMahon Act to permit transferring custody of nuclear weapons. He noted that it would be easier to secure JCAE approval of less ambitious modifications if the administration explicitly ruled out such transfer. At the same meeting, Quarles observed that France had already requested IRBMs and “we could provide them as we have done for the UK.” He doubted the IRBMs would be distributed to other allies, but warned that “if only three NATO countries had IRBMs, the other NATO countries might feel they were being downgraded.”⁹⁴ Two weeks later, Dulles told his French counterpart, Christian Pineau, that warheads could be made immediately available to French forces in the event of hostilities under a NATO arrangement, but America had to retain formal custody.⁹⁵

After the administration had outlined the dual-key Jupiter offer it proposed to make at the upcoming NAC meeting, the Foreign Office informed the British Embassy in Washington “we should fall in with the American proposal and not force ourselves upon them before they are ready. “ With luck, “this delay will not mean that when we arrive we shall be faced with a hard and fast American position, which we shall be unable to influence and which ties United States/United Kingdom bilateral cooperation too closely to the policy which the Americans intend to follow with NATO as a whole.”⁹⁶

The NAC’s public decision in December to proceed with IRBM deployments led to a protracted American effort to reach agreement with host countries. Even though the Jupiters were still under development, the need to deal with NATO’s post-*Sputnik* political crisis accelerated the deployment process. In the months ahead it became clear that the IRBMs not only offered minimal military advantages, but further undermined NATO’s cohesion rather

than reinforcing it. Military and political requirements proved difficult to reconcile. The military need for the maximum possible target coverage dictated deployment on NATO's flanks, close to Soviet territory, and the military leadership favoured overtures to Turkey and then France following final agreement with Britain. Politically, the logical candidate for subsequent deployment was France, arguably the most important NATO ally after Britain and resentful of Anglo-American cooperation in the nuclear realm. Moreover, French officials had informed the Americans earlier in 1957 that France intended to produce its own IRBMs. If it were to receive IRBMs under a nuclear sharing arrangement, it would insist on doing so at the same time as Britain. Negotiations with Britain were already well-advanced, and there were reasons for an early approach to France preceding those to other NATO members who had expressed interest (Turkey, Greece, and Italy). There was also a strong political argument for allowing the Soviets to get used to IRBM deployments before moving on to the more provocative deployment on the Turkish border.⁹⁷ The acceleration of the IRBM program soon after the conclusion of an Anglo-American understanding was politically problematic, raising the question of how arrangements with other allies would resemble or differ from those with Britain.

A background paper for the NAC meeting, prepared by Philip Farley, an atomic energy specialist in the State Department, noted that French Premier Felix Gaillard had informed Macmillan he was aware of America's intention to discuss IRBM deployments in Europe under NATO auspices, and hoped to engage in tripartite discussions with America and Britain. Gaillard had observed that French prestige was already committed to the country's national nuclear program, and America should not seek any formal French agreement to forego nuclear weapons research and production on a national basis. France was also aware that the Eisenhower administration, in the wake of *Sputnik*, was prepared to relax some of the restrictions imposed by the McMahon Act. Farley cautioned that doubts about French security would preclude JCAE approval of extending Anglo-American nuclear cooperation to France. Britain had so far resisted French overtures, but indications that France could expect a loosening of restrictions would place the British in an awkward position, and "any appearance of possible UK-French cooperation in the weapons field might be very damaging to the prospects for Congressional acceptance of US-UK weapons cooperation."

Farley also observed that with French prestige heavily invested in at least a token program, "the U.S. should not attempt to get formal French agreement to forego nuclear weapons

research and production.” He suggested American leaders indicate that once the McMahon Act had been revised, some avenues of nuclear cooperation could be opened to France, such as: the transfer of reactors, reactor components, and fabricated fuel elements; the provision of information needed to ensure IRBM missile-warhead compatibility; and cooperation in IRBM production. If such cooperation were available, in conjunction with the proposed NATO nuclear stockpile and IRBM deployments, “the French may (in view of the great cost of an extensive nuclear weapons program) decide to hold their own program to token proportions.” A token program would not be prohibitively expensive, and an initial French nuclear test could come as early as 1958.⁹⁸ Informing Gerard Smith of his exchanges with Gaillard, Macmillan said he was trying to evade pressure for British aid to the French program by dissuading Gaillard from overt pursuit of assistance. He had observed that relaxation of the McMahon Act “would be a boon to the whole free world and that French activity in the interim might prejudice this.”⁹⁹

Eisenhower thought it inevitable that at least the larger Western European states would develop nuclear forces under national control, but hoped they would be coordinated through NATO. A strong NATO framework accorded with his understanding, rooted in decades of military experience, of the need for an effective central command structure, as well as his support for a unified Europe less dependent on America for its security. An integrated IRBM arrangement that might evolve into an explicitly European force was also compatible with the State Department’s reservations about the development of additional national deterrents.¹⁰⁰ In the short run, it also offered a solution to the problem Farley had identified, that of Britain having to either accede to or rebuff French requests for nuclear cooperation which, if agreed to, could complicate modification of the McMahon Act. Within an overall NATO framework, bilateral negotiation of the detailed procedures to implement deployment would provide a margin of maneuver to meet each ally’s circumstances.

In the months ahead, French officials alternated between acceptance of bilateral control arrangements similar to those between the U.S. and U.K., and insistence on purely national control. Neither was compatible with the formula announced at Paris, under which SACEUR would exercise ongoing control of the weapons, subject to the orders of the NAC. The Eisenhower administration would not accept either national control of the IRBMs and their warheads, or a purely bilateral arrangement. Nor was it prepared to provide technical assistance to the French nuclear program as a *quid pro quo* for French participation in a

NATO IRBM program, linking what it insisted were separate issues. In the face of persistent French footdragging, Norstad began talks with Italy in early 1958 as a goad to progress with France. Differences between France and the United States on nuclear cooperation were close to unbridgeable even before Charles de Gaulle's installation as President of the Fifth Republic.¹⁰¹

The Suez crisis had forced French policymakers and the public to view nuclear weapons through the prism of France's military and diplomatic dependence. The British White Paper's emphasis on nuclear weapons had exacerbated the French fear of falling behind, while *Sputnik* had undermined the credibility of the American nuclear guarantee. Gaillard's government had strengthened cooperation between the French military and the nuclear energy authority, the CEA, while the July 1957 vote on France's second five-year atomic plan made its military nuclear program virtually public and formal. The primary difference de Gaulle's ascension brought was in intention. He sought a nuclear capability to assert French autonomy, not merely a larger say within alliance structures.¹⁰²

Soon after his return to power, de Gaulle removed any doubt that national control would be at the heart of French nuclear policy. He moved to end preliminary discussions with West Germany and Italy about a possible nuclear consortium, prevent cooperation within Euratom on the military applications of atomic energy, and wind down French participation in the construction of Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor project.¹⁰³ When he met with Norstad in May of 1958, he declared himself in favour of a NATO atomic stockpile and IRBM units in France and Germany. However, when it came to IRBMs, "the French Government wants to define clearly the conditions under which the weapon will be employed and further...to participate in the decision of employment." Norstad replied that such a decision would rest with the NAC, and de Gaulle questioned "with some irony, the efficiency of this organization in this matter." He stated that France required some control over any stockpile on French soil, although this need not be exclusive. He added that France would have to be actively involved in any preparations for nuclear war, and indicated his dislike of the McMahon Act constraints, which he proposed to raise with Dulles. Norstad responded that "it will be impossible to obtain a radical decision in this matter." Yet he hinted at a greater degree of *de facto* European control, observing that "he hopes that by progressive steps it will be possible to minimize the specifically American character of the atomic armaments and emphasize their NATO character."¹⁰⁴

Meeting with Dulles, de Gaulle subsequently conceded that weapons furnished by the Americans could be the foundation of an eventual national deterrent and joint control of some weapons was initially acceptable. But France would insist on some nuclear arms under explicit and exclusive national control. It could not accept an IRBM arrangement including nominal American control of the weapons, with their employment requiring SACEUR's approval. De Gaulle rejected Dulles's argument that the McMahon Act dictated formal American custody as a convenient pretext for perpetuating American nuclear hegemony within NATO.¹⁰⁵

In Caccia's assessment, the Americans had treated the December NAC meeting "as an exercise in public relations" and found less allied interest in IRBM bases than anticipated. Washington was in the unaccustomed position of soliciting favours, but had "little enthusiasm for the concept of interdependence."¹⁰⁶ After de Gaulle's early expressions of a desire for nuclear weapons under national control, the Eisenhower administration stepped back from its past overtures to France, fearing that pressure on de Gaulle to take a definitive position on nuclear sharing arrangements would provoke him into further attacks on Anglo-American nuclear cooperation. When French officials proposed negotiations at the political level to reach a compromise, the administration suspected a French effort to probe the firmness of American support for the approach agreed in December 1957.¹⁰⁷

A French nuclear explosion could not be far off, as Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs C. Burke Elbrick warned Dulles, and once this occurred it would be difficult to explain to de Gaulle why Washington was not willing to provide France with the same nuclear information it had supplied to Britain.¹⁰⁸ Eisenhower instructed Dulles that the American approach to nuclear assistance to France should consist of detailed explanation to de Gaulle of what Washington could do under the existing legislation, accompanied by offers to see what was possible through a generous interpretation of current arrangements.¹⁰⁹

While French obstruction and the reluctance of other host states had slowed the momentum behind IRBM deployments within NATO, bilateral Anglo-American nuclear ties firmed up, with consequences for the composition of Britain's arsenal and its doctrinal underpinnings. Not only did Washington pursue enhanced allied cooperation more broadly, but it was more interested than before in access to technological innovations developed as part of the British thermonuclear weapons program. The Eisenhower administration obtained Congressional approval of amendments to the McMahon Act allowing greater sharing of

information with allies who had demonstrated substantial progress in their own nuclear programs, as well as bilateral agreements with Britain in July 1958 and May 1959 for the transfer of nuclear technology.¹¹⁰ By May 1958, discussions of targeting between SAC and Bomber Command had informed Britain of American plans regarding all targets that could threaten Britain directly (i.e., those within 2,500 nautical miles).¹¹¹

Yet if the advent of thermonuclear weaponry enabled Britain to credibly conduct itself as a nuclear power with only a modest deterrent, it also enabled additional nuclear weapons states to do the same, undermining the role in international politics which Britain derived from the Western nuclear duopoly. As the Macmillan government moved to secure Britain's status as a thermonuclear power, it was pulled in different directions by its desire to avoid further proliferation and its aversion to any disarmament agreements that might jeopardize its emerging thermonuclear deterrent. Tests by all three nuclear powers in 1957 had aroused growing opposition, with much of the British public attracted by the Labour Party's support for a test suspension.

Participation in test ban negotiations would enhance Britain's stature as one of the world's major powers, while an agreement itself would perpetuate its position as one of a few nuclear weapon states. Limits on the ability of other states to test would retard their efforts to acquire nuclear capabilities, while constraints on testing by the three present nuclear powers would prevent the U.S. or USSR from converting their greater resources into nuclear capabilities qualitatively superior to Britain's. But by 1957 the *sine qua non* for British support of test limitations, possession of a sustainable thermonuclear deterrent, was not yet in place. Macmillan was reluctant to support restrictions on testing despite Eisenhower's interest in a test ban to constrain the superpower arms race.¹¹²

To undercut public support for a test suspension, Ministers cautioned that if Britain were to end National Service it would have to either manufacture its own thermonuclear weapons, which required testing, or depend completely upon the American deterrent.¹¹³ Early in 1957, Foreign Office personnel informed the State Department that any limits on testing would have to be considered separately from other disarmament measures.¹¹⁴ In March of 1958 Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev announced a testing halt and asked the Western powers to reciprocate. While Washington responded by proposing a conference on the feasibility of detecting tests, Britain, with further tests already planned for September, remained aloof. Macmillan was disinclined to discuss test limitations without substantial amendment to the

McMahon Act, and the Cabinet Defence Committee agreed that British acceptance of a test suspension would be conditional on an American commitment to provide Britain with assistance that would obviate the need to test once it took effect.¹¹⁵

Any modification of American law had to meet Congressional and AEC concerns over allied security, without attracting criticism from other allies by implying a permanent privileged relationship for Britain. Dulles suggested to AEC Chairman Lewis Strauss that an amendment limiting cooperative arrangements to states that had already made demonstrable progress in their own national nuclear programs “would take care of the British and not obviously discriminate against the French.”¹¹⁶ After such an amendment was approved in July of 1958, Macmillan agreed to support American initiatives for a test suspension in exchange for Eisenhower’s agreement to transfer fissionable materials and design information enabling Britain to produce operational warheads without embarking on a new series of tests.

In September, Britain concluded its current testing program, allowing Macmillan to end the ambivalence surrounding his government’s position on testing. By the fall of 1958, Khrushchev had declared himself no longer bound by his earlier unilateral renunciation of testing, and on October 30 he announced that the USSR considered itself free to carry out further tests until it had conducted as many as Britain and American combined. The next day the American and British governments announced an indefinite moratorium on their testing programs.¹¹⁷ Macmillan was now free to support a test ban, which he did with considerable enthusiasm over the coming years, to Eisenhower’s ultimate chagrin.¹¹⁸ From 1958 to 1961, the British and American governments observed a unilateral testing moratorium, in various formal and informal variants, while agreement on more ambitious limits proved elusive.¹¹⁹

The Eisenhower administration’s efforts to provide any nuclear aid to France through NATO or European channels created problems for the Macmillan government. While the 1957 Anglo-American agreement for the deployment of the Thor IRBMs contained no reference to either SACEUR or NATO, the December 1957 offer to other allies was within an explicit NATO framework. The uniqueness of the Anglo-American arrangement reflected the shift in American thinking away from additional national deterrents, not a conviction that Britain should be exempt from restrictions imposed on other allies. The evolution of American policy logically implied a diminution of support for Britain’s independent deterrent insofar as differential treatment of allied nuclear aspirations inevitably embittered

relations with the less favoured allies.

Moreover, de Gaulle was now outdoing the British in his insistence on acquiring nuclear weapons under explicit national direction. Prior to Macmillan's June 1958 meeting with de Gaulle, the Foreign Office reminded the Prime Minister that SACEUR wanted the IRBM sites in Britain, like those on the continent, under his direct control, but had been told informally that London could not agree. Foreign Office analysts believed de Gaulle would likely demand a bilateral agreement with Washington similar to Britain's rather than accept an arrangement whereby nuclear weapons in France were all under SACEUR's control. It was advisable that Britain avoid taking a position on any agreement the French might propose since "on the one hand we do not wish to encourage the French to take an independent line from SACEUR and on the other we do not wish to seem to be urging them to accept an inferior agreement to our own."¹²⁰ Lloyd had already concluded that if de Gaulle's suspicions of Anglo-American collaboration in NATO were inflamed, this would only encourage him to exclude Britain from European councils. Washington would then find it easier to deal with the Continental powers as a group, with Britain relegated to the sidelines.¹²¹ When he met Macmillan, de Gaulle said he was prepared to accept joint Franco-American control of French nuclear assets, analogous to Anglo-American arrangements, but that some French nuclear weapons would have to be under clear national control. Macmillan suggested an industrial free trade agreement was perfectly compatible with the workings of the EEC and warned of the dangers to western unity of a trade war between the Six and the other Western European states. De Gaulle replied in turn that the EEC was little more than a continuation of established Continental trade barriers and posed no threat to British interests. Neither managed to shift the other's position.¹²²

De Gaulle made his nuclear desires clearer with the delivery on September 25 of his memorandum to the British and American governments, calling for institutionalized consultations between NATO's two present nuclear powers and France, which was about to cross over the nuclear threshold, each of the three exercising the dominant voice in its own sphere of influence, and commanding the deference of the other two. Direction by this triumvirate would effectively replace present NATO decision-making procedures, and draw an explicit distinction between nuclear and non-nuclear members.¹²³ The memorandum's contents quickly reached diplomatic representatives of other governments and NATO officials. NATO Secretary-General Paul-Henri Spaak told Britain's Permanent

Representative, Sir Frank Roberts, that France's modest contribution to NATO both within and beyond its own borders made pretensions to equality with America and Britain wildly unrealistic.¹²⁴ Norstad later informed Macmillan that he had made the same point to his French colleagues.¹²⁵

Macmillan had worried for some time that West Germany's dependence in security matters would turn it into an accomplice in any Gaullist effort to obstruct closer ties between Britain and the Continent. Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, he noted, was anxious to avoid isolation from his allies, and the risk of greater Soviet political pressure. Macmillan believed the Chancellor also favoured a strong Franco-German alignment as a check on British and American desires for an East-West rapprochement at his country's expense. As a result, "he is...prepared to pay an economic price for French political help."¹²⁶ Yet he also hoped that the desire for British support in security matters might lead Adenauer to cooperate in the development of an FTA linking the EEC with Britain. By Foreign Minister Heinrich von Brentano's account, Adenauer was not yet convinced of de Gaulle's backing for European integration and feared France's political divisions over the unsuccessful war in Algeria would delay the creation of EEC institutions.¹²⁷ Yet the British Ambassador in Bonn, Sir Christopher Steel, found the Chancellor "profoundly pessimistic....about the future of the political regimes in the United States and the United Kingdom."¹²⁸ Macmillan suggested to Lloyd and Chancellor of the Exchequer Derrick Heathcoat-Amory that both de Gaulle and Adenauer should be warned that "if little Europe is formed without a parallel development of a Free Trade Area we shall have to reconsider the whole of our political and economic attitude." A high external tariff would force Britain to form a group of states outside it as a counterweight to the Six. Britain, he wrote, "would take our troops out of Europe. We would withdraw from NATO. We would adopt a policy of isolationism."¹²⁹

When he visited Bonn in early October to sound the Chancellor out, he found him furious over de Gaulle's memorandum. While de Gaulle had told him that he was willing to accept an FTA coming into effect in January 1959, Adenauer was convinced that for all his public statements in favour of Franco-German reconciliation, de Gaulle sought a tripartite directorate within NATO to cement the second-class status of non-nuclear members and deprive the Federal Republic of the political influence which its economic resurgence might entail.¹³⁰ Macmillan concluded de Gaulle's influence over Adenauer was now shaken. There was no firm Franco-German bloc obstructing British economic cooperation with the

Continent, and it might be possible to reach an understanding with either de Gaulle or Adenauer. While the General's proposal was, as it stood, unacceptable, Macmillan suggested to Caccia, it was now the object of open controversy, which might compel an early response.¹³¹

The British Ambassador in Paris, Gladwyn Jebb, warned that outright rejection would confirm de Gaulle's suspicions that NATO as it stood was essentially run by an Anglo-Saxon duopoly.¹³² In conversation with Dulles about coordinated responses to de Gaulle, Caccia suggested that the alternative of informal tripartite consultation be discussed, with other NATO members kept informed so as to allay any fears they might have. Yet with Britain anxious to secure de Gaulle's agreement to a Free Trade Area, this was hardly the moment to unambiguously rebuff his overtures and force him to rely more on Continental structures in which Britain was not represented.¹³³ The Eisenhower administration was aware of de Gaulle's past wariness of European integration, and reluctant to arouse his ire by weighing in on the question of an FTA.¹³⁴ As the Minister for Economic Affairs at the American Embassy in Paris told Jean Monnet of the Action Committee for a United Europe, the thrust of U.S. policy was to encourage all European states to pursue tariff reductions and liberal trade, regardless of their membership in any economic grouping.¹³⁵

When Dulles and Lloyd discussed de Gaulle's proposal, they agreed its particulars were now common knowledge and widely unacceptable among other NATO members as well in Africa and Asia, where it was assumed de Gaulle was trying to strengthen France's hand in Algeria and against decolonization more broadly. The only way discussions could proceed without arousing widespread protests was if the current French proposal were withdrawn and a new one brought forward. The two also agreed on the importance of avoiding a rebuff to de Gaulle that might lead to his seeking Europe's political and economic division, and a French policy resting solely on a tight, inward-looking EEC.¹³⁶ Yet there were important differences in emphasis between the American and British replies to de Gaulle.¹³⁷

Eisenhower responded that consultations limited to the three, but inevitably affecting the interests of those NATO members not taking part, were unrealistic, although he did not reject further discussion.¹³⁸ Macmillan's reply gave more attention to the ambiguities in de Gaulle's proposal, asking if tripartite consultations would supplant existing NATO procedures and if decision-making would be on a basis of unanimity, giving each of the three a veto over actions by the others.¹³⁹ When Jebb delivered Macmillan's response, he added that Britain

supported further tripartite discussions at the Ambassadorial level. De Gaulle observed that the American response to his proposal had been very discouraging, and that if NATO could not be improved, France would minimize its participation.¹⁴⁰ His Foreign Minister, Maurice Couve de Murville, took pains to disabuse representatives of other powers of the notion that de Gaulle's ideas were set in stone. He told Jebb that de Gaulle did not believe any of Britain, France, or the United States should exercise a veto over the others' actions, or that their discussions should replace present NATO procedures. The idea was for the three to reach an agreed line before an issue was discussed in NATO, and present it to the other members, in the expectation that they would fall in line.¹⁴¹

Macmillan had told de Gaulle in June that if the EEC Six adopted a high external tariff, isolationist sentiment in Britain would increase and a trade war hampering NATO's unity might break out.¹⁴² De Gaulle expressed no interest in an FTA, but Macmillan continued to press the matter. He warned France's Ambassador to Britain, Rene Chauvel, that if the Treaty of Rome took effect in January of 1959 without an FTA, a trade war would be inevitable.¹⁴³ Steel wrote from Bonn in mid-October that Adenauer was now pessimistic about agreement on an FTA.¹⁴⁴ Macmillan tried to use German dependence on allies to get Adenauer to stand up to de Gaulle, writing him that economics and security could not be separated, and that if France ended the talks on an FTA, the result might be NATO's collapse.¹⁴⁵ By the end of October he had concluded that there was little hope for an FTA linking Britain and the Continent. "The French," he wrote in his diary, "are determined to exclude the United Kingdom. De Gaulle is bidding high for the hegemony of Europe."¹⁴⁶ When Couve visited London in November, he told the Prime Minister that France could not accept any wider trading arrangement that would prevent the Six from forming their own institutions and developing privileged ties among themselves, even if the price were Europe's fragmentation into rival economic groupings. He added that France was still interested in closer consultations with America and Britain.¹⁴⁷ On November 14, de Gaulle formally rejected British proposals for an FTA.

One of Macmillan's Private Secretaries, Sir Frederick Bishop, suggested at about the same time that a dramatic initiative towards France, in a field like defense production or aerospace, might bring about a more cooperative French attitude. Such an overture would "entail reviewing some of our basic defence policies-to the extent which we need the United States military presence in Europe."¹⁴⁸ Julian Amery, a junior Minister at the War Office (and

Macmillan's son-in-law) noted that de Gaulle was irrevocably committed to making France a nuclear power. He could do so in partnership with America and Britain, and this was at the root of his call for a tripartite directorate of NATO, replacing what he viewed as a two-power one. Alternatively, he could collaborate with West Germany on a nuclear program, or dispense with external aid altogether.

The route de Gaulle chose would shape French policy towards Europe's economic structures. "If France were to join the Anglo-American partnership and receive our nuclear information," Amery wrote, "she would have a strong incentive for basing her economic policy on the OEEC and the Free Trade Area. If instead she had to proceed in partnership with Germany, her economic policy would tend to be based on the Common Market without the Free Trade Area." Denied both, France would move in the direction of autarchy. It was hardly in Britain's interest to see a protectionist Europe with nuclear weapons, and it was in the interest of neither Anglo-Saxon power to see an essentially neutralist France shucking its NATO and OEEC obligations.

Amery observed that at the moment much of French industry opposed linking the EEC to an FTA, and indeed had reservations about the EEC itself. British industry was skeptical of the EEC and supportive of limited trade liberalization. An offer of nuclear information, at least that which Britain had not obtained from the United States, could purchase French acceptance of British association with the EEC on a basis of mutual preferences. After a few years the arrangement could be reviewed, with Britain opting for progress towards a full FTA, or France deciding the EEC had developed as far as was desirable. The bargain Amery proposed would create new trade preferences, and "raises the whole question of the so-called 'fourth nuclear power.'" But since the French had decided to build the bomb, "if we do not help them, they are likely to finance its production by far more discriminatory methods than if we do." ¹⁴⁹

The alternative to purchasing acceptable European arrangements from France was procuring them from West Germany. In October Macmillan's other Private Secretary, Philip de Zulueta, pointed out that Britain's commitment to maintain existing force levels on the Continent and the Federal Republic's renunciation of the possession or manufacture of nuclear weapons were both contained in the Paris Agreements of 1955. If Bonn and Washington sought to nuclearize FRG forces, "I wonder if we could use our agreement in any way to help us over the free trade area. There are, of course, objections to mixing up two

subjects in this way but it might be worth considering the point. In particular, I should be surprised if the French and the Americans saw eye to eye on this.”¹⁵⁰

However, many British officials saw the provision of nuclear weapons to the FRG as deeply problematic, with Defense Minister Franz-Joseph Strauss a particular object of suspicion. As early as 1956, when the Eisenhower administration aired the “Radford Plan” for reducing American troops levels in Europe, and relying to a greater extent on nuclear striking power, NATO’s nuclear dispositions had been a particular concern of Adenauer’s government. Given the alliance’s increased reliance on nuclear weapons, he believed Germany required a role in NATO nuclear planning. He was also determined that German forces at least be equipped with the same tactical nuclear weapons as the American forces they would replace, even if the warheads were normally in American hands. His nightmare was Soviet aggression against a West Germany defended solely by conventional means, with the possibility of a superpower agreement to refrain from nuclear hostilities. Strauss’s confidence in the American guarantee and NATO nuclear doctrine had been shaken by *Sputnik*, and he had tried to explore alternative arrangements through Euratom or the embryonic Franco-Italian-German nuclear consortium, which de Gaulle terminated on coming to power.¹⁵¹ British concerns about Strauss were exacerbated towards the end of 1958, once Norstad informed Roberts that Strauss had claimed to have Adenauer’s support in trying to acquire IRBMs for the *Bundeswehr*, an assertion Norstad doubted.¹⁵²

Macmillan’s curiosity had been aroused by the emergence of proposals for quantitative and qualitative limits on armaments in the two Germanys and other states. In Britain, the proponents of “disengagement” included Hugh Gaitskell, who had seen the Hungarian uprising of 1956 as symptomatic of a weakening Soviet hold on the satellite states. Gaitskell believed force reductions in the centre of Europe would give the satellites more room for independent action and reduce the dangers of a future East German uprising that might trigger West German intervention.¹⁵³ He rejected any variant of disengagement limited to Germany or requiring the withdrawal of all American and British forces from the Continent, advocating a demilitarized, nuclear-free zone covering Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and a reunified, neutral Germany.¹⁵⁴ Early in 1958, Macmillan had accepted Lloyd’s suggestion for a joint study of prospects for disengagement by the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence.¹⁵⁵ This group concluded that it might be possible to negotiate disengagement without overt discrimination against West German forces, and its analysis

was forwarded to the American Department of State for comments. The Americans concluded that disengagement without discrimination against Germany was likely to prove difficult in practice, and that holding any discussions would severely strain Bonn's confidence in the other Western powers.¹⁵⁶

British policymakers found NATO structures convenient when FRG forces had to be equipped with tactical nuclear weapons. In May of 1958, when Britain moved to preposition warheads for Corporal tactical missiles and Canberra bombers in the Second Tactical Air Force on German soil, the State Department and Foreign Office agreed Norstad would order the redeployments and retain control of the warheads, under the procedures governing the nuclear stockpile agreed to in Paris by the NAC.¹⁵⁷ This ensured NATO's formal control over the weapons, but did not remove British misgivings. Lloyd noted that the Foreign Office had concluded that even if the warheads remained in U.S. custody, equipping German forces with tactical nuclear weapons would hasten the FRG's eventual emergence as an independent nuclear power. While Britain should fall in with SACEUR's control of the weapons in order to keep Germany in the Western camp as an equal partner, there were long-term dangers "when the Great Powers will have reached a position of nuclear stalemate and the ICBM will be a fully operational reality. In those circumstances the United States may be tempted to withdraw into Fortress America and to leave Europe to fend for itself."

If West Germany were on the road to acquiring nuclear weapons, the USSR might be willing to purchase its departure from NATO with the offer of a reunified but neutral Germany, which Bonn might find tempting. Even in the short term there were dangers. If Soviet moves to compel Western recognition of the East German regime led to rioting in East Germany and the FRG, with nuclear weapons at the ready, sought to intervene, the danger of war by miscalculation was high. But the alternative was "to resist General Norstad's proposals, to offend both Germany and the United States, and to risk a breakdown of NATO—not in five or ten years' time, but now."¹⁵⁸ The Cabinet Defence Committee agreed that it would be unwise to provoke debate within NATO over the dangers of nuclear weapons in West German hands, since existing NATO doctrine required acceptance of that risk.¹⁵⁹

By the end of 1958 the restoration of Anglo-American nuclear cooperation and the amendment of the McMahon Act had put Britain's deterrent on a more secure footing. Among the major questions now confronting Macmillan's government were whether and how nuclear cooperation could be extended to one or more Continental powers in exchange

for closer economic ties to the EEC. Given ongoing American support for the Common Market and the progress already made, Macmillan was convinced open British opposition was impossible. The only feasible policy was to dilute the EEC in a wider, looser grouping.¹⁶⁰ The shift in American policy towards constraining additional nuclear deterrents within a NATO framework made it difficult for Macmillan to offer an arrangement that was not explicitly inferior to Britain's painfully unique one with America. At the same time, de Gaulle, the most likely partner in any deal, had made clear his unwillingness to accept an inferior arrangement as well as his wariness of any British ties to the EEC. In the next year the spectrum of options open to Macmillan would change, as the Soviet Union increased its pressure on West Germany and its allies over Berlin. Yet de Gaulle's options would change too.

Notes

1. John F. Kennedy, "A Democrat Looks at Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs*, 36/1 (October 1957), p. 45.
2. Idem, p. 48.
3. Robert A. Wampler, "Conventional Goals and Nuclear Promises: The Truman Administration and the Roots of the NATO New Look", pp. 353-380 of Francis H. Heller and John R. Gillingham, eds., NATO: The Founding of the Atlantic Alliance and the Integration of Europe (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).
4. Samuel F. Wells, Jr., "The Origins of Massive Retaliation", *Political Science Quarterly*, 96/1 (Spring, 1981), pp. 31-52.
5. Marc Trachtenberg, "The Nuclearization of NATO and U.S.-West European Relations", Heller and Gillingham, op cit, pp. 413-432; David Alan Rosenberg, "Reality and Responsibility: Power and Process in the Making of United States Nuclear Strategy, 1945-68", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 9 (1986), pp. 35-52; John Lewis Gaddis, "The Essential Relevance of Nuclear Weapons", pp. 105-118 of his The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
6. Theodore Draper, "The Western Misalliance", in Present History (New York: Random House, 1984), pp. 105-168, esp. pp. 112-113.
7. Alan S. Milward, "NATO, OEEC, and the Integration of Europe", pp. 403-412 of Heller and Gillingham, eds., op cit; Gustav Schmidt, "'Tying' (West) Germany into the West-But to What? NATO? WEU? The European Community?", pp. 137-174 of Clemens Wurm, ed., Western Europe and Germany: The Beginnings of European Integration 1945-1960 (Oxford and Washington: Berg, 1995), esp. pp. 161-163.
8. Wayne Reynolds, Australia's Bid for the Atomic Bomb (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2000), pp.43-44 and 106-107.
9. John Krige, "Why did Britain join CERN?", pp. 385-406 of David Gooding, Trevor Pinch, and Simon Schaffer, eds., The Uses of Experiment: Studies in the Natural Sciences (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
10. Andrew M. Johnston, "Mr. Slessor Goes to Washington: The Influence of the British Global Strategy Paper on the Eisenhower New Look", *Diplomatic History*, 22 (1998), pp. 361-398; Reynolds, op cit, pp. 18-19.
11. Simon J. Ball, "Military Nuclear Relations Between the United States and Great Britain under the Terms of the McMahon Act, 1946-1958", *Historical Journal*, 38/2 (June 1995), pp. 438-454. The American partnership with West Germany, further from equality than that with Britain, produced an air force configured as an adjunct to and miniature version of the USAF. See James S. Corum, "Building a New Luftwaffe: The United States Air Force and Bundeswehr Planning for Rearmament, 1950-60", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 27/1 (March 2004), pp. 89-113.
12. Philip Nash, The Other Missiles of October: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Jupiters, 1957-1963 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), p. 28.
13. David Clay Large, Germans to the Front: West German Rearmament in the Adenauer Era (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 152.
14. Robert Bothwell, "Weird Science: Scientific Refugees and the Montreal Laboratory", pp. 217-232 of Norman Hillmer, Bohdan Kordan, and Lubomyr Luciuk, eds., On Guard for Thee: War, Ethnicity, and the Canadian State, 1939-1945 (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1988).
15. Claude d'Abzac-Epezy and Philippe Vial, "In Search of a European Consciousness:

French Military Elites and the Idea of Europe, 1947-54", pp. 1-20 of Anne Deighton, ed., Building Postwar Europe: National Decision-Makers and European Institutions, 1948-63 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995).

16. Klaus A. Maier, "The Anglo-Saxon Triangle, the French and Western Integration", pp. 403-12 of Heller and Gillingham, op cit.; Milward, op cit. In part because of France's obvious difficulties retaining what remained of its empire, neither American nor British policymakers appear to have taken seriously its pretensions to being one of the west's three world powers, rather than a regional one. They saw the formation of the Standing Group largely as a device to soothe French *amour-propre* while proceeding with German rearmament. See Laurent Cesari, "The Declining Value of Indochina: France and the Economics of Empire, 1950-1955", pp. 175-195 of Mark Atwood Lawrence and Fredrik Logevall, eds., The First Vietnam War: Colonial Conflict and Cold War Crisis (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2007), esp. pp. 179-180.

17. Brian R. Duchin, "The 'Agonizing Reappraisal': Eisenhower, Dulles, and the European Defense Community", *Diplomatic History*, 16/ 2 (Spring, 1992), pp. 201-221. See also Kevin Ruane, The Rise and Fall of the European Defence Community: Anglo-American Relations and the Crisis of European Defence, 1950-1955 (London: Macmillan, 2000).

18. Saki Dockrill, Britain's Policy for West German Rearmament 1950-1955 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 49-50. On the difficulty of forging Atlantic economic and political links through NATO once economic integration had been achieved on a European basis, see John C. Milloy, The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1948-1957: Community or Alliance? (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006).

19. Josef Joffe, "The View from Bonn: The Tacit Alliance", in Lincoln Gordon, ed., Eroding Empire: Western Relations with Eastern Europe (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1987), pp. 129-187. Significantly, within a year Adenauer formalized his "*Politik der Starke*" by promulgating the Hallstein Doctrine, under which Bonn declined to establish diplomatic relations with any Communist state other than the USSR and threatened to sever them with any state that recognized the DDR. On the Hallstein doctrine and its effects, see William Glenn Gray, Germany's Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949-1969 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

20. Maier, op cit, p. 412.

21. Vladislav M. Zubok and Hope M. Harrison, "The Nuclear Education of Nikita Khrushchev", in John Lewis Gaddis, Philip H. Gordon, Ernest R. May, and Jonathan Rosenberg, eds., Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy Since 1945 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 149-150.

22. Record of Prime Minister's Meeting with Guy Mollet, September 27 1956, PREM 11/1352, The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA).

23. Cabinet Meeting (1956) 68, September 27 1956, CAB 128/30.

24. Wolfram Kaiser, Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans: Britain and European Integration, 1945-63 (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 130-131.

25. Hanns Jurgen Kusters, "The Origins of the EEC Treaty", pp. 211-238 of E. Serra, ed., Il Rilancio dell'Europa e i Trattati di Roma (Brussels: Bruyant, 1989).

26. MAE memorandum, January 19 1957, in Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1957, (DDF), Tome 1 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1990), pp. 118-120.

27. Macmillan memorandum, "European Integration", January 16 1952, in Documents on British Policy Overseas (DBPO), Series ii, Vol. 1, The Schuman Plan, the Council of Europe and Western European Integration, May 1950-December 1952 (London: HMSO,

1986), pp. 815-816.

28. Eden to Winston Churchill, March 18 1952, *ibid*, p. 847.

29. C.C. (55) 19, June 30 1955, CAB 128/26, TNA.

30. Kaiser, *op cit*, pp. 62-74.

31. Memorandum by Macmillan and Thorneycroft, November 6 1956, CAB 129/256, TNA. The British proposal was published as Cmnd. 72, A European Free Trade Area: United Kingdom Memorandum to the OEEC (London: HMSO, 1957).

32. Kaiser, *op cit*, p. 93.

33. C.P. (57) 6, January 5 1957, CAB 129/84, TNA.

34. GEN. 564 / 1st Meeting, Long-Term Defence Programme, December 18 1956, CAB 130/122.

35. C.C. (57) 3, January 8 1957, CAB 128/30.

36. GEN. 567, Meeting of Ministers, January 23 1957, CAB 130/122. See also the similar discussion at GEN. 564, 1st Meeting, Long-Term Defence Programme, December 18 1956, *ibid*.

37. Eden to Eisenhower, July 18 1956, Foreign Relations of the United States, (FRUS) 1955-1957, Vol. 20 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1990), pp. 86-87.

38. BNSP NSC 5602 / 1, March 15 1956, *ibid*, pp. 247-249.

39. Christopher Steel's "Memorandum of Conversation at General Gruenther's House, May 10 1956", with General Gruenther, Field Marshal Montgomery, Gladwyn Jebb, Hugh Gaitskell, and George Brown, enclosed in Walter Monckton to Eden, May 15 1956, T 225/1500, TNA.

40. Michael Dockrill, "'Restoring the Special Relationship': The Bermuda and Washington Conferences, 1957", pp. 205-223 of Dick Richardson and Glyn Stone, eds., Decisions and Diplomacy: Essays in 20th Century International History in Memory of George Grun and Esmonde Robertson (London: Routledge, 1995). Macmillan did not see American and European ties as mutually exclusive. Rather, links to Europe would reinforce British influence in Washington and reinsure against any future rupture of the "Special Relationship." See Kevin Ruane and James Ellison, "Managing the Americans: Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan and the Pursuit of 'Power-by-Proxy' in the 1950s", *Contemporary British History*, 18/ 3 (Autumn, 2002), pp. 147-67.

41. Record of Meeting at the Pentagon, January 28 1957, FO 371/129306, TNA.

42. Sir Richard Powell to Harold Caccia, March 8 1957, FO 371/129329.

43. Macmillan and Walter Monckton to Eden, March 1956, PREM 11/1778.

44. Summary of Restricted Session of Conference, March 22 1957, John Foster Dulles to Department of State, Secto 13, March 22 1957, Office of the Staff Secretary, International Trips and Meetings Series, Box 2, f. Bermuda 1957-Chronology, Friday, March 22, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library (DDEL), Abilene, Kansas.

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49. Dulles briefing for UK press, idem.
50. Marc Trachtenberg, A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 194-200.
51. Meeting of Minister with Secretary of Defense Wilson and American Officials, December 12 1956, DEFE 7/1162, TNA.
52. Record of a Meeting held at the Pentagon on Monday, 28 January 1957, ZP5/18, FO 371/129306.
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54. Jonathan E. Helmreich, "The United States and the Formation of EURATOM", *Diplomatic History*, 15/ 3 (Summer,1991), pp. 387-410.
55. Memorandum of Conversation, March 23 1957, "Atomic Energy Items", White House Office Files, Office of the Staff Secretary, International Trips and Meetings, Box 2, f. Bermuda 1957-Chronology, March 23 1957, DDEL.
56. "Agreed Note on Military Nuclear Programmes of Fourth Countries", March 1957, FO 371/17513, TNA.
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61. House of Commons, *Debates*, Fifth Series, Vol. 568, Cols. 66-67, and 130-131, April 1, 1957.
62. John Baylis, "The Development of Britain's Thermonuclear Capability 1954-61: Myth or Reality?", *Contemporary Record*, 8/1 (Summer, 1994), pp. 159-174.
63. Air Ministry note "The Size of the Deterrent", n.d. but obviously 1956, COS (56) 269, DEFE 5/69.
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66. See the paraphrase of Macmillan's thinking in Melville (DUS, Air Ministry) to Sir Richard Powell, September 15 1958, AIR 8/2220.
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- 114.Memorandum by Robert Matteson of conversation with Barbara Salt, Counsellor, British Embassy, February 6 1957, White House Office Files, Special Assistant for Disarmament Files, Box 34, f. Bilateral Conferences-United Kingdom 1957-58 (3), DDEL.
115. See 5(58) 2, March 20 1958, CAB 131/19, TNA.
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117. Freeman, op cit, pp. 87-90.
118. In 1960 Eisenhower and AEC Chairman John McCone agreed in deploring Britain's opposition to a test suspension until after modification of the McMahon Act had secured the British deterrent. Britain subsequently proposed limits on testing considerably more restrictive than those the U.S. would accept. Memorandum of conversation between Eisenhower and McCone, February 3 1960, Office of the Staff Secretary Files, Subject Series, Alphabetical Subseries, Box 3, f. Atomic Energy Commission, Vol. 3 (1), DDEL. Eisenhower seems to have been open to a test ban, granted foolproof verification. See Benjamin P. Greene, "Eisenhower, Science and the Nuclear Test Ban Debate, 1953-56", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 26/4 (December, 2003), pp. 156-186.
119. Oliver, op cit, p. 10.
120. Brief #3-d, Prime Minister's Visit to Paris, June 29-30 1958, "NATO: IRBM Sites in France", FO 371/135469, TNA.
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122. Minute of Macmillan-de Gaulle meeting, June 29-30 1958, DDF, 1958, Tome 1 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1992), pp. 862-883.
123. De Gaulle memorandum of September 17 1958, FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. 7, Pt. 2, pp. 81-83. By one account, de Gaulle later said he had deliberately asked for more than the "Anglo-Saxon" powers would ever grant, so that refusal would furnish the grounds for France's incremental withdrawal from NATO structures and obligations. See Alain Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle* (Paris: Fayette, 1994), p. 352. Insofar as his proposal was for increased interdependence among three favoured powers rather than a mere loosening of restrictions on French action, it is more likely his claim was a later exercise in sour grapes. For this interpretation, see Irwin M. Wall, "France, NATO and the Algerian War", in Wilfried Loth, ed., Europe, Cold War and Coexistence, 1953-1965 (London: Frank Cass, 2004), pp. 56-66, 58.
124. Roberts to Lloyd, October 14 1958, Tel. #307, PREM 11/3002, TNA.
125. Memorandum of Conversation with Norstad, November 28 1958, PREM 11/3701.
126. Minute of Macmillan conversation with Ambassador Chauvel, June 20 1958, PREM 11/2336.
127. Memorandum of Conversation between the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Brentano, June 7 1958, PREM 11/2345.
128. "Anglo-German Relations", April 10 1958, FO 371/137375.
129. Macmillan to Lloyd and Heathcoat-Amory, June 24 1958, PREM 11/2315.
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131. Macmillan to Caccia, in Foreign Office to Washington, October 9 1958, Tel. 7124, PREM 11/3002.
132. Paris to Foreign Office, October 18 1958, Tel. #477, PREM 11 / 3002.
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134. Department of State policy paper, "Policy Considerations toward a de Gaulle Government", May 27 1958, *ibid*, pp. 17-20.

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139. Macmillan to de Gaulle, n.d. but delivered October 21, 1958, PREM 11/3002, TNA.
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141. Paris to Foreign Office, October 25 1958, Tel. #496, *ibid.*
142. Minute of Macmillan-de Gaulle conversations, June 29-30 1958, DDF, 1958, Tome 1, (Paris; Imprimerie Nationale, 1992), pp. 868-871.
143. Chauvel to Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres, October 15 1958, DDF, 1958, Tome 2, (Imprimerie Nationale, 1995), pp. 518-521.
144. Steel to Lloyd, October 17 1958, FO 371/137378, TNA.
145. Macmillan to Adenauer, October 25 1958, PREM 11/2706, TNA.
146. Macmillan diary for October 31 1958, quoted by Alistair Horne, Macmillan, 1957-1986, (London: Macmillan, 1989, p. 111.
147. Record of Conversation with Foreign Minister Couve de Murville, November 6 1958, PREM 11/3002, TNA.
148. "Thoughts on Policy Towards Western Europe", n.s. and n.d. but by Bishop, mid-November, 1958, PREM 11/2985.
149. Amery memorandum to Macmillan, "The General, the Bomb and the Free Trade Area", December 3 1958, PREM 11/2696.
150. De Zulueta to Macmillan, October 28 1958, PREM 11/2929.
151. Klaus Schwabe, "Adenauer and Nuclear Deterrence", pp. 37-55 of Loth, ed., *op cit*, Pertti Ahonen, "Franz-Josef Strauss and the German Nuclear Question, 1956-1962", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 18/2 (June, 1995), pp. 25-51. Schwabe notes that Adenauer favoured West German participation in at least the manufacture of nuclear weaponry, but initially through Euratom or the three-nation consortium, which would not have violated the 1954 undertakings.
152. Roberts to Lloyd, December 18 1958, PREM 11/2929, TNA.
153. See Gaitskell to Richard Crossman, May 28 1960, enclosing Michael Howard minute of Gaitskell's remarks at Chatham House on October 23 1957, in Philip Williams, ed., The Diary of Hugh Gaitskell, 1945-1956 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1983), pp. 629-630.
154. See Gaitskell's Godkin Lectures at Harvard University, The Challenge of Coexistence (London: Methuen, 1956) and Denis Healey's Fabian Pamphlet A Neutral Belt in Europe (London: Fabian Society, 1957).
155. Lloyd minute to Macmillan, PM 58/1, January 2 1958, FO 371/135627, TNA.
156. Comments on British Paper on European Security, April 18 1958, PREM 11/2347.
157. Sandys to Macmillan, May 20, 1958, PREM 11/2929.
158. Lloyd to Macmillan, November 12 1958, "Germany and Nuclear Weapons", *ibid.*
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Chapter Two: Berlin to Rambouillet

On November 10, 1958, Nikita Khrushchev delivered a speech in East Berlin, giving the three Western occupying powers six months in which to conclude a peace treaty with either both Germanys or a reunified German state, and establish West Berlin as a demilitarized free city. If they did not agree to such a settlement, he continued, the Soviet Union would put control of the access routes between West Berlin and the FRG in East German hands. As an outpost of political and economic freedom more than a hundred miles behind the frontiers of the Communist bloc, West Berlin was a potent economic and political threat to the stability of the DDR. Free movement across the intra-German border allowed West Berliners to buy cheap goods and services from East Berlin's businesses, leaving less for East Berliners' consumption. It also meant that skilled workers in East Berlin could contribute to West Berlin's economy, taking payment in West German Marks while also enjoying the heavily subsidized East German living costs. Other East Germans simply fled to West Berlin and then the FRG. Politically, West Berlin was a platform for espionage, including monitoring of east bloc communications, and broadcasting that reached East German audiences.

The city's geographic vulnerability allowed Khrushchev to threaten Western access in order to extract diplomatic recognition of the DDR, which would constitute *de facto* acceptance of Europe's postwar partition. He also believed that turning West Berlin into a free city would reduce the Western presence and hence the destabilizing effect on the DDR, even if the city could not be fully incorporated into the Soviet bloc.¹ A November 27 note to the other occupying powers formally gave them six months in which to negotiate an end to the occupation regime. Otherwise, the USSR would conclude a separate peace treaty with East Germany, and West Berlin would be treated as a free city.²

Scholars continue to differ as to Khrushchev's exact goals, some seeing Soviet policy as driven primarily by the desire to prevent West Germany from acquiring nuclear weapons,³ while others give pride of place to the well-established Soviet goal of formal acknowledgment of Europe's division into eastern and western spheres.⁴ The most persuasive analyses acknowledge that events around Berlin developed a momentum of their own, with Khrushchev's desire to see what concessions he might obtain from the Western powers at the negotiating table as crucial.⁵ Philip Nash has drawn attention to the gap between the NAC's approval in April, 1958, of MC-70, which proposed stockpiling tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, and the FRG's formal request for missiles in November, when

the Bundestag had passed the necessary legislation in March. He suggests that Khrushchev's ultimatum removed the perceived need for West German circumspection in expressing any nuclear ambitions.⁶ Yet, as Jill Kastner demonstrates, Chancellor Adenauer was aware of Soviet concern over any German nuclear arsenal, and in April seems to have hinted, in talks with Deputy Premier Mikoyan, that he might be prepared to refrain from equipping the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons if acceptable limits on conventional force levels in central Europe could be agreed, an overture to which the Soviets never replied.⁷ Following the NAC decision to deploy IRBMs, Moscow's fears of an eventual German nuclear capability also loomed large in British assessments of the Soviet desire for a German settlement.

In his initial assessment of Khrushchev's ultimatum, Lloyd argued that Britain could not consider abandoning the Western position in Berlin, although contacts with representatives of the DDR, perhaps leading to eventual recognition, should not be ruled out.⁸ A further Foreign Office analysis, providing detailed guidance for British embassies, interpreted Soviet actions as driven by the desire to prevent any West German nuclear capability and generate pressure in the West for high-level talks on Germany's future that might lead to Western recognition of the DDR and Europe's postwar division, and consolidation of Soviet control over other satellites. It concluded that the Western occupying powers might be forced to choose among: abandonment of West Berlin; resorting to force to maintain their position; and remaining in the city, but dealing with and, if need be, recognizing East Germany. West Berlin's anomalous position as an island in a Communist sea allowed the Soviets to calibrate and apply whatever degree of pressure they deemed necessary to achieve their goals. If Khrushchev chose to delegate administrative tasks now performed by Soviets to East Germans, "we cannot stop him."⁹ One silver lining to Khrushchev's ultimatum, the Under-Secretary of State for the Western Department, Anthony Rumbold, observed, was that it was "a golden opportunity for embarking on the kind of tripartite consultations for which the French government have been pressing."¹⁰ When the American Ambassador in London, John Hay Whitney, visited the Foreign Office he warned that Washington feared any divergence of American and British policies over Berlin, especially British willingness to contemplate recognition of the DDR, and that "Khrushchev's objective being to get us out of Berlin, he would keep on turning the screw until that objective was at last achieved." Lloyd replied that "so long as we were determined to remain in Berlin Khrushchev could not get us out of it short of going to war, whether we recognized the DDR or not."¹¹

American concerns were reiterated in a State Department note warning that recognition of the DDR would not only help stabilize the Pankow regime but embolden the Soviets to step up the pressure on Berlin and erode support for NATO in West Germany.¹² The second-ranking British official in Berlin suggested that American reluctance to contemplate dealings with East Germany reflected in part the influence of the new American political adviser in the city, Findley Burns. Burns feared initial concessions would engender additional Soviet demands, where longer experience showed “sometimes the best way to avoid going right down the slippery slopes (sic) is not to remain clinging to an unstable handhold but to find a good foothold a little lower down.”¹³

After Adenauer requested a separate British response to the Soviet *démarche*, Macmillan informed Khrushchev that Britain was determined to uphold allied rights in Berlin.¹⁴ Yet the Prime Minister suspected that with six months until the ultimatum expired, it would prove impossible to avoid negotiations that would touch on German reunification and disengagement.¹⁵ Earlier in 1958, Lloyd had noted that, despite NATO’s formal support of German reunification through free elections, “emotionally we are all of us, including the Russians, fairly content to see the division persist.” All feared that a reunified Germany would dominate Europe, but “to say so and go for a deal with the Russians for the acceptance of the status quo would completely forfeit the good-will of the Federal German Government.” Therefore Britain could not even tacitly endorse Germany’s continued partition.¹⁶

In January 1959 Rumbold suggested that Britain propose some measures of disengagement, in order to determine “what price the Russians might be willing to pay in terms of military retreat eastwards for the sake of being relieved of the fear of Germany armed with nuclear weapons.”¹⁷ After Lloyd asked Gladwyn Jebb to reflect upon the broader German question in the context of the immediate crisis over Berlin, Macmillan directed Jebb to consider particular questions such as a post-Adenauer West Germany’s ability to resist Soviet offers of reunification in exchange for neutrality, and Moscow’s willingness to consider a reunified Germany’s membership in NATO.¹⁸

Jebb’s analysis would guide most subsequent British actions over Berlin and Germany. He concluded that the USSR would not accept a reunified Germany’s membership in NATO except under conditions of disengagement extending to the removal of the American troop presence in Europe. There was a good chance that after Adenauer’s departure the FRG would

accept reunification in exchange for neutrality. While NATO could survive West Germany's departure, it would be left without a credible non-nuclear defense against Soviet aggression. In addition, intervention against a reunited Germany that stood outside NATO and was determined to renege on its international undertakings, would be difficult indeed.

Jebb agreed with the consensus in the Foreign Office that reunification was undesirable on any terms, and would be catastrophic under the least favourable ones. It would not eliminate East-West tensions except under circumstances tantamount to abandonment of the Western position in Europe. He acknowledged it could plausibly be maintained that, however unpleasant the prospect of a reunified and neutral Germany might be, it was desirable to negotiate such an arrangement before the Soviets acquired the capability to inflict a direct nuclear strike on the U.S. and a more adverse strategic balance weakened the Western negotiating position. Jebb believed that, on the contrary, "by 1962, or indeed before, we may have reached the position in which war between the United States and the Soviet Union would automatically result in suicide on the part of these powers." Barring some far-reaching and unlikely disarmament agreement between the superpowers, mutual vulnerability would "appear to perpetuate some 'status quo', however absurd, all over the world. Or rather to perpetuate any 'status quo' which is guaranteed by the physical presence of the two contending parties."

If long-term strategic considerations did not indicate the Western powers would profit from an early offer of concessions over Germany or Berlin that were unsound on their own merits, they could take some measures to alleviate Soviet anxieties over the prospect of a German nuclear capability. The Polish Foreign Minister, Oskar Rapacki, had recently put forward a plan for phased disengagement. In the first stage, the manufacture or acquisition of nuclear weapons by participating central European states would be banned, with full denuclearization and conventional force reductions in the second. Jebb proposed grafting the first stage of Rapacki's plan onto the existing Foreign Office position, with a suggestion that no IRBMs be stationed in the two Germanys, Poland, or Czechoslovakia." If there is anything in the belief that the Russians really are frightened by the possession of nuclear arms by the Germans," he wrote, "this plan should go a long way to remove their apprehensions."

Jebb suggested that if the Soviets transferred bureaucratic functions to the DDR, the Western powers could claim the East Germans were acting as agents of the USSR. Increased

contacts with East Germany would be necessary if war were to be avoided, but the Western powers could go well down this path without formal recognition of the DDR. It would be prudent, during any conference on the German question, to encourage more contact between the two Germanys so that “Western Germans (most of whom probably do not in fact desire to be reunified) could have the illusion of ‘seeing some light at the end of the tunnel.’”¹⁹

Rumbold cautioned that “our allies will not agree to any measure of disengagement without some measure of agreement on German reunification.” Because the British proposal did so, “we shall not be able to put it forward until we are in fairly desperate straits.”²⁰ However, serious differences among the Western powers arose over what to do well before matters had reached such a pass. It was almost universally assumed that if the East Germans were given the authority to cut off western access to West Berlin, they would do so. The Chief of the Defence Staff, Lord Mountbatten, was convinced that limited ground actions to restore access, as the American Joint Chiefs of Staff advocated, would be read by the Soviets as a bluff and promptly called. He proposed responding to any interruption of access with an airlift, which would allow the USSR to back down without humiliation, and suggested limited ground actions should not be taken except on the understanding that they could lead to wider hostilities.²¹ The Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, Sir Frederick Hoyer-Millar, agreed that it was possible to supply Berlin by air for some time, but concluded there was no alternative in the long term to dealing with the East Germans.²² Jebb also favoured an airlift, and resistance to any American pressure to force the issue through ground actions²³

President Eisenhower’s own thinking over Berlin was actually closer to that of the British than widely thought. The President believed that, whereas past great-power conflicts had entailed the gradual mobilization of industrial resources by the combatants, any Soviet-American clash would rapidly escalate to nuclear war. As a result, the options available to statesmen in a crisis would shrink to surrender or all-out hostilities, and the prudent course was to seek diplomatic solutions before forces were engaged.²⁴ In his public statements Eisenhower denigrated any suggestion that events around Berlin amounted to a crisis, suggesting instead that they were one facet of the ongoing cold war struggle.²⁵ While less sanguine in private, he also insisted that contingency plans for a blockade had to command broad allied support and impress the dangers of the situation upon the Soviets while leaving them room to climb down without humiliation.²⁶ Administration policy assumed that Soviet

pressure on Berlin was designed to bring the Western powers to the negotiating table to discuss the German question, and hence the goal of American policy had to be a diplomatic formula acceptable to all three western occupying powers and the FRG. There was no reason to think increased conventional military capabilities would widen the spectrum of diplomatic solutions. The only military choice would be whether to go to war if it became clear the Soviets could not be brought to accept a peaceful settlement.²⁷ The allied position in and around Berlin, Eisenhower told Dulles, might demonstrate the commitment of the Western powers to the city's freedom and German security, but it was not militarily defensible. "Our political posture", he observed, "requires us to assume military positions that are wholly illogical."²⁸

As Dulles reminded the American Ambassador in Bonn, administration policy entailed a willingness to eventually deal with DDR officials as Soviet representatives (the "agency theory," as it was known), although this formula, which could easily be misunderstood, had not been explored in detail with either the other occupying powers or the FRG.²⁹ Furthermore, such contacts, or any wider negotiations on the German question, would follow other measures should the USSR turn control of the access routes over to the DDR. In the first instance, the United States would refuse to deal with DDR officials, and commence low-key but visible military preparations in West Germany. Upon the President's direction, a small convoy would proceed down the autobahn to West Berlin, with instructions to resort to force only if fired upon. If the convoy were obstructed, it was to turn back. Washington would suspend all use of the access routes to West Berlin, proceed with further military preparations and the removal of American dependents from West Germany. The administration would then attempt to isolate the USSR diplomatically, with the recall of allied Ambassadors and the convening of the UN Security Council. If the Soviets remained firm, the President would call a four-power conference on the German question.³⁰ Eisenhower resisted the Joint Chiefs of Staff's call for a division-sized ground probe in the event of interrupted access, fearing this might lead to rapid escalation. He directed that the convoy be modest in size, consisting primarily of trucks, with a small armed escort, reaffirming that it should turn back if blocked and use force only if fired upon.³¹ The American Ambassador in Moscow, Llewellyn Thompson, doubted that it would prove feasible to bluff the Soviets into abandoning their ultimatum by indicating a willingness to resort to force, but concluded there was no more to lose by holding talks once the bluff had

been called than seeking negotiations immediately, as the British seemed to prefer.³² By February, Dulles was warning the President that Adenauer's call for a firm stand and Macmillan's desire for negotiations were irreconcilable, with tensions rising in the Western camp and an open break in the allied front likely.³³

Macmillan had reached similar conclusions, observing in a Cabinet meeting that the Soviet ultimatum had exacerbated divisions among NATO members over Germany and Berlin, and "some fresh initiative should be taken to break the present deadlock and to find a basis for Western agreement."³⁴ It was in the hope of taking such an initiative that the Prime Minister accepted a long-standing invitation to visit the USSR. Caccia informed Eisenhower that Macmillan intended to come to America to confer with him over Berlin, but proposed to visit Moscow beforehand so that subsequent Anglo- American discussions would not be seen in Bonn and Paris as connivance at a sellout behind European backs. In fact, visiting Moscow prior to consultations with Washington simply left Britain alone as the object of Continental suspicions. Eisenhower warned Caccia that a trip to Moscow while the Soviet deadline was still in effect might be ill-advised, and observed that the Prime Minister could not claim to speak for him. He did stop short of objecting outright.³⁵ Insofar as Eisenhower's and Macmillan's approaches differed, they did so primarily on matters on timing, with the President favouring diplomatic overtures several steps further down the road than the Prime Minister. In at least one other international confrontation, the Offshore Islands crisis, Eisenhower discreetly encouraged efforts to reach a diplomatic resolution, some of them British in origin, before forces were engaged.³⁶

In Russia, Macmillan warned Khrushchev that the situation around Berlin was dangerous, and the Western powers were determined to maintain access to West Berlin. Khrushchev replied that if the other occupying powers objected to his deadline, they could set another date. He also suggested breaking the deadlock between the superpowers in the inconclusive three-power Geneva talks on test limitations with an annual quota of on-site inspections.³⁷ Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko followed up by proposing a summit on European security or a Conference of Foreign Ministers to begin in April. He also suggested consideration of troop reductions and creation of a nuclear-free zone in central Europe.³⁸ On his return to London, Macmillan told his Cabinet that the visit had succeeded in defusing the immediate crisis, while Ambassador Sir Patrick Reilly reported from Moscow that the Prime Minister's obvious firmness had impressed Khrushchev and contributed to his decision to lift the

deadline.³⁹ He had tried to ease any doubts on Eisenhower's part by writing from Moscow that in his talks with Khrushchev, "I would not respond to his pleas that I should advance some fresh proposals." Macmillan reassured the President that he had stood by the agreed allied position that "nothing he could do would extinguish our rights of access to Berlin and our determination to do our duty by staying there."⁴⁰

If Macmillan's visit was seen as a success within his own government, its repercussions in Germany were more problematic, and rooted in long-standing divergences between British and German positions on dealing with the USSR. British wartime planning for the postwar world had assumed that the need to cooperate with the Western powers in containing Germany would limit Soviet hostility and unilateralism.⁴¹ After the collapse of the wartime alliance, British policymakers recognized the desirability of defending Europe as far east as possible, as well as the usefulness of German economic and military strength, properly controlled, to the Continent's defense.⁴² Yet they favoured a position of strength as a basis for negotiations, not an end in itself. Bonn's maximalist stance was seen as impairing any reduction of tensions with the Soviets, tensions which prevented the reduction of Britain's expensive Continental commitment of men and weapons. By early 1959, Macmillan saw Adenauer's rigidity as doing little to promote reunification as well as making *détente* impossible and war over Berlin a distinct possibility. And, of course, Bonn could not seriously favour negotiations, since any settlement with the USSR would inevitably entail German concessions.⁴³ Moreover, Adenauer was particularly wary of any overture towards the Soviets which he had not initiated and could not control.⁴⁴ The British Ambassador in Bonn, Sir Christopher Steel, reported that upon first hearing that Macmillan planned to visit Moscow, Adenauer had quickly convinced himself that Britain was likely to prove an uncertain support.⁴⁵ When Macmillan visited him in mid-March, Adenauer indicated his concern that at Moscow Macmillan had seemed ready to discuss arms limitations in central Europe as one means of increasing European security, which sounded like disengagement, and he stressed the need for Western nuclear arms to compensate for Soviet conventional preponderance. Macmillan reassured Adenauer that his willingness to enter into such discussions did not imply acceptance of either disengagement or measures that discriminated against the FRG, and that there could be no negotiation of any zone of limitations that would weaken NATO or require American troop withdrawals. He added that an apparent willingness to at least discuss such proposals was the best way to neutralize Soviet

propaganda and public pressure for unbalanced force reductions.⁴⁶

To be sure, British policymakers did not find it easy to determine precisely what Adenauer's position was. His principal adviser on foreign policy questions, Herbert Blankenhorn, informed Frank Roberts in February that the Chancellor sought to stabilize the German *status quo*, as long as this did not exclude or seem to further defer reunification. If a broadly acceptable deal could be reached, he would open diplomatic relations with Poland and Czechoslovakia, recognize the Oder-Neisse line, and accede to some quantitative limits on West German armed forces. He might also agree to discuss a ban on IRBMs on West German territory, as well as full American control of the warheads for any tactical nuclear weapons operated by the *Bundeswehr*, and a possible non-aggression treaty between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. According to Blankenhorn, Adenauer drew the line at a formal German peace treaty, but would consider *de facto* recognition of Europe's post-war division.⁴⁷ But, as Hoyer Millar had noted with exasperation, it was hardly feasible to shape British policy so as to mirror the changing humours of the aged, temperamental Chancellor.⁴⁸

During his mid-March visit to Washington, Macmillan proposed East-West discussion of arms ceilings and ground inspection to guard against surprise attack in an area covering the two Germanys, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.⁴⁹ A State Department analysis of British thinking noted that London had, over the years, presented various proposals for disengagement in central Europe, but until now these had been linked to reunification, not just a settlement over Berlin. It concluded that an inspection and arms limitation zone was unlikely to appeal to Moscow unless it entailed the neutralization, at the very least the complete denuclearization, of West Germany.⁵⁰

The State Department also pointed out that while the British had always upheld the agreed allied position that German reunification was the responsibility of the four occupying powers and could take place only on the basis of free elections, "it is believed they would not object to seeing reunification proposed indefinitely." This could be attributed to the persistence of wartime memories, resentment of the Federal Republic's economic recovery and prosperity, and disappointment over the failure of talks on the Free Trade Area proposal. The American Embassy in London had reported that British pronouncements since Macmillan's return from Moscow, while calling for firmness in defense of Berlin, had emphasized the need for negotiations. The danger was that "this official UK zest for negotiations may in the end build up formidable political pressure to reach agreement by unwise and too generous

concessions.” Stepped-up contacts between the FRG and DDR, as Britain proposed, were desirable, but must not connote a fundamental shift in the allied position or seem to endorse the Soviet contention that reunification was a matter to be addressed by the two Germanys alone. Accommodating the Soviets on the basis of Germany’s continued division would encourage them to demand still more or tempt Bonn to seek reunification either forcibly or through agreement with Moscow. It was still the case that “to maintain German loyalty to the West we must continue, both for the record and in good faith, to support German reunification.”⁵¹

Macmillan met with Eisenhower at Camp David on March 20 and warned that the British public would not support war over Berlin without a four-power summit beforehand. “Even if we reach no agreement, such a meeting was a necessary step,” although “if the Soviets were to take unilateral action or threaten us with the launching of an attack against us, he would not agree to go to the summit.”⁵² There was some confusion as to whether Adenauer had discreetly accepted Macmillan’s proposal for a summit. Macmillan claimed prior to his meeting with Eisenhower that during his conversations with Adenauer, the Chancellor had not objected to a summit on Berlin.⁵³ Yet Adenauer had told the American Ambassador in Bonn, David Bruce, that he wanted any summit linked to a five-year standstill around Berlin and Germany, and that Khrushchev’s desire for talks with western leaders made this a realistic precondition.⁵⁴ At Camp David, Macmillan suggested that Adenauer “had moved into a fundamentally different position from the past. He thinks that he can now live with the *status quo* though it would be wrong to abandon public lip service to his objective” of reunification.⁵⁵

The Prime Minister also suggested that the Western position in Germany would be stronger if it rested on a new, internationally recognized legal basis for the allied presence, to which Acting Secretary of State Christian Herter replied that this might be construed as abandoning reunification, at least in the short term. After Macmillan raised the question of whether some arrangement might be reached between the two Germanys under which Soviet forces might be withdrawn from the DDR, Eisenhower expressed his doubts, observing that Adenauer saw the corresponding American military presence in West Germany as essential. “All see the need for a relatively long breathing space,” he remarked, “the real question is what are the conditions for this breathing space.” Under-Secretary Robert Murphy made the now-familiar suggestion that talks between the two Germanys go ahead, but on the

understanding that East Germans could function only as Soviet agents in procedures governing Western access to Berlin.⁵⁶ Selwyn Lloyd warned that the Western position in Berlin was physically hard to defend, a claim he had made before and which reflected his fear of the impact of a comprehensive blockade. This was a step the Americans doubted the Soviets would take, because it would turn international opinion so strongly against the USSR.⁵⁷

Not only did Macmillan fail to allay American doubts about his reliability over Berlin, he did not secure Eisenhower's agreement to an early East-West summit. The President, to be sure, did not fully share Adenauer's suspicions. After Dulles's funeral, he told Adenauer that "since there is a very sharply divided nation affecting such matters, Macmillan has had to tread a very careful path." Nonetheless, "in any showdown Macmillan would stand on principle." Adenauer, he concluded, "seems to have developed an almost psychopathic fear of what he considers to be 'British weakness.'"⁵⁸ Yet the President was unwilling to attend a summit until sufficient progress had been made at a Conference of Foreign Ministers. The Western Foreign Ministers were able to agree on a proposal for discussion, based on a four-stage plan to deal with German reunification and European security. The first stage would include preliminary discussions on disarmament and agreement among the occupying powers not to station IRBMs in either of the Germanys, Poland, or Czechoslovakia, subsequent stages to impose increasingly stringent force limitations, the drafting of an all-German constitution and formation of a constituent assembly, leading to a final settlement with the government of a reunified Germany.⁵⁹ The foreign ministers also agreed to the formation of a tripartite military planning organization, LIVE OAK. Starting in April, American, British, and French staff officers met outside Paris, under Norstad's command, to develop contingency plans in the event of interrupted access to Berlin. In a discreet and limited move in the direction of the open tripartism de Gaulle sought, the Tripartite Ambassadorial Group, based in Washington, would provide broad political direction.⁶⁰ The foreign ministers of all four occupying powers met that March in Geneva, where their deliberations continued inconclusively through the summer.

While the Geneva talks went ahead, Adenauer sought allied agreement to a five-year "stand-still" period, during which the Soviets would seek no alteration in the German *status quo*, as a precondition of any summit meeting with Khrushchev. Under Secretary of State C. Douglas Dillon cautioned that Moscow was unlikely to agree to such an undertaking.

Furthermore, “we doubt the wisdom of accepting the corresponding obligation on the part of the West barring further progress toward closer political, economic and military integration of the Federal Republic with the West. This would clearly be the price we would have to pay.” He advised Eisenhower to continue warning the Soviets of the perils of any unilateral action and his own unwillingness to attend a summit under duress. Even if Khrushchev and his colleagues were unwilling to accept western terms for a German settlement, Dillon observed, they might display flexibility at Geneva in order to obtain a summit.⁶¹

In June Khrushchev wrote Eisenhower that if his deadline struck the Western powers as unreasonable, he was prepared to compromise on the timeframe.⁶² On a July visit to the USSR, Vice-President Richard Nixon told Khrushchev that while Berlin was important, so were other potential topics for discussion at a summit, such as nuclear testing, disarmament, and trade. “For such discussion to be fruitful”, he said, “there must be an atmosphere of calm, not crisis.” Neither the President nor the American public, he added, could accept a Soviet *diktat* over Berlin. Khrushchev reiterated the established Soviet position that the situation around Berlin had to be changed, but indicated that he did not intend to apply force.⁶³ Eisenhower was sufficiently encouraged to invite Khrushchev to visit him in the United States and seek a bilateral resolution, although he was determined that the American position remain within the bounds of what Adenauer would accept.⁶⁴ During Khrushchev’s September visit, the two leaders met at Camp David, where Khrushchev said that while the Soviet Union was prepared to act unilaterally if negotiations with the Western powers did not lead to new arrangements for Berlin and Germany, “the question of a time limit was not one of principle.”⁶⁵

Eisenhower wrote to Macmillan on October 9, the day after the Conservatives won a 107-seat majority over Labour, proposing a summit among Western leaders in December. Macmillan had seen a meeting of Western leaders as logically leading to an East-West summit, but Eisenhower’s decision to deal with Khrushchev on a bilateral basis had sidelined the Prime Minister from the principal discussions of the Berlin problem, while the maturing of the Franco-German tie left him with little influence over the EEC’s development.⁶⁶ The fading of Franco-German disagreements left fewer opportunities for British mediation between the two, while the superpower dialogue on Berlin precluded a British role as intermediary.⁶⁷

In a meeting with Lloyd, Norstad observed that in the wake of Macmillan’s trip to

Moscow, “there had been a distinct change in the atmosphere in Washington. There had been for a time distinctly the feeling that we had made some deal of our own with the Russians and that we were no longer the completely reliable ally.” During the discussions at Geneva “that feeling had been almost completely dissipated, and the alliance was back on the old relationship.” Yet even that conversation revealed how much British actions were constrained by allied opinion. Lloyd had mentioned London’s intent to reduce the British Army on the Rhine (BAOR) from 55,000 to 45,000 in 1960. Norstad replied that such cuts would forfeit some of the goodwill towards Britain that had been regained in Washington.⁶⁸ Lloyd concluded they would also play into the hands of de Gaulle and those in West German politics who sympathized with his thinking. They “would have the satisfaction of being able to say that the British were carrying less weight in Europe, that we were of less use as allies and that there was less need to meet us over the Free Trade Area because we were pulling out of Europe anyway.”⁶⁹

The failure of the EDC marked the end of that phase of European cooperation in which France, seeking to constrain German power within supranational structures, had dictated the pace and terms of integration. Under Adenauer and Brentano, West Germany had seen closer ties with France as the foundation of wider European cooperation, and economic links as entailing some degree of political integration. Adenauer was consistently willing to fall in with French preferences on the workings of political and economic bonds, in order to secure progress.⁷⁰ Since the Federal Republic’s recovery of sovereignty, Adenauer had also viewed European integration as politically necessary not only because of its centrality to American policy in Europe, but as a fallback position in the event of American withdrawal, and a platform for asserting equality with France and Britain. Integration would reassure the rest of Europe while West Germany’s increasing economic strength gradually translated into greater political influence. After the Messina conference, Bonn had pursued a two-track policy of supporting reduced trade barriers within the OEEC, while refraining from any substantial criticism of either the EEC or Euratom, to ensure that neither project would seem to fail as a result of German actions. Determined to obtain the widest possible consensus, Adenauer sought compromises between Britain and France, dependent upon both in terms of security. German backing would strengthen either the British or the French position, so both had an incentive to seek German support. In Bonn there was considerable sympathy for the French argument that the combination of an FTA and continuation of Commonwealth preferences

would give Britain the best of both worlds, but there was no enthusiasm for a clear rebuff to Britain or a sharp division of Europe between the Six and the rest.⁷¹

The West German Minister of Economic Affairs, Ludwig Erhard, was deeply committed to a liberal economic order, and feared that a narrow, autarchic European market limited to the Six would divide the Continent into two trading blocs and jeopardize West German access to markets elsewhere, including Britain. Erhard favoured an FTA as mitigating the EEC's protectionist tendencies. Yet Adenauer, who may not have understood liberal economics that well, much less shared Erhard's enthusiasm, privileged the political over the economic in his approach to integration.⁷² In the domestic debate over the EDC, he had linked integration and rearmament, using the former's popularity to generate support for the latter. Integration also offset the appeal of reunification, about which Adenauer was himself ambivalent.⁷³ While he had supported the FTA until the fall of 1958, he was prepared to modify his position if underlying political circumstances changed.

In 1956, French recognition of Bonn's willingness to accept Europe's political and economic organization on French terms imparted fresh momentum to integration. After Suez, French policy turned toward consolidation of a Continental bloc under French direction. The fear that a split between the English-speaking and Continental powers would leave France in a tight European bloc which West Germany could dominate had previously restrained the French from any initiatives that might precipitate such a division. Yet now, with a smaller and more cohesive Europe a potential vehicle of French interests, French policy shifted from skepticism to consistent support for an EEC. De Gaulle himself had always shown a visceral suspicion of supranational structures as infringing on France's freedom of action. Yet he too now saw the EEC, if sufficient French control could be secured, as one component of a French-led bloc that would include a Western Europe under French leadership and strong ties with former and present French colonies. At the head of such a grouping, France could deal with the superpowers on equal terms.⁷⁴

Even before de Gaulle's return to power, it was clear that France faced challenges in assembling such a bloc. The insurrection in Algeria had proven difficult to subdue, with French actions expanding to include air strikes on FLN bases in Tunisia. Algerian nationalists proved skillful in using the American media and stages such as the U.N. to heighten Franco-American differences over French efforts to bring the rebels to heel.⁷⁵ The Eisenhower administration feared that the brutality of France's colonial war would embitter

relations between the NATO powers and Third World suppliers of petroleum and other raw materials. In these circumstances, Washington was willing to risk considerable French displeasure to press for a political settlement that might lead to Algerian independence.⁷⁶ Indeed, French surrender to American demands for a settlement with Tunisia, and a rumoured betrayal of *pied noir* interests triggered the army coup that brought de Gaulle back to power. While he hoped to grant Algeria a high degree of self-government within the framework of a French bloc, de Gaulle also believed the FLN would not come to the peace table and negotiate anything less than complete Algerian independence unless France's allies gave her *carte blanche* militarily. On the contrary, Washington pressed de Gaulle to seek a diplomatic resolution, and it was largely to seek more latitude within France's own sphere of influence that he sought tripartism within NATO.⁷⁷

The summer and fall of 1958 were the crucial months in which Adenauer formed a strong personal bond with de Gaulle, convincing the latter that the Federal Republic would accept some degree of economic discrimination within a tight Western Europe revolving around a Franco-German axis in exchange for the additional security of a reliable partnership with France. De Gaulle differed from previous French leaders in his approach to European integration, insofar as he sought not merely to limit Britain's influence or prevent it from sabotaging the EEC, but to exclude it altogether from a uniting Europe. Unprepared to risk de Gaulle's friendship by challenging him directly, Adenauer was increasingly willing to fall in with de Gaulle, and leave relations with London hostage to those with Paris.⁷⁸

In September, Adenauer met de Gaulle at Colombey-les-deux-Eglises, where the General argued that the only geopolitical danger of concern to France was the ascendancy of the Asiatic world in international affairs. Europe, he said, had to unite in order to remain independent of the superpowers, and there was no reason why, at least in principle, this could not extend to the Soviet Union's satellites, and, eventually, the European components of the Soviet internal empire itself.⁷⁹ It was at this point that Adenauer seems to have concluded that de Gaulle could surmount France's internal divisions and genuinely sought warm relations with Bonn. Despite the Chancellor's occasional hesitations, Franco-German relations grew closer from this time, and both Anglo-German and Anglo-French ones cooled. Adenauer abandoned his active support of the FTA, showing that he would not seek ties with Britain to the point where they imperiled his rapport with de Gaulle. He refused to follow Erhard's advice to threaten France with a halt to improving Franco-German relations, the one tactic

that might have forced de Gaulle to shift course.⁸⁰

Adenauer chose to back France over Britain before Khrushchev's ultimatum brought Anglo-German differences over Berlin to the fore, but once the city was under threat, he would not do anything to jeopardize his relationship with the General.⁸¹ Given the lack of a Soviet response to his earlier overtures in the direction of nuclear renunciation in exchange for conventional force reductions, and the tone of Khrushchev's November 10 speech Adenauer may have concluded the Soviet leader was intent on gaining the same objectives by threat as opposed to negotiation, and that he also sought to bully de Gaulle into retreating from his policy of stronger ties with the Federal Republic. For de Gaulle, firmness in the face of Soviet threats over Berlin was the *sine qua non* of Adenauer's trust and willingness to compromise with France on other questions.⁸² When de Gaulle met again with Adenauer at Bad Kreuznach in November, he reassured the Chancellor that he could rely upon French resolve in any confrontation over Berlin. He also obtained Adenauer's acquiescence in his veto of the FTA by assuaging his doubts over France's commitment to European integration, promising to accept all the obligations of the Treaty of Rome, agree to the extension of the external tariff cuts scheduled for January 1959 from the OEEC to all GATT members, and allow the European Commission to examine possibilities of future association between the EEC and the OEEC. Adenauer attached enough importance to relations with de Gaulle that, despite his private grumbling to others, he made only perfunctory noises in public about the September memorandum on tripartism.⁸³

France's position on Berlin was not, in reality, consistently firmer than Britain's. On November 30, officials from the French Embassy in London visited the Foreign Office to convey de Gaulle's view that a firm initial response to Khrushchev's ultimatum would induce him to turn down the pressure. Once he had stepped back from the ultimatum, the allied stance should not be overly negative. France was willing to contemplate all-German elections under UN auspices, with troops from neutral states replacing those from the occupying powers, if the FRG could be brought to agree. If the West Germans were unenthusiastic, the three Western powers could point to the advantages in securing the removal of Soviet forces from Berlin.⁸⁴ Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville called for meetings among the three Western occupying powers, in a capital other than Bonn, prior to four-power consultations, stressing the need to highlight the unique responsibilities of the occupying powers in all public statements, and not to seem to follow West German

opinion.⁸⁵ Couve continued to insist on conducting as much of the discussion as possible in three-power venues, warning Jebb that the Germans must not be allowed to inject a note of hysteria into western consultations⁸⁶

Despite Macmillan's adherence to the agreed position on occupation rights in Berlin during his trip to Moscow, his unilateral initiative in itself was widely seen as breaking ranks.⁸⁷ Furthermore, his apparent success in securing the lifting of the Soviet deadline strengthened de Gaulle's position. Macmillan had called Khrushchev's bluff and, as the French had predicted, Berlin would now become the subject of future negotiations. De Gaulle could safely continue with a policy best understood in terms of short-term intransigence and long-term flexibility.⁸⁸ He told Macmillan that if the Soviets interrupted access to Berlin, the Western powers could not give in, even at the risk of war.⁸⁹

De Gaulle's actions were less clear-cut than some of his early pronouncements, and he continued to resist American calls to concert contingency plans for ground action if access were cut off.⁹⁰ If his policy reflected a conviction that, in the crunch, the Soviet bluff could be called,⁹¹ Macmillan's trip to Moscow had confirmed his reasoning. As talks on Berlin loomed, Couve told Lloyd that it was important to be firm at the outset, since a precipitous withdrawal would be disastrous for NATO cohesion and West German morale, but the Western powers could afford flexibility in later exchanges with the Soviets.⁹² De Gaulle himself indicated publicly in March of 1959 that a long-term settlement of the German question could entail recognition of the Oder-Neisse line, permanent renunciation of any German nuclear ambitions, and the incremental expansion of contacts between the two Germanys. He differentiated France's policy from that of the other Western powers by abandoning the insistence upon reunification as a prerequisite of further progress, and by openly acknowledging Soviet security interests in German arrangements.⁹³

But while any signs of British interest in a settlement drew Adenauer's criticism, more explicit French statements passed without complaint.⁹⁴ Macmillan's government had flirted with disengagement, rather than trying to reassure Bonn by differentiating its position from that of the Labour Party. Nor had London managed to impress upon German policymakers the distinction between a less rigid negotiating stance and the actual sacrifice of German interests. Much as British policy had been shaped by an underlying fear of German domination of Europe or a second Rapallo between Moscow and Bonn, Adenauer's policies in the 1950s had been conditioned by fears first of a Franco-Soviet, then of an Anglo-Soviet

rapprochement based upon a shared interest in containing German power. Adenauer's declining confidence in Britain led him towards the least flattering interpretation of each British initiative, a trend that persisted after Macmillan's trip to Moscow and played into de Gaulle's hands. Once the German geopolitical commitment to France was made, it would prove difficult for Erhard or anyone else to reverse.⁹⁵ And once Adenauer had acquiesced in de Gaulle's rejection of an FTA, Macmillan saw he could not count on Bonn's support in organizing Europe economically, and had little need to provide strong support over Berlin in exchange.

The EDC's failure and West Germany's admission to NATO left Franco-German reconciliation likely, if not inevitable, regardless of whether French hopes for a nuclear-armed European grouping in NATO bore fruit. There could be no return to the previous French policy of containing Germany through clearly discriminatory measures, in the face of American disapproval. France could guard its own security against Germany only through reconciliation, or at least its appearance. The formation of a Franco-German axis gave de Gaulle a means of safeguarding French security against Germany that was not dependent on Anglo-Saxon cooperation, as well as a platform for his policy of forging a Continental bloc capable of defying Anglo-Saxon wishes.⁹⁶

Macmillan's government had moved to strengthen Britain's position in Europe by cobbling together a grouping of states outside the EEC. In March of 1959, Paymaster-General Reginald Maudling, who had borne the principal responsibility for the FTA talks, told Macmillan that it was necessary to forge stronger connections with other states outside the EEC since "if we were to reject the idea of forming some alternative association with our friends outside the Six we should be left without a Friend in Europe."⁹⁷ Macmillan noted that in the wake of de Gaulle's veto, Britain had to take some initiative or face a further decline in its standing.⁹⁸ Europe's "outer seven" (Britain; Denmark; Norway; Sweden; Switzerland; Austria; Portugal) had already held their first ministerial meeting in Oslo by late February, and Macmillan encouraged the formation of a European Free Trade Area to prevent other OEEC states from reaching bilateral deals with the EEC and encourage economic liberals in the Six, such as Erhard, to throw their weight behind the negotiation of a wider trade arrangement encompassing the two groups.⁹⁹

Negotiations to form an EFTA unfolded during the latter half of 1959, with the agreements signed on November 20. Yet EFTA, precisely because it was a commercial arrangement

without the EEC's political dimension, was a less attractive club. Moreover, the EEC's schedule of rapid reductions in tariffs between members also generated pressures on EFTA members to accept matching reductions in trade barriers. While Britain saw the need to demonstrate that EFTA could function as efficiently as the EEC, EFTA members with underdeveloped industrial sectors were less enthusiastic. EFTA's formation after the collapse of the FTA talks was a modest British victory, but its ultimate significance would depend on whether it led to a new arrangement with the EEC.¹⁰⁰

The relative weight of the EEC and EFTA was hardly a secret. The Foreign Office's Planning Section pointed out in late 1959 that the EEC had gathered considerable momentum, with the potential to constitute a stronger economic and military unit than Britain. A cohesive Continental grouping could supplant Britain as America's principal ally, or pursue its own line in foreign policy, at variance with that of the United States. If American policymakers were forced to choose between a Britain that seemed to oppose the European unity which they favoured, and a vigorous EEC embodying that ideal, they would choose the latter as their closest ally. Britain could be relegated to minor-power status in an alliance dominated by the US and a European bloc, or stranded on the middle ground as the two moved apart. Britain's highest priority, the analysis concluded, should be maintaining Western unity, and to that end it would require a new relationship with the EEC, albeit one that stopped short of full membership.¹⁰¹

The officials of the recently formed Economic Steering Committee called for incremental progress towards a new relationship. Britain could proceed from cooperation with the Continental powers through existing intergovernmental structures to a reassessment of political and economic circumstances to determine if negotiations with the Six were feasible. A clear British statement in favour of association would be the necessary trigger for full-scale negotiations. EFTA's interests would have to be protected in the process, the Commonwealth countries persuaded that they had more to lose from Britain's exclusion than from closer ties, and American support enlisted. The entire process, the Committee warned, would backfire unless Britain offered the Six enough for them to actively back British membership.¹⁰²

In October, Macmillan wrote Lloyd that the French and West German governments would be central to the purchase of any arrangement between EFTA and the EEC. The situation in Berlin left Adenauer dependent upon the support of his allies, he continued, and in a weak political position. But while Adenauer by himself could be pressed into accepting a deal, he

continued, de Gaulle could not. France's strong economy, the winding down of violence in Algeria, and the strong Presidency created by the October 1958 Constitution made his domestic political position unassailable, while the other members of the Six, the Federal Republic above all, were unlikely to break ranks and accept a deal with Britain which did not meet his approval. Despite his past veto of an FTA, Britain might be able to buy de Gaulle's cooperation by helping him achieve his political goals.¹⁰³

On November 29, Macmillan met with Lloyd, Heathcoat Amory, Norman Brook, Hoyer Millar, and other senior officials to prepare for the forthcoming Paris summit of Western powers. Macmillan opened the discussion by observing that the measure of any policy shift was whether it helped Britain to maintain its standing as a world power. It was unlikely that Britain would remain as attractive an ally to America if it were completely excluded from the institutions created by the Six. He proposed to sound out de Gaulle at Paris and, if his goals were nuclear assistance and some form of *de facto* tripartism, press further to determine if a bargain could be struck. Both Lloyd and Heathcoat Amory urged him to proceed cautiously in his conversations with de Gaulle and ensure any British offer would actually elicit French concessions.¹⁰⁴

A briefing note by Macmillan's private secretary, Philip de Zulueta, noted that de Gaulle had made clear his desire for an independent French nuclear capability and might be prepared to pay for British assistance. But the British deterrent was so dependent upon American cooperation that much of the relevant information was not in Britain's gift. Given Eisenhower's dislike of de Gaulle's proposal for nuclear tripartism, if Macmillan were to make common cause with de Gaulle on this point, his standing with the President, and perhaps American nuclear assistance, might be jeopardized.¹⁰⁵

Macmillan's chances of concluding a satisfactory bargain with de Gaulle were in part a function of American willingness to countenance both the goal of a deal between the EEC and EFTA and the means of aid to France's nuclear program. Yet over 1959, American policy towards both nuclear sharing and any EEC-EFTA deal had hardened. Western Europe's division into rival trade blocs was unwelcome to American policymakers who had long supported greater European unity. The Treaty of Rome, which established the EEC, provided for the free movement of capital, workers, and goods. In American eyes, this amounted to much of the foundation for later political supranationalism. EFTA, on the other hand, entailed the trade discrimination inherent in a customs union, but without

compensating gains in political cohesion. The American trade surplus fell from its record \$6.1 billion in 1957 to \$1 billion in 1959. There was little to attract Washington in a European grouping without a political dimension to offset such short-term damage to American trading interests.

Undersecretary of State Dillon, largely responsible for European policy in the last two years of the Eisenhower administration, was among its most determined critics of EFTA.¹⁰⁶ Selwyn Lloyd had told the December, 1956 meeting of the North Atlantic Council that Britain's policy toward Europe took as its starting point the Continent's inability to conduct itself as a "third force" independent of the superpowers. It followed that Continental structures such as the EEC should not be allowed to undermine looser Atlantic arrangements.¹⁰⁷ De Gaulle's ambition was to develop European institutions, dominated by France, in which Atlantic ties would mean less, with the major decisions taken at periodic meetings of heads of government and foreign ministers, and ongoing commissions coordinating national policies in economics, defense, and foreign policy.¹⁰⁸ Yet he chose to downplay his goals initially, so as to avoid alarming his potential partners in the EEC by overt measures to undermine either NATO or the existing European structures. Rather than undertake unilateral initiatives, into 1959 he allowed them to set the pace in discussions of political cooperation. The Department of State was well aware of de Gaulle's past wariness of European integration, and saw both him and the British as suspect in their commitment to European cooperation. Adenauer seemed to be the European leader whose views of a supranational Europe most accorded with American preferences. For that reason, and because Washington was by no means confident that his successor would be as reliable, American policy emphasized support for Adenauer and trying to embed the Federal Republic in European institutions while he was in power. While American policymakers were less trusting of de Gaulle, as long as he refrained from direct opposition to European integration as Washington envisioned it, and seemed to be in broad harmony with the other members of the EEC he could count on reciprocal American forbearance.¹⁰⁹ The State Department concluded that in light of de Gaulle's current stance of cooperation with his EEC colleagues, American intervention in the debate over wider arrangements with EFTA risked goading him to revert to his past obstructionist stance.¹¹⁰ Dillon himself told Eisenhower that the thrust of American policy should be the negotiation of an acceptably low uniform tariff with the EEC. Promotion of wider arrangements was likely to distract from that effort if it did not impede

it.¹¹¹

American thinking was no more congenial to Macmillan on nuclear assistance to France than on European economic arrangements. The consensus in Washington behind IRBM deployments in Europe came under attack in 1958 and was badly frayed by late 1959. General James Gavin, the Army's former head of weapons research and development, and General Maxwell Taylor, its onetime Chief of Staff, published books critical of IRBM deployments unless the missiles were highly mobile. Deployment in fixed sites on the Continent, both observed, merely invited attack, while the relative inaccuracy of the IRBMs limited their military utility except in conjunction with other weapon systems.¹¹² Albert Wohlstetter, an analyst with the RAND Corporation, saw nuclear forces under European control as desirable in principle. Yet he criticized the IRBM program, contending that the combination of time-consuming liquid-fueling, the delays in any decision to launch inherent in dual-key control, and fixed-site deployment within range of Soviet weapons, would actually reduce Moscow's strategic difficulties. The IRBMs could hardly deter a Soviet attack they were unlikely to survive, and their uselessness as retaliatory weapons might provoke the Soviets by suggesting an intention to strike first in a crisis.¹¹³

Senator John F. Kennedy told the editor of *Harper's* that strategic equality with the USSR based on the ability of the IRBMs to hit Soviet targets was illusory, because the weapons were under dual-key control. American and allied interests might diverge, he warned, and if the Soviets threatened to attack either the United States itself or targets elsewhere of little concern to the Europeans, there might be strong pressures in IRBM host countries to "refuse to give us automatic permission." He acknowledged the political case for the IRBM deployments, conceding that "these missile bases are important in contributing to the sense of security of the countries involved." But America "won't have security until we have either Polaris submarines widely dispersed and constantly at sea, or fully protected intercontinental ballistic missiles in hardened bases here in the United States."¹¹⁴

The Polaris SLBM system, which began to take shape in 1956 and was successfully test-fired from a submerged vessel in 1960, was distinguished by its relative invulnerability. Because the submarines carrying the missiles could evade a Soviet strike, there would not be pressure to launch the missiles upon warning of attack and Polaris could be safely withheld for discriminate retaliatory action. The system generated its own strategic doctrine, "finite deterrence", one of whose proponents was Maxwell Taylor. This held that the key to

effective deterrence lay not in the number of weapons or the number of targets they could strike, but their ability to survive the enemy's attack and then complete retaliatory strikes. Second strike targets would be limited to the enemy's command sites, urban-industrial centres, and those components of his remaining nuclear capability that could be readily identified. "Counterforce" targets in particular would be far fewer than under a doctrine of massive retaliation, and American strategic force requirements could be reduced, with Polaris largely supplanting SAC forces. In the benefits it conferred on comparatively modest nuclear forces, finite deterrence was akin to British conceptions of nuclear sufficiency. However, Eisenhower did not accept, and may not have completely understood, the doctrine. He seems to have thought of Polaris as a supplement to existing strategic systems, useful primarily for destroying Soviet defenses prior to a bomber offensive.¹¹⁵

Neither did Norstad invest any great hopes in Polaris or other seabased systems. From late 1959, he openly advocated the deployment of several hundred land-based Medium Range Ballistic Missiles (or MRBMs, as second-generation IRBMs were now called) under his command. He presented the request as a response to changing military conditions, arguing that the growth of Soviet air defenses and the vulnerability of NATO aircraft based in Europe necessitated the addition of the more survivable MRBMs to the theater forces at his disposal. The effect, however, would be to make NATO a *de facto* nuclear power in its own right.¹¹⁶

Yet if Norstad sought a NATO strategic nuclear capability, and others favoured European nuclear weapons under national control, the December 1957 IRBM offer remained official American policy. The military value of the weapons might be doubtful, but withdrawing the offer would require a public effort to secure the consent of all members, and backtracking on a major NATO initiative with Berlin still under threat could be interpreted as a betrayal of European interests in the face of Soviet demands. Moreover, once deployment agreements with Italy and Turkey were concluded in October, 1959 there was little need for active American involvement.¹¹⁷ The 1957 offer stayed on the books, but the Basic National Security Policy prepared in mid-1959 put the onus on allied states who wanted IRBMs deployed on their soil to formally request them, with the United States refraining from any active encouragement.¹¹⁸

At the Rambouillet summit in December, Macmillan took pains to assure de Gaulle that Britain accepted French leadership of the EEC, insofar as the alternative was German primacy. De Gaulle replied that his policy of binding Germany within European institutions

was rooted in a desire to prevent German domination of the Continent.¹¹⁹ Macmillan concluded that he and de Gaulle were as one on the need to constrain German power, and that the General now looked to Britain as a likely partner in doing so. He proposed to strengthen his bond with de Gaulle by supporting his pursuit of nuclear tripartism as strongly as he could without jeopardizing relations with Washington. In return, he would ask de Gaulle to accommodate him on economic ties to Europe. “The future of British trade in Europe”, he observed, “is far more important than whether a few French fighters are or are not to be put under the command of SACEUR.” Britain had to uphold its tacit understanding with de Gaulle, and “not allow it to be whittled away by the Americans – or, if they do the whittling, it must be clear that we stand by the undertaking.”¹²⁰

As tensions over Berlin eased, the need for LIVE OAK was less clear, and there were some suggestions within the Eisenhower administration that it should be wound up. Norstad was not prepared to go that far, but did cut the key general officer positions. Contingency planning for Berlin was put on ice, and the organization did not become a vehicle for ongoing tripartism, as de Gaulle had hoped.¹²¹ At Rambouillet, Eisenhower indicated his willingness to go further in this direction. He observed that he could accept regular high-level tripartite consultations on world affairs, provided they were not formalized. He also offered to provide France with nuclear weapons on the same dual-key basis as Britain, and said he wanted a European, preferably a French, general to succeed Norstad as SACEUR, in order to reduce European dependence on the United States. De Gaulle in turn said he saw the usefulness of arrangements that could be likened to a wartime supreme allied command, with an American supreme commander.¹²²

Yet what Eisenhower proposed was too little to satisfy de Gaulle. Dual-key control would not provide the purely national nuclear capability he sought. While the proposal for a European SACEUR with nuclear weapons at his disposal revealed Eisenhower was prepared to go very far in aiding the creation of a European nuclear force, it would make NATO itself, not any European member state, a nuclear power.¹²³

Furthermore, it soon became clear that Eisenhower’s position went further than what the Department of State could comfortably support. Herter was unaware of what had happened when the three leaders met privately, and asked the British for a detailed account. Upon receiving one from Lloyd, he seemed unpleasantly surprised, leading Lloyd to conclude that his American counterpart regarded the current arrangements for consultation as not only

sufficient but as far as Washington could wisely go.¹²⁴ Macmillan suggested to Lloyd that the next step was to ask Eisenhower if he could go further to meet de Gaulle's wishes, with a public appeal to follow if a private one failed.¹²⁵ Lloyd, acutely conscious of the State Department's lack of enthusiasm for tripartism, cautioned that backing de Gaulle too strongly would only endanger the relationship with Washington that the Prime Minister had worked so hard to repair.¹²⁶

Macmillan had no more luck securing American support for an EFTA-EEC deal than he had in producing agreement on nuclear tripartism. By late 1959, Maudling had concluded that American reservations about an FTA were making it easier for de Gaulle to block progress towards a deal between the two groups.¹²⁷ In bilateral discussions with France, the British insisted that some formal link between the EEC and EFTA was necessary.¹²⁸ By this point the Six were on the brink of drawing a stark distinction between the EEC and those outside it through accelerated tariff harmonization, in which West Germany and the Benelux countries would, for the first time, increase their external tariffs. De Gaulle maintained American confidence in his intentions by sticking to the line that broader trade liberalization under the auspices of GATT, rather than a bargain between the two trading blocs, was the best way to deal with the division between the EEC and EFTA.¹²⁹

Prior to the December, 1960 Paris summit Macmillan informed Amory that in his discussions with the Americans on Europe's economic organization, he proposed to emphasize EFTA's usefulness in preventing the Continent's definitive division between an EEC Six with a shared external tariff, and all the rest of Europe, with political tensions sure to follow. "Unless some way can be found of avoiding the economic damage which we should otherwise suffer from the Six," he concluded, "the whole of our political relationship in (sic) Europe will have to be revised."¹³⁰

When Macmillan and Lloyd met with Dillon during his pre-summit tour of European capitals, they indicated that "the British concern about the EEC was not economic but political." Dillon made clear that while America would not overtly attack EFTA, it viewed it without enthusiasm given the lack of a political dimension to compensate for discrimination against American exports. Macmillan then claimed to regard the EEC as a brake on West German power, which Dillon found "inconsistent with the British expression of political concern over the EEC and the British action in organizing the EFTA." In Dillon's eyes, EFTA was more a source of divisions within Europe than a cure for them. The British

emphasis on EFTA's political aspect proved counter-productive, and Dillon warned Eisenhower that in light of the French and West German opposition to any merger of the EEC and EFTA, "unless action is taken with US initiative there is real danger that the European trade problem, already serious, will develop into a bitter political split."¹³¹

The Paris summit produced agreement to proceed to a further conference in January, at which the United States, Canada, and the West European states would form a new organization to promote economic cooperation. The OECD was created as the successor to the OEEC, with Dillon successfully arguing during the negotiations on its formation that its mandate should be restricted to the overall encouragement of economic growth, since any responsibility for trade liberalization would duplicate the work of existing entities such as GATT. As a result, efforts to create a formal link between the EEC and EFTA would not continue under OECD auspices, as the British had hoped.¹³²

Trade arrangements were among the topics surveyed by the Future Policy Study, an interdepartmental assessment of likely political, military, and economic developments over the coming decade, which Macmillan had commissioned in June of 1959, along with recommendations on appropriate British policies to be pursued after the next election. The Study was conducted by the Permanent Undersecretaries of the major Departments, and coordinated by Sir Norman Brook.¹³³ The group disagreed on Britain's global role, with the War Office and Chiefs of Staff supporting its retention on the basis of close bilateral cooperation with Washington, and the Foreign Office and Treasury questioning the cost and inclined to believe that the pursuit of a regional role in Europe would better reinforce the Anglo-American partnership.¹³⁴

The final report, presented in February, 1960, papered over these differences. It pointed out that Britain's power, relative to the superpowers, would inevitably decline over the next decade, in both military and economic terms. Britain should continue reshaping its military posture, emphasizing mobile striking power *a la* the 1957 White Paper, since war in Europe was unlikely. While a high level of defense spending was affordable, narrowly British interests might have to be subordinated to those of the alliance as a whole. With the power of the Soviet bloc on the rise, preserving NATO would remain Britain's most fundamental interest. Under no circumstances could it afford to ignore American wishes, and "whatever happens, we must not find ourselves in the position of having to make a final choice between the two sides of the Atlantic."¹³⁵

In the wake of the disappointing Paris summit, there were indications that meeting French desires would be central to maintaining NATO's cohesion as well as forging any new relationship between Britain and Europe. Patrick Reilly warned from Moscow that, having failed to exacerbate divisions in the western camp by contrasting Britain's flexibility over Berlin to the firmer positions of other NATO members, Khrushchev was now turning to woo de Gaulle as the Western leader most inclined to break ranks over Berlin and Germany.¹³⁶ The Foreign Office was also keenly aware that American officials were backing away from Eisenhower's offer to de Gaulle at Rambouillet.

Only a few days after the summit, Herter suggested to Couve that informal talks go ahead at the sub-Ambassadorial level, with a mid-level official at the U.S. Embassy in London to lead the American party.¹³⁷ Couve now changed tack and suggested establishing formal consultative structures, as de Gaulle had famously proposed in 1958, probably to induce the Americans to offer more by way of the informal channels they found more acceptable.¹³⁸ Herter avoided a direct reply to the proposal, his response presenting further informal consultation as something de Gaulle had requested at Rambouillet, rather than something Eisenhower had offered. He concluded that the Americans saw the current informal arrangements as working well and saw no pressing need to change them.¹³⁹

Lloyd advised Macmillan that the Foreign Office still thought formalized tripartite consultations would do no harm, provided that Washington could be brought to accept the idea. He suggested the Prime Minister build upon his apparent bond with de Gaulle, reiterating that he must take care to stay in step with the Americans. Lloyd observed that de Gaulle's awareness of the need to contain German power provided a basis for Anglo-French partnership in leading Europe. "If we could get a situation in which the political views of the Six meant in practice the Anglo-French view, or an Anglo-French-German triangle, with Britain and France in agreement within it", he concluded, "it might prevent the diminution of our power to influence the Americans."¹⁴⁰ For the moment, Macmillan contented himself with fruitless private appeals to Eisenhower to consider some mechanism for tripartism.¹⁴¹ For his part, Eisenhower expressed surprise at the renewed French calls for formal tripartism, given de Gaulle's apparent interest at Rambouillet in the informal variety.¹⁴²

Time did not seem to be Macmillan's friend. The Foreign Office Planning Section concluded, in an analysis which Lloyd forward to Macmillan, that West Germany's expanding economy and its conventional military contribution might enable it to supplant

Britain as America's principal ally, while France's nuclear program, given new importance by de Gaulle, threatened to erode the diplomatic value of Britain's own Deterrent.¹⁴³ In February of 1960, France performed its first successful atomic test at Reggane in the Sahara. The French nuclear capability was a political reality, and would gradually become a military one. This left little chance of a NATO agreement on nuclear weapons that did not take account of France's national deterrent,¹⁴⁴ just as American opposition to a French nuclear force was growing. And the question of whether Britain itself could retain a nuclear deterrent that was truly independent was about to arise that month in Macmillan's next meeting with Eisenhower.

Notes

1. Hope M. Harrison, Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 145-48.
2. Note of November 27 1958, in Denise Folliot, ed., Documents on International Affairs 1958 (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs / Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 312-315.
3. See Marc Trachtenberg, A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 251-282.
4. For example, Lawrence Freedman, Kennedy's Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 62-91.
5. Harrison, pp. 148-151, and John P.S. Gearson, Harold Macmillan and the Berlin Wall Crisis, 1958-1962: The Limits of Interests and Force (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 34-35.
6. Philip Nash, The Other Missiles of October: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Jupiters, 1957-1963 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 57-60.
7. Jill Kastner, "The Berlin Crisis and the FRG, 1958-62", pp. 125-146 of John P.S. Gearson and Kori Schake, eds., The Berlin Wall Crisis: Perspectives on Cold War Alliances (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), esp. pp. 128-129.
8. Foreign Office to Washington, Tel. 8112, November 15 1958, FO 371 / 137336, TNA.
9. Foreign Office to Washington, Tel. 8113, November 15 1958, idem.
10. Rumbold to Frederick Hoyer Millar, November 14 1958, FO 371 / 13733.
11. Foreign Office to Washington, Tel. 8135, November 19 1958, FO 371 / 137339.
12. US Minute on the UK Position, November 19 1958, FO 371 / 137336.
13. Office of the Deputy, UK Military Government, Berlin, to Foreign Office, by E.H. Peck, November 22 1958, FO 371 / 137339.
14. Unofficial translation of Adenauer to Macmillan, November 20 1958, and Macmillan to Khrushchev, in Foreign Office to Moscow, Tel. 2209, November 22 1958, both in idem.
15. Macmillan memorandum to Lloyd, November 28 1958, quoted in Macmillan, Riding the Storm, 1956-59 (London: Macmillan, 1971), p. 573.
16. Lloyd draft reply to Macmillan, January 10 1959, FO 371/137398.
17. Rumbold minute, "A New Policy about Germany", January 14 1959, FO 371 / 145821.
18. Sir Norman Brook to Frederick Hoyer Millar, January 23 1959, FO 371 / 145816.
19. Jebb memorandum, "Berlin and Germany", February 12 1959, FO 371/ 143399.
20. Rumbold's "Report on the Deliberations of the Four Power Working Group on German Reunification and European Security", February 16 1959, FO 371 / 145818.
21. Mountbatten to Chiefs of Staff Committee, COS (59) 1st, January 1 1959, DEFE 4 / 115. Gearson, op cit, p. 59, points out that from December 1958 through 1961, Britain and France consistently resisted American pressure to prepare contingency plans for ground actions to reopen access to Berlin in the event of a Soviet blockade.
22. Note by Hoyer Millar, November 14 1958, FO 371 / 137335.
23. "Berlin and Germany", February 12 1959, FO 371 / 143399.
24. Andrew P.N. Erdmann, "'War No Longer Has any Logic Whatever': Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Thermonuclear Revolution", pp. 87-119 of John Lewis Gaddis, Philip H. Gordon, Ernest R. May, and Jonathan Rosenberg, eds., Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy Since 1945 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. pp. 111-112, and Campbell Craig, Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Nuclear War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 65-98.
25. See Eisenhower press conference, March 4 1959, Public Papers of the Presidents,

- Dwight D. Eisenhower: 1959 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1961), pp. 146-147.
26. MCP, December 11 1958, FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. 8, pp. 172-177.
27. Kori Schake, "A Broader Range of Choice? US Policy in the 1958 and 1961 Berlin Crises," pp. 22-42 of Gearson and Schake, eds., op cit, esp. p. 22 and p. 27.
28. MCP November 30 1958, FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. 8, pp. 142-143.
29. Dulles to Bonn, November 14 1958, *ibid*, p. 98. On Eisenhower's tendency to retreat in crises from his rhetorical endorsement of Adenauer's positions on reunification, borders, and Berlin, ending up not far from the British stance in practice, see Klaus Larres, "Preserving Law and Order: Britain, the United States and the East German Uprising of 1953", *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1994), pp. 320-350.
30. State Department to Bonn, December 11 1958, *ibid*, pp. 177-180.
31. MCP, January 29 1959, *ibid*, pp. 299-305.
32. Moscow to Department of State, November 21 1958, *ibid*, p. 298.
33. MCP, February 9 1959, *ibid*, pp. 354-356.
34. CC (59) 4th Meeting, February 3 1959, CAB 128 / 33, TNA.
35. Washington to Foreign Office, Tel. 414, January 21 1959, PREM 11 / 2775.
36. Craig, op cit, pp. 78-90.
37. Record of the Visit of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary to the Soviet Union, 21 February-3 March 1959, PREM 11 / 2609, TNA. The Soviets had resisted on-site inspections as a pretext for espionage, while the Americans had insisted they were necessary to reliable verification. Eisenhower had previously rejected variants of the quota proposal, but the British blurred Macmillan's break with his position by instructing the British representative at the talks to suggest Macmillan had only engaged in exploratory discussions of a general concept. See Michael Wright to Foreign Office, April 28 1959, PREM 11 / 2861.
38. Top Secret Annex to Record of Visit, *idem*.
39. CC (59) 14th Meeting, March 14 1959, CAB 128 / 33; Moscow to Foreign Office, Tel. 35, March 16 1959, FO 371 / 143440.
40. Macmillan to Eisenhower, February 21 1959, FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. 8, p. 392.
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43. R. Gerald Hughes, Britain, Germany and the Cold War: The Search for a European Détente, 1949-1967 (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 64-68.
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46. Record of Visit by the Prime Minister to Bonn, March 12-13 1959, PREM 11 / 2676.
47. Roberts to Hoyer Millar, February 6 1959, FO 371 / 14518.
48. Minute by Hoyer Millar, February 16 1959, FO 371 / 145773.
49. Briefing Paper on Berlin, Germany and European Security for Prime Minister's Visit to Washington and Canada, March 16 1959, FO 371 / 145826.
50. Position Paper, "European Arms Inspection and Control Area", March 18 1959, drafted by Sullivan and Fessenden, Records of Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Special Assistant Series, Box 6, f. Briefing Papers for Macmillan Talks, (1), DDEL.
51. Position paper, "German Reunification", March 17 1959, drafted by Kohler, Vigderman, Lampson, McSweeney, and Swihart, *idem*.

52. Memorandum of March 20 Conversation with the President, March 20 1959, International Trips and Meetings, Box 6, f. Macmillan Talks (March 1959) (1), DDEL.
53. Caccia to Herter, March 13 1959, FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. 8, pp. 469-471.
54. Bruce to Allen Dulles, n.d. but *circa* March 14 1959, *ibid*, pp. 478-482.
55. Tab D, "Prime Minister Macmillan's Visits to Paris and Bonn", March 20 1959, f. Macmillan Talks, Friday, March 20, International Trips and Meetings, Box 6, f. Macmillan Talks (March 1959) (1), DDEL.
56. MCP on March 24 1959, f. Macmillan Talks (March 1959) (1), *idem*.
57. "British Views on Western Position in Berlin", Tab G, f. Macmillan Talks, Friday, March 20, *idem*.
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59. Report of the Four-Power Working Group, April 13-23 1959, FO 371 / 145850.
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80. Andrew Moravcsik, The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Policy from Messina to Maastricht (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 220-221.

81. Lee, op cit, pp. 805-806.

82. Kastner, op cit, p. 129, and Maurice Vaisse, "De Gaulle's Handling of the Berlin and Cuban Crises", in Wilfried Loth, ed., Europe, Cold War and Coexistence, 1953-1965 (London: Frank Cass, 2004), pp. 67-79, 68-69.

83. Memorandum of Conversation between Adenauer and de Gaulle, November 26 1958, DDF, 1959, Tome 2, pp. 754-763; Giauque, op cit, pp. 86-87.

84. James Murray minute of meeting with Hure and Jurgensen, November 30 1958, FO 371 / 137339, TNA.

85. Hancock note to Rumbold, "Berlin Four-Power Consultation", December 1 1958, FO 371 / 137342.

86. Paris to Foreign Office, No. 585, December 11 1958, idem.

87. Gearson, op cit, p. 78, suggests that the visit itself was the point beyond which Macmillan could not go in stretching allied unity, and that once in the USSR he could not do other than stand firm on Western rights in Berlin in exchanges with the Soviets.

88. Frederic Bozo, Two Strategies for Europe: De Gaulle, the United States, and the Atlantic Alliance, translated from the French by Susan Emanuel (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), pp. 31-32.

89. Memorandum of Conversation between de Gaulle and Macmillan, March 10 1959, DDF 1959, Tome 1, p. 269.

90. Trachtenberg, op cit p. 269.

91. As formulated in idem. Trachtenberg also notes de Gaulle's emphasis on the need to bring German opinion along in support of allied policies. Given the early French efforts to marginalize West German participation in discussions among the Western powers, the description is closer to the mark for the period after Macmillan's visit than that before, although even French public pronouncements from the latter should not be taken at face value.

92. Memorandum of Conversation between Couve and Lloyd, March 10 1959, DDF 1959, Tome 1, op cit, p. 302.

93. Bozo, op cit, citing de Gaulle press conference of March 25 1959.

94. Lee, "Postwar Turning Point", op cit, pp. 789-792.

95. Moravcsik, op cit, p. 220.

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97. Maudling to Macmillan, March 3 1959, PREM 11 / 2827, TNA.

98. GEN. 580, 4th Meeting, March 5 1959, CAB 130 / 123.

99. CC (59) 30, May 7 1959, CAB 128 / 33.
100. Kaiser, op cit, pp. 104-105.
101. SC (59) 40, October 27 1959, PREM 11 / 2985, TNA.
102. Memorandum by Economic Steering Committee, October 27 1959, idem.
103. Macmillan to Lloyd, October 22 1959, PREM 11 / 2679.
104. Record of Meeting at Chequers, November 29 1959, PREM 11 / 2996.
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108. De Gaulle memorandum for the Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres, August 13 1958, in his Lettres, Notes et Carnets, Vol. VIII (Paris: Plon, 1985), p. 73.
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114. John F. Kennedy, The Strategy of Peace, edited by Allan Nevins (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), interview with John Fischer, December 9 1959, pp. 215-216.
115. David Alan Rosenberg, "U.S. Nuclear War Planning, 1945-1960", pp. 45-60 of Desmond Ball and Jeffrey Richelson, eds., Strategic Nuclear Targeting (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).
116. Gregory Pedlow, "Flexible Response before MC 14/3: General Lauris Norstad and the Second Berlin Crisis 1958-1962", *Storia Delle Relazione Internazionali*, Vol. 13 (1998), pp. 17-41.
117. Nash, op cit, pp. 64-77.
118. Ibid, p. 77, citing NSC 5906/1, August 5 1959, in Marc Trachtenberg, ed., The Development of American Strategic Thought: Basic Documents from the Eisenhower and Kennedy Periods, Including the Basic National Security Papers from 1953 to 1959 (New York: Garland, 1988), p. 234.
119. Record of Conversation between the Prime Minister and General de Gaulle, December 21 1959, PREM 11/2991, TNA.
120. Macmillan to Lloyd, December 22 1959, idem.
121. Pedlow, "Three Hats for Berlin", op cit, p. 179.
122. Record of Meeting at Rambouillet with President Eisenhower and General de Gaulle, December 20 1959, PREM 11/2991, TNA.
123. Trachtenberg, op cit, p. 215, emphasizes how far Eisenhower was prepared to go in

supporting a European nuclear force, while adding that the possibility of a non-American SACEUR raised significant legal problems. While the President could delegate control of nuclear weapons to an American general, predelegation to a foreign one required changes to American law.

124. Extract from minute of Lloyd meeting with Secretary Herter, December 21 1959, FO 371/152095, TNA.

125. Macmillan to Lloyd, M522/59, December 24 1959, PREM 11/2997.

126. Lloyd to Macmillan, PM1314/59, December 31 1959, PREM 11/2996.

127. Maudling to Macmillan, November 27 1959, PREM 11/2678.

128. See, for example, memorandum of meeting between Lloyd and Couve de Murville, November 12 1959, DDF, 1959, Tome 2 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1995), pp. 566-588.

129. Giaouque, op cit, p. 39 and p. 72.

130. Macmillan to Amory, December 10 1959, PREM 11/3121, TNA.

131. Dillon memorandum for the President, December 16 1959, Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 11, f. Dillon, C. Douglas (1), DDEL.

132. Kaufman, op cit, pp. 183-188.

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134. R.W. B. Clarke (Treasury) to Patrick Dean (Foreign Office), August 15 1959, FO 371/143705, cited in *ibid*, p. 113.

135. C.P. (60) 35, February 24 1960, CAB 129/100.

136. Moscow to Foreign Office, Tel. No. 4, January 18 1960, FO 371/151908.

137. Herter to Lloyd, December 30 1959, FO 371/152095.

138. Copy of Couve to Herter, February 3 1960, *idem*.

139. Copy of Herter to Couve, February 3 1960, FO 371/152095.

140. Lloyd to Macmillan, PM 60/12, February 15 1960, PREM 11/2998.

141. Macmillan to Eisenhower, February 17 1960, *idem*.

142. Eisenhower to Macmillan, February 18 1960, FO 371/152096.

143. Foreign Office Planning Section memorandum, January 5 1960, encls. in Lloyd to Macmillan, February 1, 1960 PREM 11/2986.

144. Bozo, op cit, p. 41.

Chapter Three: Blue Streak to Skybolt

While Britain had created a first-generation deterrent with relative speed, by the late 1950s its limitations were evident. Deployment of the V-bomber force began in 1955, but by the end of 1958 only 73 bombers were in front-line service, too few for the RAF's Bomber Command to conduct a full-scale strategic offensive independently, now that several thousand countervalue targets had been identified in the Soviet Union. In any event, the contraction of its empire was gradually depriving Britain of the network of air bases necessary for a comprehensive bombing offensive. More important over the long run, while the bomber was the sole feasible means of delivery when Britain's nuclear effort commenced in 1949, technological progress eventually pushed it to the margins of nuclear strategy. The advent of the jet fighter imposed higher speed and altitude requirements on bombers, while improvements in Soviet air defenses reduced the chances of their reaching their targets.

The V-bomber force retained some value in American eyes as a supplement to the USAF's Strategic Air Command. British bombers were some six hours closer to targets in the USSR than American planes that would have to fly over the North Pole, and they were expected to form part of any first wave attacking Soviet air defenses. Discrete adaptations could prolong the V-bomber's useful life. Wing and engine modifications enabled aircraft to fly higher and faster, while the introduction of electronic counter-measures reduced the impact of air defenses. Standoff weapons such as the short-lived Blue Steel missile allowed bombers to strike their targets from a safe distance, while thermonuclear weapons qualitatively increased the destructive power of the individual weapon. Yet over time, ballistic missiles were bound to supplant the bomber since they could perform the same task more effectively and destroy bombers themselves in attacks on enemy airfields. A second-generation deterrent based on ballistic missiles armed with thermonuclear warheads was not beyond Britain's reach, but its acquisition on a purely national basis would entail considerable expense and probably delay.¹

After 1957, increased nuclear interdependence with America helped Britain meet its security needs despite planned reductions in the share of national resources devoted to defence.² In line with the assumption by policymakers and military planners that escalation control would prove difficult in the event of nuclear hostilities, it also offered the hope of leverage over decisions by the Americans on the employment of their own larger nuclear arsenal. The Air Ministry and its allies consistently raised questions as to how reliably

American plans would take British priorities into account, emphasizing the need for a British deterrent that might, in certain circumstances, trigger the use of American forces. At the same time, the extent of American technological assistance deepened and perpetuated the dependent nature of Britain's deterrent.³

Moreover, nuclear interdependence cut both ways. American policymakers sought coordination with Britain's deterrent in order to secure influence over its employment. British officials would have to defend the size and structure of their nuclear forces to their American colleagues, as well as deal with increased reliance on America for delivery systems. By 1958, Britain was using American miniaturization data to develop Blue Streak, a land-based, liquid-fueled IRBM and the sole ballistic missile in the pipeline as a successor to the V-bomber force.⁴

Existing British forces were largely configured to provide a minimal unilateral deterrent based on countervalue targeting, even as official planning acknowledged that British nuclear forces would almost certainly be employed only in partnership with those of the United States (indeed a 1958 Joint Planning Staff paper, approved by the Chiefs of Staff, stated explicitly that there were no foreseeable circumstances in which the British government would initiate nuclear hostilities unilaterally).⁵ This reflected the understanding among British military planners that thermonuclear weapons would enable Britain to conduct effective strikes against the major countervalue targets in the USSR, while advances in Soviet air defences, the growing ratio of Soviet targets to British bombers, and the falloff in accuracy from the supersession of gravity bombs by standoff weapons made even a modest counterforce strike difficult.⁶

The Royal Navy was also interested in acquiring weapons that would provide an independent deterrent based on countervalue targeting upon the availability of the Polaris missile for installation on British submarines. From 1959, the Naval Staff was intent on acquiring Polaris at the first opportunity, which was expected to follow the abandonment of Blue Streak in favour of a system less vulnerable to preemptive attack. Where Blue Streak would invite attack on the British mainland, Polaris would draw hostilities out to sea. In addition, its deployment would make the Royal Navy, not the RAF, the principal custodian of Britain's deterrent.⁷

In September, 1958 Duncan Sandys advised the Cabinet Defence Committee to reconsider Blue Streak. Total development costs were estimated at £200 million, and by the time it was

deployed, Blue Streak would be technically inferior to similar American systems. The rationale for Blue Streak, Sandys added, was that retention of an independent deterrent entailed full national control of rockets equipped to carry nuclear warheads. Under the recent amendments to the McMahon Act, Britain had access to American information on the manufacture of lightweight thermonuclear warheads and might also obtain rocket tail technology. The options he proposed for consideration included: suspension of Blue Streak in favour of developing a more advanced missile, either with American aid or in collaboration with European allies; and use of American design data to manufacture a British version of the Thor warhead for employment in Blue Streak. But if British efforts were concentrated on a new rocket, a gap of five years would arise between the obsolescence of the V-bomber and the availability of the new weapon, unless the bomber's useful life could be extended by equipping it with either Thor warheads under complete national control or a new version of Blue Steel.⁸

When Sandys visited his American opposite number, Neil McElroy, he was disappointed to learn of the Eisenhower administration's preference for developing a new missile to meet NATO's needs, under assignment to SACEUR, rather than producing one to British specifications.⁹ In response, Sandys backtracked from his previous advice to the Defence Committee. He observed that while development of a more advanced system than Blue Streak would soon be feasible, Britain might not have a partner with whom to share the burden. A shorter-range missile would better meet European needs. While the Americans had made data on the Thor warhead, suitable for use in Blue Streak, available to Britain, they did not intend to continue Thor's production, and there was no guarantee they would manufacture a successor system appropriate to British requirements. Polaris was promising, but too early in its development to justify confidence as a replacement for Blue Streak. While it had advantages in mobility and hence survivability, it would be less accurate than most land-based systems. Its warhead would cost more than that for Blue Streak and deployment would necessitate construction of between six and eight submarines, adding expense and delay. Sandys concluded that if Britain were to remain a nuclear power into the mid-1960s, it would have to continue with Blue Streak, aiming at deployment in the middle of the decade.¹⁰

In the Defence Committee, Heathcoat Amory advocated abandonment of Blue Streak, which the Treasury believed might ultimately cost between £400 and £600 million, even

more if deployed in hardened silos to reduce its vulnerability. He was willing to accept the loss of Britain's independent deterrent, although he thought this might be avoided through acquisition of Polaris, with modifications such as the addition of Thor warheads prolonging the life of the bomber force until its deployment, averting any gap in the deterrent.¹¹ Sandys replied that while there was a certain logic to waiting on Polaris, there was little point in dropping Blue Streak now that £50 million had been either spent or irrevocably committed. If Polaris did not pan out, Britain would only incur further expense and delay by stopping Blue Streak and restarting it a few years later.¹²

In November the Defence Committee agreed on the need to assess the costs of purchasing Thor and developing a new system later, should Blue Streak be scrapped before a decision could be taken on Polaris.¹³ In a December meeting, Macmillan learned that any economies in the Blue Streak program beyond the £5 million in savings slated for 1959-60 would delay deployment from 1965 to 1969 or 1970. The Prime Minister was noncommittal, observing only that the Defence Committee had important decisions to take on the deterrent's future.¹⁴

In February, 1959 the government created the British Nuclear Deterrent Study Group to evaluate prospective delivery systems. Headed by Sir Richard Powell, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Defence, the BNDSG included the service vice-chiefs and officials from the Foreign Office, Treasury, Ministry of Supply, and Atomic Energy Authority. It set Britain's deterrent requirements at the ability to attack between 30 and 40 major urban centres in the USSR. This did not entail either a large force or great accuracy.¹⁵

The group's final report concluded that by the mid-1960s the USSR would have the capability to launch a preemptive attack on Britain's Blue Streak force, with a warning time of slightly more than 3 minutes. British doctrine implied a second-strike role for Blue Streak, in retaliatory attacks on countervalue targets. Yet the planned Blue Streak force of 60 missiles was unlikely to survive a preemptive attack even if put on a launch -on-warning posture and deployed in hardened underground silos. The weapon would only be usable if fired first, either after a limited Soviet strike or in anticipation of hostilities.¹⁶ The BNDSG's reliance on worst-case assumptions, while arguably unavoidable, may have led it to come down prematurely for Blue Streak's cancellation. Its assessments of Soviet ballistic missile capabilities in the 1960s were unduly pessimistic, including an estimated yield for the SS-4's warhead roughly twice what it actually was, and a projected force considerably larger than what Moscow actually deployed.¹⁷ Yet the BNDSG seemed at the time to have formulated an

unanswerable case against Blue Streak, and the Chiefs of Staff Committee agreed to recommend cancellation to the Defence Committee.¹⁸

Later that month, the Defence Committee decided in principle to drop Blue Streak in favour of Skybolt, with either Polaris or a later version of Blue Streak to follow around 1970, when the V-bombers reached the end of their useful life. It also agreed to defer formal announcement until an American understanding to furnish Skybolt was in hand.¹⁹ The pursuit of American aid was complicated by divergent views in Washington over the kind and degree of assistance that should be extended to the British nuclear program. In America as in Britain, interservice rivalries shaped strategic doctrine.

The USAF was uneasy about the advent of ballistic missiles, which threatened Air Force primacy in strategic operations. *Sputnik* raised the prospect of the bomber's vulnerability to preemptive strikes by Soviet missiles, although improved dispersal and alert procedures reduced the short-term danger. There was also the likelihood of wider deployment of nuclear weapons, on Navy submarines and short-range Army systems in Europe. USAF leaders hoped to maintain Air Force preeminence in strategic operations by promoting development of successive bombers and standoff missile systems that would extend the manned bomber's life as an effective delivery system. Skybolt would provide the aging B-52 with a standoff capability, but came under attack as early as 1959, when an internal Defense Department study cautioned that development costs were likely to fall between \$1 and \$2 billion, three times USAF estimates. Sharing Skybolt with Britain and ensuring British orders for the system would keep it alive, and accorded with the Eisenhower administration's interest in nuclear sharing.²⁰

In both the RAF and USAF, there was concern that ballistic missiles could replace bombers by virtue of their greater survivability, and mobility. Their principal weakness, relative inaccuracy, could be remedied in more advanced systems or come to matter less as countervalue targeting dominated planning. As a result, the two air forces were strongly motivated to cooperate in order to prevent principal responsibility for the British and American deterrents falling to the navies, with their submarines serving as platforms for systems like Polaris.²¹

By the same token, the Royal Navy and the USN had an incentive to work together to promote systems that would make naval forces the primary custodians of deterrent systems.²² As early as January, 1958, the Office of the Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff could

confidently tell the First Sea Lord, Lord Mountbatten, that “by 1967 or so missile sites will be out of this island and at sea in submarines.”²³ The American Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Arleigh Burke, shared with Mountbatten all information on the Polaris program that U.S. law allowed. He also provided him with arguments useful for persuading others of the system’s merits, such as the unlikelihood of the Soviets achieving an anti-submarine capability that could threaten Polaris-carrying submarines. Burke said the USN expected to cover all research and development costs that were not exclusive to the requirements of a British Polaris system. He added that the USN would support the provision of Polaris to the Royal Navy, save the warhead, at production cost. While he could not commit the American government, “I expect there will be no serious difficulty.”²⁴ In his exchanges with American officials, as First Sea Lord, and then Chief of the Defence Staff, Mountbatten for his part indicated his own concern over a possible five-year gap in Britain’s deterrent, with Polaris his preferred solution.²⁵

From October of 1959, Norstad had openly advocated an alternative to American aid to allied national deterrents, in the form of a nuclear capability vested in NATO. Pointing to the decreasing utility of bombers assigned to NATO in the face of improved Soviet air defenses and their own vulnerability to preemptive missile strike, he called for deployment of several hundred MRBMs at European sites by 1965. Aimed primarily at counterforce targets, they would allow NATO forces to respond quickly to a Soviet attack in Europe and force a halt to the enemy’s advance.²⁶ A sea-based Polaris system would not meet his needs, since naval forces were less tightly integrated into NATO’s command structure and not under SACEUR’s direct command.²⁷

Norstad contended, somewhat disingenuously, that a NATO MRBM force was solely an exercise in force modernization, entailing no change in alliance strategy since it only replaced one delivery system for theatre nuclear weapons with another. Yet the deployment of thermonuclear weapons so close to Soviet bloc targets and under SACEUR’s direct command, would make NATO itself a *de facto* nuclear power.²⁸

A NATO MRBM force could also circumvent the McMahon Act’s restrictions on nuclear sharing. Norstad’s discussions with the French on the MRBM problem since 1958 had been frustrating, but in early 1960 he detected a possible shift in General de Gaulle’s attitude. De Gaulle’s decision to withdraw the French Mediterranean Fleet from NATO’s command structure threatened to complicate NATO operations and Norstad’s job. The French

representative to the NATO Standing Group had proposed in January that one option would be for the western Mediterranean to become a separate NATO command. This would be headed by a French admiral, reporting directly to SACEUR, while commanding all purely French naval activities in the area in his capacity as a French officer. Norstad regarded such “two-hat” solutions as cumbersome, but noted this did represent a step back from the previous French insistence on withdrawal pure and simple. He suggested there were “several reasons why modification of the inflexible and at times almost irresponsible attitude toward NATO problems may serve French interests.” De Gaulle, he added, had the situation in Algeria with which to contend, and was under attack both domestically and abroad for his uncooperative stance in NATO.

Norstad speculated that de Gaulle and his advisers might finally have concluded that no American assistance to France’s national nuclear effort would materialize unless the McMahon Act were amended again or its definition of “substantial progress” reinterpreted to accommodate the French case. He had previously suggested that appropriate NATO structures could reduce the American character of nuclear weapons in Europe,²⁹ and there was no contradiction between a NATO MRBM force, with French participation, and later direct aid to a French national program. Particularly with France’s first nuclear demonstration soon bringing tangible proof of its nuclear prowess, Norstad suggested to Eisenhower, “it may now occur to some of the responsible people in Paris that a policy of negativism and non-cooperation provides no basis for hope of a changed attitude on the Hill.”³⁰

In conversation with de Gaulle, Norstad observed that a French officer controlled many of the nuclear weapons available for employment on Europe’s central front, and in practice the decision to engage an attacking force would be taken by the sector commander. De Gaulle responded that British occupancy of key posts in NATO’s military structure gave Britons “their own special line of command” and “he would want exactly what the British had.” Norstad said that while such arrangements offended military logic by arbitrarily splitting the battle, “there might be political or other considerations that made this convenient for General de Gaulle and if he needed it, General Norstad would be willing to accept this and support it before the Military Committee.”³¹

Norstad’s call for a NATO MRBM force strengthened the hand of those in the State Department, particularly its Policy Planning Staff and Bureau of European Affairs, who

disliked the MRBM program announced in December 1957. The need to meet SACEUR's requirements provided them with a pretext for attaching new conditions to the offer of assistance. Now the MRBMs would be at SACEUR's disposal, not under the national control of any European ally. This was what Secretary of Defense Thomas Gates was prepared to offer at the meeting of NATO defence ministers scheduled for the end of March. Gates proposed to offer the European allies a choice of either American production of MRBMs for deployment under SACEUR (Washington's preferred option) or assistance to European multilateral production of MRBMs under NATO auspices.³²

While some in his department may have seen a NATO MRBM force as a practical proposition, Secretary of State Christian Herter expressed doubts. He told Harold Caccia that, having offered to make MRBMs available to its European allies, the United States could not openly retreat from its promise of aid. What it could do was impose "conditions which, while reasonable in themselves, would be unlikely to prove acceptable to European NATO governments." Once the offer had been made, and rejected, London and Washington could proceed to a bilateral agreement on Skybolt, Polaris, or both, with the weapons presumably under national control.³³

Prior to the March summit with Eisenhower, British officials assessed the respective merits of Skybolt and Polaris. Skybolt had the advantage of coming into service in the mid-1960s, and thus averting a gap in the British deterrent if obtained, while Polaris would not be available for deployment in significant numbers until 1969-1970.³⁴ Yet in the Ministry of Defence it was widely believed that Polaris, which offered relative invulnerability and was likely to remain operational into the late 1970s, was the preferred system of the Pentagon, not just the U.S. Navy.³⁵

As Herter reminded Eisenhower prior to Macmillan's arrival, previous exchanges between British and American officials had touched on the provision of both Skybolt and Polaris, with no conditions attached in the case of either weapon. Washington had reserved its position so as to consider British requests in light of Gates's planned offer to the NATO defence ministers. "A bilateral understanding with the British on Polaris", Herter wrote, "would clearly be inappropriate so long as a NATO MRBM program is under consideration." Moreover, the State Department hoped the British would be willing to participate in a NATO MRBM force, in order to encourage a more cooperative French attitude within the alliance and avert the emergence of additional national deterrents. "The British appear to recognize a

relationship between their interest in Polaris and a NATO MRBM program”, Herter continued, “but have been urging an early U.S. assurance on Skybolt to enable a U.K. decision to discontinue Blue Streak as a military program.” Herter had concluded, and persuaded Deputy Secretary of Defense James Douglas, that “Skybolt should be treated as a separate matter since the British want this missile to prolong the life of their existing V-bomber force” where Polaris would extend their deterrent into the missile age. He proposed to discuss Polaris and the NATO MRBM problem in his conversation with Macmillan scheduled for March 28, and suggested that the President discuss Skybolt with the Prime Minister in private and work out an acceptable line to take in their public statements on any agreement, to avoid undermining the credibility of the Gates offer.

Officials had also conducted preliminary Anglo-American talks on the use of Scottish ports as bases for American submarines carrying Polaris missiles. Herter’s impression was that “the British have in mind reserving their agreement to provision of these facilities until they have obtained satisfaction on Skybolt, or on Polaris in relation to the NATO MRBM program.” He preferred to “relate British assurances on U.S. Polaris tender facilities to our assurance of Skybolt” and to avoid any clear commitment on Polaris until after discussion of the Gates offer within NATO. Herter suggested that Eisenhower raise the matter of the Scottish ports during his discussion of Skybolt with Macmillan and tell the Prime Minister that he assumed Britain was agreeable to the use of the ports for Polaris submarines and would appreciate official confirmation of this.³⁶

On the morning of the 28th, Herter met with Macmillan at the British Embassy in Washington and informed him that Eisenhower would be prepared to discuss Polaris and Skybolt at Camp David.³⁷ The two leaders discussed the weapons systems in a private session at Eisenhower’s Gettysburg farm and again on the 29th at Camp David. The British then presented a draft memorandum from Macmillan to Eisenhower, which opened with Macmillan’s summary and interpretation of their private exchanges. Macmillan noted Eisenhower’s decision “against a fixed site rocket and in favour of mobility” in the development of future weapons systems. He observed “I was also grateful to you for expressing your willingness to help us when the time comes by enabling us to purchase supplies of Skybolt without warheads or to acquire in addition or substitution a mobile MRBM system in the light of such decisions as may be reached in the discussions under way in NATO.”

The Prime Minister observed that either he or his new Minister of Defence, Harold Watkinson, would have to announce a decision on Blue Streak in the House of Commons within the next two weeks. He expressed appreciation of Eisenhower's approval of the formulation "the effectiveness of the V-Bomber Force will remain unimpaired for several years to come. The need for a replacement for Blue Streak is not, therefore, urgent, nor is it possible at the moment to say with certainty which of several possible alternatives or combinations of alternatives would be technically the most suitable." The two leaders, the draft statement continued, had agreed on British acquisition of an airborne delivery system, but added "we shall also be considering the acquisition of a mobile MRBM system. Discussions are at present under way in NATO on this question and our decision will be taken in the light of the outcome of these discussions."³⁸

Dillon responded with a memorandum of his own for Eisenhower's signature, which he defended as more reflective of the American position, and which the President approved and relayed to Macmillan. This reiterated Washington's willingness to sell Britain Skybolt "in a desire to be of assistance in improving and extending the effective life of the V-Bomber Force." Since Skybolt remained unproven as a weapon, the offer was dependent on the success of its development program. At the forthcoming meeting of NATO defence ministers, the U.S. would offer "to make mobile Polaris missiles-minus warheads-available from United States production to NATO countries in order to meet SACEUR's requirements for MRBMs", and if the European allies were unenthusiastic, was willing to assist joint European manufacture of Polaris as an alternative. Where the British draft proposed only that any Anglo-American agreement on a mobile MRBM system be taken with reference to any NATO decision on MRBMs, the American memorandum ruled out any bilateral discussions while the NATO process went ahead. In Dillon's formulation, "it does not appear appropriate to consider a bilateral understanding on Polaris until the problem of SACEUR's MRBM requirements has been satisfactorily disposed of in NATO." The memorandum also welcomed British agreement to the use of Polaris tenders in Scottish ports.³⁹

For much of the morning of the 29th, Caccia reworked the draft British announcement on Blue Streak and Skybolt, securing the agreement of Dillon and his deputy, Foy Kohler. On April 13, Watkinson informed the House that Blue Streak would be abandoned as a delivery system. Yet Britain's nuclear striking force was still "an effective and significant contribution to the deterrent power of the free world." The government had no intention of

abandoning this contribution, so “some other vehicle will in due course be needed.” The need was not pressing, because the V-bombers would, for several years, provide a suitable platform for a new weapon, and it was not yet possible to “say with certainty which of several possibilities or combinations of them would be technically the most suitable.” On the basis of current knowledge, there was much to be said for purchasing Skybolt from the Americans.⁴⁰

Despite the ambiguity of his understanding with Eisenhower, Macmillan was confident that the prospect of access to Scottish ports for American Polaris submarines would give Washington ample incentive to meet Britain’s ballistic missile needs.⁴¹ An early agreement on Skybolt, he wrote Watkinson, would prevent the emergence of an embarrassing gap in the deterrent, during which Skybolt would not be in hand and Polaris would be years away. Moreover, a large enough order of Skybolt missiles (he proposed 100) would confer British influence over the weapon’s development.⁴²

There is much to criticize in the vagueness of the understanding reached at Camp David and the underlying lack of clarity in American policy. As Trachtenberg writes, the memorandum drafted by Dillon shows far greater antipathy to the British independent deterrent than Eisenhower’s personal view required.⁴³ Its express support for prolonging the effective life of Britain’s bomber-based deterrent was perfectly compatible with opposition to a later deterrent relying on ballistic missiles. Yet it did not require such opposition, specifying only that any bilateral assistance to Britain on Polaris had to follow successful resolution within NATO of SACEUR’s MRBM needs. Neither those who saw Norstad’s proposal for a NATO MRBM force as a workable alternative to European national deterrents nor those who viewed it instead as a charade, to be followed by the conclusion of new bilateral arrangements, were prepared to undermine it by discussing the bilateral provision of Polaris as long as the Gates offer was on the table. In that sense, Skybolt was part of the charade, as a means of keeping the British deterrent alive without Blue Streak while the NATO MRBM proposal was played out. It also had the virtue of solving Macmillan’s most exigent problems, which related to finding a replacement for Blue Streak and avoiding a gap in the deterrent.⁴⁴

Beyond the confines of the Air Ministry, few thought highly of Skybolt’s purely military merits.⁴⁵ In the Ministry of Defence it was widely believed that the Americans had offered it only so that the availability of an alternative would enable the British to scrap Blue Streak.⁴⁶

As early as May 12, Secretary of Defense Gates urged Solly Zuckerman, Watkinson's Chief Scientific Adviser, to warn the Minister that the Pentagon's interest was increasingly turning to SLBMs, and that Macmillan's government would be unwise to invest much political capital in Skybolt. Zuckerman relayed the warning to Watkinson, who in turn repeated it to Macmillan. Watkinson suggested that in the upcoming negotiations for a formal agreement he focus on nailing down an American commitment on Skybolt, meeting the government's immediate political needs, and keep discussions on the future availability of Polaris going. Rather than openly criticize the NATO MRBM proposal, he wrote, Britain should refrain from making any definitive commitment and wait for the idea to fail. At that point, Britain could move to secure Polaris on an acceptable basis.⁴⁷ The Pentagon's Deputy Director of Research and Engineering, John Rubel, was more pointed than Gates in his warnings against reliance on Skybolt. He informed Watkinson that if the Department of Defense ultimately concluded that American forces did not need the missile, its development would probably not be continued solely to meet British requirements.⁴⁸

The Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Sir Caspar John, informed the ranking naval officer at the British Joint Services Mission in Washington that Skybolt, if indeed it were developed, might by 1966 or 1967 cost almost as much as a small Polaris program. Watkinson, he concluded, would not have much enthusiasm for "a very expensive short duration stopgap", and would prefer to move beyond Skybolt to acquire Polaris as soon as possible.⁴⁹ At a Guildhall reception for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers in early May, Mountbatten told the Labour M.P. Patrick Gordon Walker that in the upper reaches of the defence establishment, it was assumed that "we will buy Skybolt now and Polaris later. We need about 6. This is not quite certain."⁵⁰

The First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Carrington, was as vigorous as any naval officer in moving to limit the British commitment to Skybolt and position the sea-borne Polaris as its eventual successor. In the wake of the Camp David summit between Eisenhower and Macmillan, he warned against any public commitment by the government to purchase Skybolt before the BNDSG could engage in further study of delivery systems.⁵¹ He also informed Watkinson that if Britain bought the submarines from the Americans, it could have an operational Polaris force by 1967, two to three years earlier than if the submarines were built domestically. The Admiralty, he added, could initiate the design work without any public indication that the government planned to acquire Polaris.⁵²

Any chance of American assistance to a British Polaris program would depend upon whether Washington insisted on a tight linkage between Polaris and SACEUR's MRBM needs. When asked by John Scali of the Associated Press whether France's first two nuclear demonstrations represented a strengthening of the West or cause for concern, Eisenhower had replied that prestige sometimes encouraged states to take steps that were not militarily necessary. Yet he also observed that "it's only natural that first Britain and then France have done this, in the circumstances of life as we now understand them" and expressed hope that "we could get the kind of agreements among the larger nations, that have already done this thing (sic) to make sure that other nations don't want to go into the expense of going into this kind of an armament race, that would stop this whole thing in its tracks."⁵³ Following this hint at the possibility of acceptable agreement among the three Western nuclear powers, Norstad suggested that its successful nuclear tests had largely met France's requirements for the prestige conferred by an independent nuclear capability. Further development of a national deterrent would take time and money, and French staff officers were now expressing interest in some form of nuclear cooperation.⁵⁴

When NATO Secretary-General Paul-Henri Spaak visited Washington in June, he suggested to Gerard Smith and Foy Kohler of the State Department that purely national nuclear forces were inappropriate for European defense, while a three-party directorate *a la* de Gaulle would prove unacceptable to other NATO members and have difficulty reaching unanimous decisions. He concluded that "the solution lies in establishing atomic arms under NATO control." Smith asked if Spaak meant "a genuinely multi-national force, in which personnel of different nations would be intermingled so that no single country would have a national capability readily at hand."

Spaak replied "this was how he had understood the question" and "he believed this was a feasible-as well as a necessary-solution." France, he insisted, was at the heart of NATO's nuclear difficulties, and "he could not envisage a solution to the atomic problem without some solution of the French relationship." Kohler raised Eisenhower's idea for a European SACEUR, and Spaak responded that, while interesting, it was not central to NATO's planning for the next decade.⁵⁵

Spaak also called for an American offer to sell France several Polaris missiles, without warheads, in order to purchase French cooperation in an MRBM program and NATO more broadly. While this would constitute aid to the French national nuclear program, it would not

require further amendment of the McMahon Act, given French progress to date. Indeed, NATO's other members would not want Washington to go so far as to amend American law to meet de Gaulle's desires.

Where Macmillan looked forward to the failure of the Gates offer, and a subsequent series of bilateral nuclear agreements, this was precisely what Spaak feared, at a moment when he saw greater integration as the cure for NATO's ills. Dillon wondered if the only alternative to the Gates proposal was a series of bilateral bargains. In his view, "it should be possible to organize [a] multilateral program of interested countries minus France." Spaak contended that without French participation, others would be reluctant to proceed on a multilateral basis. Neither Britain nor West Germany was likely to be interested, in light of Adenauer's close relationship with de Gaulle and Macmillan's differences with France over the EEC-EFTA split. However, if de Gaulle rejected an American offer to sell Polaris, it would then become easier to develop a multilateral program without French participation. Other European allies would believe that de Gaulle had rejected a generous offer designed to meet his needs, and in any event were increasingly inclined to accept Norstad's case for a NATO MRBM force. Spaak emphasized that other NATO states, while not supportive of the French pursuit of a national deterrent, accepted it as a fact of life, and would not resent an American offer of Polaris. It was "unlikely that such offer to France would set in motion similar requests from other countries."⁵⁶

Macmillan saw any MRBM program in the context of tripartite cooperation, with Anglo-French nuclear collaboration purchasing closer links between Europe and Britain. Gladwyn Jebb, had, like Norstad, concluded that nuclear cooperation might also lead de Gaulle towards a less intransigent stance within NATO.⁵⁷ Macmillan agreed, and informed the Deputy Cabinet Secretary that he had long seen nuclear tripartism as the key to better relations with France in regard to both NATO and the EEC-EFTA split. He believed Britain should encourage a more cooperative French attitude in NATO and "give them the Bomb, perhaps some V-bombers" while pursuing de Gaulle's help in shaping an economically liberal Europe consisting of sovereign states.⁵⁸

The principal threat to Macmillan's plan was the convergence of those forces that made a NATO MRBM force more plausible. The Camp David agreement had imparted new credibility to the project by providing a British endorsement, however indirect and insincere. As important, Norstad and Spaak met some success in creating the impression that France

might accept nuclear arrangements within a formally multilateral framework and that NATO's other members would acquiesce. It was not only that Britain wanted any deal on Polaris to be a bilateral one, which could then be extended to France in exchange for cooperation on British ties to the EEC, while American policy envisioned a multilateral arrangement.⁵⁹ A program like Norstad's held out the prospect of a more autonomous Europe with its own nuclear capability, in which France would have an effectively independent deterrent and the political influence it conferred, but with no need for de Gaulle to pay in the coin of cooperation with Britain on European economic and political organization. The more realistic such a scheme came to seem, the harder it would be to treat its presentation as a dumb-show. Instead, it would constitute a genuine alternative to any proposal based on implicit tripartism.

When Watkinson visited America from May 31 to June 6, he sought not only to conclude detailed arrangements on Skybolt, but to sound out the Americans on the future availability of Polaris, perhaps in addition to Skybolt, as part of the price for access to Scottish ports. On May 2, accompanied by Mountbatten and Viscount Hood, British Minister in Washington, he met with a group of officials from the State and Defense Departments, including Gates, Douglas, and Under-Secretary of State Livingston Merchant, as well as JCS Chairman Nathan Twining. When the Americans raised the NATO MRBM force, Watkinson paid lip service to the Gates offer, indicating that the British government preferred American production of MRBMs to a European consortium.

When the discussion turned to whether a European consortium could work without French participation, Watkinson said Britain was prepared to "use its influence to persuade the French to come into any such consortium, possibly along the lines of an acceptance of token Polaris missiles deployed in Germany by the French forces."⁶⁰ Watkinson noted that American officials were now seizing upon the agreement improvised at Camp David to advance the MRBM force, "getting rather troublesome about what they could fairly claim was a commitment that we had made to support some kind of European MRBM scheme with or without the French."⁶¹ He then visited production facilities on the Pacific coast with Gates, in order to assess Skybolt's progress.

On their return, the two met again, with Gates noting that Norstad's declared need for 300 MRBMs had to be acknowledged. Norstad had already informed NATO's Standing Group that he needed 80 missiles by 1963. It was politically necessary to develop detailed plans for

the period through 1963, Gates argued, and a NATO program for 1964-65 would have to be agreed in the near future. Watkinson replied that Britain might be willing to support a modest NATO MRBM force of some 50 missiles, but it could only go forward if the French agreed to take part. The British contribution would take the form of one Polaris submarine. Britain would build both the submarine and the warhead, while the U.S. would sell it the missile and control system.⁶²

Watkinson observed that Gates had been clear that the Americans would prefer a British contribution of two submarines. In addition, Washington was now calling specifically for access to Gareloch, a Scottish port close to the industrial and population center of Glasgow, rather than a more remote location. If Britain was unwilling to agree, the Americans were willing to seek agreement with the West Germans on the use of Bremerhaven instead. Watkinson suggested to Macmillan that Britain make Gareloch available, and ask in return for American training of the crews slated for the first British Polaris submarine, which would be based alongside the American vessels and share the same facilities. This would give Britain an operational Polaris capability by 1964-65, which Watkinson thought would be acceptable to Washington. In the interim, London could hold off on any contribution to a NATO MRBM force and wait on events. If the submarine were Britain's contribution to solving the MRBM problem, it would have to be assigned to NATO's Atlantic Command, "but, in fact, it would work as part of a UK/US missile force."⁶³

On his return to Britain, Watkinson met with the Prime Minister at his country home, Birch Grove. Macmillan asked if it were possible to use a Scottish port other than Gareloch, perhaps Invergordon or Loch Ewe. Watkinson answered that the former was too shallow, the latter too remote. He added that the Americans were pressing for an early British decision, and hoped to place a dry dock in the Clyde in July, and a submarine tender between October and December. The U.S., Watkinson observed, would not provide a free submarine in order to make the base a joint project, so Britain would have to buy or build one. Buying one would cost £38 million, aside from missiles and equipment, and would provide Britain with Polaris by 1964-65. Building a submarine would cost £28 million more, and it would probably not be operational until 1967-68. On reflection, he had concluded that two submarines would be needed to make any Polaris program worthwhile. Britain might buy one and build the other. This would lead to a British force of 32 missiles by 1968. He reiterated that the Americans were threatening to conclude an agreement with the West

Germans on Bremerhaven if the British government could not go ahead with Gareloch, although he suspected the threat was empty. Joining the Americans in a Polaris base, he concluded, would be the best solution to the MRBM problem.

Macmillan believed siting American nuclear-armed submarines near a major population centre was bound to create significant domestic political difficulties. In his view, “we would not be able to secure the agreement of the public to an American submarine base in this country unless we were to join in with them. We would otherwise be seen to be in the position of a satellite. We could argue fairly to the Americans that it was wrong to site a Polaris base near a heavily populated area.” He proposed offering Washington a “package deal.” The Americans could use Loch Ewe as a Polaris base “on the understanding that they sold us one or two Polaris submarines and that they gave us early facilities for crew training; and at the same time offered us reciprocal facilities in Maine and the right to use their depot ships wherever they were.”⁶⁴ This was the arrangement which Macmillan and Watkinson tried to sell to their Cabinet colleagues.

At a meeting of Ministers on the morning of the 15th, Watkinson reiterated the argument that America’s need for a Polaris base might enable Britain to reach an advantageous bargain on the provision of Polaris submarines, while avoiding any further commitment to the NATO MRBM force which the Americans were now pushing with greater energy. He added that the provision of a base for America’s own Polaris submarines would be an easier sell domestically if the location were remote. Foreign Secretary Lloyd pointed out that American submarines using a British base would not be under joint operational control, creating presentational problems. The relationship between a Polaris base in Scotland and a NATO MRBM force required careful reflection. It was in the government’s interest to be able to say that the base would ultimately be under sole British control once Britain had its own Polaris force. This made it difficult to describe the Polaris base as part of a NATO MRBM capability. In practice, Britain’s Polaris submarines would have to be earmarked for SACLANT, although in the last resort they could be withdrawn to meet a purely national emergency. He agreed that the best course would be for Macmillan to sound out Eisenhower on a deal whereby provision of a Polaris base and one or two Polaris submarines would be regarded as the sum of Britain’s contribution to the NATO MRBM project.⁶⁵

Later that day, Macmillan summarized developments since his conversations with Eisenhower at Camp David for the benefit of his key Ministers. He noted that the American

proposal was more difficult to accept now that it explicitly related to Gareloch. It also differed significantly from the deployment of American nuclear-capable bombers at British bases, since Britain would not be in a position to obtain Polaris through its own efforts for some time. "In order to justify to public opinion the provision of these facilities," Macmillan remarked, "it would certainly be necessary to present the arrangements as a partnership." Therefore, as part of the project, Britain should secure an option to purchase one or two Polaris submarines from the Americans, or obtain the design information required for domestic production. For the same reason, "it would be essential to be able to say that the Polaris submarines we might obtain in this way would be under the sole ultimate control of the United Kingdom Government. At the same time, it would be necessary to establish the principle that if we were to obtain Polaris submarines in this way, this would be regarded as our contribution to the general objective of the NATO MRBM project."

Heathcoat Amory responded that it would be hard to refuse the American request and politically very unfortunate if the Americans ended up basing the submarines in German waters instead. Yet it was also desirable to try to get Washington to accept facilities at a more remote site, although this would probably entail additional British infrastructure spending. While "he had previously thought that this expenditure would represent the United Kingdom's share in a joint project", he had concluded that "it might well be necessary, at least for presentational reasons, to provide for some United Kingdom use of the base. For this purpose, on the understanding that we would not at present be committed to Polaris submarines of our own, but would only secure the option to do so at a later date if we so wished, he was inclined to accept the project in principle." Watkinson confirmed that this was his intent, and Macmillan undertook to send a preliminary note to Eisenhower.⁶⁶

Macmillan's note downplayed any link between Skybolt and a submarine base in Scotland, instead trying to connect the latter with Polaris. The Prime Minister opened by acknowledging receipt of a full report from Watkinson on his conversations with American officials about Skybolt, and saying that he looked forward to Anglo-American discussions of precise arrangements. "As regards Polaris", he went on, "as I told you at Camp David, I shall do my best about a suitable arrangement for the use of Scottish ports." He observed that the decision was an important one, and "it will raise political difficulties for us in view of all the pressures and cross-currents of public opinion here." While he would have to discuss the matter further with his Cabinet, he hoped a mutually satisfactory agreement could be

reached, and he would send a further letter once he had secured Cabinet approval.⁶⁷

Eisenhower was on a visit to South Korea when the message arrived. Dillon drafted a reply for his signature which implied the British commitment was to make Scottish ports available in exchange for Skybolt, not Polaris. This expressed pleasure that the initial talks on Skybolt had gone well and confidence that the details could be agreed so as to meet the requirements of both Bomber Command and SAC. It also showed appreciation of “the political difficulties confronting you and your colleagues regarding provision of facilities for our Polaris submarines in the Clyde. Nevertheless, I do hope that you will find it possible to proceed this year with the arrangement upon which we reached agreement in principle at Camp David.”⁶⁸ An exasperated Macmillan wrote “I did not repeat not agree to this at Camp David” next to this passage.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, on June 24 he informed Eisenhower that his Cabinet had agreed.⁷⁰

At the British Embassy in Washington, Hood cautioned that further pressure on the Americans for a commitment on Polaris as part of the deal would only antagonize them and precipitate an approach to another ally for access to a port.⁷¹ Macmillan’s government suspended for the moment all efforts to improve the bargain.⁷² The British officials in Washington reported that a bilateral deal to secure Polaris was impossible at the moment, and the State Department would insist that any public statement on the missile include references to NATO and SACEUR’s MRBM requirements.⁷³ Given the costs of acquiring Polaris and the risk of antagonizing Washington, there was no great enthusiasm for an immediate offensive to obtain an implicit American commitment to provide Polaris. As Watkinson observed, it would be several years before Britain could afford to either manufacture or buy Polaris submarines in any event.⁷⁴

Britain’s short-term diplomatic efforts would focus on ensuring that the terms of the Skybolt-Gareloch deal were publicly defensible. As the Foreign Office noted, the only formal agreement governing the deployment of American nuclear weapons systems on British territory was that for the Thor missiles, which referred to the employment of the weapon as requiring whatever consultation was practicable under the circumstances at the time. No formal agreement governed American air bases, only a general understanding that the President would attempt to consult with the Prime Minister before initiating nuclear hostilities, again in light of what conditions permitted at the moment of decision. Given the range of nuclear submarines like those in which the American Polaris missiles would be

carried, any provision for formal consultation would have to cover the entire North Atlantic, and therefore could be no more exact than the tacit understanding covering air bases. While no formal agreement was feasible, Britain could accept an arrangement under which Macmillan could publicly state that procedures for control and employment of the weapons were broadly similar to the terms applying to the air bases or Thor missiles.⁷⁵

When Macmillan announced the basing of the American submarines at Gareloch, he told the House of Commons that he was satisfied no decision to launch the Polaris missiles would ever be taken without the fullest possible consultation, “in the tradition of Anglo-American co-operation in joint defence established in peace time more than twelve years ago and carried by successive British Governments.” He deprecated any suggestion that deployment of the submarines brought additional risks upon the local population, observing that “the Polaris submarines will be at sea, and therefore this target, like every other target in this country, will be important but no more important, and perhaps a little less important, than the bomber bases.”⁷⁶

In the course of a few months, Macmillan’s government had abandoned one ballistic missile delivery system, procured a replacement of dubious reliability, and obtained only unspoken hints that a third system would be available when needed. One might have expected its nuclear weapons policies to have faced strong criticism. Yet Macmillan proved fortunate in his opposition, with the Labour Party in the throes of one those attempts at collective suicide which periodically overtake it when out of power. Since 1957, Labour’s leadership had faced rising sentiment among its activists in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament. Hugh Gaitskell and his supporters had contained the unilateralist revolt through concessions such as rejection of new U.S. bases in Britain before new disarmament talks, support for a suspension of British H-bomb tests, and a call for a “non-nuclear club” comprising all but the superpowers. Defence issues had not loomed large in the 1959 elections, although the Conservatives had seen Labour’s policies as leaving it vulnerable to charges of “appeasement.”⁷⁷

By 1960, its formal endorsement of what one analyst has called “conditional unilateralism” left the party open to a direct assault by the unilateralists. While the government’s abandonment of Blue Streak provided Labour with an opportunity to end its internal divisions over the future of the deterrent, by that time the proponents of unilateral disarmament were unwilling to settle for half-measures implying acceptance of NATO’s

reliance on nuclear weapons.⁷⁸

Gaitskell was at a conference in Haifa when the government announced Blue Streak's cancellation, and, given his strong support for retaining a British deterrent, irritated by the more flexible line the party's Deputy Leader, George Brown, took in the subsequent debate.⁷⁹ Brown claimed Blue Streak's cancellation made a gap in Britain's deterrent inevitable (this ignored the V-bombers, which carried gravity bombs with nuclear warheads⁸⁰), and accused the government of folly in opting for Blue Streak in the first place. He then laid a possible foundation for an agreed Labour position by observing that "the argument for maintaining an independent British deterrent for basic political reasons is one thing when you have it", but "the argument for going back into the business once we are out is altogether different."⁸¹ The shadow Chancellor, Harold Wilson, found a profitable line of attack in claiming that the government had never really acquired the independent deterrent or the new lease on life as a world power that Sandys had trumpeted in the House. "Without an independent means of delivery", he claimed, "the Right Hon. Gentleman's short cut to national greatness is an empty illusion."⁸² A party pamphlet claimed Blue Streak's abandonment and the government's reliance on the still-unproven Skybolt as a replacement had exposed the illusion that Britain could easily afford a truly independent deterrent.⁸³

Gaitskell observed that it was widely understood that Britain's existing deterrent would be unable to penetrate Soviet air defences in five to seven years. Production of its own missile and warhead would give Britain the maximum independence of the U.S., but entail considerable expenditure and no guarantee of success as the relevant technology grew even more complex. He doubted this was a practical course. "The lesson of Blue Streak", he wrote, "is surely the fact that you cannot go in for the rocket race without making expensive mistakes which we cannot afford." Buying the missile from America and manufacturing the warhead domestically, or producing a new weapon system in a consortium with European allies were options worth considering. The only measures he explicitly ruled out were rejection of nuclear deterrence on principle and renunciation of Britain's NATO obligations.⁸⁴ There were differences of emphasis when the International Affairs Subcommittee of Labour's National Executive Committee met to discuss the issue. Gaitskell wished to stress the economic case that an independent deterrent cost too much, while Brown and Gordon Walker preferred to emphasize government decisions which they saw as having foreclosed the option. "The essence of the new compromise", Gordon Walker wrote, "is the

ability to say that the independent deterrent is no longer possible.”⁸⁵

One argument against the government’s policy, mounted in public by Labour’s rising defence expert, Denis Healey, played upon fears of nuclear proliferation. Healey claimed that Britain’s reliance on Skybolt as a replacement for Blue Streak indicated that “the favoured military position which Britain has been accorded by the United States inside NATO for the last eleven years is not going to last much longer, if indeed it has survived to this moment.” If Skybolt came to fruition, he went on, America could not offer it to Britain without also making it available to other allies. And if a number of NATO states acquired the power to initiate all-out nuclear hostilities with the USSR, independent of any NATO decision, then “the NATO Alliance will disintegrate, because membership of the Alliance will then confer far more risk than security.” The tendency of official statements to refer to a British contribution to the Western deterrent rather than a national deterrent suggested “the Government are conscious of this danger and are anxious by some sort of semantic jugglery to discourage the European countries from following the precedent which they themselves are setting.”⁸⁶ Privately, Healey told Gordon Walker that by not explicitly committing itself to a purely conventional British role within NATO, the Labour Party would “keep our hands free to use Polaris” when it became available.⁸⁷

By the summer of 1960, however, the leadership of the Labour Party was facing a grassroots challenge that was not only unilateralist but effectively neutralist.⁸⁸ A report to the October Party Conference by the National Executive Committee argued that Blue Streak’s cancellation had made it clear that Britain could no longer afford to be an independent nuclear power in any meaningful sense, and proposed that tactical nuclear weapons currently under development be manufactured solely by the U.S. and deployed under strict NATO control. It rejected the possibility of a joint European deterrent as an alternative to a national one on the grounds that “a European deterrent would be impossible unless the West Germans played a leading role in its production.”⁸⁹

In an earlier discussion, Brown and Gordon Walker had stressed that in party debates, “we must not pander to anti-Germanism but must simply say that Germany should not have nuclear weapons - without any time limit.”⁹⁰ Yet anti-German sentiment was rife in the Labour Party, with Adenauer disliked as a conservative Catholic and his rigidity on reunification viewed as an objectionable hindrance to détente in Europe.⁹¹ At the Party Conference supporters and critics of the leadership’s policy played upon fears of German

nuclear weapons to advance their respective positions.⁹² One of the leading unilateralist speakers at the conference, the former and future M.P. Michael Foot, argued that if nuclear weapons were a prerequisite of influence in the world," it would be a reason for every country having these bombs, including the Germans."⁹³ Brown warned that if Britain rejected any role in NATO that required acceptance of nuclear weapons, NATO would collapse unless "Germany stepped in and took our place, and I thought that, above most other things, we were anxious to avoid."⁸⁴

In the end, the Conference adopted a resolution opposing any defence policy that entailed the threat to use nuclear weapons, demanding an end to the manufacture of nuclear weapons, and the termination of American nuclear basing rights on British territory. Gaitskell regarded Britain's possession of a nuclear deterrent as a purely prudential question, but was not prepared to compromise with those who would renounce a British bomb on principle while Britain sheltered behind NATO's deterrent capabilities. Convinced that internal party differences could no longer be papered over, he resolved to reverse party policy at the next conference and secure adoption of a nuclear weapons policy compatible with fulfillment of Britain's NATO obligations.⁹⁵ This struggle would dominate Labour's defence policymaking for the next year, and leave the party ill-equipped for the moment to challenge Macmillan's handling of the deterrent.

Notes

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13. D (58) 24, November 5 1958, CAB 131/19.
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88. Gordon, *op cit*, pp. 273-275.
89. Report by the National Executive Committee for 1959-1960, in Report of the 59th Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Scarborough, 1960 (London: Labour Party, 1960), pp. 14-15.
90. See note 82, above
91. R. Gerald Hughes, "'We are not seeking strength for its own sake': the Labour Party and West Germany, 1951-64", *Cold War History*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2002), pp. 72-84
92. One of the few redeeming moments came when Healey observed that "the Social Democratic Party of Germany is 100 per cent for our policy and it may win the election next year – and I did not like the way, when it was mentioned yesterday by a comrade on the rostrum, there was a sneer ran round the hall. The man responsible for defence in the German Social Democratic Party is sitting on that platform now – Fritz Erler. He spent seven years in Hitler's concentration camps. When I see the man in this hall who has made the same sacrifice to defend freedom and socialism I will be prepared to listen to his sneers

but I shall not heed them.” Annual Conference, 1960, op cit, p. 193.

93. Ibid, p. 190.

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Chapter Four: Bowie to Herter

By the middle of 1960, Harold Macmillan had not managed to obtain a clear bilateral agreement with America on Polaris which he could use as the basis of an offer to France. Events and the evolution of his own thinking were pushing him in the direction of a more overt pro-Europeanism. The failure of the effort to negotiate reciprocal tariff reductions between the EEC and EFTA had clarified matters, by leaving no plausible option between British membership in the EEC or continued exclusion from it.¹ Moreover, by 1960 the Empire-Commonwealth's infirmity as a power-political unit and the EEC's economic success were clearer than they had been a few years earlier.

Evidence of Britain's lagging economic performance relative to that of its Continental competitors was mounting, as the short-term boom the Macmillan government had engineered prior to the 1959 election began to peter out (from 1955 to 1960, the British economy grew at a modest average of 2.5% a year, compared to the French 4.8%, West German 6.4% and EEC average of 5.3%).² In the face of these developments, Macmillan and several like-minded officials worked for much of 1960 to create a political environment conducive to shifting British policy in the direction of EEC membership.³

In January, 1960, Frank Lee, one of the most pro-EEC officials in Whitehall, took over from the more Atlanticist Roger Makins as Principal Secretary at the Treasury, and in March became Chairman of the new Economic Steering (Europe) Committee, created to provide the Cabinet with information and analyses of matters pertaining to Europe.⁴ In May, the Committee produced a preliminary report which claimed there was no alternative to "near-identification" with the EEC, and that other members of EFTA and the Commonwealth, as well as interested domestic constituencies would have to be convinced of this.⁵ Macmillan believed that "near-identification" offered fewer advantages than full membership, and was likely to entail the same political risks. "To 'go into Europe' fully", he observed to a meeting of Cabinet colleagues, "would at least be a positive and imaginative approach which might assist the government to overcome the manifest political and domestic difficulties."⁶

The successful French detonation at Reggane in February inevitably changed the context in which Britain, or anyone else, sought France's favour. The demonstration of a nuclear capability bolstered France's standing abroad, and allowed de Gaulle to adopt a still more assertive stance in pressing his NATO allies for tripartism.⁷ Following Khrushchev's *de facto* lifting of a deadline for agreement on Berlin, the LIVE OAK organization had become less

important. Norstad successfully resisted suggestions it be wound up entirely, but did reduce it in size and scrap the main staff positions.⁸ Yet the organization had clearly not become an effective forum for tripartism in NATO, and French officials now suggested that LIVE OAK and the Ambassadorial groups in Washington and Bonn be amalgamated into a new group that would supervise contingency planning for Berlin within a broad political context. Washington saw no need for such an organization, and London felt constrained to fall in with American wishes.⁹

France's testing program had been undertaken despite an informal moratorium the three current nuclear powers had agreed in October of 1958, and aroused strong opposition, particularly among Third World countries, as a result.¹⁰ Officials of the CEA took the view that while France had spurned past American offers of help on an underground test in exchange for de Gaulle's agreement to forgo atmospheric testing, once the first test demonstrated that France was indeed a nuclear power, subsequent ones could be done underground. Moreover, French accession to any test ban on the same terms as the existing nuclear powers would be feasible, and France would be eligible for the American nuclear assistance Britain received.¹¹ Despite anti-testing sentiment in much of the Commonwealth,¹² Britain refused to condemn French tests at the UN.¹³ De Gaulle had always doubted American willingness to help France acquire a deterrent that was truly independent. When he and Macmillan met at Rambouillet prior to the Prime Minister's meeting with Eisenhower at Camp David, de Gaulle reiterated his determination to acquire a French national nuclear force. Given American reluctance to provide aid, he added, British help would be welcome, even if confined to the provision of a delivery system. Macmillan replied that, under the Anglo-American agreement on nuclear cooperation reached at Bermuda, British assistance to another state's nuclear weapons program was not possible without American approval. He did suggest that conclusion of a test ban agreement drawing the line at the current nuclear powers might allow some arrangement to be made, and de Gaulle expressed interest.¹⁴ De Gaulle's Defence Minister, Pierre Messmer, followed up by informing Harold Watkinson that France could not afford both a national nuclear force and participation in the NATO MRBM force. He added that any MRBM production in Western Europe would have to take place without West German involvement, and probably rest on Anglo-French cooperation. Watkinson noted only that Britain also could not afford both retention of its nuclear deterrent and participation in a NATO force.¹⁵

Messmer later told Watkinson that the existence of the *force de frappe* was not open for negotiation. France would not revisit the decision to proceed with a national deterrent, but there was room for cooperation with allies in areas such as coordination of targeting. He also put forward a provocative argument for a purely European deterrent capability. A comparatively modest nuclear capability based on the Continent could, he suggested, deter Soviet aggression as effectively as the far larger American strategic nuclear arsenal. The Soviets, he suggested, knew full well that France would not tolerate a Soviet advance to the Rhine, but might, in some circumstances, be prepared to gamble on American willingness to live with a *fait accompli* rather than risk the destruction of American cities in a superpower nuclear confrontation. Messmer also sought to dispel any impression that France sought a European nuclear capability based on Franco-German collaboration. France was wary of West German nuclear aspirations, he said, and would not help the Germans acquire nuclear weapons.¹⁶

When Couve de Murville went to Washington to sound out the Americans on any prospect of direct bilateral aid to the French nuclear program, Herter confirmed de Gaulle's skepticism. He informed Couve that he did not favour such assistance, and that under current law the single demonstration at Reggane did not meet the threshold of "substantial progress" which was a *sine qua non* of American help. He reiterated the administration's preference for handling the sale and deployment of nuclear weapons in Europe through the multilateral arrangements available under the Gates offer, rather than bilateral deals with individual allies.¹⁷

Messmer then informed Watkinson that France could not consider any multilateral MRBM proposal that did not allow for the withdrawal of the weapons for purely national use. The two agreed that progress on the Gates offer could be slowed down through protracted discussion in the Standing Group and North Atlantic Council.¹⁸ As Watkinson told the Cabinet Defence Committee, dependence on America for Skybolt and then perhaps Polaris made it risky for the government to overtly oppose the Gates offer, despite its lack of appeal. Yet it could decline to promote it and take advantage of de Gaulle's open antipathy to multilateral cooperation through NATO, allowing France to lead the opposition during NATO's discussions.¹⁹

Macmillan continued to seek avenues for bilateral and trilateral cooperation with de Gaulle. While he had been constrained by his dependence on Eisenhower for Skybolt and

Polaris from responding to de Gaulle's overture at Rambouillet in March, the cancellation of Britain's military Blue Streak program did not preclude keeping the system alive in another context. When informing the Cabinet of the military program's abandonment, he added that modest interim funding would continue while modification for civil purposes could be explored.²⁰ He also hoped three-power consultations over Berlin could provide the nucleus of the tripartism de Gaulle sought. The General had delayed the spring 1960 Paris summit to May, to avoid inconvenient discussions of testing restrictions before the French deterrent, embryonic as it might be, was an accomplished fact, and to strengthen his hand in pressing for tripartism.²¹ When the three leaders met, Eisenhower said he could accept regular meetings among the foreign ministers and heads of government, provided these were informal and could not be construed as forming an inner circle within NATO.²² Macmillan followed up with a suggestion for regular meetings of the foreign ministers on the fringes of the NATO and SEATO meetings they would normally attend.²³ De Gaulle replied that he still wanted tripartism among the British, French, and American representatives on NATO's Standing Group.²⁴ Any short-term prospect of a bargain in which French accession to a test ban agreement opened the door to British nuclear aid was dashed when the downing of an American spy plane led Khrushchev to demand an apology before the four-power discussions could go ahead. Rather than apologize, Eisenhower chose to return home, and the abortive nature of the summit meant there would be no new agreement on testing.²⁵

Paul-Henri Spaak, NATO's Secretary-General, came forward with a proposed compromise that would go some way to meet de Gaulle's needs while stopping short of explicit tripartism. On a summer visit to Washington, he informed Acting Secretary Dillon that most Europeans had reconciled themselves to a French national deterrent. No other potential nuclear powers had immediate plans to develop forces of their own, and West Germany was very unlikely to seek a national nuclear capability. If Washington were to simply offer de Gaulle several Polaris submarines, which would not require changes to American law, it would create an impression of American generosity and make it hard for de Gaulle to refuse.²⁶ Spaak was also convinced that American assistance through NATO would elicit pressure on de Gaulle from those French politicians, officials, and military officers better disposed to NATO than he, to follow a path that would avoid the burdensome costs of a fully independent deterrent.²⁷

Lloyd advised Caccia to raise no objections in Washington to Spaak's proposal, noting

that there was no harm to British interests in France's acquiring a few Polaris submarines, as long as the availability of Skybolt, and later Polaris, was not affected. Indeed, "if these submarines were to be made available, first to us and then to France, in such a way as to render the proposed NATO MRBM scheme unnecessary, or at least less urgent in United States eyes, there might well be advantages."²⁸ Macmillan, however, feared that any offer to sell Polaris subs to France would require they be committed to NATO, an unwelcome precedent that could lead to imposition of the same condition on any sale to Britain. He complained that Lloyd's message to Caccia should not have been sent, and should be recalled.²⁹ But Spaak's overture came to naught in any event; as the American Ambassador to NATO told Spaak, there was no enthusiasm in the State Department for an initiative that could be seen as encouraging proliferation, and which was probably too little to satisfy de Gaulle.³⁰

That summer, Macmillan continued to lay the groundwork for closer ties with Europe. The Lee committee's final report concluded that "near-identification" would stimulate British industry, increasingly fearful of exclusion from EEC markets, to become more competitive, as well as provide a solid platform from which Britain could exert influence abroad. If Britain were to join, it could probably reshape EEC rules in the process of negotiating entry. There was little danger that Britain would be consistently outvoted by France and West Germany, since many smaller members would tend to side with it on key issues in order to balance against the Franco-German axis.³¹ Discussing the report, the Cabinet managed to agree on the need for a fresh initiative towards Europe, if not its precise form. One of the more formidable advocates of accession was the Commonwealth Secretary, Lord Home, who contended membership was now essential to maintaining Britain's standing in the world, with the United States in particular. Reginald Maudling, now President of the Board of Trade, expressed a preference for a Free Trade Area over full membership. The Home Secretary, R.A. Butler, a substantial figure in Conservative politics who had been the alternative to Macmillan during the selection of Eden's successor, claimed that entry would prove unacceptable to such core Tory constituencies as the agricultural sector.³²

Opinion in the Foreign Office was increasingly supportive of full entry. A summary of Departmental views concluded that the case for full membership was strong, and this had to be Britain's ultimate goal, even if economic conditions made early accession difficult.³³ Assistant Under Secretary Roger Jackling added that de Gaulle seemed intent on greater

European political cooperation, extending to foreign and defence policy. Not only could this exacerbate tensions in NATO, but British interests would not be adequately safeguarded by a mere commercial link with the EEC that conferred no influence in any grouping where the crucial political decisions were taken.³⁴ Macmillan strengthened the position of the pro-Europeans with a July Cabinet shuffle that moved Home to the Foreign Office, with former Chief Whip Edward Heath as his Minister of State. Maudling went to the Colonial Office, while the Euroskeptical Butler and former Agriculture Minister Christopher Soames were confined to technical issues as members of a new Cabinet committee on Common Market negotiations.³⁵

Macmillan also pressed the French on prospects for a multinational program that would use a civil version of Blue Streak to carry space satellites. In May, Sandys, now Minister of Aviation, suggested a joint research project to Messmer.³⁶ The French responded with an *aide-memoire* which indicated interest but said they would need access to technical data on Blue Streak in order to make an informed decision.³⁷ Deputy Cabinet Secretary Sir Frederick Bishop informed Macmillan that winding up the military Blue Streak program would cost £20 million, with full abandonment adding £2 million. The construction of space research facilities alone would cost Britain some £64 million over four or five years. "Perhaps the most obscure factor", he wrote, "is whether Blue Streak would provide us with a valuable card in our relations with European countries – particularly the French." He saw collaboration with France, even on potential military applications, as worthy of consideration, although he conceded "the experts do not like this, partly because they do not like the French, partly because they think that the United States would oppose it."³⁸

Solly Zuckerman cautioned that continuing Blue Streak as a civil venture could cost £10 million a year, without producing militarily useful results. It would maintain British expertise in liquid fuel technology, but this technology was obsolescent in any event. Macmillan noted that considerations of prestige favoured continuation, which would also avert criticism of British backwardness in the scientific press.³⁹ He later approved a draft memorandum to the Cabinet which observed that cancellation of the military Blue Streak program "has had a profound impact on public opinion." It had fostered recognition that Britain, with the economic resources of a mid-sized power, could not hope to keep up with the superpowers across the entire panoply of modern weaponry. The salient question was whether Blue Streak's complete abandonment would be viewed "as a further step in the direction of

prudence and realism or will it be held to mean that we are becoming increasingly, and to an undesirable extent, dependent on the United States?" Macmillan suggested cooperation with France, as long no American objections were raised, would have political and financial benefits. Yet it would require offsetting economies elsewhere, and he recommended Blue Streak's continuation as a civil project until year-end, while discussion of a joint venture went ahead.⁴⁰

By July, Eisenhower was prepared to respond to de Gaulle's request for tripartite consultation with an offer of the substance without the form. France's representative on the NATO Standing Group could be the French participant in three-party talks, provided his involvement was solely in a national capacity, with no hint of a tripartite process within NATO structures. After initial briefings on the American offer, Selywn Lloyd was concerned that if Eisenhower were sincere, he was showing a distressing willingness to downgrade bilateral cooperation with Britain in favour of some vague three-party process, before Britain had bought closer ties to Europe with the prospect of nuclear assistance to France. If he were merely trying to divert de Gaulle by promising more than any tripartite process would actually give him, once the expected benefits failed to materialize, the General would become still more suspicious and intractable.⁴¹ From Paris, Jebb warned that if de Gaulle learned, as he inevitably would, of any British effort to restrain Eisenhower from making a generous response to de Gaulle, his confidence in and rapport with the Prime Minister, such as they were, would be gravely undermined.⁴²

Early in August, Eisenhower replied to de Gaulle in writing.⁴³ But de Gaulle was now in a strong position to openly criticize NATO structures and the direction in which America was leading the alliance, largely because of the changes the Berlin crisis had wrought in alliance politics. If discussions over Berlin had created pretexts for preliminary and informal three-party consultations, the threat itself allowed de Gaulle to strengthen his bond with Adenauer, and with it the Franco-German nucleus of a more autonomous Europe.

In July de Gaulle had met with Adenauer at Rambouillet, and reinforced his doubts over British and American reliability in the event of a showdown with the Soviets. German interests, he went on, would be more effectively safeguarded if the EEC Six formed a political union.⁴⁴ He suggested regular meetings among heads of state and government, through which organic cooperation on political, military, and economic matters would emerge. A secretariat and commissions of officials dealing with particular subject areas and

based in Paris would provide organizational support, but have no existence independent of national governments. Existing EEC institutions would function as advisory bodies. Once the political structures were in place, the Six would move to reorganize NATO, replacing the integrated military command structure with looser arrangements for the coordination of national forces on a European basis.⁴⁵

In his reply to Eisenhower's offer, de Gaulle reiterated his call for explicit tripartism. He also criticized the Gates proposal and NATO's integrated command structure as effectively placing the central decisions regarding Europe's nuclear defence in American hands. This, he went on, deprived France of control of its own defense, an unacceptable infringement of national prerogatives.⁴⁶ Even informal tripartite consultations were too much for the smaller NATO members, who complained at a June briefing on the results of a meetings among the American, British, and French foreign ministers that these came too close to de Gaulle's three-power directorate.⁴⁷ When Eisenhower wrote to de Gaulle again at the end of August he emphatically rejected tripartism on the grounds it would antagonize other members, whose interests also had to be represented in NATO councils.⁴⁸ Macmillan urged Eisenhower not to be discouraged over the prospects of three-party cooperation by the General's message, noting that de Gaulle's moods were notoriously changeable. If efforts to bring about tripartite consultation did eventually bear fruit, he wrote, de Gaulle could be expected to become far more agreeable across a wide range of issues.⁴⁹

Yet while Macmillan still pinned his hopes on a deal with de Gaulle, American policy was moving further from bilateral nuclear arrangements that could lead to effective tripartism. While Eisenhower's policies reflected his antipathy to additional nuclear capabilities, he saw the decision to "go nuclear" as, in the final analysis, a legitimate prerogative of the nation-state, and was not prepared to resist further proliferation to the point at which resistance imperiled alliance solidarity.⁵⁰ He told the Chairman of the AEC, John McCone, that "we are forcing other countries to become nuclear powers. Our laws are based on an incorrect premise that we have, and can continue to have, a monopoly."⁵¹ By August, as McCone reported to Norstad after a conversation with the President, Eisenhower "wanted to establish a position which he could pass on to his successor rather than try to get precise legislation", and "he was really thinking more in terms of multilateral rather than bilateral legislation."⁵²

Eisenhower's reluctance to impose a definitive position on nuclear sharing allowed those officials who opposed any nuclear assistance to France to shift American policy still further

from what the President had offered in 1959. The view was emerging in the State Department that one or more of the European allies might actually accept one of the options outlined in the Gates offer, which would have dangerous consequences. If land-based MRBMs were assigned to SACEUR, their deployment might provide *de facto* control by the host states, above all West Germany, and thus the substance of a national deterrent.⁵³ In the spring of 1960, Gerard Smith, Assistant Secretary of State for Policy Planning, commissioned Robert Bowie, his predecessor and now head of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard, to conduct a study of issues affecting NATO nuclear strategy into the 1960s.⁵⁴

Bowie's report, submitted to Herter in August, observed that NATO's strategy of massive retaliation had worked for most of the 1950s because it entailed few risks for the Western powers. A Soviet bomber offensive could not have been launched without hours of warning, and, if it led to wider hostilities in Europe, the USSR's nuclear arsenal would have been overmatched by NATO's forces. Reliance upon nuclear weapons to deter aggression in the first place had allowed NATO to economize on non-nuclear defenses and deploy its nuclear weapons for a first strike, rather than in survivable fashion, as a second-strike capability would have required.

The emergence of a Soviet ICBM force had eroded the credibility of NATO's nuclear posture and emboldened Moscow to apply pressure on Berlin, possibly on the assumption that non-nuclear threats to which NATO could not respond without recourse to nuclear weapons would force the West to choose between capitulation and all-out war in any crisis. Tactical nuclear defenses were useful so long as NATO alone enjoyed "nuclear plenty", but expanding Soviet nuclear capabilities made them too expensive in peace and their use in war unacceptably destructive. A workable strategy for the next decade would require the strengthening of NATO's "shield" of conventional forces to the point where reliance upon the threat of a nuclear reply to non-nuclear aggression could be reduced to an acceptable degree, and the European allies could rest assured that sufficient resources would be on hand in a crisis to deter any threat.

As a rule, Bowie suggested, nuclear capabilities should be added to non-nuclear ones "only when addition is relatively inexpensive in terms of money and of compromising the Shield's non-nuclear combat effectiveness." Large tactical missiles could be defended as replacements for tactical aircraft. The same case could not be made for deployment of an

MRBM, “which would be an absurdly expensive way of carrying conventional high explosives and whose cost as a nuclear delivery weapon could only be defended if it were intended to enhance the strategic deterrent.”⁵⁵

The concerns of NATO’s European members, Bowie wrote, would increasingly pertain to the reliability of the American strategic deterrent under conditions of mutual superpower vulnerability. There was clear evidence of European doubts about this in the efforts by Britain, now France, and soon perhaps others, to develop their own nuclear retaliatory forces. No doubt prestige was one consideration, but “their sizeable effort lends credence to their expressed fears about American resolution.” The rationale for such forces was that a small number of missiles carrying warheads targeted against Soviet urban-industrial centres would deter attack. Yet it would be both costly and time-consuming to develop such a force, and there was little likelihood of any European state doing so from its own resources until the late 1960s at the soonest. Britain had essentially given up on production of its own missile when it abandoned Blue Streak, and France was some distance from developing one. “By the time such a force came into being, its retaliatory power would be uncertain”, while the march of military technology would make it difficult to maintain its survivability against preemptive attack and guarantee its ability to penetrate Soviet air defenses. “If such capabilities are attained”, Bowie observed, “they will virtually be confined to deterring the one contingency of mass nuclear assault upon the country in question. Against any other threat, their employment would be known by all to be suicidal, and hence the credibility of their employment would be virtually nil.”

Efforts to build European national deterrents were imprudent diversions of resources from the pressing task of increasing NATO’s conventional strength. Militarily, they were undesirable insofar as “uncoordinated forces could lead to the worst sort of targeting: namely, everyone hitting Soviet cities almost exclusively. If so, the Soviets, with no major cities left as hostages to restrain their behavior, and with none of their retaliatory power damaged, could hardly be expected to limit their response.” Nuclear war could come even if nobody planned on it, so “losing even the faint hope of ‘controlling’ general war is extremely serious. Coordinated operational control of global strategic elements is required.”

There was, Bowie conceded, a case to be made that since the British and French had already chosen to build national deterrents, provision of American aid was a prerequisite of healthy inter-allied relations. But while this might be so in the short term, assistance to

allied nuclear programs was ultimately bound to exacerbate NATO's divisions. Aid to the French program would simply generate further demands from Paris, and increase the perceived indignity of non-nuclear status, particularly in Bonn, leading to German demands unacceptable to other members. "To encourage such decentralization of deterrent power", Bowie wrote, "would also increase the risks of accidental or irresponsible use, and the perception of this would foster further discord in the Alliance." Such proliferation was not inevitable, and even reducing its pace was in America's interest.

Among NATO's current non-nuclear members, Bowie noted, only France was intent on going ahead with a national nuclear program, and "if left to their own resources even the French might eventually find the effort unpalatable and the results disappointing-especially as the costs and difficulties of creating an effective delivery system become more apparent." On the other hand, if American help made the burdens of developing a French national deterrent bearable, not only would France have every incentive to persevere, but "the UK will be virtually constrained to hang on to an independent nuclear force, West Germany is certain to claim the same privilege before long", and others might follow. In the absence of American assistance, new national programs would at the very least make slower progress and "the new club members kept from acquiring weapons systems which would give them strong confidence in their ability to act independently."

Bowie offered an alternative in the shape of a multilateral strategic capability in Europe, under SACEUR's command. The NAC would authorize him in advance to use the force against Soviet targets in the event of a major nuclear attack in the Treaty Area, and provide him with direction on its use under other circumstances as required. The fundamental innovation was that the force would be truly collective, not a mere aggregation of national forces assigned to NATO as member states decided. In order to maintain its credibility as a deterrent, participants would relinquish any national veto. Deployment at sea, probably in Polaris submarines, would avoid problems inherent in deployment on land, such as seizure by the host country or claims to a higher status within NATO based on the presence of the weapons on one's own soil.

As an interim measure, America could assign several Polaris submarines to SACEUR, demonstrating its own willingness to meet European security needs. If the European allies continued to press for nuclear sharing, America would support development of a sea-based Polaris force, jointly financed and with each crew containing sailors from at least three

NATO members, and Washington supplying warheads to a new multilateral organization. The force would be so tightly integrated that members could not withdraw their contributions for national use. While America too would relinquish its veto, the warheads would remain in U.S. custody until their release was authorized, in order to protect design information. A force of 200 missiles would constitute a sufficient deterrent.⁵⁶

Centralized control of NATO's nuclear assets was not only a means of addressing the alliance's immediate problems, but implicitly one element of a wider program for negotiating disarmament and improving East-West relations. NATO and the Soviet bloc, Bowie contended, had a shared interest in reasonable arms limitation that could reduce the odds of all-out war. While disarmament had, until now, been primarily a matter of propaganda initiatives in the U.N. and other fora, "the Soviets have a real stake in avoiding nuclear conflict and in inhibiting the Atlantic nations from threatening nuclear force to counter developments which they believe serve the Bloc's interests. They may come to regard agreements, even with the sacrifice of secrecy involved, as worthwhile to this end." The apparent shift in the Soviet negotiating position towards acceptance of the need for some degree of inspection indicated Moscow might be thinking in such terms.

NATO, Bowie concluded, should seek consensus on arms control initiatives that would serve the interests of all members. These could include measures to reduce the chances of war by accident or unintended escalation, to prevent the uncontrolled development of additional national nuclear capabilities, stabilize deterrence and lower its burdens, and promote regional security in Europe. Following successful joint study, it might be feasible for America to conduct superpower arms control talk in the context of an agreed NATO position and ongoing consultation with the other major NATO states.⁵⁷ Improved relations between the Eastern and Western blocs could encourage beneficial changes in the Communist world: "they may exert at least marginal leverage toward bringing closer the time when a muting of Soviet aggressiveness, internal changes, a weakening of satellite links with the USSR, or Sino-Soviet schism may permit some form of lasting détente. This long-term goal needs to be borne in mind, even as the Atlantic nations concert their relations with the Bloc for more immediate purposes."⁵⁸

The Bowie report differed from Norstad's approach by emphasizing institutional changes more than additional nuclear weaponry. The thrust of Bowie's analysis was to treat enhancement of NATO conventional forces as a political and psychological exercise

responding to the allies' need for reassurance more than any military need.⁵⁹ Its core principles were that European pressure for nuclear sharing had to be accommodated in an acceptable manner; that the development of new national deterrents should be restricted as much as possible; and that nuclear sharing should support NATO's further military and political integration. The two programs, as one analyst has written, pointed in different directions, the one enabling the spread of *de facto* national deterrents, the other designed to avert them.⁶⁰ Indeed, Bowie suggested to Eisenhower that, in the interest of preventing effective national control of land-based MRBMs deployed in Europe, America should retreat even from the Gates offer.⁶¹ The President concluded that a multilateral force under SACEUR (eventually a European general) would restore NATO's cohesion and the confidence of its members.⁶²

In October Kohler briefed Hood on the proposal Herter planned to make at the upcoming NAC meeting in Paris. As an interim measure, five Polaris submarines would be assigned to NATO, and deployed by the end of 1963. They would be under SACEUR's command and available for employment in the event of a Soviet nuclear attack on the NATO area under existing NATO procedures or new ones upon which the NAC might agree. Should a permanent MRBM force under SACEUR be created, its targeting would be coordinated with external strategic forces such as SAC and Bomber Command.⁶³

That summer, Bishop had responded to the apparent American retreat from the Gates offer by observing that a new American approach to nuclear sharing was inevitable, and that Britain should encourage a reassessment of American thinking that was in line with London's own desire for a bilateral Anglo-French link.⁶⁴ Some aspects of Bowie's analysis were congenial to the British, including his skepticism about the military utility of additional MRBMs. Macmillan himself was of the view that "the Americans, in weapons policy as in golf, want too many clubs."⁶⁵ Prior to the December NAC meeting, Solly Zuckerman noted that "we have moved far from the beginning of this year when we gave a luke-warm, but unqualified, approval to the US MRBM proposals." He suggested that "our increasing reluctance to agree to the US proposals has made them feel more and more isolated, and the more isolated they have felt, the more ready they were to amend their proposals. In retrospect, I wish we had been far more forceful earlier than we were."⁶⁶ British officials also welcomed the American retreat from land-based MRBMs in Europe and their production by consortium, since this would reduce the danger of host-country seizure without

explicitly discriminating against West Germany.⁶⁷

The Joint Planning Staff had concluded that under conditions of mutual vulnerability, all-out war was unacceptable as a response to aggression, and deterring it in the first place more important than ever. It was essential that the Soviets know any aggressive act would elicit resistance. It was when NATO conventional forces were insufficient to contain a limited attack that the alliance would face the choice between accepting the likelihood of defeat in conventional hostilities and giving SACEUR the authority to release nuclear weapons, risking rapid escalation to general war. There was, therefore, a case for assessing the third course, the discriminate use of nuclear weapons under new arrangements for political control.

However much official statements emphasized deterrence, the JPS noted, “public opinion always looks to the problem of what will happen if Soviet aggression occurs.” This created “a political need for a more intelligible defence policy than one which could result, if the primary aim should fail, in a choice between capitulation and mutual destruction.” Yet knowledge of any such plans had to be limited to those making the central decisions, at present the British and American political leadership and SACEUR. Anything that smacked of “graduated deterrence” might undermine the credibility of NATO’s deterrent posture in the eyes of the Soviets as well as European opinion, by suggesting a threshold below which aggression could be undertaken without the risk of a nuclear riposte. Moreover, such an approach to nuclear conflict could not be presented as a substitute for the existing deterrent policy, since “it can be successful only in a set of circumstances in which Russia has doubted Western determination to use nuclear weapons, but has accepted the risk of devastating retaliation in order to make a piece-meal gain, having secretly decided to withdraw if necessary rather than use nuclear weapons herself.”⁶⁸

The Royal Navy would furnish any British contribution to a seaborne MRBM force, and the Admiralty had reservations. A brief endorsed by both First Sea Lord Sir Caspar John and Lord Carrington noted that if Britain were to make a contribution, it was desirable that it have an acceptable alternative role, so that economies in defence spending could be made elsewhere. The British contribution, presumably taking the form of one or more Polaris submarines, would be under SACEUR’s control even in peacetime, putting it out of reach for any other purpose. While the provision of a Polaris submarine could be defended as supplanting any other British effort to meet SACEUR’s MRBM requirements, it would entail the effective sacrifice of national control. A submarine-based force would be highly mobile,

and hence survivable in the face of retaliation. This could be seen as making it a valuable adjunct to NATO's existing shield forces, useful for imposing a pause on the enemy, but in practice escalation was likely to be very rapid and extremely difficult to control.⁶⁹

In the Foreign Office, Shuckburgh had reviewed the American proposal as Kohler had outlined it to Hood. He observed that its success would require the acquiescence, and ideally the active support, of all major NATO powers, as well as public acceptance in Britain, France and West Germany. De Gaulle was likely to prove the principal obstacle, in light of his opposition to integrated military command structures. Accordingly, "it will be important not to present the plan in a manner which would suggest that it was incompatible with de Gaulle's policy of building a 'force de frappe'." The General's support would be more readily procured "if the plan could be presented as something into which a French national contribution might eventually be fitted." While his prior agreement need not be viewed as a *sine qua non* for the pursuit of any steps toward greater integration within NATO, it was doubtful if any proposal would succeed in the face of his fixed opposition.

Shuckburgh's analysis took into account problems with both British and Continental public sentiment, where he saw significant pitfalls relating to custody of the warheads and authority to launch the weapons. The Americans saw a need to transfer control of the weapons to NATO which, *faute de mieux*, meant transfer to SACEUR. The U.S. plan, as presented by Kohler, implied the predelegation to SACEUR of the authority to launch MRBMs, without consultations at the political level, in the event of a Soviet nuclear attack on NATO Europe. Yet there was nothing in the American proposal so far that indicated a willingness to relinquish control of the warheads.

While the Americans had not made a clear decision on the point, "it does appear to be contemplated that the President's authority to 'undo the lock' might be delegated to SACEUR, so that in fact a NATO officer, and not an American officer, would have the ability to release the warheads." Although this could be taken as implying Washington's tacit agreement to continue furnishing an American officer as SACEUR, "if the distinction is to have any meaning for the Europeans, it will also be taken by the world at large as meaning that the US [government] have given up control of these weapons." The dilemma here was that "the more the plan appears to give European countries a share of control over the use of nuclear weapons the more it is likely to attract criticism on the grounds that it will spread nuclear capability." There were implications for Soviet policy as well, given the likelihood

that Red China and East Germany would respond by asking for nuclear weapons themselves.

Meeting NATO's MRBM needs through a seaborne force assigned to SACEUR had the merit of obviating any requirement for MRBMs on German soil, and the American proposal was clearly designed to provide an alternative to any German national nuclear weapons program. Yet "these arguments would be difficult to deploy in public", and any arrangement under which West German officers might appear to control nuclear weapons or warheads was bound to arouse public concern in Britain as well as some Continental countries. The question thus arose of whether the American goal of reassuring the allies that American and European defence were firmly connected required transferring physical control of the weapons themselves. The progressive nuclearization of NATO forces would inevitably intensify the debate over the control of nuclear weapons. Yet for at least a few years, most NATO states were likely to remain content with existing control arrangements because of the destabilizing effects of apparent proliferation and "the great difficulty of inventing any other system of NATO political control which would preserve the 'credibility' of the deterrent." Secretary General Spaak was widely regarded as one of those aware of this difficulty.

Shuckburgh concluded that, at least in regard to the interim force of five American Polaris submarines, "it would be wise to stick to the principle that the warheads remain technically in US custody and cannot be released without Presidential authority (sic) and that the use of the missiles is governed by the same rules as apply to other nuclear weapons already in the hands of NATO forces. This would enable the awkward question of control to be left on one side at least until the second stage arises, in which contributions from other NATO countries are involved." If immediate changes to present control arrangements were deemed necessary, then the authority to launch the MRBMs only in the event of all-out Soviet nuclear attack on Europe might be predelegated to SACEUR.

The need would remain for other measures to assure the Europeans that the MRBM force was a reliable component of NATO's dispositions for European defence. A consultative solution, Shuckburgh reflected, might work as well as physical transfer of the weapons themselves. This could take the form of an expanded Standing Group, including the Secretary General and representatives of two additional members, in rotation. The new committee would be privy to the targeting and deployment of the MRBM force, and able to reassure all NATO states that it could be counted on in the event of attack. A similar body might also supervise the disposition of any permanent multinational MRBM force.

“One day, perhaps”, Shuckburgh wrote, “we may reach a state of affairs where member nations will be willing to place their security more fully in the hands of an alliance by putting forces permanently and irrevocably under international command and control. But this is hard doctrine today.” Contributions to a permanent seaborne MRBM force would be more forthcoming if they were assigned to NATO under established procedures and remained under ultimate national control. Such a force would be compatible with de Gaulle’s insistence on national prerogatives, and Britain might contribute several submarines to it.⁷⁰

De Gaulle’s own nuclear program was focused on the development of a delivery system that could replace the Mirage IV bomber, which was of declining reliability as Soviet air defenses improved, and required in-flight refueling to reach targets in the USSR. Development of a missile from French resources alone would be expensive, so de Gaulle had reason to be receptive to British overtures for collaboration involving a modified Blue Streak.⁷¹ There were, however, reservations within Macmillan’s government about any bilateral cooperation with France. Heath reminded Aviation Minister Peter Thorneycroft, a proponent of collaboration with de Gaulle, of the political risks. “At present”, he wrote, “France is the odd man out in NATO”, and while Washington had no objections to a European consortium to produce a civil version of Blue Streak, it would be less supportive of an Anglo-French partnership. Moreover, in a bilateral undertaking the French were likely to press for the use of their testing facility at Colomb Bechar in Algeria rather than the base to which the British had access at Woomera, Australia. “The relative proximity of Colomb Bechar might also lead to unfortunate misapprehensions of Anglo-French collaboration on nuclear weapons”, he warned, adding “the French have already suggested...that ‘Woomera was a long way from Europe.’”⁷²

Thorneycroft replied that “if we are to carry Europe with us we have got to carry France” and that if it were possible to pull France into a research project in which Woomera would be used to develop Blue Streak, “it would straddle the Six and Seven and include the Commonwealth.”⁷³ He soon found that the French were interested largely in inertial guidance and reentry systems relevant to warhead delivery, although they were agreeable in principle to keeping any consortium formally non-military. The head of the French atomic energy authority, Francois de Rose, proposed using Blue Streak as the first stage of a European satellite launcher, with the French short-range rocket *Veronique* as the second.⁷⁴ When Thorneycroft met with Messmer in November, they agreed to convene a conference at

Strasbourg early in the new year, which would bring together potential participants in a civil rocket venture. Messmer was not prepared to commit himself to a civil project until the incoming American administration indicated whether it could countenance the sharing of information on the military variant of Blue Streak.⁷⁵ Macmillan agreed there should be no irrevocable decision until the Kennedy administration's stance was clear.⁷⁶

Officials in the Foreign Office were concerned that Ministers were giving serious thought to giving the French access to military information which, even if it was not of U.S. origin, could only be shared with American approval under the Anglo-American agreement concluded in 1957. If Britain provided such information to France, they believed, it would not remain secret for long.⁷⁷ Shuckburgh observed that France was obviously intent on acquiring its own national nuclear capability, and was "already beginning to act most mischievously" by assisting Israel's Dimona reactor project. "Eventually no doubt the only way of controlling this will be to admit them to whatever 'nuclear club' is in being", he went on, but this was hardly reason to help France now in the teeth of American opposition. "On the contrary", he concluded, "it would be highly improper for us, under cover of the international Blue Streak plan which is meant to be for purely civilian ends, to give any sort of military information to the French or anyone else."⁷⁸ Moreover, as Permanent Secretary Peter Ramsbotham pointed out, any French land-based missile was bound to be a first-strike weapon, which would run counter to the shift towards relatively invulnerable second-strike systems.⁷⁹

That de Gaulle's criticisms of NATO arrangements could be vague and contradictory, Macmillan suggested, was irrelevant. The point Britain had to emphasize was that the Six could not reasonably expect Britain to make a larger contribution to Europe's defence than any of them while excluded from the benefits of a shared market.⁸⁰ Somehow, the economic benefits of European unity and contributions to the common defense had to be brought into closer alignment. Though Anglo-French collaboration on Blue Streak was problematic, the overall approach which Macmillan would adopt was becoming clear. In the wake of the Bowie report, it was unclear if the existing policy of waiting for the NATO MRBM concept to collapse would suffice or if Britain would need to turn that concept to its own advantage as best it could.⁸¹ Macmillan's private secretary, Philip de Zulueta, suggested in October that the Prime Minister take advantage of American support for European integration by embedding any Anglo-French nuclear sharing agreement in a broader "Atlantic Community"

with NATO as its primary political grouping. This would include more effective political consultation within NATO, amounting to *de facto* tripartism, and the incorporation of some elements of national deterrents in a NATO entity, while Washington would support British accession to the EEC in order to end Western Europe's division between the EEC and EFTA. It was important, de Zulueta wrote, to make progress during the few years while de Gaulle and Adenauer, both profoundly attached to the prerogatives of the nation-state, remained in power, and Britain's deterrent retained its value as a bargaining chip.⁸² Bishop also emphasized that Britain's nuclear capability was a "wasting asset", so any arrangement based on nuclear sharing had to be nailed down while it was still valuable.⁸³

Both Norstad, in a November speech to NATO parliamentarians, and Herter, addressing the December NAC meeting, distinguished between short-term measures to modernize NATO capabilities and the longer-term project for a multilateral MRBM force. Norstad remarked that the military need to replace obsolescent systems had initiated the debate within NATO over the use of Polaris, and the Jupiters now coming into service were the first step toward meeting this need. The same need would be better met by mobile systems, and between 1963 and 1965, these could be deployed; some of them could be land-based, others sea-based. He added that the concept of a multilateral force had recently arisen, as a means of providing NATO with the increased authority necessary for its continued vitality. "If politically feasible", he said, "action to pass to the Alliance greater control over atomic weapons and to subject their use more directly to the collective will could be a great and dramatic new step." He then called for making mid-use systems, both land and sea-based, available to NATO as part of the ongoing modernization of tactical systems while member governments considered the pooling of nuclear weapons in some multilateral entity in the longer term.⁸⁴

Herter struck a similar note when outlining the multilateral concept to the NAC. He cited Norstad's speech and agreed on the utility of a NATO MRBM force as part of the ongoing modernization of NATO defenses in Europe. The American view, he went on, was that "creation of additional national nuclear weapons capabilities would have a marked divisive effect on the Alliance. It would mean duplication of effort and diversion of resources and tend to stimulate competition within the Alliance in the nuclear field." Therefore the administration held that "the multilateral concept offers the best means of providing a collective basis for the common defense in the MRBM field."

The MRBMs' range and striking power gave them a character unlike that of the tactical aircraft they would supplant; "while those MRBMs are required as modernization of the tactical strike capability, the line between 'tactical' and 'strategic' capabilities in the nuclear field is becoming blurred." SACEUR could coordinate targeting of any MRBM force with that of external strategic forces such as SAC and Bomber Command's V-bomber force. Herter added that Washington was prepared to make five Polaris submarines available for the defense of the NATO area by the end of 1963, and that a multilateral entity deserved consideration for the future, but without specifying exactly what this might be or how it would function. He did not rule out a land-based force, and differed from Norstad in also stressing the need to augment NATO conventional forces.⁸⁵ The MLF proposal, he concluded out, was for discussion in the NAC. It should not be treated as a firm, detailed offer requiring an early decision.⁸⁶ The agreed communiqué from the meeting stated only that Herter had raised the multilateral force as one option for further study and that the NAC had directed the Permanent Representatives from the member states to consider the concept in more detail.⁸⁷

In December Gates gave Watkinson an indication of how far Washington might follow the reasoning of the Bowie report. He pointed out that, in the interest of providing the European NATO states with a collective nuclear force, the U.S. might ultimately relinquish the dual-key system under which it retained custody of the warheads for nuclear weapons deployed in Europe. The eventual delegation of authority to a European SACEUR would entail changes to American law, perhaps even a constitutional amendment. Given the new emphasis in American policy on a NATO framework for additional MRBMs in Europe, if Skybolt failed to pan out it was not likely that Washington would offer Polaris as a replacement unless all British Polaris submarines were incorporated into a multilateral force. Yet if the Herter proposal did not elicit allied participation, Washington might then turn to bilateral provision of Polaris to Britain and perhaps other allies.⁸⁸ (Inter-service contacts on Polaris were premised on American bilateral provision. Carrington informed Watkinson that Burke had indicated his own support for supplying Polaris without any constraints on its use outside NATO.⁸⁹)

There was little support in either the government or the opposition for pooling Britain's nuclear forces in a European entity, although a few younger Europhile M.P.s had raised the possibility in response to Blue Streak's cancellation as a military venture.⁹⁰ The government was fortunate that Herter's proposal, as adumbrated in Paris, had described an MLF only in

vague terms and as a future prospect. As a result, Heath could inform the House that the multilateral concept was only a topic for discussion, not a matter for immediate decision. As for the five American Polaris submarines that would be in place by the end of 1963, they “would operate in accordance with existing procedures. Thus no change in the control arrangements for nuclear forces is involved.”⁹¹

As Trachtenberg has written, Herter’s proposal, offering only discussion of greater collective control of NATO nuclear assets, was a substantial retreat from Eisenhower’s willingness to foster an independent European nuclear capability, and reflected the State Department’s aversion to nuclear sharing. The President, he concludes, declined to exert leadership as his administration was nearing its end, even though this left him freer than ever to candidly prescribe remedies for NATO’s ills.⁹² Yet a lame-duck administration had good reason to distinguish the pressing business of modernizing NATO’s tactical capabilities from the long-run prospect of a multilateral entity. Not only did this accord with Eisenhower’s wish to leave the formulation of a definitive solution to the nuclear sharing problem to his successor, but there was little benefit in a premature discussion of an ambitious new program when Congress strongly resisted any diminution of existing American prerogatives regarding nuclear weaponry. The Chairman of the JCAE, Senator Clinton Anderson, regarded even existing dual-key arrangements as dangerous. A warhead attached to a weapon under the operational control of another state, he contended, was not in exclusive American custody if there were two firing keys, one of which was not in American hands.⁹³

Kohler told Herter that creation of any multilateral entity would require amending the McMahon Act and suggested consultations with representatives of the incoming administration and pressure on Congress to proceed with legislative changes in the new session. If possible, the results of these consultations should be presented to the NAC, since the European allies already understood the constraints imposed by the impending change of administration. He warned against diluting the logic of the Bowie report in any compromise that amounted to loose coordination of additional, and divisive, national deterrents.⁹⁴

There were, Kohler added, disagreements between the State and Defense departments over command and control arrangements for MRBMs. The State Department favoured predelegation to SACEUR of the authority to release nuclear weapons in the event of a Soviet nuclear attack on NATO Europe or in other contingencies, under either the existing

procedures that had been developed for national nuclear forces or new ones upon which the NAC would decide.⁹⁵ The Pentagon preferred to rely upon existing procedures or NAC directives addressing very precisely defined contingencies.⁹⁶ Kohler suggested that in the interim Herter make it clear to the European allies that if existing procedures for dealing with the initiation of nuclear hostilities, and the predelegation to SACEUR of authority to respond to a Soviet nuclear attack with nuclear weapons were to be supplemented, this could only be with NAC directives which carefully specified the applicable military circumstances. "Resort to existing procedures for a truly multilateral force", he wrote, "would be a contradiction in terms." The Europeans should also be informed that Washington reserved judgment on the desirability of any new procedures, had doubts as to the allies' willingness to adopt them, and could only consider them if they were consistent with American constitutional processes.⁹⁷

Gerard Smith endorsed Kohler's recommendation that Washington adhere to the position articulated in the Bowie report, but cautioned against giving in to the Pentagon's wish to make the five Polaris submarines available to NATO on a basis of national manning and ownership. It would be still less prudent, he argued, to discuss an extension of the multilateral principle to an MRBM force on the basis of existing NATO procedures, or in the context of some ill-defined future discussions within the NAC. "If we adopt such an uncertain posture regarding the need for multilateral features in the case of the permanent NATO force", he wrote, "we would, in effect, be inviting the Europeans to settle for creation of national MRBM forces." If the Europeans could not agree on the composition and governance of a multilateral force, and then concluded they preferred national forces, the U.S. could consider its response. But it should not invite this conclusion "by putting forward language which would, in effect, drop the key element of the Bowie proposal before it had received serious consideration."⁹⁸ Prior to the NAC meeting, the State Department did brief members of the Senate leadership such as Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson and the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, J. William Fulbright, as well as the leading members of the JCAE, including Anderson and Congressman Chester Holifield. It did not press the Congressional leaders to move ahead with changes to American law, and indicated that Herter was only presenting a broad concept, not a precise offer.⁹⁹

But if Herter's presentation to the NAC was opaque, the underlying logic of his proposal was clearly inimical to British interests. Not only was a NATO MRBM force of the sort he suggested regarded in Whitehall as militarily superfluous, but Britain had nothing to gain by

folding its national deterrent and privileged nuclear relationship with the United States into a European entity. West Germany, on the other hand, had an interest in undermining the Anglo-American nuclear duopoly within NATO, and Adenauer was increasingly influenced by de Gaulle's antipathy to American dominance of alliance councils. It was predictable enough that from late 1960, Bonn was the principal source of external pressure on Washington for some multilateral vehicle for nuclear sharing.¹⁰⁰

American pressure on the other members of the Six to ease British entry would not be forthcoming as long as de Gaulle downplayed the extent to which his conception of Europe entailed a reduction in American influence. A circular telegram from Herter suggested that they could be left to handle the General as they thought prudent, while Washington kept its distance. Even if de Gaulle were more inclined than other leaders to prefer intergovernmental to supranational cooperation, this might prove a tolerable difference in emphasis, and in any event the other leaders of the Six were unlikely to acquiesce in measures that reversed their progress toward integration so far.¹⁰¹

Macmillan's hopes of securing Polaris on a basis of national control and of using the prospect of nuclear collaboration to secure de Gaulle's acquiescence in British entry to the EEC would depend upon the incoming Kennedy administration's European policy. As the Prime Minister repaired to Chequers to bid farewell to the old year, it was far from clear what that policy would be.

Notes

1. David Dutton, "Anticipating Maastricht: The Conservative Party and Britain's First Application to Join the European Community", *Contemporary Record*, 7/3 (Autumn, 1993), pp. 522-540, esp. p. 522.
2. Wolfram Kaiser, Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans: Britain and European Integration, 1945-63 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p. 112. On the proliferation of data on comparative economic performance and the emergence of economic "decline" as a subject of public debate in Britain, see Jim Tomlinson, "Inventing Decline: The Falling Behind of the British Economy in the Post-War Years", *Economic History Review*, Vol. 99 (1996), pp. 117-152. At the same time, while the evaporation of the economic arguments against it enabled decolonization to proceed, the loss of imperial status fostered a generalized public concern about Britain's standing and influence in the world. On this, see id., "The Decline of the Empire and the Economic 'Decline' of Britain", *Twentieth Century British History*, 14/3 (2003), pp. 201-221.
3. Sabine Lee, "Staying in the Game? Coming into the Game? Macmillan and European Integration", pp. 123-147 of Richard Aldous and Sabine Lee, eds. Harold Macmillan and Britain's World Role (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), esp. p. 99.
4. John W. Young, "British Officials and European Integration, 1944-60", pp. 87-106 of Anne Deighton, ed., Building Europe: National Decision-Makers and European Institutions, 1948-63 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), esp. p. 99.
5. ESE Paper 11, May 25 1960, CAB 13/1852, TNA.
6. European Economic Association Committee, 8th Meeting, CAB 134/1819.
7. Cyril Buffet, "De Gaulle, the Bomb and Berlin: How to Use a Political Weapon", pp. 73-95 of John Gearson and Kori Schake, eds., The Berlin Wall Crisis: Perspectives on Cold War Alliances (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), esp. p. 82. The technology required to make France a nuclear weapons state was in place before de Gaulle's return to power. Without parliamentary oversight, and on the basis of opaque suggestions from outgoing Prime Minister Pierre Mendes-France, the CEA had developed the required infrastructure and manufactured weapons-grade plutonium. On this, see Gabrielle Hecht, The Radiance of France: Nuclear Power and National Identity after World War II (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 60-90.
8. Gregory Pedlow, "Three Hats for Berlin: General Lauris Norstad and the Second Berlin Crisis, 1958-62", pp. 175-198 of Gearson and Schake, eds., op cit, p. 179.
9. COS (60) 58, March 6 1960, DEFE 5/1100, cited in ibid, p. 82.
10. Martin Thomas, "The British Government and the End of French Algeria, 1958-62", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (June, 2002), pp. 172-198, esp. p. 187, and Susanna Schrafstetter and Stephen Twigge, Avoiding Armageddon: Europe, the United States, and the Struggle for Nuclear Nonproliferation, 1945-1970 (Westport, CT.: Praeger, 2004), pp. 99-100.
11. Note by Francois Perrin, July 27 1959, Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres, Documents Diplomatiques Francais, (DDF) 1959, Vol. II, (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1993), pp. 175-177.
12. Memorandum by Iain MacLeod, "French Nuclear Tests", October 30 1959, PREM 11 / 2701, TNA.
13. Thomas, op cit, p. 187; Schrafstetter and Twigge, op cit, pp. 100-101.
14. Record of Conference with General de Gaulle, Rambouillet, March 12-13 1960, PREM 11/2998; De Zulueta minute, "Points Discussed with General de Gaulle at Rambouillet on 12 and 13 March 1960", March 14 1960, PREM 11 / 3162, TNA.

15. Roberts to Foreign Office, March 31 1960, Tel. 113, DEFE 7/1369.
16. Record of Conversation with Minister Messmer, Paris, April 13 1960, FO 371/161231.
17. Memorandum of Conversation with Couve de Murville and Ambassador Alphand, April 15 1960, Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1958-1960, Vol. 7, Part 2 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1993), pp. 338-339.
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20. CC (60) 26, April 13 1960, CAB 128/34.
21. Buffet, op cit, p. 83.
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24. De Gaulle to Eisenhower and Macmillan, June 1 1960, FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. 7, Part 2, pp. 384-386.
25. Schrafstetter and Twigge, op cit, pp. 101-102.
26. State Department to Paris, June 15 1960, FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. 7, Part 2, pp. 597-598.
27. Roberts to Foreign Office, June 23 1960, Tel. 204 Saving, PREM 11/3713, TNA.
28. Foreign Office to Washington, June 23 1960, Tel. 2802, idem.
29. Handwritten comment by Macmillan on de Zulueta to Macmillan, June 24 1960, idem.
30. Frederick Nolting to State Department, July 5 1960, FRUS, 1958-1960, Vol. 7, Part 2, p. 599.
31. CP (60) 107, July 13 1960, CAB 129/102, TNA.
32. CC (60) 41, July 13 1960, CAB 128/34.
33. "The United Kingdom and the European Economic Committee", July 8 1960, FO 371/150362.
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39. Timothy Bligh minute of Macmillan meeting with Zuckerman and Bishop, 10:30 a.m., July 5 1960, idem.
40. Bishop draft of Prime Minister's note for the Cabinet, July 20 1960, initialed by Bligh, idem.
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62. Eisenhower meeting with State and Defense Department officials, October 3 1960, *ibid*, p. 651.
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77. H.C. Hainworth to Sir Patrick Reilly, December 22 1960; Reilly minute, December 22 1960, both FO 371/157328.

78. Shuckburgh comment on Reilly minute, December 22 1960, *ibid*. In 1960, France stopped government assistance to the Dimona project, declaring that the production of weapons-grade plutonium at the facility was contrary to French policy. Private firms with existing contracts were allowed to fulfill their obligations. See Cohen, *op cit*, pp. 73-75.

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89. Carrington to Watkinson, December 14 1960, ADM 205/163.

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96. Tab C, “NATO MRBM Force”, *ibid*.

97. See note 83, above.

98. Smith memo to Herter, "Nuclear Weapons for NATO", November 10 1960, *ibid.*

99. Kohler to Rusk, "NATO MRBM Force Concept", January 12 1961, *ibid.*

100. Bluth, *op cit*, pp. 70-74.

101. Circular telegram by Herter, October 20 1960, FR 1958-1960, Vol. 7, Part 1, pp. 298-300.

Chapter Five: Grand Designs

Ruminating at Chequers on Britain's place in the world as the year closed, Macmillan concluded that "exclusion from the strongest economic group in the civilised world must injure us", and that Britain had to make a vigorous effort to reach a satisfactory arrangement with the EEC while de Gaulle was in power. Although the general would not accept any agreement that infringed on the fundamentals of national sovereignty, his successors might be more tolerant of the supranational structures Britain would find hard to swallow. Moreover, expansion of Britain's economy without inflation depended on rising exports and hence growing international trade. It was not yet clear what stance the Kennedy administration would adopt in trade matters, but Macmillan saw a danger that it would move in a protectionist direction to finance its domestic programs.¹

While Macmillan was aware of the arguments for entry to secure European export markets and encourage the modernization of British industry,² he observed that Europe's division into two trading blocs should be viewed primarily as a political problem rather than an economic one, with the solution entailing overtures to de Gaulle, Adenauer, and probably Kennedy. The French and German leaders had achieved an impressive rapprochement, but Adenauer had doubts about de Gaulle's reliability within NATO, and de Gaulle was wary of resurgent German economic might. "Under the influence of a growing fear of Germany's wealth and strength", Macmillan wrote, "the French might be persuaded to accept an agreement between EEC and EFTA and a political structure which brought Britain in as a balance." A nuclear capability was equally important to de Gaulle, and while it would be difficult for Britain to conclude terms acceptable to Washington for sharing nuclear weaponry or information with France, "it is the one thing which will persuade de Gaulle to accept a European settlement." Such a settlement would strengthen Britain's bonds with the Commonwealth as well as America, and could be justified as bolstering the prosperity and political cohesion of the Western bloc. And de facto nuclear tripartism was defensible as relieving America of some of the burdens of Europe's defence, allowing it to redirect resources elsewhere.³

Aware of the Foreign Office's reservations about any sharing of military information with France, Macmillan reassured Home that he was not contemplating this at the moment. As for Thorneycroft's exchanges with the French regarding a civil project based on Blue Streak technology, they were limited to identifying French demands. Any effort to secure American

agreement to share sensitive information would require consideration of the wider issues.⁴ Caccia's soundings of those entering the new administration yielded no basis for thinking Kennedy would prove more forthcoming than Eisenhower. Caccia suggested raising the matter early on, but in the safer form of a general inquiry into administration thinking, rather than a request for approval of a British overture to de Gaulle.⁵ From Paris, Pierson Dixon also advised caution in approaching de Gaulle, and doubted that the general would be satisfied with tripartite consultations that stopped short of giving him his own nuclear force.⁶

A memorandum for Cabinet consideration, drafted by the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Norman Brook, for Macmillan, elaborated on the Prime Minister's thinking. This noted that while other EEC members did not share de Gaulle's interest in "some sort of political High Command for the Six", the EEC's consolidation would require political consultations over a wide range of issues, inevitably ending in the common formulation of policies. The longer Britain delayed a decision on closer links, the more isolated it would become, with Washington attaching more importance to the views of the Six. The EEC might form the nucleus of a "European 'third force'...which would endanger the stability of the Atlantic Alliance." Agreement on acceptable terms for closer British links to the EEC was more likely while de Gaulle and Adenauer were still in power, since their respective departures would leave France and the Federal Republic politically unsettled and less able to make decisions on British association. They might ultimately move in the direction of a more integrated Europe than Britain could accept, or turn in the opposite direction and break up the EEC. The latter would be equally unwelcome from the standpoint of Western unity, but Britain would be unable to prevent it from the outside.

The Kennedy administration's position would be crucial. The President "may lose patience with the division between the Six and the Seven and throw his weight into finding a solution in the interests of Western unity." Some of his advisers might favour a wider European grouping that included Britain, yet if Britain refrained from any initiative and left it to Washington to swing the Six into line, the EEC would be less inclined to seek agreement. At the same time, any accommodation between the Six and the Seven would amount to further discrimination against American trade. To get the administration's support, "we must persuade them to subordinate their economic to their political interests." This argued for an early British initiative, to be presented as an alternative to a deepening and debilitating Six-Seven split. It was equally important to Western cohesion to avoid the development of

additional national nuclear forces by NATO members. In order to prevent this, Macmillan's government had not objected to an MRBM force as a way of meeting SACEUR's needs, despite reservations about the likely cost and its lack of military utility as well as doubts that it would divert de Gaulle from a purely national program or satisfy his wish for a voice in nuclear matters. Yet some means of meeting French desires was necessary.⁷

At a subsequent meeting of Cabinet members at Chequers, Macmillan reiterated that a central question to consider was whether "an early settlement in the context of a 'confederate' Europe would be politically easier for us than later settlement with a 'federal' Europe."⁸ Home agreed that the political and economic revival of the Continental powers made a greater European voice in NATO councils desirable, but cautioned against any risky overtures to de Gaulle prior to Macmillan's first meeting with Kennedy, a meeting that was likely to set the tone for Anglo-American relations under the new administration. He suggested trying to meet de Gaulle's desires by reviving tripartite meetings of the three foreign ministers, augmented by more frequent gatherings of the heads of government. It should not, he suggested, be beyond the wit of alliance leaders to modify NATO's chain of command so that French officers occupied more key positions, and if Britain were to earmark the V-bomber force for a future multilateral force, this would both illustrate London's own commitment and provide an example for others.⁹ Lloyd had already demonstrated his own reluctance to go too far to accommodate de Gaulle, suggesting that if the general insisted on access to information dealing with the military variant of Blue Streak, Thorneycroft should use his request as an excuse for winding down talks on the civil project. This would also, Lloyd suggested, provide a domestically popular justification for Blue Streak's definitive abandonment.¹⁰

A week later de Gaulle reiterated to Sir Pierson Dixon, Jebb's successor in Paris, that the United States must not be allowed exclusive mastery of the latest aerospace technologies. As a result, he would not insist on military information about Blue Streak as a prerequisite of French participation in a European civil satellite consortium, provided that France manufactured the second stage of the launcher. Nor would he raise objections to the use of Woomera for now, although eventually he would expect to see European testing facilities constructed.¹¹

De Gaulle reiterated this offer when Macmillan visited him at Rambouillet.¹² For his part,

Macmillan observed that while he had maintained close ties with the Eisenhower administration, there would be a period of uncertainty while Kennedy set his course. If the new administration proved indifferent to allied opinion, "it was all the more important that Anglo-French relations should be very close." The Prime Minister added that his government favoured European arrangements that increased trade and made full use of the continent's productive capacity. As for tripartism, "the broad principle that the three countries should associate themselves because of their interests outside Europe seemed very sensible although he did not know if the new President would accept it. At the same time he deprecated the close relations between London and Washington as "largely the result of co-operation in the nuclear field which had sprung up for historical reasons."

De Gaulle responded that he saw no need for further integration in NATO, since this merely maintained American dominance of the alliance. While there were American, British, French, and German forces under NATO command, "the real security was provided by American nuclear weapons and not because of the NATO forces." In practice a state must either integrate its forces and lose control of its own defence, or refuse to follow the logic of integration and, like Britain, keep the bulk of its forces outside NATO. It was not integration that kept the Germans from leaving the alliance to pursue reunification, "but their political will." A NATO nuclear force would be an illusion insofar as the weapons would be under effective American control and "the Americans would use them or not as they wished."

Macmillan returned to the need for allied cooperation, suggesting "some arrangement by which the United States, the United Kingdom and France became trustees of nuclear weapons for the Free World." This could entail close consultations, as long as they were not formalized, and leave much of the French deterrent outside NATO. De Gaulle replied that Khrushchev would seek to undermine Western unity, in part by dangling the prospect of agreement over Berlin, although German reunification would be a great risk for the Soviets. He was also likely "to try to talk to Mr. Kennedy on the basis that the two great nuclear powers should keep their monopoly and co-exist." This would be dangerous given America's isolationist history and present burdens, and if the Americans were tempted by such offers, "they would not be interested in making an arrangement to improve Western co-operation."¹³

The next day he acknowledged that with America's ascendancy after 1945, it made sense for Britain to align itself with the Americans in order to gain influence over their decisions. Europe's recovery had changed things, even if the British had not completely abandoned the

notion that they should base their policy on strong ties to Washington. While neither France nor Britain was solely a Continental power, the maritime strand meant less to France. He urged Macmillan to take his time and move incrementally towards closer ties with Europe. France “had had to move faster because she was more afraid of Germany than was the United Kingdom.”¹⁴

In the wake of the Rambouillet meeting, de Zulueta concluded that de Gaulle had three possible lines of advance in his mind: agreement on some form of political arrangement between the EEC and EFTA, to be concluded on its own merits; agreement on the basis of nuclear equality for France, accepted by both London and Washington; or an agreement in which the British, either without American knowledge or in open defiance of American opposition, provided nuclear assistance. He thought the chances of the first course were small, and was reluctant to contemplate the third for now. The prospects of the second option would depend largely on the result of Macmillan’s exchanges with Kennedy. There was the danger that “de Gaulle may still think that we can argue tripartitism (sic) on the basis that he speaks for Europe and we for the Commonwealth. In fact this horse is unlikely to run and we have already hinted to him a new basis for tripartitism, namely possession of nuclear weapons. If this is to become a reality President de Gaulle must accept our presence and welcome our help inside Europe.”¹⁵

In Paris, Dixon was optimistic that Macmillan had made progress convincing de Gaulle of his wish to end the Six-Seven split, but noted his optimism was qualified now that Couve had spoken publicly of “co-existence amicable” between the two economic groupings and the need for the EEC to consolidate its own structures.¹⁶ The days ahead brought still more reason for caution, when a diplomatic counselor to de Gaulle told an official at the British Embassy that de Gaulle would go along with low-level technical talks among experts, but doubted they would lead anywhere.¹⁷ France’s Ambassador to Britain, Jean Chauvel, remarked that de Gaulle favoured continuous consultations between British officials and the EEC precisely because “he did not think this was a matter which could be the subject of quick decisions.”¹⁸

Macmillan was increasingly convinced that delay was harmful. He reflected that while the EEC’s members might be more inclined to consider British entry in a year or two, once their own structures were set, those interests opposed to Britain’s membership would have become more entrenched. Entry was also more likely in the current climate of rapid European

economic growth, with new members less welcome in a period of stagnation. Moreover, an early British initiative could lead to agreement while de Gaulle and Adenauer were still in office, and command the Kennedy administration's backing.¹⁹ While de Gaulle might reject British association with the Six as allowing London the best of both worlds, association would also be more palatable to Commonwealth interests and allow EFTA to continue in some form. Britain's Commonwealth preferences and France's similar arrangements with its overseas territories might provide ground for agreement on a basis of shared preferences and a reduced external tariff or their extension on a Most Favoured Nation basis.²⁰

Edward Heath responded that there was support in Cabinet for discussing a common external tariff for industrial goods, and proposed to sound out French officials during the WEU ministerial meeting towards the end of February. Discussions could follow if the French showed interest. If they were not, "and on present form it is difficult to visualize a settlement being reached on the terms in which we are thinking – it will be necessary to bring our colleagues face to face with the realities of the European situation." The government could then decide whether to drop its efforts to bridge the EEC-EFTA divide, or pursue closer European ties on a different basis. "I do not think it is possible to know whether this is necessary until after the Anglo-French talks", Heath wrote, "nor indeed until after you have met with President Kennedy." If the Cabinet were to accept ties beyond mere association, doubters would have to be convinced that all measures possible under the current policy had been explored and that the costs of the shift in policy were justified.²¹

Macmillan followed up on the Rambouillet meeting by reminding de Gaulle of the need to restore Europe's economic unity before the present split resulted in political divisions, adding that occasional political consultations were unlikely to suffice.²² He was also aware of the need to secure American support by placing Europe's economic arrangements in the wider context of Western political unity and by emphasizing the economically liberal nature of any EEC-EFTA links.²³ The new Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, indicated to Caccia that Washington, unlike London, felt no particular pressure to meet de Gaulle's wishes in order to end the Six-Seven split.²⁴ From Bonn, Christopher Steel cautioned against any effort to alarm the Americans into backing British initiatives by pointing to the dangers of a post-Adenauer Federal Republic that was not safely integrated into the western bloc. Indeed, since the economic liberal Ludwig Erhard was the Chancellor's presumptive successor, Adenauer's exit would increase the odds of successful negotiations. Moreover, "the Americans regard the

Germans as being a pretty fine American achievement and would be liable to resent suggestions that they would go wrong at the first opportunity.” Britain, Steel suggested, would be on stronger ground in “emphasizing to the Americans that the Germans very much want an arrangement on the lines we advocate.”²⁵

While inconclusive discussions between French and British officials on a civil Blue Streak continued, the British did not inform the French that they were not committed to furnish military information under the project and that the Americans knew of France’s desire for it. Rather than let the secondary matter of Blue Streak lead to premature discussions with the Americans about the broader question of how to meet French nuclear aspirations, the Foreign Office proposed to keep talking to France while reassuring the Americans that “we are not committed to provide the information and...shall not hesitate finally to refuse it if such a refusal appears necessary.” This would be preferable to Britain seeming to call for changing the agreed policy of not assisting the French nuclear program.²⁶ In Washington, Caccia warned that “even if the military information involved in Blue Streak were relatively insignificant...the Americans would take the view that an important point of principle is involved.” Therefore, “we ought to make up our minds on what to do about France in general before we decide about Blue Streak in particular.”²⁷ The British line in Washington, for the moment at least, was that Britain had not undertaken to share dodgy information with France, that the proposed French second-stage rocket for the Blue Streak project was based on one that France would manufacture separately for military use in any event, and that the former would not subsidize the latter. If the French pressed for information on reentry and inertial guidance systems, Britain would consult with the Americans on a response.²⁸

A Foreign Office memorandum circulated in both Washington and Bonn contended that while Britain had not joined the EEC, it had greeted its creation as furthering Western unity. Ministers had made clear that “it is no part of British policy to undermine the EEC or to prevent the Six from attaining the close economic integration provided for in the Treaty of Rome.” Yet there were dangers that the EEC’s evolution, if “unaccompanied by wider arrangements designed to preserve the economic unity of Western Europe as a whole, might have serious consequences in the political, as well as the economic field.” Britain had proposed the industrial FTA and then EFTA in order to avert such dangers. Informal discussions indicated that EEC members were willing to consider a wider arrangement, but

“formal negotiations cannot be undertaken with any hope of success unless all the governments concerned are convinced of the political need to bring the existing economic division of Western Europe to an end.” Above all, substantial progress was unlikely unless “President de Gaulle and the French Government can be persuaded that a wider arrangement is not only in the wider political interests of the Free World, but can also be achieved without damage to the essential interests of France and the integrity of the European Economic Community.” By the same token, Britain would have to contemplate the impact of any arrangement on its Commonwealth links, but was interested in discussing tariff harmonization.²⁹

German officials had pointed to de Gaulle’s success in encouraging Adenauer’s doubts about the genuineness of British interest in forging stronger bonds with the Continent, and suggested that Macmillan make his interest explicit and unambiguous.³⁰ When Adenauer and his Foreign Minister, Heinrich von Brentano, visited London, Macmillan emphasized that “a solution of the present economic split in Europe would do much to relieve the current malaise” in NATO. Adenauer replied that he had always supported British cooperation with the Continental allies, while Brentano added that the EEC had political as well as economic aims, and had proven its worth by improving Franco-German relations. EFTA’s formation had complicated the task of linking the UK with the EEC, since Britain had incurred obligations to its EFTA partners. Some of them were neutrals, constraining possibilities of political cooperation. The same difficulty, Brentano concluded, did not exist in the WEU, which could be strengthened as a venue for Anglo-Continental consultation. Adenauer observed that if NATO’s nuclear dispositions were not modified in response to American vulnerability, some European state was bound to develop its own nuclear weapons. France had started down this path, and others would follow. “SACEUR must have authority”, he claimed, “not in his capacity as a United States General – to use the weapons.” Macmillan responded that “the important thing about the deterrent was its credibility. Polaris being a second strike weapon was an important advance here.”³¹

Addressing the WEU Council a few days later, Heath described the WEU as a fitting vehicle for political consultations while Britain pursued a new economic relationship with the EEC. He said the division into two economic groupings prevented the maximum expansion of trade and production, and Britain was willing to consider agreement on a harmonized tariff covering industrial goods if its Commonwealth and agricultural interests

could be protected.³² The Foreign Office undertook to present this as “a fundamental change of principle in Her Majesty’s Government’s position. They have never before envisaged adopting a common tariff over a sector of the economy.”³³ Caccia reported that Heath’s speech had been widely discussed in Washington. State Department officials such as Under-Secretary for Economic Affairs George Ball had expressed interest, although there were concerns that Britain’s objective might prove to be a reprise of the FTA concept,³⁴ which was hardly in accord with the new administration’s policies and priorities for Europe.

Where Eisenhower’s military experience led him to organize a relatively hierarchical administration, Kennedy preferred a looser structure, in one analysis rather like an academic faculty.³⁵ The influence of the State Department bureaucracy, which Kennedy regarded as a bastion of cautious thinking, was reduced through the appointment of a weak Secretary, Dean Rusk. The key advisers were those with whom the President felt a personal affinity, such as National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy and his Deputy, Walt Rostow. The NSC rarely met as a full body, with policy often set through Kennedy’s informal interaction with staff members, some of them comparatively junior. The NSC shed most of its purely administrative functions, and became more of a policy-making body. It acquired more control over the paper flow, with important telegrams to the major embassies and the texts of Kennedy’s own speeches on foreign policy topics passing through its machinery. This process allowed small groups of like-minded officials in the NSC and elsewhere to exert more influence than under a more formal decisionmaking process.³⁶ There were advantages, with unorthodox ideas getting a hearing, but costs insofar as definitive decisions were rarely taken and recorded. There was also a tendency for policies to be pushed ahead by their most fervent proponents, and later qualified by the President himself.³⁷ Arguably, Kennedy’s lack of firm philosophical underpinnings made decisionmaking hard for him, since he depended mainly on technical arguments that rarely led unambiguously in one direction.³⁸ Yet this also reinforced his pragmatist’s preference for preserving his freedom of action by avoiding irreversible commitments.³⁹

Kennedy saw expanded international trade as desirable in both economic and geopolitical terms, with a liberal trade regime preventing the West from splintering into rival autarchic blocs which the Soviet Union might play off against one another. Kennedy envisioned the expansion of a stable and prosperous global trading system from a core of North America and Western Europe to integrate the newly industrializing economies of former colonial

possessions, which might comprise the Cold War's decisive theatre. He also sought secure access to growing European markets for America's capital-intensive export sectors, in order to boost the nation's trade surplus. Increased American exports and a more equitable distribution of defense burdens in NATO, he thought, were necessary to deal with the rising balance of payments deficit and stimulate the American economy's flagging rate of growth.⁴⁰

Rusk had no profound interest in questions of trade or European integration, so administration policy in these areas was largely shaped by Under-Secretary Ball, a one-time associate of Jean Monnet and fervent believer in European economic integration as engendering political cooperation. Ball had been disappointed by the EDC's failure, and remained hopeful that cooperation could be extended to the defence sphere.⁴¹ He differed on a number of issues with Dean Acheson, Secretary of State in the Truman administration and now a Democratic eminence grise on foreign policy. Yet they were old friends, and Acheson too had been troubled by the EDC fiasco, brooding ever since on Europe's seeming inability to achieve further political unity.⁴² The former Secretary acceded to Kennedy's request that he study both NATO's future and the Berlin problem, ensuring that his thinking would weigh heavily in the making of the new administration's European policies.⁴³

Prior to Kennedy's inauguration, Ball had served as chairman of a task force advising him on the balance of payments problem, which noted that American deficits were inevitably reflected in surpluses by others, West Germany in particular. Ball suggested that these states had a responsibility to alleviate the imbalance, given their stake in an open trading system. This could be accomplished through increased internal consumption and investment, and their assumption of a greater share of the burdens of European defence and aid to the less developed countries. In light of the need to sustain NATO's morale, he recommended reductions in American defence expenditures only where they did decrease military effectiveness, but flowed from more efficient allocation of resources, changes in weapons technology that created savings, or higher spending by the allies.⁴⁴

Urged by the State Department to reassure the European allies that American military strength on the Continent would not fall,⁴⁵ Kennedy sent an early message to the NAC, stating that America, with its immense resources, would continue to shoulder many of the costs of the common defence, but expressing confidence that "the nations of Western Europe will wish to commit an equitable portion of their own growing resources." He also lauded the movement towards greater European integration as "a powerful and unifying force which can

multiply free Europe's strength and prestige."⁴⁶ Before Rusk took office, Kohler had informed him that the West German response to the Herter proposal had been enthusiastic, reflecting Adenauer's interest in nuclear sharing to avert an eventual German national deterrent. Britain, Kohler had added, was wary of German participation and saw multilateral ownership and manning of any force as reducing the chances of British or French involvement.⁴⁷ Brentano staked out the West German position in a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations which contended that "it is far from rational that the armed forces at the disposal of NATO are not all under one supreme commander invested with clear-cut authority" and called for serious consideration of a NATO nuclear force.⁴⁸ Yet Acheson soon produced a report for Kennedy that essentially ended consideration of an MRBM force *a la* Norstad.⁴⁹

Acheson recommended more attention to contingencies short of all-out nuclear aggression, and proposed stronger NATO conventional forces, capable of enforcing a halt on Soviet attacking forces so as to allow consideration of the risks in continued hostilities. This could, he suggested, be done through reinterpretation of current NATO doctrine, rather than its formal revision. To allay allied uncertainties, Kennedy should express his willingness to order nuclear retaliation in the event of either direct nuclear attack on NATO forces or a conventional assault on the verge of success. It was desirable for America to commit five Polaris submarines to NATO for the duration of the alliance, along with the commitment of additional seaborne missiles as they became available. Deployment and targeting would be agreed among NATO commands and the American military, with the participation of the Standing Group to ensure that targets of particular concern to the Europeans were covered. The buildup of NATO conventional forces was projected to last from 1962 to 1966. If, after its completion, the Europeans wanted to expand the seaborne force, that could be considered, along with a multilateral European contribution. In any such discussions, Washington should rule out European national ownership or control of MRBM forces, any weakening of the central control of nuclear weapons, or diversion of European resources from conventional rearmament.

Nor should America aid European production of MRBMs or procurement for national forces, even were these assigned to SACEUR. National production or procurement would bring national capabilities within easier reach of aspiring nuclear powers, by lowering the barriers of cost and technical difficulty in the manufacture of delivery systems. Commitment

to SACEUR, even with physical locks, was not a foolproof safeguard against eventual diversion. Not only would new national forces impede central control and increase the odds of war by accident or miscalculation (especially if localized combat was already under way), but they would be politically dangerous. “If such a proliferation of national nuclear capabilities extended to Germany”, Acheson wrote, “it would strain NATO cohesion – possibly to the breaking point.”⁵⁰

Acheson saw other national nuclear forces as problematic, if less so. “Over the long run”, he suggested, “it would be desirable if the British decided to phase out of the nuclear deterrent business.” If Skybolt were not needed to meet American requirements, its development should not be continued for British purposes; nor should America take other steps that would prolong the life of the V-bomber force. It should not help de Gaulle develop a French deterrent either; “if we help him –directly or indirectly – he will go forward successfully and the Germans will follow suit, perhaps by joining in his effort.” Instead, NATO should develop consultative bodies to meet allied desires for a voice in nuclear decisions. If Washington were to allow de Gaulle “at least some of the voice he is seeking in matters nuclear and treat the British no better in respect of future strategic delivery vehicles, he may well pursue his program on a more nominal scale.” He would have achieved one of his major goals, French involvement in nuclear decisions, and might then be willing to relinquish France’s national effort, leaving its formal abandonment to a successor.⁵¹

He praised European integration as an instrument of Franco-German reconciliation and suggested encouraging Britain to enter the EEC rather than diverting it through false hopes of a special Anglo-American intimacy. American cooperation with a steadily uniting Europe would help convince Britons that their traditional detachment from the Continent was not a promising power base, while the Six should be urged to let Britain enter on terms which it could accept. The United States would be able to cooperate more closely with a unified Europe than with a number of weaker powers, and the pursuit of greater European unity was desirable as a counter to Gaullist self-assertion and to impart a sense of momentum to the West.

More consultation within NATO was desirable, but, Acheson warned, “genuine consultation may well be more painful and more abrasive – both for our allies and for us – than the polite arm’s length statements of intention of generalities (sic) which sometimes pass for consultation.” Yet it was “the only kind of consultation that will be consistent with

our underlying purpose: that of making the Atlantic Community into an effective instrument for common action.”⁵²

Acheson subsequently wrote to Kennedy that one of the major problems in NATO which his report had not addressed was the lack of effective central direction. SACEUR was now the leading individual in alliance structures, a function less of the merits of successive occupants than of SACEUR's role as CINCEUR and his control of the targeting and employment of American nuclear systems. SACEUR overshadowed the American representative to the NAC, while the Standing Group's location in Washington marginalized it from planning in SHAPE. SACEUR's primacy had been defensible in NATO's early days, when the European members had few forces at their disposal and a Soviet ground attack was the principal military threat. National military capabilities had since expanded, but each member state's defence ministry determined its military programs and priorities. It was necessary to assert central political direction of the alliance. While previous administrations had resisted British suggestions to turn NATO's staff into something akin to an international defence ministry, it might make sense to change tack.

Asserting American political leadership of NATO would require further change, and Acheson thought it essential that an eminent American assume a new post, with authority over US forces in Europe and standing in the chain of command after the President and Secretary of Defense. Like SACEUR / CINCEUR, he would wear “two hats” and serve as a NATO minister of defence, responsible to the NAC. The new post would replace the Standing Group and Military Committee, and have SACEUR's prerogatives of direct access to national defense ministers and chiefs of staff. The position of SACEUR would then be downgraded to the point where it need not be occupied by an American general. “One suggestion that deserves consideration”, Acheson wrote, “would be to rotate the job, beginning with a French SACEUR.” The prestige and significance of the job “would remain considerable enough to increase French grandeur”, and a French appointee would provide “a safer way to do this than to give the French missiles or other essentials of a nuclear strike force.” De Gaulle, he claimed, sought a national deterrent as a bargaining chip to obtain a bigger French say in nuclear and other NATO matters, and “a French SACEUR would do this more directly.”⁵³

Rostow, for one, was as yet unpersuaded by Acheson's contention that France would probably follow suit were the British to fold their deterrent into a NATO force. “This

relationship seems to me crucial to the future of the deterrent”, he wrote, “and deserves more coherent and extended argument.” He also linked Acheson’s stress on the virtues of consultation to the German problem. The Western position in four-power negotiations had been defensive, he observed, because “we have been unable to hold up a constructive vision of where we would like all of Europe to fetch up except a vision which no one believes: namely, the vision of a Germany united by free elections but free to remain fully in NATO.” He was unsure if a practical alternative existed, but was concerned that “we go into every negotiation with the latent fear that the Russians might conceivably offer free elections in Eastern (sic) Germany against some form of neutralization. That offer, if seriously and persuasively pursued, is one against which no German government could stand.” More consultation in NATO might provide a forum for discussing future negotiations without disrupting the alliance in the short run. “To place the matter in NATO is already half the battle”, Rostow concluded, “because behind the fears over such talk is the notion that Washington and Moscow might make a deal over Europe’s body.”⁵⁴

On April 21 Kennedy approved a policy directive embodying the recommendations in the Acheson report. It reiterated American support for European integration, increased consultation in NATO, and expanded conventional capabilities for European defence. It rejected assistance to a French national nuclear program in favour of consultative arrangements for French participation in nuclear decisionmaking. Any future multilateral force would have to include an American veto over its use, but veto power by others was acceptable as well. In addition to entering the EEC, Britain should be encouraged to wind down its deterrent and commit its strategic forces to NATO. Since it was unlikely to do so without a similar commitment of some US forces, Washington should consider committing the bombers it maintained in Britain.⁵⁵

Britain’s position towards the EEC, as Heath had outlined it at the WEU, was regarded in the State Department as insufficiently forthcoming to rally those members who would welcome British accession as a counter to possible Franco-German domination and the Community’s evolution in a Gaullist direction.⁵⁶ Prior to Macmillan’s meeting with Kennedy in April, Ball informed Caccia that it was essential that Britain become a full member within five years, rather than seek a mere commercial arrangement between the EEC and EFTA.⁵⁷

The Foreign Office / Ministry of Defence brief for the meeting suggested that accepting some form of collective nuclear force within NATO might be the only way to overcome

American opposition to further proliferation through an arrangement with France.⁵⁸

Thorneycroft warned that France's own nuclear progress would soon remove the value of British help as a bargaining chip. British reluctance to share nuclear information, he concluded, was already embittering Anglo-French relations, and Britain had to offer help while an offer remained profitable.⁵⁹ David Ormsby-Gore, who led the British delegation at the disarmament talks in Geneva, noted that while merging the British deterrent into a NATO force was unacceptable to the government, de Gaulle would not abandon the pursuit of a French national force without such a face-saving option, if indeed he could be persuaded to do so at all. France, he suggested, could sabotage any test ban agreement by goading the Soviets not to sign one that was not comprehensive, something the Americans would not accept.⁶⁰ De Zulueta wrote that Macmillan's goal had to be that of convincing Kennedy that de Gaulle was prepared to let Britain into the EEC but only once it had unambiguously opted for European over purely Atlantic ties. His task with de Gaulle would then be to get him to agree to a package deal rather than try in vain to extract concessions from Britain one at a time.⁶¹ And when Rusk met with Home on April 4, he confirmed that Washington did not want to encourage a French deterrent, and hoped the European members could discuss ways of meeting their nuclear requirements in a NATO framework.⁶²

Kennedy invited Acheson to his meeting with Macmillan on April 5, and the former Secretary outlined his thinking on nuclear matters. NATO, he suggested, was already a de facto nuclear power, since American control of dual-key systems in Europe was largely theoretical. Since there was no way at present to ensure that allies with nuclear weapons on their soil would seek American agreement before firing them, "the problem of command was a very real one." SACEUR was in command militarily, but the problem was at root a political one. "The Allies", Acheson continued, "must make up their minds whether they wanted to shoot the weapons off, and, if so, in what circumstances." It was up to Washington to present the problem to NATO's European members and get them to face up to it. Nuclear weapons were, of course, useless without a delivery system, and the French would soon find developing one prohibitively expensive. In fact, "there was only one way in which they could develop a real nuclear capacity, and that was with German help. The dilemma was that, if we helped the French, the Germans would insist on equal treatment. If we did not, and the French persisted, they could only succeed by calling in the Germans", which would end any chance of preventing further proliferation through agreed limits on testing. It was wiser to

meet French desires by assigning the V-bomber force, American bombers based in Britain, and perhaps some MRBMs to NATO. If de Gaulle were asked to work out the command arrangements, “it would give him control, at least to some degree, of a force far more powerful than anything he could hope to have on his own.”

Kennedy wondered if de Gaulle “would or would not be satisfied if the nuclear capability over which he had some control was confined only to Western Europe”, unlike those of Britain and the US. Macmillan replied that “de Gaulle might be ready to contribute to a common pool if he had something purely French to put into it. It was a prestige issue. The General was not thinking of a European war.” Kennedy suggested it might help if a French officer were made SACEUR.⁶³

The next day Macmillan suggested that when Kennedy met with de Gaulle during his summer tour of Europe, he present a “package deal” of tripartism and nuclear cooperation in exchange for cooperation with British entry to the EEC. He cautioned that “it was most important not to give the French anything unless they took the whole; for they would pocket any advantage and say no more about it.” Kennedy “did not think tripartitism (sic) would present great difficulties.” Having read about Eisenhower’s offer to de Gaulle at Rambouillet, he had concluded that “de Gaulle was more anxious for the appearance than the reality” since “when it came to practical discussion the French were very uncreative.” He reiterated the familiar proposal for a French SACEUR. Macmillan noted that any NATO nuclear force was unlikely to satisfy de Gaulle if it did not allow him some independent capability. But “if we could somehow or other get him an independent nuclear force, however small, we should be able to persuade him to put it back into trusteeship, as we could probably do with the British, and as perhaps the Americans might also do for some part of their forces.” Kennedy noted this was “not impossible, although difficult for the Americans.” Macmillan then suggested that Kennedy study “whether he had the power, as President, to allow the British to give either warheads or nuclear information to the French.” He agreed, and asked Macmillan to put his thoughts on paper.⁶⁴

Macmillan followed the meeting with an address at MIT, in which he argued “the health of our whole NATO alliance depends on finding a way of building a partnership in the nuclear as well as in the conventional field.” Economically, he continued, Britain was at the centre of two world trading groups, the Commonwealth and EFTA, with the trend towards regional groupings now irreversible. “For us in Europe”, he said, “the urgent need is bringing

together the Six and the Seven” to help form “the largest area of free trade that we can.”⁶⁵ On returning home, he informed his Cabinet that reconsideration of Britain’s role in Europe was unavoidable, with the alternative a Gaullist Europe that hampered Western unity and threatened Britain’s position as the West’s second power.⁶⁶ He also informed Commonwealth leaders that the Kennedy administration understood the dangers should a politically cohesive EEC, with de Gaulle its dominant figure, emerge, and realized “it would be better if the United Kingdom were to join the political associations (sic) of the Six, where they would provide an element of stability.” While this would entail economic sacrifices by Britain and its Commonwealth partners, “they would have to be weighed against the political advantage of avoiding a further division of Europe.”⁶⁷

Key Cabinet members agreed with Macmillan’s new emphasis on geopolitical considerations. Watkinson wrote that any British association with the Six had to be set in a wider frame, and speculated that the major Western powers might form “some kind of loose confederation” in which Kennedy, Macmillan, and de Gaulle shared leadership.⁶⁸ David Eccles believed that if closer ties with Europe were defended in economic terms, the enthusiasts “would be no match for the ghosts of Louis XIV and Napoleon, the Kaiser and Hitler.” As domestic politics, “joining the Six would only be tolerable if it were part of a grand design to make the free world strong enough to win the uncommitted nations to its side” and “the selfish argument would have to be played down.”⁶⁹ “This”, Macmillan responded, “is the theme of my Boston speech.”⁷⁰

He then moved to further impress his ideas on Kennedy in advance of the President’s meeting with de Gaulle. He repeated his contention that Western political cohesion required overcoming Europe’s economic division, the importance of the objective making it worthwhile to go very far to meet de Gaulle’s wishes. He observed that while Britain looked more favourably on the EEC after de Gaulle’s accession to power, it could not sign the Treaty of Rome as it stood, since this would betray EFTA’s other members and the Commonwealth. “What we want from the French”, he wrote, “is an assurance that they would welcome us in the Six, that they understand that we should need to make some special arrangements...and that they are ready to enter the ensuing negotiations in good faith.” Britain could ill afford to alienate its EFTA and Commonwealth partners by making overtures that bore no fruit. Kennedy need not apply pressure to de Gaulle, only convey the indications of British interest in his talks with Macmillan.⁷¹ Some satisfactory arrangement

for EFTA would be required, since members such as Norway and Denmark would probably wish to join any new grouping.⁷²

As for the French nuclear program, de Gaulle might claim he was doing no more than the British when they developed atomic and then thermonuclear weapons, but the situation was different. Under conditions of nuclear sufficiency, “the nuclear power of the West must increasingly be regarded as held in trust on behalf of the free world as a whole.” Therefore, France should try “not so much to create an independent national capacity, but rather to make a contribution as a Great Power to the Western deterrent as a whole. This is increasingly the British view of their nuclear capacity.” The three Western nuclear powers might agree to consult with one another before employing nuclear weapons, after which America and Britain could offer aid to the French effort.⁷³ While overt tripartism dealing exclusively with NATO matters would offend other members, the same objection would not apply to “tripartite consultation on matters which are of common interest to the three countries and transcend the ambit of the North Atlantic Alliance”, such as activities outside NATO’s geographic area or pertaining to the strategic deterrent.⁷⁴

Yet within days of the Kennedy-Macmillan talks, it became clear how strongly some in the administration objected to a loose EEC-EFTA union. In the eyes of the State Department, the significance of the talks was that the US had clearly told the British it would support them if they chose to “take part in the dynamic process of European integration and fully accept political and institutional obligations of Rome Treaties.” The decision was Britain’s to make, but American opposition to a purely commercial arrangement between the Six and the Seven was unchanged, and Washington relied on the Six to resist such a deal. The American position should not be taken as endorsing Britain’s current stance or as pressure on the Six to reach agreement with either Britain or EFTA. It was “applicable only to a possible future position.”⁷⁵

C. Douglas Dillon, who had entered the new administration as Secretary of the Treasury, observed at an April 24 press conference that while a broader European arrangement with political content was desirable, “the type of thing that we particularly have always not wanted to see was an agreement between the Six and the Seven where they gave each other special considerations, special tariff arrangements, and they made no political arrangement with each other.” This would increase discrimination against American exports with no offsetting gains in Western political unity.⁷⁶

When Kennedy and Ball met with Adenauer and Brentano on April 13, the President said he hoped to see Britain, and perhaps other EFTA states, enter the EEC before the year was out. He gathered that the British were eager to join, but doubted all members of the Six would welcome them. He believed that “we should use our influence – the Federal Republic within the EEC and the United States on the outside – to induce the UK to associate with the EEC.” The Chancellor said he would welcome such a shift in the British position, while Brentano added that EFTA, as a purely commercial body, was a complication, but that after British entry some EFTA members might be accommodated through GATT measures. Ball emphasized the continuity of the administration’s policy with that of its predecessor, and what he saw as Britain’s shift away from a loose EEC-EFTA link. He concluded that he thought Britain could live with the terms of the Treaty of Rome, and that the main obstacles to agreement would be Commonwealth preferences, which could be addressed without great difficulty, and agriculture, where de Gaulle was unlikely to accept any special terms for Britain.⁷⁷

When Heath met with Swiss officials on April 22, he found them perturbed by press reports, based upon a briefing by Ball to American reporters, that Macmillan had moved dramatically away from any notion of an EEC-EFTA deal, at American urging. If such reports were unchallenged, EFTA’s other members would become demoralized and their bargaining position with the EEC weakened to the point where the latter could negotiate with them individually, offering more attractive terms to the more desirable aspirants. Britain could clarify things by indicating it would not act without consulting its EFTA partners. Heath replied that such publicity “had not made it any easier for the United Kingdom to move towards a solution” since “any step they now took might be represented as having been made under American pressure.” Yet the new administration had made its attitude to any settlement clear, “and it would be necessary to take this into account.”⁷⁸

On May 2 Ball and his assistant, Robert Schaetzel, met with Caccia and several subordinates to clarify the American position. Ball opened by observing that Washington shared the British view of Europe’s divisions as a political problem, with France and West Germany potentially turning the EEC into an inward-looking bloc. Britain tended to be “a disruptive force in the pattern of European integration so long as it remains outside the framework” but once inside the EEC could help steer it in directions congenial to the US.⁷⁹ He then handed over a memorandum which said that Washington had never seen the EEC

and EFTA in the same light, given the latter's lack of a political dimension, and that British accession to the EEC was a separate question from any commercial accommodation the Six might reach with some of the Seven. This could be undertaken through GATT or the OECD, minimizing the difficulties for states unwilling to accept the obligations of the Treaty of Rome. Washington was not prepared to consider substantial derogations to accommodate any EFTA members.⁸⁰

David Pitblado, Economic Minister at the British Embassy, objected that the distinction between British entry and a later Six-Seven arrangement meant "to put it crudely...if the UK were to stand honorably on its commitment to the Seven, the United States would not lend its support." Ball replied that if Britain and perhaps Norway and Denmark joined the EEC, a commercial arrangement for Sweden and Switzerland might be reached later. "If the negotiations were carried out in one package", he warned, "it would be on the basis of the lowest common denominator, which would badly weaken the final result." Caccia said "this formula was quite distinct from what the Prime Minister had understood" and was "aimed at the 'bustup' of EFTA." Schaetzel asserted the continuity with established American policy, and Caccia suggested the Americans had erroneously assumed "that the UK would 'rat on its partners.'" He added that Macmillan had consistently said British concerns over EFTA, agriculture, and Commonwealth preferences would have to be addressed, and Ball retorted that he had only said they had to be considered. When Caccia asked if Kennedy had seen and approved the memorandum, Ball said he had not, but that it reflected his thinking.⁸¹ He concluded that if Britain were reasonable in its terms, France would be reasonable in turn, and "would indeed be under pressure from the other countries of the Six to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion."⁸²

De Zulueta informed Macmillan that it looked "as if the Americans have gone back on what we thought to be their change of attitude and are still soft-peddalling (sic) the union between the Six and the Seven." On the most pessimistic reading, the distinction between British entry into the EEC and later arrangements for other EFTA members "really means that the US want us to disband the Seven and join the Six (although they are careful not to say that they are urging us to do this)", which would be a weak negotiating position, in addition to its moral infirmity. De Zulueta added that Britain could argue that the arrangements it sought for the Seven did not constitute substantial derogations from the Treaty of Rome. He suspected Ball's memo had been drafted without knowledge of

Macmillan's letter to Kennedy "and may have been due to pressure on him (or to French influence to which Mr. Ball is thought to be very susceptible)." While there was no purely economic answer to Ball's position, the claim that the Six were a force for political cohesion was outdated, since "it may help to bring the Six together, but it (a) divides Europe and (b) threatens to divide the whole of the free world." He concluded "this is the point which we must go on hammering with the Americans."⁸³

On May 17th, Heath told the House of Commons that the Six-Seven split had political consequences, but he departed from Macmillan's line in his emphasis on the economic costs. Over the past five years, he observed, British exports to the EEC countries had risen twice as fast as exports overall, and once the Six had a common tariff in place British exports would be less competitive in both European and world markets. Closer ties between the EEC and EFTA could avert this danger.⁸⁴ He described this speech to Ball as the "opening gun in [a] grand debate" and the start of a campaign to educate the Conservative Party in the need for stronger links with Europe, prior to the government's formal decision. The Labour Party was too divided to effectively oppose the government and unlikely to reject entry outright. He agreed with Ball that the Americans should not seem to push Britain towards entry. He indicated that Ball's memorandum had clarified American thinking, and suggested it was the other EFTA states who disliked any suggestion that Britain was prepared to join alone as weakening the bargaining power of the group as a whole. The tone of Heath's speech and the subsequent conversation convinced Ball that the government was moving towards full membership, provided the requirements of parliamentary and public opinion, and agricultural, Commonwealth, and EFTA interests could be met in satisfactory fashion.⁸⁵

Kennedy tried to encourage Macmillan in this direction, confirming that Ball's remarks and memorandum had represented administration thinking. He reiterated American interest in Europe's political cohesion, above all in confirming the Federal Republic's Western orientation, a goal for which it was prepared to accept the economic disadvantages (which he hoped would prove temporary) flowing from expansion of the EEC. Because a loose trade arrangement encompassing the EEC and EFTA would not offer the same benefits, "we have hoped that perhaps the problem of your relation to EFTA might be handled in stages", with British entry not dependent on arrangements for the rest of EFTA. "We cannot help thinking", he concluded, "that if you are once safely and strongly in the Common Market, you will be in a very good position to protect all of the interests which so legitimately give

you concern at present.” He was willing to raise these matters with de Gaulle, but wished to show no preference for any particular terms.⁸⁶ Macmillan responded that he too thought it would be counter-productive for the President to urge any particular solution on de Gaulle, but that he hoped he could impress upon the general “the political advantages of reaching an early solution and persuade him to take an active hand in working for this.”⁸⁷

American officials had already signaled a retreat from Kennedy’s initial interest in tripartism, in favour of wooing de Gaulle with more consultation in NATO. Rather than abandon Herter’s MRBM proposal outright, the new administration proposed to treat it as a low priority.⁸⁸ As Kennedy told the Italian Ambassador, Manlio Brosio, the administration was still assessing Eisenhower’s proposal to make NATO a fourth nuclear power, and he considered a Polaris MRBM force an improvement on land-based systems. The problem was “to find an acceptable plan and at the same time discourage separate nuclear capabilities such as French and German.” He could not see why the Polaris proposal would not meet their needs, since France would find an independent force expensive and it would confer “no more voice in the alliance than they at present have.”⁸⁹

Kennedy informed NATO’s Military Committee in April that while it was important, as Macmillan had said at MIT, to maintain an effective nuclear deterrent, the alliance also needed conventional forces strong enough to impose a pause for reflection on an aggressor before he initiated nuclear hostilities.⁹⁰ Later that month, Acheson met privately with the NAC, where he argued that, as Norstad had long claimed, NATO’s nuclear advantage of the 1950s was gone, prompting a return to the notion that the nuclear threshold must be raised and conventional defences in Europe improved. He knew of the allied desire for a voice in nuclear decisionmaking and emphasized that MRBMs would be assigned to NATO under NAC guidelines, and common sense suggested the Americans would launch them before they could be struck by an attacker. American and European defences were indissolubly connected, and it was ridiculous to believe the US would not become involved in any nuclear war in Europe.⁹¹

America’s Ambassador to NATO, Thomas Finletter, reiterated the same points, after the State Department informed him that the commitment of US Polaris submarines to NATO would cover targets of importance to the Europeans and demonstrate the indivisibility of American and European defence, while postponing the need to deal with the idea of a larger NATO MRBM force. The US, Finletter stated, was prepared to consider any allied

suggestions for such a force, and if the NAC managed to develop guidelines for the use of nuclear weapons assigned to NATO or procedures to ease political consultation, to agree to them. In the meantime, the President would order a nuclear response to any unmistakable nuclear attack on NATO forces or a non-nuclear attack that conventional forces could not repel.⁹²

In a speech to the Canadian Parliament, Kennedy himself reaffirmed the Herter offer of five Polaris submarines, and more as they became available. These would be assigned to NATO, “subject to any agreed NATO guidelines on their control and use, and responsive to the needs of all members but still credible in an emergency.” He said he looked forward to “the possibility of eventually establishing a NATO sea-based force, which would be truly multilateral in ownership and control, if this should be desired and found feasible by our allies, once NATO’s non-nuclear goals have been met.”⁹³ This kept alive the prospect of some form of MLF if the Europeans could agree on a formula and after building up their conventional forces, as well as providing a possible receptacle for Britain’s deterrent. Bundy thought it politically advantageous to eventually announce the commitment to NATO of all Polaris submarines in the NATO area, since “this would give us the leverage we will need to persuade the British to commit their strategic forces to NATO.”⁹⁴

Soon after Kennedy took office, the JCAE had fired a warning shot against further nuclear sharing, suggesting that the post-Sputnik MRBM offer been conceived in haste, with bilateral arrangements such as that with Britain deserving reassessment to determine if they undermined the goals of the McMahon Act. The JCAE contended that the Pentagon had provided information on “two-key” arrangements only when the Committee explicitly asked for it, but was obliged to actively consult with it on pending initiatives.⁹⁵ Even before Kennedy received Macmillan’s memorandum, Bundy had warned Caccia that after reflecting on what he could offer de Gaulle by way of tripartism, the President had concluded the JCAE would not allow much “unless de Gaulle would be ready himself to earmark any French potential to NATO.” A French SACEUR might be feasible, provided that de Gaulle could himself something akin to NATO’s current integrated command structure. The question was “would he acquiesce on any terms?” Bundy concluded that Kennedy had yet to find some proposal for tripartism that might prove acceptable to de Gaulle without creating serious problems with other allies.⁹⁶

Once Kennedy had read and digested Macmillan's memorandum, Bundy informed Caccia that the President now saw three obstacles to nuclear agreement with de Gaulle. Congress, the JCAE in particular, remained reluctant to go along, and would tend to see France as still less reliable given the attempted coup led by officers unhappy with de Gaulle's handling of the Algerian situation. In addition, the French had managed to conduct only low-yield nuclear tests so far, and it would take time and money for them to develop usable weapons and a delivery system. Indeed, "it was doubtful whether France would go through with this." Finally, it was unlikely that Washington could share nuclear information and technology with one ally while denying it to others. "So long as Adenauer remained this might not be an immediate problem", but German nuclear ambitions might have to be confronted at some point after his departure.⁹⁷

The President followed up with a letter to Macmillan, suggesting that de Gaulle's desire for a voice in nuclear matters could be met in other ways, by greater sharing of information on the characteristics and targeting of American nuclear weapons, increased consultation in NATO overall, and the assignment of both American nuclear forces in the NATO area and British strategic forces based in the UK to a NATO command.⁹⁸ Macmillan replied that de Gaulle was not likely to be cooperative in NATO and elsewhere if he did not receive some satisfaction on nuclear questions. Denying him all aid was of little use, because "there would still be the Nth country problem to deal with" since de Gaulle "would not go so far as to abandon his own nuclear programme." The sole alternative was to find a way to convince him to forgo total independence in nuclear affairs, and thus discourage others from following the French example of pursuing a national deterrent. This might be achieved "by giving him a formula about consultation which would satisfy his honour and in which he could join." As for the President's suggestion that British nuclear forces in the UK be committed to a NATO command, "this is a very big question which we must think further about so I trust you will not pursue this idea when you are developing your other proposals with the General."⁹⁹

Home informed Macmillan that, in the opinion of the Foreign Office, Britain would not be able to shift Washington from its past resistance to tripartism and Anglo-French nuclear cooperation unless Britain itself were willing to contribute to some multilateral nuclear entity. Assignment of national forces to a NATO pool, with each participant retaining the right to withdraw them for purely national use in the event of an emergency, would preserve Britain's freedom of action. It would also allow de Gaulle to take part without abandoning France's current program or entering upon any irreversible commitments impairing its

nuclear sovereignty.¹⁰⁰ Watkinson, on the other hand, repeated his plea for the early release of information on Blue Streak. If Britain were prepared to trust de Gaulle, he wrote, an arrangement on Blue Streak would be a major step towards overcoming the EEC-EFTA division and bolstering NATO's unity.¹⁰¹ Despite his preference for a bilateral deal with France, Macmillan noted that he had pressed Kennedy on the need to treat France as an equal in nuclear matters, but that if the Americans objected to Britain sharing information with France, the only way forward would be some form of multilateral pooling of nuclear weapons.¹⁰²

Prior to Kennedy's visit to de Gaulle, the President of France's National Assembly, Jacques Chaban-Delmas, relayed a "personal message" from the general. With Europe having recovered from the last war, this suggested, France was now the natural channel for coordinating Western policies on the Continent, much as America and Britain were the logical conduits for policy coordination in their respective areas of primacy. De Gaulle was thinking not of formalized tripartism that might offend others, but of "having Western policy coordinated by decisions taken beforehand at the level of the conception of policies and not belatedly at the level of their implementation." This could prevent the three powers falling out, as they had over Suez. Representatives of the three would reach consensus on policies, which "might be transmitted to the other nations through the natural channel of that member of the Big Three which has the most intimate associations with any particular geographic area", such as France's Ambassador in Bonn or America's in Tokyo, making it clear in each case that the three had agreed upon the position put forward. This concerting of policies would prevent Khrushchev from dividing the Western powers, "and could be done without alarming Adenauer, perhaps through meetings of foreign ministers held in conjunction with broader NATO meetings."¹⁰³

In the same month, Francois de Rose had met with Paul Nitze, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, and told him that France was within reach of a thermonuclear capability. The McMahon Act criterion of substantial progress had been met, and the other, that transfer of information and technology was in America's interest, was a political calculation rather than a technical one. The previous administration had indicated its decision by declining to share information and technology with France. De Gaulle would continue testing and remain outside any test ban treaty unless Washington were prepared to provide an independent nuclear capability. "If France is forced to develop its own nuclear

capability”, de Rose went on, “other European nations would undoubtedly follow suit” and “the USSR would be placed in a position of having to help Red China.” If, on the other hand, France received help for its nuclear program and signed a test ban agreement, “the USSR would more than likely refuse to give assistance to Red China which would in turn promote what we are all seeking – a further split in the Sino-Soviet bloc.” Nitze replied that the new administration supported the Herter proposal for Polaris submarines, and noted the Americans had been surprised by the lack of discussion in NAC. De Rose pointed out that most Europeans had expected Washington to take the lead in elaborating what was, after all, an American proposal. France was certainly willing to listen to American ideas, but many Europeans suspected that in the age of nuclear plenty the Americans no longer wanted nuclear weapons on the Continent.¹⁰⁴

The French Ambassador in Washington, Herve Alphand, informed Bundy and Nitze that de Gaulle sought the concerting of nuclear plans among the three major Western powers as well as the right to employ his nuclear force independently. If Kennedy were inclined to share nuclear information or technology, de Gaulle would be interested, but would not raise the matter himself. Bundy suggested changing NATO’s structure, with an American as its defence minister and a European general in the chain of command, might make the assignment of nuclear weapons to the alliance more attractive to de Gaulle. Claiming to speak only for himself, Alphand speculated that de Gaulle would be willing to put all French nuclear weapons under an agreed plan but would likely insist on a national right of withdrawal.¹⁰⁵

Bundy was interested enough to meet the next day with Nitze and Charles Bohlen, Rusk’s Special Assistant, for preliminary discussion of whether selling Pershing missiles to France would be consistent with the policy toward NATO that Kennedy had approved on April 21.¹⁰⁶ He suggested to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara that the key was whether the missiles would meet a military need that could not be met otherwise, providing justification for going ahead despite the administration’s position against aid to French MRBM programs. A recent commitment to sell Pershings to the FRG, minus warheads and under dual-key control, had set a helpful precedent.¹⁰⁷

Yet the thrust of American preparations for the meeting with de Gaulle was on establishing a personal rapport between the two leaders and reassuring the general that the

American deterrent remained credible. State Department planning assumed de Gaulle had to understand the new administration's firmness and believe that he was being taken into the President's confidence just as much as the British were, and that he had overestimated the postwar Anglo-American intimacy. Since his demands for tripartism "may be built on an overestimation of the UK's world power and position and on an assumption that France will be able to impose its policies for the indefinite future on Germany, it would be wise to point out our belief that the UK's future is in Europe – and we have so indicated to Macmillan – and that burgeoning German strength could go the narrow, nationalistic path again if the European goal is lost." His desire for a voice in nuclear matters might be met if Kennedy explained his support for more consultation in NATO, as well as his plan to commit American Polaris submarines, and urge the British to do the same with their bombers and missiles. He should get the same assurance of consultation before any use of nuclear weapons that Eisenhower had given Macmillan and Kennedy had reaffirmed. To clarify American inability to help him develop an independent deterrent, Kennedy should explain that "the fact that the Germans do not now wish to imitate the French program is due, in no small part, to known US opposition to Nth country programs and to the uncertain prospects of success which such programs face in the absence of US aid", which aid to a French program would change. A shift in French policy any time soon was unlikely but it might be possible to meet some of de Gaulle's legitimate concerns about NATO cohesion and the credibility of the US deterrent. Since there was domestic opposition to de Gaulle's pursuit of a national deterrent and little chance a French MRBM capability was in reach during his tenure, "if US policy responds constructively to some French concerns, the next French Government may then be disposed to let the French MRBM program go the way of the British Blue Streak."¹⁰⁸

Bundy added that the United States had a supplementary understanding with Britain which required agreement on the use of American nuclear weapons based in Britain, but "there is no occasion for parity here because we have no nuclear weapons based in France." Under the current circumstances, he concluded, somewhat jesuitically, "the general offer of consultation is equal to what the British have."¹⁰⁹

The meeting with de Gaulle proved disappointing, with Kennedy failing to persuade him to soften his insistence on nuclear independence. He offered consultation on par with what Britain enjoyed, reiterated his assurances regarding the Polaris submarines, and said he

understood the desires of NATO's non-nuclear members for a voice in nuclear planning required a response. De Gaulle insisted that "these weapons are of a world-wide scope and might be used in the off-shore islands, in the Far East or even Cuba." It was hardly NATO's affair how they were used; it was up to the three nuclear powers to develop their own plan, and a small standing group should be created for the purpose. De Gaulle did not object to the assignment of Polaris submarines to NATO, but this "did not change things fundamentally for Europe since these are US nuclear weapons under US control." NATO was still vital, but had to be restructured to reflect Europe's revival and the new nuclear balance.¹¹⁰ When Kennedy pointed out that his administration saw Britain's place as in Europe and would accept the economic costs of British adhesion to the EEC in exchange for greater political unity, de Gaulle replied that he suspected British wariness of political cooperation would preclude the commitment required to enter and that in any event Britain always tried to act as broker on behalf of any group it joined.¹¹¹

Kennedy's pessimism about cooperation with de Gaulle was evident when he met with Macmillan a few days later. He observed that de Gaulle had indicated that as far the EEC was concerned, "the British must come all the way in or not at all" though he was no federalist. Foreign ministers' meetings, Kennedy added, could provide a venue for discreet consultation, and it might be possible to give France military information, particularly about aircraft. It could come from the United States or "it might seem more politic for this information to be given ostensibly by the United Kingdom, perhaps in connection with a European Space Project." It would be difficult for Washington to furnish any nuclear know-how because "this would expose the United States to the charge that it was responsible for the proliferation of nuclear weapons and might give an excuse for Soviet nuclear aid to China." Kennedy and Macmillan agreed any information-sharing would have to be through consultative structures Rusk, Home, and Couve managed to agree upon, and that nuclear assistance to de Gaulle would be contingent upon his helpfulness in NATO.¹¹²

Kennedy was more openly pessimistic in a subsequent meeting with Congressional leaders, where he suggested "de Gaulle does not really want the British in the Common Market. He appears to believe that they will not make the necessary commitment", and was happier with the current situation, under which he was the EEC's dominant personality. In addition, he had no apparent interest in transferring Polaris submarines to NATO "since they would not reinforce French forces."¹¹³ A week later, Rusk told Home over lunch that while

Kennedy was ready to go along with de Gaulle's proposal for regular meetings of the three foreign ministers to explore further consultative measures, he doubted de Gaulle could be satisfied. While de Gaulle had told Kennedy "that he would be quite content to organize the consultation on a 'sneaky' basis", his real goal was "public acknowledgment of the Big Three: this was just what the US could not accept."¹¹⁴

Macmillan's government continued to press the need for an end to Europe's political and economic divisions, with Home telling the Council on Foreign Relations that "interdependence for Britain must include European interdependence."¹¹⁵ On July 21 the Cabinet formally agreed to seek full membership of the EEC, and initiate negotiations to determine if satisfactory arrangements could be made for agriculture, EFTA, and Commonwealth interests.¹¹⁶ The Prime Minister told the House of Commons of the decision on July 31, setting out Britain's three conditions and pledging that no agreement touching on British sovereignty would be concluded until after consultation with Commonwealth states and approval by Parliament. He emphasized while the Treaty of Rome was concerned with economic dealings, "it has an important political objective, namely to promote unity and stability in Europe."¹¹⁷ In the same vein, he subsequently asserted that "this division in Europe, although it is superficially of a commercial character, undoubtedly detracts from the political strength and unity of Western Europe", adding that while the economic arguments for and against entry were not overwhelming either way, neither for the political implications for Britain's sovereignty "as dangerous or profound as they are sometimes made out to be." Advocates of an intermediate position "say that before we make up our minds we must know the conditions."¹¹⁸

This formula was broadly acceptable within the Conservative Party and to a wide spectrum of domestic and international opinion. Proponents of entry had grounds for hope that negotiations would lead to British membership, while opponents could take comfort in the fact accession was not preordained.¹¹⁹ Yet it was not enough to satisfy the most fervent ideologues of integration. Ball concluded that while American opposition to Macmillan's initial pursuit of negotiations between the EEC and EFTA had forced Britain to abandon a negotiating position that would have guaranteed failure, Macmillan had now "attempted to slide sideways into the Common Market." His insistence on accommodating EFTA and Commonwealth concerns was bound to complicate negotiations, even if their failure were politically unacceptable. If the Commonwealth states ended up with privileges similar to

those of the French overseas territories, this would harm American temperate agricultural commodities. He recommended American insistence that the negotiations be phased.¹²⁰ A study overseen by Ball concluded that, given the British preference for cheap food, the net effect of British entry on American agriculture might be positive, but the matter required closer examination. In any event, Washington should push for the lowest possible external tariff.¹²¹

Watkinson assured Messmer the British government favoured national, not multilateral, control of nuclear systems in the NATO area, and urged him to talk to McNamara about the importance of tripartism in targeting.¹²² Home sharply reminded him that this was not agreed government policy, and that ill-judged statements to the French could prejudice Britain's relations with both Washington and Paris.¹²³ But it soon became clear that Macmillan's decision for membership was unlikely in the short term to lead to a bargain involving nuclear tripartism. Rusk warned Home that he was prepared to go ahead with tripartite discussions, as Kennedy had asked, but these could not include any tripartite planning for the deployment or use of nuclear weapons.¹²⁴ On June 30 Rusk met with the British and French Ambassadors in Washington and proposed discreet weekly conversations about shared concerns outside the NATO area.¹²⁵

At an August meeting of foreign ministers in Paris, he suggested that British, French, and American representatives on the Standing Group could hold regular discussions about shared concerns outside the NATO area. Couve promptly expressed support for the idea, but Rusk doubted it would be enough for de Gaulle. Rusk "asked Couve frankly whether the General's interest in tripartite consultation was primarily to obtain greater harmony of policy or whether his purposes depended upon making the existence of such consultations generally known. He smiled but did not reply directly."¹²⁶ A day later de Gaulle countermanded Couve's acceptance of the suggestion, telling Rusk only that this was not what he had in mind, and that he would not pursue the matter further at the moment. Rusk indicated that he was relieved there was no need for further contacts designed to improve three-power consultation. He was happy to dispense with them, he added, since the dealings among the three major powers were bound to assume an increasingly quadripartite tenor in any event, now that Khrushchev was once again stepping up the pressure on Berlin.¹²⁷

Notes

1. Memorandum by the Prime Minister, December 29 1960-January 3 1961, PREM 11 / 3325, TNA, emphasis in the original. This document is routinely cited as Macmillan's "Grand Design" memorandum. See, e.g. Jacqueline Tratt, The Macmillan Government and Europe: A Study in the Process of Policy Development (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 162-163 and passim.
2. As demonstrated in E.H.H. Green, "Searching for the Middle Way: The Political Economy of Harold Macmillan", pp. 157-191 of his Ideologies of Conservatism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
3. Memorandum by the Prime Minister, December 29 1960-January 3 1961, PREM 11 / 3325, TNA. Emphasis in original.
4. Macmillan to Home, January 3 1961, PREM 11 / 3513.
5. Caccia to Hoyer-Millar, January 11 1961, FO 371 / 157333.
6. Dixon to Home, "The Prime Minister's Visit to General de Gaulle January 28-29, 1961", January 12 1961, FO 371 / 159671.
7. Draft memorandum by Brook, "Some Aspects of Our Relations with the United States and Europe", PM (W) (61) 1, January 18 1961, CAB 133 / 244.
8. Draft conclusions, Brook to Macmillan, January 20 1961, *ibid.*
9. Home briefing note, January 19 1961, FO 371 / 159671.
10. Lloyd to Macmillan, January 7 1961, PREM 11 / 3513.
11. Dixon to Foreign Office, January 27 1961, Tel. 38, FO 371 / 157335.
12. Record of Conversation at Rambouillet, 2:45 p.m., January 29 1961, PREM 11 / 3553.
13. Record of Conversation at Rambouillet, 2:30 p.m., January 28 1961, *ibid.*
14. See note 12, above.
15. de Zulueta to Macmillan, February 4 1961, *ibid.*
16. Dixon to Foreign Office, Tel. #58, February 3 1961, *ibid.*
17. Same to same, Tel. #60, February 16 1961, *ibid.*
18. Memorandum of conversation between the Lord Privy Seal and the French Ambassador, February 8 1961, enclosed in Home to Dixon, Tel. #50, February 14 1961, *ibid.*
19. Macmillan memo., n.d. but clearly early February 1961, "The Six and the Seven: United Kingdom Policy", *ibid.* Much of the language is from Brook's memo. of January 18 1961, "Some Aspects of Our Relations with the United States and Europe", CAB 133 / 244.
20. Enclosure to *idem*, n.d., n.s. "The Six and the Seven: United Kingdom Policy", *ibid.*
21. Heath to Macmillan, February 6 1961, *ibid.*
22. Macmillan to de Gaulle, February 6 1961, enclosure in Foreign Office to Paris, February 7 1961, Tel. #67, *ibid.*
23. Draft minute from Macmillan to Lloyd, enclosed in de Zulueta to Macmillan, January 30 1961, *ibid.*
24. Caccia to Hoyer Millar and Macmillan, January 30 1961, PREM 11 / 3226.
25. Steel to Roderick Barclay, January 19 1961, FO 371 / 158160.
26. Hainworth minute, "Blue Streak", February 14 1961, FO 371 / 157339.
27. Caccia to Hoyer-Millar, January 11 1961, FO 371 / 157333.
28. Foreign Office to Washington, February 16 1961, Saving #836, FO 371 / 157339.
29. February 16 1961 memorandum, "European Unity and the Six / Seven Problem: An Analysis", FO 371 / 158160.
30. Foreign Office to Steel, February 22 1961, Tel. #52, PREM 11 / 3553.

31. Record of Meeting between the Prime Minister and Dr. Adenauer at Admiralty House at 4 p.m. on February 22 1961, *ibid*.
32. Heath address to Council of WEU, February 27 1961, pp. 164-169 of Documents on International Affairs, 1961, ed. by D.C. Watt (London and Oxford: Oxford University Press / Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1965).
33. Foreign Office Circular Tel. #94, February 27 1961, FO 371 / 158160, TNA.
34. Caccia to Foreign Office, #4888, February 28 1961, *ibid*.
35. Lawrence Freedman, Kennedy's Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 40-41.
36. Andrew Preston, The War Council: McGeorge Bundy, the NSC, and Vietnam (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 40-47.
37. Freedman, *op cit*, p. 41.
38. Frank Ninkovich, Modernity and Power: A History of the Domino Theory in the Twentieth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 268.
39. Freedman, *op cit*, p. 5.
40. Thomas W. Zeiler, American Trade and Power in the 1960s (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 245-247; Nils Gilman, Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), chs. 5-6.
41. James A. Bill, George Ball: Behind the Scenes in US Foreign Policy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 102-114. Until an adequate biography of Ball appears, scholars will have to make do with Bill.
42. John Lamberton Harper, American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean G. Acheson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 323-329.
43. Freedman, *op cit*, pp. 62-63.
44. Report to the Honourable John F. Kennedy by the Task Force on the Balance of Payments, December 27 1960, f. Transition Files – Task Force Reports – Economy – Task Force – Balance of Payments 12 / 27 / 60, Box 1073, Pre-Presidential Files (PPF), JFKL.
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46. Kennedy message to NATO Permanent Council, February 15 1961, pp. 61-62 of Documents, 1961.
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48. Brentano speech to the CFR, New York, February 15 1961, pp. 125-135 of Documents, 1961.
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50. “A Review of North Atlantic Problems for the Future”, March 1961, f. NATO General, Acheson Report, 3 / 61, Box 220, NSF, JFKL, pp. 4-6, 8-9, and 43-44.
51. *Idem*, p. 8 and p. 44.
52. *Idem*, p.19 and p. 26.
53. Acheson memo. for Kennedy, March 29 1961, f. NATO General, 3 / 17 / 61 – 3 / 31 / 61, *ibid*.
54. Rostow memo. to Acheson, March 20 1961, “NATO Paper”, *ibid*.
55. Policy Directive, April 20 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. 13, pp. 288-290.
56. State Department Circular Telegram to Missions in Europe, March 24 1961, *ibid*, p. 5.

57. Caccia to Foreign Office, March 16 1961, FO 371 / 158161, TNA.
58. Foreign Office / Ministry of Defence brief, "The Problem of France and the Emergence of Further Nuclear Powers", drafted by Peter Ramsbotham, March 27 1961, FO 371 / 161205.
59. Ministry of Aviation brief, April 1961, FO 371 / 157345.
60. Ormsby-Gore to Home, March 29 1961, FO 371 / 161198.
61. de Zulueta to Macmillan, April 3 1961, PREM 11 / 3311.
62. Memorandum of conversation with Rusk, April 4 1961, PREM 11 / 4242.
63. Record of a Meeting held at the White House on Wednesday, 5th April, 1961, CAB 133 / 244.
64. "Continuation of the Prime Minister's Note on his Conversation with President Kennedy on Thrusday (sic) April 6 at 2:45 p.m.", PREM 11 / 3554.
65. Macmillan address at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, April 7 1961, on pp. 69-78 of Documents, 1961.
66. CC (22) 61, April 18 1961; CC (24) 61, April 26 1961, both CAB 128 / 35, TNA.
67. Macmillan to Robert Menzies and Keith Holyoake, April 15 1961, PREM 11 / 3554.
68. Watkinson to Macmillan, April 24 1961, *ibid*.
69. Eccles to Macmillan, April 24 1961, *ibid*.
70. Macmillan to Eccles, April 24 1961, *ibid*.
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72. Enclosed "Memorandum", Annex 2, "Europe", *idem*.
73. "Memorandum", *idem*.
74. Annex 3 to "Memorandum", "Tripartism", *idem*.
75. Department of State Circular Telegram, April 12 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, p. 7.
76. Extracts from Dillon press conference of April 24 1961, in Caccia to Foreign Office, May 2 1961, #1116, PREM 11 / 3554, TNA.
77. Memorandum of Conversation, April 13 1961, "European Integration and the Six and Seven Problem", FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 9-10.
78. Record of Conversation between the Lord Privy Seal and M. Schaffner, April 22 1961, PREM 11 / 3554, TNA.
79. Memorandum of Conversation, May 2 1961, "US Position on European Economic and Political Integration", FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 12-14.
80. American Memorandum, May 2 1961, encls. in Caccia to Foreign Office, May 2 1961, #1135, PREM 11 / 3554, TNA.
81. The American account of the conversation (see n. 79, above) has Ball indicating that Macmillan, given the informality and brevity of his conversations with Kennedy, failed to grasp the two-stage process. The British account (n. 82, below) has him conceding that he and his colleagues may not have fully taken in British observations about the need to accommodate EFTA.
82. Caccia to Foreign Office, May 2 1961, #1134, "Sixes and Sevens", PREM 11 / 3554, TNA.
83. De Zulueta to Macmillan, May 3 1961, *ibid*.
84. House of Commons Debates, Fifth Series (London: HMSO, 1961) Vol. 640, Cols. 1386-1400, May 17 1961.
85. Ball to Bundy, in London to Department of State, Tel. #4726, May 18 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 18-19.

86. Kennedy to Macmillan, May 22 1961, in Department of State to London, May 23 1961, *ibid*, pp. 20-21.
87. Macmillan to Kennedy, May 25 1961, f. UK, Macmillan Correspondence, 5 / 16 / 61 – 6 / 30 / 61, Box 220, NSF, JFKL.
88. Record of Watkinson meeting with McNamara, March 21 1961, DEFE 13 / 211, TNA.
89. Memorandum of conversation, April 11 1961, “Various”, f. Italy, General, 1/ 20 / 61 – 4 / 30 / 61, Box 170, NSF, JFKL.
90. Kennedy address to NATO Military Committee, Washington, D.C., April 10 1961, Documents, 1961.
91. Finletter to Rusk, Polto 1481, April 22 1961, f. NATO, including NATO defense, 1961-62, Box 64, Lot 58 D133, RG 59, NARA.
92. Rusk to Finletter, Topol 1526, April 25 1961, *ibid*.
93. Address before the Canadian Parliament, Ottawa, May 17 1961, Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy, 1961 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1962), pp. 382-387, 385.
94. Bundy memo. to McNamara, “NATO Studies”, May 1 1961, f. NATO, General 4 / 8 / 61 – 4 / 30 / 61, Box 220, NSF, JFKL.
95. JCAE, “Notes for President Kennedy”, February 15 1961, encls. in Rep. Chester Holifield to Kennedy, February 15 1961, f. ACDA, Departments and Agencies, Box 60, President’s Office Files (POF), JFKL.
96. Caccia to Foreign Office, April 21 1961, #1039, FO 371 / 161201, TNA.
97. Same to same, May 5 1961, #1159, *ibid*.
98. Kennedy to Macmillan, May 5 1961, f. UK, Macmillan correspondence, 5 / 1 / 61 – 5 / 30 / 61, Box 171, NSF, JFKL.
99. Macmillan to Kennedy, May 15 1961, in Foreign Office to Washington, May 15 1961, #3383, FO 371 / 161201, TNA.
100. Home to Macmillan, May 24 1961, PREM 11 / 3328, TNA.
101. Watkinson to Macmillan, May 25 1961, *ibid*.
102. Macmillan to Watkinson, May 29 1961, FO 371 / 161206.
103. Memorandum of conversation, March 20 1961, “Tripartite Consultation between France, the United States and the United Kingdom”, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 649-651.
104. Memorandum of conversation, April 12 1961, f. NATO General, 4 / 8 / 61 – 4 / 30 / 61, Box 220, NSF, JFKL.
105. Record of conversation by Nitze, encls. in Bundy to Lucius Battle, May 9 1961, *ibid*.
106. Bundy to Robert McNamara, May 12 1961, *ibid*.
107. William Bundy memorandum for General Lyman Lemnitzer, “President Kennedy’s visit to France”, May 18 1961, f. 9164 / 5420 (France), Box 176, RG 218, NARA.
108. “Scope Paper: President’s Visit to de Gaulle, Paris, May 31 – June 2 1961”, encl. in *idem*. See also “President’s Visit to de Gaulle: Talking Points”, May 27 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 657-659.
109. Bundy memo. for Kennedy, May 27 1961, “Specific Answers to your questions of May 29th (de Gaulle)”, *ibid*, pp. 659-661.
110. Memorandum of conversation, May 2 1961, “President’s Visit to de Gaulle”, *ibid*, pp. 662-667.
111. “US Aide-Memoire on Kennedy-de Gaulle talks”, June 5 1961, FO 371 / 161206, TNA.
112. Private Discussion between President Kennedy and the Prime Minister at Admiralty House, 12:45 p.m., June 5 1961, FO 371 / 161201.

- 113. Conversation with the Congressional leadership, June 6 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 668-669.
- 114. Record of a Conversation between the Secretary of State and Mr. Dean Rusk at Lunch at the State Department, June 14 1961, FO 371 / 161201, TNA.
- 115. Home speech to CFR, Chicago, June 16 1961, Documents, 1961, pp. 78-84.
- 116. CC (61) 42, July 21 1961, CAB 128 / 35, TNA.
- 117. House of Commons, Debates, Fifth Series, (London: HMSO, 1961) Vol. 645, Col. 1386, July 31 1961.
- 118. Ibid, Cols. 1482 and 1496, August 2 1961.
- 119. Wolfram Kaiser, Using Europe, Abusing the Europeans: Britain and European Integration, 1945-63 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p. 145.
- 120. Ball memo. for Kennedy, "Certain Implications of Prime Minister Macmillan's statement on the EEC", August 7 1961, encls. in Ball to Bundy, August 7 1961, f. UK General, 8 / 1 / 61 – 8 / 20 / 61, Box 170, NSF, JFKL.
- 121. Ball memo. for Kennedy, "UK Adherence to the European Common Market", August 23 1961, f. UK General 8 / 12 / 61 – 9 / 15 / 61, *ibid*.
- 122. Record of meeting with Messmer, July 25 1961, FO 371 / 160459, TNA.
- 123. Home to Watkinson, August 10 1961, FO 371 / 161207.
- 124. Record of conversation (draft), June 14 1961, FO 371 / 161201.
- 125. Caccia to Foreign Office, June 30 1961, Tel. 1783, FO 371 / 161207.
- 126. Rusk to State Department, August 7 1961, Secto 36, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, p. 673.
- 127. Rumbold to Foreign Office, August 9 1961, Tel. 284, FO 371/161207.

Chapter Six: Berlin and After

Kennedy had campaigned for the Presidency largely on the charge that an emerging “missile gap” favoured the Soviets, but there were indications in early 1961 that this was not the case; the USSR was devoting resources to the development of second-generation missiles rather than a crash buildup consisting of the technically primitive first-generation ICBMs. By September, photographs taken from the first reconnaissance satellite demonstrated that the USSR had only ten ICBMs deployed on launchers, not the thirty-five predicted in 1959, with no more than fifty likely by mid-1962, rather than several hundred.¹ The expansion of American strategic forces that began under Eisenhower had been accelerated by Kennedy, with increases in programmed numbers for second-generation missiles. By the close of 1961 the US possessed a securely dispersed “strategic triad” of air-, land-, and sea-based systems, with total numbers growing at a steady clip.²

Yet perception was as important as reality when it came to reassuring European allies that the American nuclear guarantee was reliable, and European governments tended to credit Khrushchev’s boasts of nuclear superiority, as validated by Kennedy’s campaign utterances.³ And there were good reasons why the views from European capitals might differ from the one from Washington; in the early 1960s, the Soviet missile program would emphasize the SS-4 and SS-5, IRBMs that would loom larger in any purely European conflict than in any worldwide nuclear conflagration.⁴ Berlin remained the likely flashpoint, and the fact that Khrushchev had lifted his deadline rather than dropping his demands altogether sharply limited the extent to which tensions could ease once the new administration was settled in. As the British Ambassador in Moscow, Frank Roberts, observed, Khrushchev was apparently determined to resolve the German problem in 1961.⁵ It became evident that the matter could not be shelved on February 17 1961, when Bonn received a note from Khrushchev reiterating his demands, although holding out the possibility of interim arrangements on Berlin until a treaty was negotiated.⁶

As a Senator, Kennedy had worried less about the possibility of an overt Soviet attack on Western Europe than about the incremental application of pressure around Berlin, “which never seems quite worth a war.” He mused about a compromise settlement under which American troop numbers might be reduced and anti-Communist propaganda activities wound down, in exchange for Soviet recognition of Western access rights, with a United Nations guarantee. Rather than emphasize the long-term goal of German reunification, he

acknowledged that “Berlin and the problems suggested by Berlin are going to be with us for many years.”⁷ In office, Kennedy ordered a review of Berlin policy that was linked to the new administration’s overall effort to shift NATO strategy in the direction of stronger conventional forces and reduced reliance on nuclear weapons, not least by Dean Acheson’s role in both. Acheson had accused Eisenhower of neglecting to build up conventional forces in Berlin, and thereby rendering threats of nuclear war less credible, since escalation from limited conventional hostilities to general war was improbable.⁸ Now that Khrushchev had the ability to strike the United States, Acheson suggested, he was trying “to peel the layers of the onion of resolution to demonstrate, if possible, that Western resolution would not be found at the core. If it were found to be there or pretty far in (sic), the process would be stopped without much damage to the USSR.” He did not believe that the United States should initiate nuclear war rather than be pushed out of Berlin or resort to force in order to avoid any dealings with the DDR. But “should we insist that present communications to West Berlin must be maintained and use force to remove obstacles? Answer. Yes.” (sic) While this was risky, there was some margin for maneuver insofar as the United States and its allies would face the East Germans initially. The Soviets might then “intervene diplomatically-in which case their resolution has failed first-or militarily-in which case they can force the evacuation of Berlin if they want to. But a forced evacuation, bringing refugees with us, will do us far less harm than a surrender without a struggle. It will also tend to solidify NATO and worry the neutrals about Russian intentions.”⁹

After Acheson delivered his thoughts on NATO, Kennedy asked him to assess American policy towards Berlin. In a preliminary memorandum, the former Secretary of State concluded that timidity in the face of Soviet threats to Berlin had the potential to undo West Germany’s integration into the Western camp. A crisis over the city’s fate was likely in 1961, and restricting the Western response to political and economic measures would engender widespread doubts about the value of American security guarantees. Threats to respond with nuclear weapons to any aggression would not be convincing. Any fight over Berlin “must begin, at any rate, as a local conflict.” While it was unclear how and where this would end “this uncertainty must be accepted.”¹⁰ Bundy found Acheson’s analysis compelling, but doubted that Macmillan would be prepared to follow the course he recommended.¹¹ The American Ambassador in Moscow, Llewellyn Thompson, had emphasized that Soviet objectives in Germany were not confined narrowly to Berlin. Khrushchev, he suggested, was

concerned primarily with shoring up the East German regime by halting the drain of skilled labour to the Federal Republic and securing Western recognition, as well as ensuring Bonn did not acquire nuclear weapons. It might be possible to bargain concessions on wider issues for stronger assurances of Berlin's safety.¹²

When Kennedy and Macmillan met with Acheson on April 5, the former Secretary presented the situation in Berlin as a test of allied resolve. Khrushchev could be expected to force the issue sometime in 1961, probably through interrupting Western ground access. A military response would be necessary in this event, he suggested, but not if the Soviets transferred bureaucratic functions, such as stamping passports, to East Germans. When Home pointed out that the Western powers had to be prepared for serious negotiations with the Soviets if Khrushchev were to be deterred from signing a treaty with the DDR, Acheson agreed, but cautioned that any discussion of a treaty had to be avoided so as to preserve West German morale. No definitive solution of the Berlin problem was likely without solving the larger problem of Germany's status and role, and that was a long-term endeavour at best. Nor was there any possible solution in Berlin that would not entail a weakening of the Western position. The key to the situation, he added, was demonstrating to the Soviets that the West attached more importance to preserving its access than they did to interrupting it. Strengthening conventional forces in Berlin would convey Western determination. Should the Soviets interrupt access, the United States had to be ready to send in a division-sized force able to defend itself.¹³

Home and Watkinson were unpersuaded by Acheson's call for a stronger conventional presence. They argued that it was Soviet doubts about Western willingness to employ nuclear weapons in defence of Berlin, and not the weakness of NATO's nonnuclear defences, that might embolden Khrushchev and lead him to miscalculate.¹⁴ Upon learning of Kennedy's proposed summit meeting with Khrushchev at Vienna, Macmillan recommended that the President make only the vaguest of threats about how "any interference in our position would lead to a dangerous situation." He doubted that Kennedy would indicate at this point that the stamping of documents by East Germans would not constitute a *casus belli*, but he tended to agree it would be "a mistake to play this card in advance of the negotiations."¹⁵

At Vienna, Kennedy did warn Khrushchev that war by miscalculation was a danger against which the superpowers had to guard, adding that both would lose in the event of a general war. In describing the need to make quick decisions on the basis of incomplete

information, he suggested that he himself had miscalculated in his handling of the failed Bay of Pigs landing at Cuba a few weeks earlier. Khrushchev argued that Germany, the principal aggressor in the Second World War, had now assumed a leading role in NATO, and that it was absurd that no peace treaty had been concluded sixteen years after the war's end. He reiterated his intention to conclude a separate peace with the East Germans if Moscow and Washington could not reach an agreement dealing with Germany as a whole. In that event, all Western occupation and access rights in Berlin would become void.¹⁶ When they resumed their discussion the next day, Kennedy observed that he would stop over to see Macmillan on his return home. He asked if he should inform the Prime Minister that he had found the only courses open in Berlin were accepting a Soviet *diktat* or engaging in a direct confrontation. The Chairman replied that he did not threaten war, the US did, and if war came it would be the result of American actions. He rejected Kennedy's claim that he was the one who sought to change the *status quo*, contending that a peace treaty would change no boundaries. His decision to conclude a treaty with the DDR was irrevocable, and if the US would not consent to an interim agreement then he would conclude a separate treaty in December. He then handed over a fresh memorandum, reiterating his demands.¹⁷

Khrushchev's belligerence forced Kennedy to adopt a firm stance in response, given the consequences of negotiating under threat for American relations with the European allies.¹⁸ When Kennedy met Macmillan on the way home, he emphasized Khrushchev's aggressiveness at the summit. He observed that an immediate offer to negotiate would be taken as weakness in the absence of an imminent clash of forces. As an alternative, he suggested stepped-up contingency plans and military preparations for the interruption of Western access to Berlin. Macmillan wondered if it might be feasible to prevent Khrushchev from acting until after the West German elections scheduled for September by asking him to elaborate on his latest memorandum and by proposing a conference of foreign ministers, reluctantly agreeing to more contingency planning on a bilateral basis.¹⁹ The Prime Minister concluded that Khrushchev had to be told clearly that any interference with Western access rights would be repelled by force, dismissing Home's suggestion of safeguarding Berlin through installing UN representatives.²⁰

Kennedy reiterated America's commitment to the city's defense in a televised address which also defined precisely what interests had to be defended by force: Western access to the city, the freedom of its Western half, and the American military presence. He conceded

that the Vienna summit had brought agreement no closer; the most that could be said in its defence was that “at least the channels of communication were opened more fully, at least the chances of a dangerous misjudgment on either side should now be less, and at least the men on whose decisions the peace in part depends have agreed to remain in contact.” It was essential to avoid a war that “would settle no dispute, prove no doctrine.”²¹ Yet the combination of a firm tone with the careful delimitation of Western interests that pertained only to *West Berlin* signaled that while Kennedy would not negotiate under threat, he was prepared to recognize Soviet interests in the German question as part of any settlement.²²

The precise military means for defending Berlin while minimizing the risks of escalation was hardly clear. McNamara had instructed the Joint Chiefs of Staff to prepare a document explaining how the United States could respond in a controlled fashion to aggression against Berlin, allowing pauses in the escalation of hostilities during which negotiations could go ahead; they concluded this was not technically feasible.²³

Existing contingency plans, McNamara informed Kennedy, were close to the “trip-wire” thinking the European allies had long favoured, with escalation to general nuclear war after the use of modest conventional forces to defend Berlin. This was largely a reflection of the city’s inconvenient position, miles behind the Westward boundary of the Soviet bloc. While it was feasible for American and allied forces to reopen ground access to West Berlin by conventional means alone, restoring interrupted access by air would not be possible without a wider conflict. There were strong political reasons, he continued, for developing the capacity for a substantial conventional response before the choice between surrender and escalation to nuclear war had to be made. If the Western powers had nonnuclear forces capable of holding back the DDR’s forces without the need to escalate to either nuclear hostilities or conventional combat across a wider front, the Soviets would not think they could rely on the East Germans to win a victory for them by proxy without assuming the risks inherent in direct participation.²⁴

The Foreign Office concluded that Khrushchev would probably conclude a treaty with the DDR at some point in 1961, and expect the Western powers to live with it. A blockade was much less likely.²⁵ It also believed that visible military preparations might make a crisis more, not less, likely; in any event a crisis would not arise until Khrushchev concluded a separate peace, something he’d deferred for several years and might yet do again. While Britain should not appear to lack resolve, it was unclear precisely which measures it could

support. Economic sanctions were less risky than military preparations, but would harm the balance of trade.²⁶ Planners in the Ministry of Defence had concluded the principal danger around Berlin was of war by miscalculation. A Soviet probe to test Western willingness to resist aggression with nuclear weapons might trigger the rapid, unintended, but uncontrolled escalation of hostilities.²⁷ Home recommended bilateral discussions with Washington on possible diplomatic initiatives that might be considered without the French and Germans getting in the way. He suggested acceptance of the Oder-Neisse line and *de facto* recognition of the DDR in exchange for Soviet acknowledgment of the Western presence and access rights. If such a settlement were proposed in the UN and reluctantly accepted by the Western powers, he mused, Bonn might be prepared to move away from its sterile policy of refusing to engage with the DDR.²⁸ Despite Britain's strong rhetorical support for the Western rights at issue in Berlin, Acheson told Caccia, Kennedy doubted that it could be relied upon in the crunch.²⁹

By this point, there was in fact considerable agreement between Washington and London on the nature of the Soviet challenge at Berlin, the interests whose defence required a clear willingness to resort to force, and the need for substantive exchanges with Khrushchev, unconstrained by any great concern for what Adenauer would accept. What disagreements did exist pertained mainly to military preparations and contingency planning.³⁰ Yet these were hardly trivial in light of the analysis Acheson submitted to Kennedy on June 28. The confrontation at Berlin, Acheson's report contended, was of wider significance because it had become a test of the comparative resolve of the superpowers, and American conduct would now determine whether allies in Europe and elsewhere would retain confidence in American leadership. Negotiations to settle Berlin's fate could safely proceed only once Khrushchev's conviction that interruption of Western access to Berlin would precipitate nuclear war, a conviction that had apparently faded in recent years, was restored. Once it was clear, to both the Soviet leader and America's European allies, that the United States was prepared to defend Berlin with nuclear weapons, negotiations could go ahead with some promise of success and without jeopardy to allied morale. If the United States were not willing to risk escalation of hostilities to nuclear war rather than allow Khrushchev to cut off Berlin, its policy would essentially become one of bluff, a bluff that Khrushchev was bound to call.

In Acheson's view, accepting a modest but genuine risk of nuclear war, either through escalation or a failure of American preparations to deter Soviet aggression, was a *sine*

qua non of a successful resolution. Showing American firmness required both military and political preparations. These could include a permanent increase in military capabilities as well as short-term conventional force increases and a declaration of a national state of emergency. Military preparations should be visible but low-key. Should the Soviets cut off Berlin, an American probe would be necessary, less to restore access militarily than to meet “the political purpose of moving the Soviets to negotiate a resumption of access” by establishing that “the Western Allies were not prepared to submit to Soviet demands and would use whatever force was necessary, up to and including general war, in resisting them.” The American presence around Berlin should be substantial enough to defeat East German forces without resorting to tactical nuclear weapons.

A further danger was that America’s allies, none of whom had a comparable position of global leadership at stake, were naturally inclined to favour a less risky approach and urge it upon Washington. Yet one aspect of the reassertion of American leadership would be for the administration to proceed with the proposed actions rather than subjecting them to consultation with the allies, even at the risk of allied disagreement reaching the point of breaking ranks in public. While he doubted Khrushchev would act before the West German elections, American preparations should be complete before the end of the year, when he was likely to conclude a treaty with the East Germans and hand control of allied access over to them.³¹

Following discussion of Acheson’s report at the National Security Council meeting of June 29, Kennedy ordered further study of its recommendations.³² There were reservations about Acheson’s particular proposals among some of Kennedy’s advisers. His Special Assistant and sometime speechwriter Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. warned that the steps Acheson suggested might seem too provocative and offer little scope for negotiation should Khrushchev come forward with a proposed settlement that included secure access to West Berlin. Schlesinger, State Department consultant Henry Kissinger and legal adviser Abram Chayes agreed on the need to consider contingencies other than a comprehensive blockade of Berlin.³³ On July 8, Kennedy met at Hyannisport with Rusk, McNamara, and his military aide, General Maxwell Taylor, and indicated his desire for a wider choice than between surrender in the face of Soviet aggression and early resort to nuclear weapons. He sought a period of a month in which to choose whether to resort to nuclear weapons or withdraw, rather than the few hours available under current contingency plans, and ordered the

preparation of contingency plans allowing for stronger conventional defenses in Berlin.³⁴ When the full NSC met again on July 13, Secretary Rusk suggested that an early declaration of national emergency, as Acheson proposed, would amount to a dramatic escalation of tension, contradicting his broader recommendation that preparations be low-key.³⁵ Kissinger noted that Acheson's rejection of early negotiations left the diplomatic initiative to Khrushchev. He suggested regaining it with an American proposal, putting the onus of rejection on the Soviets.³⁶ Bundy was in broad agreement, and suggested Kennedy use his next major speech to bring forward a new proposal.³⁷

On the 17th, Kennedy shifted broader planning for the crisis to a new Berlin Steering Group, with Rusk as chairman, and Bundy and the Chairman of the JCS, General Lyman Lemnitzer, as members. The Interdepartmental Coordinating Group on Berlin Contingency Planning, whose members included Acheson, Paul Nitze, and Foy Kohler, which had previously supervised overall conduct of the crisis, would remain, but with its remit limited to day-by-day planning.³⁸ The new Steering Group's first meeting quickly reached consensus on McNamara's proposal to expand conventional forces across the board by year-end, and appropriate additional funds for defence. While the administration would make these gestures, indicative of a general seriousness in meeting the Soviet threat, it would not declare a national state of emergency, since that could suggest confrontation was imminent. The remainder of the NSC joined the group at 4 pm, and, Acheson made the case for a declaration of emergency as an unambiguous and visible signal of American resolution. McNamara replied that rapid deployments could be made as required under existing arrangements, and he did not want to mobilize large numbers of troops without a clear mission for them to undertake.³⁹

While Kennedy and a majority of his senior advisers had broken with Acheson over both American willingness to negotiate and an immediate declaration of emergency,⁴⁰ this amounted to a modification, not a rejection, of his underlying approach.⁴¹ Kennedy's broadcast on Berlin of July 25 announced almost \$3.25 billion in additional defence spending, increased draft calls in the coming months, and increases in authorized troop levels for the services. He also made it clear that the American commitment to Berlin's defense was not solely conventional, reiterating that NATO's nuclear guarantees applied to the city, and calling for additional expenditures on civil defense. Yet on this occasion as well, he was careful to define American interests in terms of *West Berlin* and to observe that while

America's military posture around Berlin was inevitably defensive, that was compatible with the aggressive pursuit of a negotiated settlement.⁴² Privately, he showed no great confidence in the idea that escalation of hostilities could be readily controlled. The crucial point in the crisis, he observed in a meeting with the JCS, was likely to be that just before the Soviets employed nuclear weapons, asking if would be possible to prepare for a preemptive strike without the Soviets detecting the preparations.⁴³

A more promising use for nuclear weapons in the current crisis was formulated by the economist Thomas Schelling, who was affiliated with the RAND Corporation. A paper by Schelling, included in Kennedy's reading in late July, made political virtue out of military necessity when it came to the destructive power of nuclear arms and the difficulty in calibrating escalation in their use. "The important thing in limited nuclear war is to impress the Soviet leadership with the risk of general war", he wrote, "a war that may occur whether we or they intend it or not." The use of nuclear weapons could never be truly tactical since the consequences were not so confined, no matter how few were detonated or how carefully their targets were selected. Raising the spectre of general war could reimpose the deterrent effect after hostilities had started. Even when it came to the decision to use nuclear weapons first, the point was not to win an essentially illusory military victory by destroying this or that target, but to send the signal that would persuade the adversary to concede.⁴⁴ Arguably, Schelling's detailed analysis was not applicable insofar as the tactical nuclear weaponry it required was not present around Berlin, suggesting to one scholar that he was writing primarily with the hope of influencing American handling of later crises.⁴⁵ Yet his paper also assumed tight coordination of military and political measures,⁴⁶ and thus encouraged such coordination as a feature of the Kennedy administration's approach to what would eventually be dubbed "crisis management."

Macmillan was pleased by the references to diplomacy in Kennedy's speech, and thought it might be feasible to have a meeting of Western leaders after the West German elections, leading to a high-profile East-West summit in October.⁴⁷ Home responded that discreet ambassadorial exchanges, perhaps eventually leading to a summit, were more prudent.⁴⁸ He was, of course, convinced that negotiations had to be restricted to the question of Western access, where agreement was likely, without the introduction of extraneous matters that might prove less amenable to compromise.⁴⁹

When the Western foreign ministers met on August 5, it was clear that, as Acheson had

anticipated, the European allies had less enthusiasm than Washington for military preparations. Brentano said there was nothing the West Germans could do until after their elections, and Couve observed that France had many other commitments, but it would be possible to deploy a division returning from Algeria in September. Home too pleaded the pressure of other commitments, although he offered to raise the readiness of British forces already in Germany and said troops scheduled to return from Hong Kong and Cyprus could form a new division based in Britain. He warned that a conventional buildup might merely encourage Khrushchev to gamble that he would encounter only nonnuclear resistance, and suggested it was preferable to keep him uncertain. Rusk responded that strengthening conventional forces made it clearer to the Soviets that any aggression would be met by force, inevitably escalating to nuclear hostilities. The conventional buildup would dissuade Khrushchev from miscalculating, but if the Western powers did not strengthen their conventional forces he would conclude they were bluffing and act accordingly. He noted that, parallel to military preparations, Washington recognized that Ambassadorial discussions in Moscow were likely, and hoped the Soviets would accept a proposal for a foreign ministers' meeting. The content of Western negotiating positions was less important than that discussions lead to implicit acceptance and maintenance of the *status quo*. If Western opinion was to accept the risk of war, and acceptance of that risk seem credible to Khrushchev, the Western powers had to appear reasonable and to have exhausted all diplomatic options.

Home expressed general agreement with this approach but wondered if the Western powers could not make the inevitable offer of negotiations sooner. Couve was insistent that an offer to negotiate while an ultimatum was in effect would undermine the credibility of the Western position and convince Khrushchev he had gained from his threats. It would, he claimed, be better to stand firm on allied rights in Berlin and respond that any interference with access would be met with force. Brentano noted the political need for the Western powers to seem reasonable, but echoed Couve in warning that demonstrated readiness to negotiate now would signal lack of resolve.⁵⁰ A few days later Rusk told a meeting of America's Ambassadors to the European allies to emphasize the point that "we were trying to create a situation where we could gain time through economic and other measures before any shooting actually started."⁵¹

Where Kennedy did break with Acheson's approach and outline the basis for a resolution that left American rights in West Berlin secure, he did so indirectly, minimizing his own

exposure to criticism. In late July, Martin Ausland, of the State Department's Berlin Task Force, had argued that while Soviet policy at the moment seemed to consist of living with the refugee flow while seeking an early resolution in Berlin, continued growth of refugee numbers could "tip the balance" in favour of closing the sectoral boundary. This could increase the short-term danger of a wider conflict by precipitating a recurrence of the 1953 uprising. The Soviets and East Germans would "seem to be creating enough difficulties for themselves in East Germany without US taking a hand." Should the border be closed, any American protests should stop short of seeming to encourage the East Germans to revolt in anticipation of Western assistance.⁵² During the President's August 10 news conference, a reporter referred to a July 30 television interview in which the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, J. William Fulbright, had wondered aloud why the DDR did not simply close the inter-German border in Berlin. This would stop the rising flood of refugees, many of them young, educated, and productive, from East to West Germany, stabilizing the former. It would also be within the DDR's rights, Fulbright had suggested. Did the President agree?

Kennedy opened with the observation that "the tremendous speedup of people leaving the Communist system to come to the West and freedom, of course, is a rather illuminating evidence (sic) of the comparative values (sic) of life in an open society and those in a closed society." Yet "the United States Government does not attempt to encourage or discourage the movement of refugees and I know of no plan to do so."⁵³ With closure looking still more likely by August 12, the principal danger was seen as an uprising that "would precipitate crisis before military and political measures now underway for dealing with Berlin political problem have become effective."⁵⁴

When the East Germans, with Soviet acquiescence, closed the sectoral boundary and began construction of the Berlin Wall on August 14, it seemed that they had understood what would prove acceptable to Washington and what would not. But while it is easy enough in retrospect to see the Wall's construction as a turning point in the Cold War, leading to the emergence of a limited *détente* in Europe and West Germany's grudging acceptance of partition, things were not so clear-cut at the time.⁵⁵ As the East Germans began shutting down road and rail links between East and West Berlin, Rusk consulted with Kennedy before issuing a press release that attacked the interruption of free movement but added the reassuring observation that "available information indicates that measures taken thus far are

aimed at residents of East Berlin and East Germany and not at the allied position in West Berlin or access thereto.”⁵⁶ When the Berlin Steering Group had its first meeting after the erection of the Wall, it recommended that Kennedy remain sailing at his summer home in Hyannisport rather than return and heighten tensions by giving Khrushchev the impression he had triggered a full-blown crisis.⁵⁷

Bundy, however, noted that the Soviets had always had the power to close the border, and given their lack of control over movements between East and West Berlin, their doing so had been inevitable. Since it was inevitable, “it is as well to have it happen early, as *their* doing and *their* responsibility” rather than as part of a negotiated settlement.⁵⁸ Christopher Steel, the British Ambassador in Bonn, said he had “always wondered that the East Germans have taken this long to seal this boundary.” He believed the closing of the boundary was solely a response to the refugee flow, which had peaked in August at 2,000 a day, not a prelude to further actions. The situation was tolerable, he concluded, as long as the Western powers did not overreact and provoke an uprising in the East.⁵⁹ Bearded by reporters while golfing at Gleneagles, an irritated Macmillan had said there was no crisis and nobody was going to start a war. He later explained to Kennedy that he had intended merely to point out that a violation of allied rights in Berlin, widely regarded as grounds for military action, had not taken place.⁶⁰ The British Embassy in Bonn saw the closing of the border as a salutary dose of reality for the West Germans, forcing them to question Adenauer’s *Politik der Starke*, which had failed to prevent it.⁶¹

A few days later, the Americans were wondering if there might be more to come. The head of the American mission to West Berlin, Allan Lightner, cautioned that the superpower confrontation in Berlin was no longer confined to words, and the Soviets, on the heels of an apparently successful *fait accompli*, might be emboldened to push the Americans harder still.⁶² McNamara warned the Berlin Steering Group of State and Defense Department officials that the Wall might indicate a decision by Khrushchev to accelerate the pace at which he would press for a settlement. The President, he noted, was alarmed that a Soviet leader intoxicated by his initial success would take greater risks.⁶³ Kissinger suggested that Khrushchev sought to stabilize the DDR and with it the Soviet bloc as a whole, through Western recognition of the DDR and the Oder-Neisse line, and that he was sincerely alarmed by the resurgence of West German military power, particularly the prospect of any nuclear role for the *Bundeswehr*. *De facto* acceptance by the Western powers of Germany’s division

was inevitable, but abandonment of reunification as a goal would alienate Bonn and strain NATO unity. The damage could be minimized if the West made it clear that it accepted division only “because it prefers the *status quo* to nuclear war.”⁶⁴

Bundy’s Deputy, Carl Kaysen, also suggested that the United States define its interests in Berlin narrowly, limited to Western access to West Berlin, the retention of a military presence, and the city’s own viability, in order to avoid war, even though the administration might face charges of softness from its political opponents. The situation around Berlin was unstable and dangerous. Khrushchev was under pressure from the Soviet military and Red China to take a hard line, and had important advantages: Berlin was behind the borders of the Soviet imperium, the forces of the entire Eastern bloc were under Khrushchev’s effective control, and his capacity for nuclear retaliation made any American resort to nuclear weapons more dangerous and hence less likely, while the United States had to contend with disagreements in NATO as well as local inferiority in conventional forces.⁶⁵

The problem of how to prepare for any new move by Khrushchev was also linked to that of reassuring the West Germans. Mayor Willy Brandt feared the Wall would be followed by moves to separate Berlin completely from the West. He hoped Kennedy would raise the matter in the UN.⁶⁶ Moreover, the head of the US Information Agency, Edward R. Murrow, had concluded from his talks with Brandt and others that measures were needed to avert “an abrupt and serious worsening of our relations with the people of Berlin and then with the Federal Republic.”⁶⁷ Kennedy informed Brandt that the United States would not go to war to undo what Khrushchev had done and doubted any diplomatic effort would get him to reverse course. He was prepared to deter further action by reinforcing the American garrison in the city with a battle group of more than 1,500 troops.⁶⁸ American actions combined measures designed to provide short-term reassurance with overtures to the Soviets to obtain a negotiated settlement in which the West’s core interests in Berlin were secure.

In addition to dispatching Vice-President Johnson and General Lucius Clay, the former American proconsul in Berlin, to reinforce public spirits, the administration urged its allies to reinforce their garrisons in the city.⁶⁹ Macmillan responded that sending more British troops would weaken positions elsewhere while doing little tangible to improve the situation in Berlin. He also warned against any measures that might heighten tensions, suggesting that Western overreactions would merely divert blame from the Soviets and East Germans.⁷⁰ Heated diplomatic protests or dramatic military preparations, Home feared, would only make

an East German uprising more likely.⁷¹ Previous British measures to strengthen the Western military position in Berlin, Shuckburgh cautioned, had been the minimum required to avoid invidious comparisons with others.⁷²

The situation around Berlin was inevitably unclear and unstable as long as Khrushchev declined to acknowledge that the Wall was an alternative to a separate peace with the DDR and West Berlin's forcible isolation, not a step towards it.⁷³ The American policy towards Berlin and Germany that coalesced between mid-August and mid-September did, in its specifics (mutual acceptance of the territorial *status quo*; Bonn's formal renunciation of nuclear ambitions; recognition of the Oder-Neisse line and the DDR) anticipate not only the settlement that formally emerged in the 1970s but the *Ostpolitik* Brandt would pursue as Foreign Minister and then Chancellor. But it was a hard sell to West German opinion in 1961, and the administration was neither candid nor sure-footed in wooing Bonn.⁷⁴ As a result, Washington would have to manage both skeptical allies as well as an apparently unpredictable adversary in its efforts to contain and defuse the crisis in Berlin. As early as August 14, State Department instructions to the new Ambassador to Yugoslavia, George Kennan, urged him to take advantage of any opportunity to inform his Soviet counterpart that the United States not only sought negotiations to find a resolution "that takes account of the interests of all the parties involved" but would be happy to engage in informal exploratory discussions if they would ease agreement. While Washington's dealings with the NATO allies would be guided by any resulting insight into Soviet thinking, "it does not intend that any other government shall be apprised specifically of the fact that such talks are occurring. In particular, it does not intend that the Germans shall have any knowledge of them."⁷⁵

His mind concentrated by the prospect of Khrushchev's taking further action against Berlin to meet his year-end deadline and the continued absence of agreement on a Western negotiating position, Kennedy informed Bundy that he did not wish to be constrained by the need for four-power agreement. An early invitation to negotiations was necessary, and American desiderata should be limited to Berlin's freedom and Western access. None of the European allies should be permitted veto power over American initiatives; they should be informed "that this is what we mean to do and that they must come along or stay behind."⁷⁶

The British assessment was that the Wall had actually reduced uncertainty around and pressure on the Western presence in Berlin, with the result that negotiations should now be easier.⁷⁷ Home was pleased to see Anglo-American agreement on the need for negotiations,

and suspected that after the September 19 elections Bonn would become more flexible.⁷⁸ Adenauer himself, Macmillan conceded in conversation with Ambassador David Bruce, was likely to be intransigent on the points of explicit recognition of the DDR and formal renunciation of nuclear weapons. De Gaulle, of course, was hostile to negotiations, and his objections must not be allowed to obstruct pursuit of a peaceful settlement.⁷⁹

On September 12 Kennedy and Rusk agreed to pursue bilateral negotiations with the USSR through Ambassador Thompson in Moscow in the first instance. Rather than stand firm on occupation rights, the US should seek parallel peace treaties that would safeguard Western rights in Berlin, but on a new basis and without reference to future reunification.⁸⁰ Not only was Kennedy increasingly impatient with German policy on reunification, non-recognition of the DDR, and the Oder-Neisse line as an obstacle to agreement, it seemed that his impatience was widely shared abroad. A letter from Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to Macmillan noted that much of the world saw German policy on these points as not only obstructionist, but all too suggestive of a refusal to accept wartime defeat if not of outright revanchism. On the tangible issues around Berlin and Germany, Nehru gathered from his own exchanges with Khrushchev, “there is probably already a measure of agreement about some of them.”⁸¹ Kennedy’s own Ambassador to India suggested that Khrushchev’s intimations to Nehru that he thought little of the Ulbricht government implied that Soviet policy sought to stabilize his weak client state rather than eject the Western powers from Berlin. It followed that America could safely ask for strong guarantees of its core interests of access to Berlin and the city’s freedom. To bring up German reunification or self-determination for the East Germans during negotiations would not only fail but damage American credibility. “No one can bargain with what he doesn’t have”, John Kenneth Galbraith wrote, and “all the effort does is build up the importance of what the Soviets will get. We invent a defeat and make it look as bad as possible.”⁸²

Addressing the UN General Assembly later that month, Kennedy warned of the danger of the superpowers blundering into nuclear war through miscalculation of one another’s reactions. He proposed taking all practical steps to slow down the nuclear arms race and reiterated his call for a ban on atmospheric nuclear tests, without inspection or controls, as well as “prohibiting the transfer of control over nuclear weapons to states that do not own them.” “We believe a peaceful agreement is possible which protects the freedom of West Berlin and allied presence and access, while recognizing the historic and legitimate interests

in assuring European security”, he observed. There was, he insisted, “no need for a crisis over Berlin.”⁸³ Kennedy’s fear of war by miscalculation was no mere rhetorical flourish; while informing Home over lunch that he was prepared to offer acceptance of the Oder-Neisse line, *de facto* recognition of the DDR, and troop reductions in and around Germany as part of a settlement, he said it was by no means sure that Khrushchev understood interference with Western access would lead to war.⁸⁴

The Pentagon used Schelling’s analysis as part of the framework for war-gaming exercises in September, taking a clash around Berlin as their starting point. These suggested that using military actions to send unambiguous signals to the enemy was difficult in the extreme, and that the escalation of hostilities tended to leave insufficient time to conduct diplomacy. One pattern was that the side bearing the onus of expanding hostilities to a level of destructiveness neither wanted tended to shy away from doing so. To Kaysen, these studies demonstrated the difficulty of using force in a precise and discriminate manner. He added that the United States would also be inhibited in its actions by potentially uncooperative allies.⁸⁵ Kennedy remained torn between Acheson’s thinking and de Gaulle’s about the respective merits of conventional and nuclear forces in deterring the Soviets. Would a conventional buildup in Europe, he asked, convince Khrushchev of American resolve to defend Berlin, even at the risk of general war, or would it convince him the Americans would not do so, and were therefore emphasizing non-nuclear options?⁸⁶ McNamara responded that it was unclear precisely what would deter Khrushchev. While a conventional buildup alone was unlikely to convince him that the United States and its allies were serious about Berlin’s defense, the absence of one could be taken as a sign of weakness. But a posture based almost entirely on nuclear forces and the threat of escalation to general war was less convincing than one that involved the visible strengthening of both conventional and nuclear forces.⁸⁷

McNamara, it can plausibly be argued, was declining to press for a purely conventional buildup because he realized a conventional defense of Berlin was not feasible at the moment, however much one might wish it were (as a later occupant of McNamara’s office observed, one fights a war with the army one has), and because he would be unable to impose a strategy built on flexible response and sequential conventional actions upon Norstad.⁸⁸ And Norstad was emphatic in his view that contingency plans had to reflect the probability that the crucial decisions on escalation would come quickly. Allied conventional forces around

Berlin were not sufficient to defend Berlin, the recent American emphasis on strengthening conventional forces had undermined the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons, and escalation was likely to be rapid and unpredictable, with neither side able to impose a gradual progression from one carefully defined phase of hostilities to another.⁸⁹

At one inconclusive meeting, Assistant Secretary Nitze argued for giving Norstad instructions based on a strict progression from attempting to restore access with local conventional forces to wider conventional hostilities prior to non-military measures such as a comprehensive embargo of the Soviet bloc and resort to the UN; Rusk and McNamara successfully pressed Kennedy to reverse the order of these two stages, with diplomatic measures preceding the expansion of conventional hostilities. Conventional operations would gradually reach such intensity that the Soviets could be under no misconception that limited nuclear war was imminent, with general nuclear war not far behind. While Kennedy doubted that nuclear weapons could be used selectively to demonstrate American willingness to employ them, or to achieve tactical objectives, without rapid escalation to general war, McNamara suggested the effort had to be made anyway, given the destructiveness of all-out nuclear hostilities. When Nitze suggested the alternative to this was a preemptive strike, McNamara replied that it was unlikely either side would feel confident a first strike would succeed.⁹⁰ Lemnitzer had already concluded that a first strike was not feasible, given the need for comprehensive and timely intelligence on the location of all Soviet missiles, their reaction times (as low as 5-10 minutes where missiles were on full readiness), and the odds that even under the most optimistic scenario Soviet missile-bearing submarines were likely to survive.⁹¹

A subsequent meeting on the 20th returned to the subject, but by that time Khrushchev had told his Party Congress the year-end deadline for agreement with the DDR was no longer operative, thus informing the Western powers he was not intent on further moves against Berlin. Acheson once again made the case for rapid and substantial conventional troop deployments to Europe. McNamara replied that in light of Khrushchev's announcement there was no need for an immediate decision on troop levels, and in any event deployment of additional forces was logistically impossible until November. He then presented draft instructions to Norstad, which stated that NATO would respond to aggression aimed at Berlin with non-nuclear forces alone, once these had been strengthened, that nuclear weapons could not be used without Kennedy's explicit approval, and that command-and-control

procedures should be unambiguous on this point.⁹²

One scholar argues that with war apparently imminent, the Kennedy administration retreated from flexible response, acting on the assumption that any conflict with Soviet forces would escalate towards general war and therefore had to be evaded in the first instance, much as Eisenhower conducted analogous crises.⁹³ Yet this tends to overestimate the extent to which key policymakers embraced the doctrine to begin with, and perhaps the doctrine's own coherence. Certainly the administration did not build up American conventional forces as much as one would have expected; McNamara's first budget did not add to the six American divisions in Europe, and over the long term the administration hoped there would be fewer American troops on the Continent. It emphasized strengthening non-nuclear forces where it had *political* reasons for doing so, pressing the European allies to devote resources to conventional arms so as to avoid proliferation and secure a division of labour in which the nuclear decisions would be taken by Americans. Officials rarely used the term at all, and it was not embodied in any canonical policy statement.⁹⁴ To be sure, the general idea of seeking the maximum number of options available appealed to Kennedy, given his incrementalism and dislike of irrevocable decisions. But he does not appear to have fully accepted its core tenets, and was certainly enough of a practical politician to understand that he could not impose it upon his allies without creating divisions in the Western camp that would offset any increase in the conceptual clarity of agreed-upon strategy.⁹⁵

If Kennedy came to see deterrence *per se* as working better in practice than in theory,⁹⁶ the same could be said of the approach to Berlin into which he had stumbled by the end of October 1961. Relying solely on a large-scale conventional buildup around Berlin would not have been acceptable to France and Germany, and simply trumpeting American nuclear superiority might not have been credible to Khrushchev. As it was, the conventional buildup enhanced the credibility of the nuclear deterrent rather than replacing it, in addition to enabling the United States to negotiate from a position of strength. Statements that the nuclear balance favoured the United States not only further bolstered the American negotiating position, they reassured allies fretful about the credibility of the nuclear guarantee.⁹⁷ Kennedy focused on the first clash of Soviet and American forces as the moment at which the nuclear danger became alarmingly real.⁹⁸ Additional conventional weapons were useful primarily by helping to create new options for diplomatic resolution before hostilities broke out, rather than ones for reimposing deterrence in their midst.

By early October, the fact that the Wall was no longer a makeshift set of obstacles but a solid, seemingly permanent border had suggested to Christopher Steel that the Soviets and East Germans did not intend to push beyond the new *status quo*; one did not, after all, erect a thick border only to overrun it.⁹⁹ Macmillan had announced his intention to seek UK membership of the EEC at the end of July. He and Home were happy to let the increasingly flexible Kennedy administration take the lead in advocating negotiations in Western councils, rather than allowing Britain to appear as the principal proponent of concessions.¹⁰⁰

The results of the West German elections suggested Bonn might now become both less rigid in dealing with the Soviets and more welcoming of British entry into the EEC. While Adenauer was still in place as Chancellor, his CDU was reduced to a minority and forced to form a coalition with the FDP, who disliked Adenauer's close embrace of de Gaulle and favoured a wider Europe that included Britain.¹⁰¹ The FDP's price included Brentano's replacement as Foreign Minister by the more pragmatic Gerhard Schröder, who was expected to adopt a less rigid line over Berlin and with the Soviet bloc.¹⁰² Yet the British remained concerned to minimize divisions in the Western bloc between a seemingly soft Anglo-Saxon duo and a more rigid Franco-German one, insofar as this could be done without prejudicing a peaceful settlement. Home had concluded by October 6 that the lack of fresh Soviet demands and the prospect of negotiations suggested Khrushchev was well aware of the risks inherent in any interruption of Western access. Moreover, public opinion both at home and abroad seemed to view Western demands as reasonable. Accordingly, the Western powers could afford to strike a very tough position, but on the narrow question of maintaining their rights in Berlin.¹⁰³

By that point, Bundy had concluded that the Soviet position thus far, of demanding formal recognition of German borders and of the DDR, West Berlin's designation as a free city, and explicit guarantees against nuclear proliferation in central Europe, could not be accepted without the French and Germans, as well as the Kennedy administration's domestic opponents, accusing it of appeasement.¹⁰⁴ When Kennedy met with the Soviet foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko he reiterated his desire for a negotiated resolution but said the Soviets were asking too much. Gromyko emphasized the importance Moscow attached to ensuring that neither German state acquired or manufactured nuclear weapons. The superpowers, he added, had a shared interest in preventing a German nuclear capability.¹⁰

Kennedy urged Macmillan to do what he could to secure Adenauer's agreement to

negotiations along the lines the administration proposed. He doubted that de Gaulle could be persuaded to drop his opposition to negotiations, but if Adenauer went along with the American approach, he might swallow his objections rather than risk isolation.¹⁰⁶ The West German Ambassador to Britain told Home his government was not willing to abandon formal links between West Berlin and the Federal Republic, drop its opposition to any schemes for disengagement that would effectively discriminate against Germany, or formally accept the Oder-Neisse line.¹⁰⁷ There were few immediate indications of flexibility on the part of the new West German government, although there it did not object when the four-power Ambassadorial group in Washington concluded the German undertaking of 1954 to refrain from force in the pursuit of reunification or revised borders could be extended so as to cover the Oder-Neisse line, effectively recognizing it.¹⁰⁸ As Khrushchev observed to Kennedy, the United States was constrained from negotiating on the basis of its own preferred course by West German resistance.¹⁰⁹ In his conversations with German officials, Shuckburgh found widespread skepticism about the American proposals, and concluded that, if anything, a more sympathetic stance toward Bonn's intransigence was needed to overcome suspicions of British weakness.¹¹⁰

Macmillan was less appreciative than the Foreign Office of the case for reassuring Adenauer on matters other than Western access to Berlin and the retention of garrisons. When Kennedy remarked that a deal involving *de facto* recognition of the DDR would ask a lot from the Chancellor and give him little, Macmillan replied that Adenauer would gain from reduced tensions and an end to the immediate prospect of war.¹¹¹ Rather than press for German concessions, Home essentially passed the responsibility for squaring Adenauer back to Washington. There were, he observed, points on which the Soviets were likely to be vehement in any negotiation: no German nuclear arms; an end to the political links between Bonn and Berlin; acceptance of the Oder-Neisse line. With luck, the West Germans would show some give. Whether Adenauer was won over to the Anglo-American view would depend mainly, he continued, on the Chancellor's November meeting with Kennedy.¹¹²

The need to reduce the danger of an unsought clash of forces had loomed large in Kennedy's letter to the Chancellor of October 13. While Kennedy had emphasized the firmness of the American commitment in Berlin, he had noted that force reductions in the satellite countries would be in the west's interests. He had also reiterated that non-transfer of nuclear weapons, or materials, information, or knowledge necessary to their production, to

any state that did not possess them, was a long-standing American policy which he had inherited from the previous administration.¹¹³ During their meetings from November 20-22, Kennedy tried to dispel any suspicion on the Chancellor's part that America's pursuit of negotiations was driven by consciousness of nuclear inferiority. He observed that the United States and NATO enjoyed nuclear superiority over the Soviet bloc, a situation that would be less favourable in a few years. As a result, negotiations were likely to produce as good a result, if not a better one, if they were undertaken now rather than later.¹¹⁴ (It seems doubtful that postulating a less favourable nuclear balance in a few years did as much to reassure the Chancellor as Kennedy hoped.) When Kennedy asked him if the ABC (atomic; biological; chemical) renunciation of 1954 remained operative, Adenauer responded that it did, but noted that it had not included any reference to the Soviet Union and its interests, and did not apply to weapons on German soil stockpiled by other members of NATO. A further renunciation under current circumstances would constitute a new undertaking. Yet he stopped short of objecting outright to the informal talks Thompson was conducting in Moscow.¹¹⁵

De Gaulle had made it clear to Kennedy just a few days before the Vienna summit that he did not believe Khrushchev would risk nuclear war in order to seize Berlin. He rejected the central tenet of Acheson's approach, contending that the threat of a rapid escalation to nuclear war was what deterred Khrushchev. Kennedy's argument that conventional forces could defend the city struck him as unconvincing, given the local balance of forces and the city's location. Retreating from the threat of nuclear war by strengthening conventional defenses would make Soviet aggression more likely, he claimed.¹¹⁶ The more recent French insistence that Khrushchev was not prepared to risk war by threatening the Western presence in Berlin, making the *status quo* stable and negotiations unnecessary, struck the British as an attempt by de Gaulle to dissociate himself from any agreement that might offend German sensibilities.¹¹⁷ In the face of Soviet pressure for undertakings against German nuclear weapons, the General told Macmillan, he could not commit France never to help Bonn acquire a nuclear capability.¹¹⁸ As for negotiations, the most he would do, in a December 12 telephone conversation with Kennedy, was concede that Thompson's exchanges with the Soviets could continue in the new year, provided they were understood as purely exploratory. In return he would refrain from denouncing them.¹¹⁹ The administration doubted that he could be induced to go further.¹²⁰

Informal and exploratory as the discussions might be, each superpower sought to strengthen its negotiating hand. At the end of August Khrushchev announced the Soviet Union would resume nuclear tests in the atmosphere. When the British and Americans had presented a proposal to ban all tests, with between 12 and 20 annual on-site negotiations of per signatory per year (the precise number to be determined by the number of otherwise unidentifiable seismic events¹²¹), the Soviets had rejected any treaty to which France was not a signatory, on the grounds that the French could conduct tests on behalf of Britain and the United States.¹²² Not long before the construction of the Wall, Macmillan had been attracted by the idea of linking Soviet acceptance of a test ban treaty that would ease Moscow's fears of a German bomb to Western acceptance of a settlement on Berlin.¹²³ The Foreign Office had cautioned against vehement British advocacy of a treaty in the face of divisions within the American government between proponents and skeptics of a ban, on the grounds that there was little benefit in failing to back any American decision to resume testing in the face of clear Soviet reluctance to negotiate limitations.¹²⁴

With further Soviet tests likely, it proposed a unilateral Anglo-American moratorium of between three and six months provided the Soviets agreed to negotiations in the interim.¹²⁵ Home was emphatic that if Kennedy came down against a new moratorium, Britain would have to go along rather than stick to a position that might jeopardize bilateral defence cooperation and guarantee British isolation in Western councils while the Berlin crisis remained pressing.¹²⁶ Macmillan proposed a six-month moratorium combined with an offer of negotiations. Yet the Soviets had conducted three tests in the first five days of September. Kennedy informed Macmillan that he would not resume testing unless it seemed necessary in military terms. While the American analysis of the Soviet tests would determine if it was necessary for the US to test in return, he expected this would be the case. He doubted that the Soviets would accept a proposed moratorium, and the offer could both raise unrealistic expectations and make the eventual resumption of American tests, should it prove unavoidable, the object of greater controversy.¹²⁷

Among Kennedy's immediate advisers in the NSC and elsewhere, there appears to have been little sense at any point that military requirements dictated an early end to the latest moratorium on testing. It was understood that the longer an uninspected moratorium remained in force, the more likely the Soviets would engage in clandestine testing, and that a resumption of testing would be most useful as a political signal in a crisis like Berlin when,

however, the international opposition would be most intense. Resumed testing was not necessarily a severe blow to American hopes of nonproliferation, since proliferation was seen as likely to occur through transfer of nuclear weapons and technology from current nuclear powers, rather than independent programs to which tests would be central.¹²⁸ Advocates of a test ban within the new Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, however, believed that resumed testing would make the “Nth country problem” worse, weakening the moral and legal sanctions with which the United States discouraged potential new nuclear powers and generating pressure within France and West Germany for either further tests or the transfer of nuclear weapons.¹²⁹ In the French case, of course, it could equally well be argued, and actually was in at least one study by consultants from the RAND Corporation, that clear movement in the direction of a test ban agreement would strengthen de Gaulle’s hand. He would be in a position to demand, through nuclear sharing and American assistance, that which he could not obtain through testing, as the price of French adhesion.¹³⁰

After the Soviets exploded a device with an unprecedented 50-kiloton yield, Kennedy issued a statement that the United States would commence preparations for a new series of tests. While he would not “dismiss the Soviet nuclear tests as mere bluff and bluster”, he emphasized that “in terms of total military strength, the United States would not trade places with any nation on earth.” He asserted that the administration had taken steps in its first year to strengthen America’s overall strategic position and would not relinquish its advantage. America’s total nuclear power, he concluded, was far greater than that of the Soviet Union, and “deployed so as to survive any sneak attack, and thus devastate any nation which initiated a nuclear attack on the United States or its allies.”¹³¹

The administration had already moved to offset any Soviet political gains from the September tests and to assure the European allies that the United States enjoyed a significant nuclear advantage and its nuclear guarantee was, therefore, reliable. In the process, it publicly and definitively broke with Kennedy’s early rhetoric about a “missile gap” and demonstrated that numerical superiority was clearly with the United States.¹³² On October 21, Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric told a gathering of businessmen that the United States was well ahead of the Soviet Union in total nuclear strength, and, with seabased systems like Polaris, in nuclear weaponry that was deployed so as to survive an enemy attack and retaliate. “This nation”, he claimed, “has a nuclear retaliatory force of such lethal power that an enemy move which brought it into play would be an act of self-

destruction.” As for the recent tests, “with the customary Soviet heavy-handedness, the timing has been chosen with one eye on Berlin”, but, he added, the United States, itself capable of conducting tests with larger yields than the Soviet ones, had declined to do so because the military gains were modest. The administration’s promotion of stronger conventional forces in Western Europe did not reflect a loss of confidence in the American nuclear deterrent or fading of nuclear guarantees to the NATO allies. Stronger non-nuclear forces were desirable “so that a potential enemy may not be tempted to steal from under our noses, gambling that we would not call out the weapons of massive nuclear destruction.” Increasing the options available for conventional defence required a buildup of non-nuclear forces, but “it does not rule out the use of tactical nuclear weapons in a limited war if our interests should so require.”¹³³

Administration efforts to dispel suspicions that the United States sought negotiations with Moscow from a position of nuclear inferiority extended to a briefing of Adenauer himself by Henry Kissinger, which emphasized the survivability of systems such as Polaris in the event of a Soviet first strike. At the time, Adenauer seemed pleasantly surprised by the extent of the American advantage.¹³⁴ Yet it would take more than information about the numbers and deployment of American missiles to reassure the West Germans. Bonn’s doubts about American reliability reflected wider strategic and indeed political assessments. As Norstad warned Kennedy, the Germans could not accept a strategy for defending Berlin and Germany that assumed clearly graduated stages, because this might allow the Soviets to seize a city like Hamburg with a rapid thrust, and then call a cease-fire.¹³⁵ Awareness that the weapons existed was no more important than confidence that they would be brought to bear when they could determine the outcome of any confrontation, and this raised questions not only of deployment but of control. It was hardly surprising that Adenauer’s new government would now seize upon the need for MRBMs that Norstad had raised, in order to press for tangible progress on nuclear sharing.

Defence Minister Franz-Joseph Strauss told a Georgetown audience in November 1961 that Soviet pressure on Berlin and Germany was aimed at extracting Western concessions harmful to NATO solidarity. The appropriate deterrent strategy had been clear enough when the United States had a nuclear monopoly, or even an overwhelming advantage in delivery vehicles, but rough nuclear parity between the superpowers, if it had not yet arrived, was imminent. Inevitably, those without nuclear weapons would seem to lack the capacity for

defence against nuclear aggression, and thus the central criterion of sovereignty. Thus the question arose of whether NATO would acquire its own sovereignty “or whether-from the tendency to arrive at a common power of decision-the deterrent has not developed from a *force de frappe* into a *farce de frappe*, as there are 15 fingers on the trigger.” Since NATO’s non-nuclear members were effectively defenceless without nuclear weapons at their disposal, but there were legitimate political objections to further proliferation, “a system of guarantees and formulas must be found which will give to the small and medium partners in NATO the consciousness and the role of partnership.” Whatever the configuration of the arrangements that were ultimately made, they would “demand in every case a certain abandonment of national rights and a legal diminution of sovereignty which from a technical point of view has long been diminished, if it has not been abolished.”¹³⁶ The government subsequently tabled in the *Bundestag* a statement of policy affirming the need to develop a NATO striking force as soon as possible, “so as to raise the defensive powers of the forces in NATO to the same level of technology as any one opponent.” By requesting the formation of such a force, the West German government “weakens at the same time any reproach of wishing to obtain atomic weapons for her own use. The Federal Government has never raised this demand.”¹³⁷

A few weeks later, Bundy responded by publicly reiterating that Kennedy’s address at Ottawa had set out a position of support for a sea-based NATO force, and a willingness to commit American Polaris submarines to it. He reiterated the official line that nuclear weapons alone did not meet all contingencies and “Europe...has a need to look strongly to its self-defense, in the levels of force below the nuclear threshold.” Yet he also acknowledged, in discussing nuclear armaments, the “clear and growing concern in Europe as to whether these dispositions will be fully responsive to European needs and desires.” While the immediate emergency around Berlin had preoccupied officials in all governments for much of 1961, the administration still believed that steps toward a collective force were “both important and possible.”

Under the current distribution of power, he argued, the United States was “the only great power, in the full 20th century sense, on the side of freedom.” British history and ties to the Commonwealth, the personal authority de Gaulle imparted to the leadership of France, and West Germany’s economic revival, were all noteworthy, but “these voices speak in the context of levels of power which simply do not compare with those of the United States and the Soviet Union, and the difference inevitably affects the discourse.” The imbalance of

power, and the “partial dependency” it entailed were not good for “the pride or the judgment of free men.” Moreover, “when one power is very much stronger than its allies, there is an unhealthy tendency to seek special and unique connections at the major center.” A more equal partnership between America and Europe, he continued, was in the interests of the United States as well as its major allies, and the demographic and economic resources of Western Europe were sufficient to make it a great power in its own right, could its political divisions be overcome. “The European destiny does now require a new political community”, and the United States welcomed such early steps as the increasing harmony between Paris and Bonn, although “it is of course a hazardous business to predict the form of political relationship which the United States might have with an entity which is only now beginning to come into existence.”¹³⁸

Nitze had cautioned against active encouragement of a NATO nuclear force, noting that in the previous discussion of such a force, “there has never been a coherent description-to take one critical example-of a feasible and sensible process for deciding to go war under such circumstances.” The American offer to consider any proposals put forth by the allies for command and control arrangements “was simply a graceful way of getting us off the hook. If we now press our allies to come up with a solution to this insoluble problem, we will only get back on the hook again.” At the very least, he argued, further internal debate was appropriate before the United States appeared to be engaged in active promotion of the Ottawa proposal. There were, after all, good reasons that the allies had not come forward with any ideas of their own. “Why isn’t it desirable to treat the offer as lapsed?” he asked.

The notion that internal political divisions alone stood between Western Europe and potential future status as a great power was “surely true, and not quite a tautology”, but if they were easily removed Europe would already be a great power in its own right. “It is most unlikely”, Nitze suggested, “that Western Europe in any near future will achieve the sort of undivided sovereignty over the command of nuclear power which is needed as one condition to resist Soviet pressure.” As a result, the Europeans would depend on American nuclear guarantees for some considerable time, and to suggest otherwise was to not only deceive them but to deceive oneself. He suspected that “many of the American supporters of a unified Western Europe subconsciously seek to escape by this means from the unpleasant realities of today’s world and the heavy responsibility of defending Europe.” Encouraging mutual dependence among all members of the Atlantic world was preferable to investing heavily in

the creation of a separate great power in Europe, and more compatible with the long-run interests of the Americans and of the European allies, “who will be increasingly disturbed by any indication that we are ‘contracting out’ of the defense of Europe.”

Emphasis on a European rather than Atlantic community also raised the prospect of more discrimination by a united Europe against goods from elsewhere, rather than freer trade within the non-Communist world as a whole. As for the respective role of nuclear and non-nuclear weapons in Europe’s defence, it was important to keep in mind that the credibility of the nuclear deterrent was greater “if we have the capability to respond to Soviet non-nuclear provocations with significant non-nuclear action.” Increasingly destructive conventional hostilities conveyed American determination and this, combined with the fact that the Western political stake in Berlin was larger than that of the Soviet bloc, would lead the Soviets to accept political accommodation rather than risk escalation to general war.¹³⁹

The form that any additional nuclear force might take was, of course, a point on which Kennedy could appeal to Soviet fears, reminding Khrushchev early in the new year that continued uncertainty around Berlin and the danger of renewed aggression tended to stoke whatever French and German desires for an independent nuclear capability existed as well as encourage resistance to diplomatic accommodation.¹⁴⁰ Despite his reluctance to resume nuclear testing, Kennedy remained willing to do so in order to strengthen his own negotiating position and reassure the European allies. This also created opportunities for Macmillan to seek further bilateral atomic cooperation, since the United States lacked an appropriate site for the proposed tests. Atmospheric testing in Nevada was likely to arouse public concern, and Eniwetok, previously used for such tests, was now under UN administration. The administration hoped to use the British site at Christmas Island.¹⁴¹ Macmillan in turn sought American permission to test the warhead for Skybolt in Nevada, which he defended as not only technically helpful but a display of alliance solidarity that would not be lost on the Soviets.¹⁴²

When the two leaders met at Bermuda in late December, Macmillan expressed agreement in principle to a resumption of testing, but argued for strenuous diplomacy to remove the need. Kennedy indicated that he could not accept any initiative that would merely postpone resumed testing.¹⁴³ Macmillan recurred to his past advocacy of *de facto* tripartism and his first suggestion was for a summit of the nuclear powers, including France. To obtain de Gaulle’s signature on any agreement, he suggested, France should be allowed to conduct

underground tests for some time after an agreement was reached. The nuclear powers might hold regular summits thereafter.¹⁴⁴ Home, more cautious than Macmillan, wanted any diplomatic initiative to be low-key and limited to discussion of resumed testing, and not take the form of a four-power summit that might try to settle such weighty issues as the fate of Berlin and Germany.¹⁴⁵

Macmillan then shifted to a less grandiose variant of his proposal, suggesting that he and Kennedy invite Khrushchev to send Gromyko to a meeting of the foreign ministers of the nuclear powers prior to the opening of the scheduled Eighteen Nation Disarmament Conference (ENDC) in Geneva. This would discuss the requirements for a permanent test ban, seek consensus on interim disarmament measures, and include a collective declaration to refrain from disseminating nuclear weapons or information to non-nuclear states.¹⁴⁶ Kennedy informed the new British Ambassador in Washington, David Ormsby-Gore, that he had no objection to sending the proposed invitation to Khrushchev, but doubted the suggested meeting of foreign ministers would achieve much.¹⁴⁷ He replied to Macmillan that he was open to his ideas, regardless of the final British decision on the use of Christmas Island or the American one on testing.¹⁴⁸ Kennedy and Macmillan did send a joint message to Khrushchev, but in his reply he said nothing about the proposed meeting of foreign ministers, saying only that the leaders of the participating powers should take an active part in the ENDC deliberations.¹⁴⁹

Kennedy ultimately decided, as he informed Ormsby-Gore on February 27, to announce resumed testing as of April 15 unless the Soviets agreed to a ban with effective provisions for inspection beforehand.¹⁵⁰ His formal notification of Macmillan noted that he would make the announcement on March 1, leaving Macmillan little room to try to modify a decision which, in the end, he was bound to support.¹⁵¹ Kennedy's broadcast noted that further testing was required in part to reassure American allies. "If they felt we could be swayed by threats or intimidation", he said, "if they thought we would permit a repetition of last year's deception—surely they would lose faith in our will and our wisdom as well as our weaponry."¹⁵² There was little opposition abroad, as Galbraith, a skeptic about the benefits of resumed tests, conceded. Kennedy had "obviously responded to the Soviet initiative with reluctance" and "we have managed to keep in sight the simple fact that the Russians did it first."¹⁵³

With the matter of nuclear testing apparently settled for the moment, deliberations within the administration on nuclear questions would turn more to the prospect of a NATO nuclear

force. If the greater importance the MLF would assume in administration policy was a function of de Gaulle's increasingly overt obstructionism in NATO and regarding the EEC in the latter half of 1962,¹⁵⁴ in the early part of the year it emerged as an element of the American effort to reassure the allies, with Berlin still seen as under threat. Of course, the shift to a less active stance at Ottawa had not ended all internal discussion.

Acheson remained skeptical of the proposal for an MRBM force, noting that it would only be employed in the event of a general war, but that such a war would ultimately be decided by events outside the European theater. He had advised Kennedy against proceeding with such a force because it would detract from the creation of European conventional forces capable of repelling localized attacks to which external forces could not respond. Active promotion of an MRBM force would undermine the administration's efforts to persuade the European allies to spend more on non-nuclear arms. They would doubt that the overriding need for stronger conventional forces "was our premise, since we were not acting on it." There was no pressing need to press for such a force, given British opposition, the difficulty of accommodating the French in regard to the custody of warheads, and Bonn's dislike of either antagonizing other NATO members by agreeing to deployment on German soil or suffering discrimination by declining to host the missiles while they were deployed elsewhere. There was no need, he concluded, to go beyond the present commitment on Polaris submarines. A Polaris force "would-at least for a very long time-be in American hands so that it could not be seized and odd things done with it." Washington would be in a position to say to the allies "Here it is; it is there for your defense; we will not take it away. If you do not have any confidence in us, why we can't give it to you any other way." If the Europeans were of another view, "that is for them to say. If they say so with force and unanimity, this would be a matter to consider seriously."¹⁵⁵

The State Department consensus held that it was unwise to force the question of how any MRBM force would be organized by any early shift in policy. The stance Kennedy had approved, of opposing the deployment of MRBMs with national forces in Europe, while holding out the prospect of a multilateral seaborne force and building on the commitment of US Polaris submarines to NATO, was the only way of avoiding two problematic options for land-based deployment. The first of these, deploying MRBMs only with American forces, would exacerbate European concerns about American nuclear predominance in NATO. The other, deploying them with European national forces, would be a significant step towards the

creation of additional national deterrents. The missiles would be capable of reaching targets inside the USSR, and neither their commitment to NATO nor physical safeguards would prevent their diversion to national purposes by a determined government at the head of a technologically sophisticated state. "It would be more difficult to maintain the cohesion of an integrated Europe and the Atlantic Community in the face of widespread awareness that several NATO countries now had the means of independently initiating strategic attack on the USSR", not least because the Soviets would take the opportunity to stoke allied fears, and would argue that such deployment effectively nullified any non-diffusion agreement. Since France was unlikely to insist on assistance to its national nuclear program in return for accepting MRBMs, German deployments would be all the more important if the force were to make any military sense. In the long run, a seabased force was preferable, because the host states for any landbased one were likely to demand that some weapons be available to their national forces, and it was less vulnerable to host-state seizure.¹⁵⁶ Yet as the end of 1961 approached, further, and consequential, discussions of NATO's nuclear dispositions were to come.

Notes

1. Desmond Ball, Politics and Force Levels: The Strategic Missile Program of the Kennedy Administration (Berkeley; University of California Press, 1980), pp. 95-102. On Kennedy's use of the "missile gap" in the 1960 election, see Christopher Preble, John F. Kennedy and the Missile Gap (Dekalb; Northern Illinois University Press, 2004).
2. By this point, the American arsenal included more than 1,600 strategic bombers, more than 60 Atlas ICBMs, and 80 Polaris missiles. See Andreas Wenger, Living with Peril: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Nuclear Weapons (Lanham; Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), p.243. On the Eisenhower-era roots of the buildup, see Peter J. Roman, Eisenhower and the Missile Gap (Ithaca; Cornell University Press, 1995).
3. Wenger, op cit, p. 243.
4. R. Craig Nation, Black Earth, Red Star: A History of Soviet Security Policy, 1917-1991 (Ithaca; Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 210-211.
5. Moscow to Foreign Office, Tel. 1822, December 26 1960, PREM 11 / 3996, TNA.
6. "Concerning a German Peace Treaty and Related Matters", Feb. 17 1961, pp. 635-41 of United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Documents on Germany (Washington; GPO, 1961).
7. Kennedy interview with John Fischer, in Kennedy, The Strategy of Peace, edited by Allan Nevins (New York: Dodd, Mead; 1959), pp. 212-214.
8. See his "Wishing Won't Hold Berlin", *Saturday Evening Post*, March 7 1959, pp. 32-33 and 85-86.
9. Acheson to Felix Frankfurter, December 12 1958, p. 152 of Among Friends: Personal Letters of Dean Acheson, edited by David S. McLellan and David C. Acheson (New York; Dodd, Mead, 1980).
10. Acheson memorandum of April 3 1961, "Berlin", f. UK Security Policy (2), Box 127a, President's Office Files (POF), JFKL.
11. Bundy memorandum for Kennedy, April 4 1961, idem.
12. Moscow to State Department, February 9 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIV, p. 3
13. Memorandum of conversation, April 5 1961, *ibid*, p. 40.
14. Memorandum by Home and Watkinson, May 1 1961, D(61)24, CAB 131/25.
15. Macmillan to Caccia, T237 / 61, April 24 1961, PREM 11 / 3316.
16. Memorandum of conversation, June 3 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. 14, 77-86.
17. Memorandum of conversation, June 4 1961, *ibid*, pp. 87-98. Soviet *aide-memoire*, June 4 1961, Documents on Germany, pp. 642-646.
18. As argued by Georg Schild, "The Berlin Crisis", in Mark J. White, ed., Kennedy: The New Frontier Revisited (New York: New York University Press, 1998), pp. 91-131, 96.
19. "Note of Points made during the Private Discussion between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Macmillan at Admiralty House on June 5", June 8 1961, f. UK Security Policy (3), Box 127a, POF, JFKL.
20. Douglas Hurd memorandum of conversation at Admiralty House, June 5 1961, FO 371 / 161201.
21. Broadcast by Kennedy, June 6 1961, Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy: 1961 (PPP:1961), (Washington; GPO, 1962), pp.441-446.
22. Schild, op cit. pp. 103-104.
23. Genl. Lyman Lemnitzer to McNamara, April 18 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. VIII, p. 74. As David Alan Rosenberg writes, the technology enabling missiles to be rapidly retargeted did not yet exist, one of the reasons that American operational war plans changed less during this decade than statements of official doctrine would imply. See his "Reality and

- Responsibility: Power and Process in the Making of United States Nuclear Strategy, 1945-1968", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. IX (1986), pp. 35-52.
24. McNamara to Kennedy, May 5 1961, "Military Planning for a Possible Berlin Crisis", *FRUS, 1961-1963*, Vol. XIV, pp. 61-65.
25. As summarized by Shuckburgh in Washington to Foreign Office, Tel 1454, June 16 1961, FO 371 / 160536.
26. Shuckburgh's Notes for the Secretary of State's meeting with the Prime Minister, June 22 1961, *ibid*.
27. Watkinson memorandum, "UK views on NATO Strategy and Nuclear Weapons", May 1 1961, D(61)23, CAB 131 / 25.
28. Home memorandum, "Berlin", July 26 1961, C(61)116, CAB 129 / 106.
29. Caccia to Macmillan, July 7 1961, PREM 11 / 3616.
30. As argued by John P.S. Gearson, *Harold Macmillan and the Berlin Wall Crisis, 1958-1962: The Limits of Interests and Force* (London; Macmillan / King's College, 1998), pp. 170-172, and R. Gerald Hughes, *Britain, Germany and the Cold War: The Search for a European Détente, 1949-1967* (London; Routledge, 2007), pp. 93-97.
31. Acheson report of June 28 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, Vol. XIV, pp. 138-159, esp. p. 155.
32. NSAM No. 58, June 30 1961, *ibid*, 162-165.
33. Schlesinger to Kennedy, July 7 1961, *ibid*, 173-175.
34. Taylor memo for Kennedy, "Actions Agreed at the Discussions at Hyannis Port (sic), 8 July 1961", July 12 1961, *ibid*, p. 186.
35. Minutes of NSC meeting of July 13 1961, *ibid*, pp. 192-194.
36. Kissinger memorandum to Bundy, "Negotiations", July 14 1961, f. Germany-Berlin, General, Country Files (CF), Box 81, NSF, JFKL.
37. Bundy to Theodore Sorensen, July 22 1961, *idem*.
38. Record of meeting on Berlin, July 17 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, Vol. XIV, pp. 209-212.
39. Memorandum by Bundy, July 19 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, Vol. XIV, pp. 219-220.
40. As noted by Wenger, *op cit*, pp. 213-214.
41. *Ibid*, pp. 214-215, and Lawrence Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 69.
42. Broadcast of July 25 1961, *PPP:1961*, pp. 534-540.
43. Memorandum of meeting, July 27 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, VIII, p. 123.
44. Schelling memorandum, July 5 1961, "Nuclear Strategy in the Berlin Crisis", *ibid*, Vol. XIV, pp. 170-172.
45. Campbell Craig, *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Thermonuclear War* (New York; Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 157.
46. Freedman, *op cit*, pp. 100-101.
47. Macmillan to Home, July 31 1961, FO 371 / 160542, TNA.
48. Home to Macmillan, August 3 1961, *idem*.
49. Home memorandum. "Berlin", July 26 1961, C(61)116, CAB 129 / 106.
50. Record of meeting of foreign ministers at Quai d'Orsay, August 5 1961, *idem*. See also the American record in *FRUS, 1961-1963*, Vol. XIV, pp. 269-280.
51. Minute of meeting, August 9 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, Vol. XIV, 321-4.
52. State Department to Bonn, July 22 1961, App. B, pp. 113-117, of John C. Ausland, *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Berlin-Cuba Crisis, 1961-1964* (Oslo; Scandinavian University Press, 1996).
53. News conference of August 10 1961, *PPP:1961*, pp. 553-561, esp. p. 557. That Kennedy agreed with Fulbright's sentiment is clear enough from his refusal to disavow it and his

subsequent actions, but I have found no documentary evidence that the Senator concerted his remarks with the administration. It is, however, interesting that in the later crisis over Cuba, Kennedy would make contingency plans for a third party to propose a solution he was not prepared to offer in the first instance himself.

54. State Department to Bonn, August 12 1961, Deptel 339, App. C., pp. 118-119 of Ausland, op cit.

55. Freedman, op cit, p. 76.

56. Rusk statement of August 13 1961, App. D, pp. 121-122 of Ausland, op cit.

57. Minutes of meeting of Berlin Steering Group, August 15 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIV, 332-334.

58. Bundy to Kennedy, August 14 1961, *ibid*, 331.

59. Steel to Foreign Office, Tel. 781, August 14 1961, FO 371 / 160509, TNA.

60. Macmillan to Kennedy, in Foreign Office to Washington, Tel. 5877, August 27 1961, FO 371 / 160544.

61. Bennett (Bonn) to Buxton (Central Department), August 18 1961, FO 371 / 160505.

62. Berlin Mission to State Department, August 16 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIV, p. 343.

63. Record of Steering Group Meeting, August 17 1961, *ibid*, pp. 347-349.

64. Kissinger memorandum to Bundy, August 18 1961, f. Germany-Berlin-General, CF, Box 82, NSF, JFKL.

65. Kaysen memorandum to Bundy, August 22 1961, f. Staff Memoranda by Carl Kaysen, 6/61-8/61, Meetings and Memoranda (MM), Box 320, NSF, JFKL.

66. Brandt to Kennedy, August 16 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963 Vol. XIV, pp. 345-346.

67. Murrow to Wilson, in Berlin to State Department, August 16 1961, pp. 339-341, *ibid*.

68. Kennedy to Brandt, August 18 1961, *ibid*, p. 352.

69. Washington to Foreign Office, Tel. 1938, August 15 1961, FO 371 / 160510, TNA.

70. Macmillan to Kennedy, in Foreign Office to Washington, Tel. 5634, August 18 1961, *idem*.

71. Home to Macmillan, September 15 1961, FO 371 / 160551.

72. Shuckburgh to Brook, August 15 1961, FO 371 / 160541.

73. Freedman, op cit, p. 79.

74. Arne Hofmann, The Emergence of Détente in Europe: Brandt, Kennedy and the Formation of Ostpolitik (London; Routledge, 2007), p. 45.

75. Rusk instructions to Kennan, August 14 1961, App. E, pp. 124-125 of Ausland, op cit.

76. Kennedy to Rusk, August 21 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIV, pp. 359-61.

77. Steel to Shuckburgh, August 25 1961, FO 371 / 160549, TNA.

78. Home memo, "Berlin", September 1 1961, C(61)132, CAB 129 / 106.

79. Foreign Office to Washington, Tel. 6284, September 7 1961, FO 371 / 160549.

80. As summarized in Kennedy to Rusk, September 12 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIV, pp. 359-360.

81. Nehru to Macmillan, September 12 1961, in Macmillan, Pointing the Way, 1959-1961 (London; Macmillan, 1972), pp. 398-399.

82. Galbraith to Kennedy, September 15 1961, pp. 83-86 of his Letters to Kennedy, edited by James Goodman (Cambridge, MA.; Harvard University Press, 1998).

83. Address to UN General Assembly, September 25 1961, PPP: 1961, pp. 618-626.

84. Home to Macmillan, in Washington Tel. 2414, September 15 1961, FO 371 / 160551.

85. Kaysen memorandum for Kennedy, September 22 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, microfiche supplement (mic. supp.) for Vols. XIV-XVI, doc. 182.

86. Kennedy to McNamara and Rusk, September 8 1961, *ibid*, Vol. XIV, pp. 398-399.
87. McNamara memorandum to Kennedy, September 18 1961, National Security Archive microfiche collection, The Berlin Crisis, 1958-1962 (Washington; Chadwyck-Healy, 1998), doc. 2484.
88. Craig, *op cit*, pp. 140-141.
89. Norstad to McNamara, September 16 1961, Berlin Crisis, 1958-1962, doc. 2482.
90. Record of meeting, October 10 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIV, pp. 487-489.
91. Lemnitzer to Kennedy, September 27 1961, *ibid*, Vol. VIII, pp. 152-153.
92. Record of meeting, October 20 1961, *ibid*, Vol. XIV, pp. 517-518.
93. Craig, *op cit*, p. 151.
94. Francis J. Gavin, "The Myth of Flexible Response: United States Strategy in Europe during the 1960s", *International History Review*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (December 2001), pp. 847-875.
95. As argued by Freedman, *op cit*, pp. 110-111.
96. *Idem*.
97. Wenger, *op cit*, pp. 246-247.
98. Freedman, *op cit*, p. 111.
99. Bonn to Foreign Office, Tel. 1035, October 6 1961, FO 371 / 160555, TNA.
100. As summarized in Acland to de Zulueta, August 15 1961, FO 371 / 160543.
101. Home memo, "Political Situation after the West German Elections", October 6 1961, C(61)154, CAB 129 / 107.
102. Annual Review for 1961, by Christopher Steel, January 2 1962, FO 371 / 163527.
103. Home to Washington, Tel. 7190, October 5 1961, FO 371 / 160555. For an interpretation of the Wall's construction as a retreat by Khrushchev from the risk of hostilities over interruption of Western access, see Jeremi Suri, Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 34.
104. Bundy memorandum for Kennedy, October 2 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIV, pp. 460-461.
105. Memorandum of conversation, October 6 1961, *ibid*, pp. 468-480.
106. Record of conversation between the Prime Minister and President Kennedy, October 6 1961, FO 371 / 160555, TNA.
107. Memorandum of conversation with Ambassador von Etzdorf, October 23 1961, FO 371 / 160558.
108. Home memorandum, "Berlin", November 21, 1961, Annex A "Paper on the Western Ambassadorial Meeting in Washington", November 14 1961, C(61)184, CAB 129 / 107.
109. Khrushchev to Kennedy, November 9 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIV, pp. 567-580.
110. Shuckburgh to Home, October 22 1961, FO 371 / 160559.
111. Record of telephone conversation, November 9 1961, FO 371 / 160562.
112. Home memorandum, "Berlin", November 21 1961, C(61)184, CAB 129 / 107.
113. Kennedy to Adenauer, October 13 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIV, pp. 493-497.
114. Memorandum of conversation with Adenauer, November 20 1961, *ibid*, pp. 590-595.
115. Memorandum of conversation, November 22 1961, *ibid*, pp. 620-632.
116. Memorandum of conversation with de Gaulle, May 31 1961, *ibid*, pp. 81-83.
117. Foreign Office Brief for Cabinet Meeting, October 25 1961, FO 371 / 160557, TNA.
118. Macmillan conversation with de Gaulle, as summarized in Foreign Office to Washington, Tel. 8711, November 27 1961, FO 371 / 160565.
119. Memorandum of telephone conversation with de Gaulle, December 12 1961, FRUS,

1961-1963, Vol. XIV, pp. 679-681.

120. Memorandum of conversation between Home and Rusk, December 19 1961, FO 371 / 160567.

121. Brooke-Turner minute of May 30 1961, FO 371 / 157094.

122. UK Delegation in Geneva to Foreign Office, Tel. 20, May 18 1961, PREM 11 / 3590.

123. Macmillan to Kennedy (draft), July 1961, PREM 11 / 3591.

124. Foreign Office memo., "Nuclear Tests Negotiations", June 9 1961, FO 371 / 157117.

125. Foreign Office to UK Delegation at the UN, Tel. 4000, September 20 1961, PREM 11 / 3592.

126. Home to Macmillan, October 14 1961, *idem*.

127. Record of telephone conversation between the Prime Minister and President Kennedy, October 27 1961, *idem*.

128. Memo. from Robert Komer to Bundy, May 22 1961, "Test Ban Issues", f. Disarmament N/T Policy, Vol. II 1961, Box 79, RG 359 (Executive Office of the President, Office of Science and Technology), NARA.

129. Marcus Raskin memorandum for Bundy, June 16 1961, "Arguments which Militate Against Resumption of Nuclear Tests", encls. in Raskin to Jerome Wiesner, June 26 1961, *idem*.

130. "The Accession of Other Nations to the Nuclear Test Ban", by Ciro Zoppo with the collaboration of Alice Hsieh, March 8 1961, RM-2730-ARPA, encls. in Dabney to Gullion, March 31 1961, f. Disarmament N/T Rand, *idem*.

131. Statement by the President concerning the Development and Testing of Nuclear Weapons, November 2 1961, PPP: 1961, pp. 692-693.

132. On the significance of the departure see, for example, Wenger, *op cit*, pp. 241-242.

133. "Present Defense Policies and Program", address to the Business Council, October 21 1961, *Vital Speeches of the Day*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4, December 1 1961, pp. 98-99.

134. As noted in Bonn to State Department, February 17 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIV, pp. 824-827.

135. Memorandum of conversation between Kennedy and Norstad, November 9 1961, *ibid*, pp. 555-557.

136. Strauss address at Georgetown University, November 27 1961, pp. 139-146 of Documents on International Affairs, 1961, ed. by D.C. Watt (Oxford and London; Oxford University Press / Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1965).

137. Extract from Statement in the *Bundestag*, November 29 1961, *ibid*, pp. 146-150.

138. Speech to Economic Club of Chicago, December 6 1961, "Policy for the Western Alliance: Berlin and After", f. Government Consulting, Skybolt / NATO, 1954-66; Box 19a, Papers of Richard E. Neustadt, JFKL.

139. Nitze to Bundy, December 1 1961, *idem*.

140. Kennedy to Khrushchev, February 15 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIV, pp. 819-822.

141. Kendrick Oliver, Kennedy, Macmillan and the Nuclear Test-Ban Debate, 1961-1963 (London; Macmillan / King's College, 1998), pp. 41-43.

142. Macmillan to Khrushchev, November 3 1961, PREM 11 / 3246, TNA.

143. Record of meeting in Government House, Bermuda, on Thursday, 21st December 1961, at 5:15 p.m., Annex to "The Prime Minister's Visit to Bermuda, 20-23rd December 1961", PREM 11 / 3782.

144. Kennedy to Macmillan, December 29 1961, PREM 11 / 3246.

145. Home to Macmillan, December 31 1961, FO 371 / 16113.

146. Macmillan to Kennedy, January 5 1962, PREM 11 / 3782.

147. Washington to Foreign Office, Tel. 135, January 13 1962, FO 371 / 16113.
148. Kennedy to Macmillan, January 13 1962, *idem.* Oliver, pp. 68-69 plausibly suggests Kennedy was intent on separating the outcome of any meeting at Geneva from the resumption of testing, lest the former be tacitly accepted as a constraint on the latter.
149. Macmillan and Kennedy to Khrushchev, February 7 1962, PREM 11 / 4041; Khrushchev to Macmillan and Kennedy, February 10 1962, PREM 11 / 4042.
150. Washington to Foreign Office, February 27 1962, Tel. 630, FO 371 / 163115.
151. Kennedy to Macmillan, February 27 1962, *idem.* Oliver, pp. 82-83, notes the short notice.
152. Kennedy broadcast "Nuclear Testing and Disarmament", March 2 1962, PPP:1962 (Washington; 1963), pp. 186-193 (p. 189)
153. Galbraith to Kennedy, May 7 1962, Galbraith, *op cit*, pp. 103-105.
154. As noted in, e.g., Jeffrey Glen Giauque, Grand Designs and Visions of Unity: The Atlantic Powers and the Reorganization of Western Europe, 1955-1963 (Chapel Hill; University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pp. 112-113; and Oliver Bange, The EEC Crisis of 1963: Kennedy, Macmillan, de Gaulle and Adenauer in Conflict (London; Palgrave, 2000), pp. 234-235.
155. Acheson to McNamara, July 19 1961, "MRBMs", f. MLF General 1 / 61 – 6 / 62, Regional Security Files (RSF) Box 216, NSF Box 211-216, JFKL.
156. "MRBMs", memo by Foy Kohler and George McGhee to Rusk, October 27 1961, encls. in McGhee to Rusk, October 27 1961, *idem.*

Chapter Seven: Athens to Philadelphia

On December 28th, Rusk and McNamara directed the formation of a joint Pentagon-State Department group, including Bowie, Kaysen, Kohler, and Nitze, to consider NATO's nuclear role, including MRBMs, in anticipation of intensified pressure for discussion at the May meeting of the NAC in Athens. In the group's discussions, Nitze was insistent that any proposal that might lead to an independent European nuclear force able to initiate general war was bound to end in an American withdrawal from Europe, particularly if this force were not under a US veto. In Kohler's eyes, the central questions were whether two nuclear forces, one American and one European, would have a greater deterrent effect than one, and whether the use of a European force would trigger a war from which the United States would be unable to stand aloof. He answered both questions in the affirmative. Bowie, Kohler, and Henry Owen of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff all favoured discussion of a possible European force, though without commitment to a final goal. The options for greater European involvement ranged from discussion of guidelines for nuclear use within NAC, through the commitment of US-manned and -owned forces to SACEUR, and the formation of jointly-owned and mixed-manned forces, operating without an American veto (assigned to SACEUR or placed under an alternative European command mechanism). All should be open for consideration with the Europeans, ending at the point in the process where European needs had been met. If discussions followed that path, "the problem of British and French forces will disappear, because their owners will see their essential irrelevance." Nitze, Kaysen suggested, went astray by focusing solely on European concerns over the adequacy of the deterrent as a whole, and thereby tended to think they could be eased by increased consultation in NATO.¹

Kaysen raised the question of whether a European force not subject to a US veto could initiate a war when the United States was not prepared to enter one, and under unfavourable circumstances. If it were structured as a second-strike force, aimed at targets agreed upon by Europeans and Americans through joint planning under NAC auspices, and not as a first-strike one, then it would augment the overall deterrent effect of NATO nuclear capabilities without impeding the conduct of a well-planned nuclear war. The key would be getting the Europeans to share American thinking about nuclear targeting, and reassuring them that the targets of particular concern to European governments would in fact be attacked. Any force which the Europeans could employ without a formal US veto "makes it possible for them to

throw the carefully thought out and well-planned – we hope – lessons on targeting into the ash can and do something irresponsible which damages them and us.” But “it is hard to conceive of any arrangement which doesn’t have this capability for mischief except one in which there are no nuclear forces in Europe at all.” It was arguable that nothing short of a veto-free force which the Europeans could use for a first strike would provide them with the political reassurance they desired. “What they want”, Kaysen suggested, “is not now clearly determined, but will come about as a result of the style and substance of our discussions with them.” One major advantage of a seabased MRBM force based on Polaris was that its survivability made it an ideal second-strike weapon, without the accuracy and ease of simultaneous launch that a first-strike role required.²

As the group noted, Norstad had convinced many Europeans, including a number in Bonn, that NATO’s present strategic doctrine, which presupposed the willingness to use nuclear weapons at an early stage of any conflict, could not be effective without a great many MRBMs. The State and Defense departments were agreed on the need to educate the Europeans into accepting the new American thinking, under which NATO should be capable of responding by non-nuclear means to limited aggression, with nuclear weapons in reserve to deter expansion of hostilities; this approach did not require large numbers of MRBMs in Europe but did require stronger European conventional forces. The military need for expanded coverage of Soviet targets threatening Europe was not immediate, but the political need to increase NATO cohesion was pressing.

Measures to educate the Europeans, such as more information on the American deterrent and greater participation for its use were only likely to meet allied concerns if the administration made clear it was prepared to take further steps should the allies want them taken. Therefore the administration should follow up on Kennedy’s Ottawa speech by indicating it would progressively commit seabased MRBMs to NATO under any guidelines NAC could agree regarding their use, and was prepared to take part in a multilaterally owned and manned seaborne force if the allies wanted this and could agree on a control formula. “It is essential”, the group concluded, “that the Europeans should decide for themselves, instead of our holding them back. To make this politically possible, they must have before them a clear indication of US willingness to proceed with the whole package, if they desire.” The pressures for national programs as an alternative to nuclear sharing would determine how far the allies ultimately proceeded with an Ottawa force; “the package is thus only likely to be

executed in the degree needed to head off these programs.” Any control formula was likely to divide questions of use into two categories. In clearly specified contingencies, such as a large nuclear attack on the NATO area, authority to launch might be predelegated to an individual or group to release the force into SACEUR’s custody. In all other cases, the formula might provide for decision by unanimity or a specified group of NATO members, including the US. If NATO conventional forces were built up to adequate levels, “there would be time for such a collective procedure to work, since there would not be a need for instantaneous nuclear response to non-nuclear attack. Our allies would be highly unlikely to press for US exclusion from such a collective procedure.” The administration should indicate that while current US law did not permit a transfer of control, it would support any control formula upon which NAC could agree.

While it was unlikely a majority of NATO members would ever agree on a control formula without a US veto, “to indicate explicitly to our allies from the outset...that any possibility of ever considering such an arrangement was excluded would gravely weaken the political effects of the proposals.” The resulting debate in NATO would focus on the veto, and possibly “so stimulate European doubts and pressures as ultimately to force us to the very choice which we want to avoid: between accepting some veto-free form of multilateral control and standing aside and allowing a series of veto-free national forces to develop.” The proposed course, on the other hand, would allow proponents and opponents of veto-free arrangements to debate between themselves, with little chance of the former prevailing. This would also maximize the political impact of the concept, and leave the United States free to decide the question of a veto, should it arise, in light of the prevailing circumstances. American willingness to not only support such a force but take part in it and commit much of its own nuclear arsenal would undercut any contention that it entailed the decoupling of European and American defence. It would be “dramatic evidence of our unconditional commitment to the defense of Europe.” Above all, facing up to the need for decisions on how the force worked would ease concerns that it was merely American insistence, and not the inherent complexities and risks, that determined how NATO’s nuclear weapons were controlled.³

NATO Secretary-General Dirk Stikker warned Rusk that the situation around Berlin was encouraging a more assertively nationalist stance in Bonn. Even Adenauer was, for the first time, “throwing Germany’s weight around.” No successor, Stikker suggested, would be

capable of containing resurgent nationalism, and some means of accommodating German concerns over nuclear defence had to be found within NATO while he was still in a position to exert a restraining influence. In conversation with Rusk, he agreed with the Secretary that no NATO member would ask the United States to go to war right away if access to Berlin were suddenly interrupted, but there was uncertainty as to how far the Americans would allow hostilities to progress and the situation to deteriorate before resorting to nuclear weapons. There was “something of a paradox” in which “if the Europeans are not sure that the US will use nuclear weapons and are not certain that we will maintain and improve those weapons that now exist in Europe, they will not agree to a conventional build-up”, to which they would be amenable if they were reassured about the American nuclear commitment.⁴ Stikker agreed with Bowie and Kaysen in rejecting Norstad’s view that creation of an Ottawa force should be regarded as a separate matter from modernizing existing forces to meet NATO’s MRBM requirements. Instead, he believed, it was the appropriate vehicle for meeting any such need, which had to be seen primarily as a political one insofar as programmed forces already covered targets of concern to the Europeans.⁵

In subsequent discussions, the two departments agreed to recommend proceeding with a 200-missile program to Kennedy, although there were significant differences. Despite its grave doubts about the military utility of the proposed force, the Pentagon was prepared to accept it for political reasons, and to break with Norstad’s support of a land-based force rather than a seaborne one. There was agreement on the need for mixed-manning, multilateral ownership and control, with the Europeans bearing much of the cost of the new force. Existing national forces should be committed, including Britain’s V-bombers, but these could be withdrawn for national use, as under current arrangements. A new NATO command, distinct from SACEUR and SACLANT, was desirable. McNamara agreed with Nitze that the United States should retain a veto in any force and that internal agreement on the point should be reached before the proposal was made. Kaysen and Henry Owen of the State Department Policy Planning Staff successfully argued that explicitly ruling out a veto-force was likely to abort any discussion at an early stage and prevent a more realistic exploration within NATO of nuclear strategy in Europe. The alternative approach of indicating the legal and political obstacles to relinquishing the American veto, along with a willingness to consider it in the face of a clear allied desire, was reluctantly accepted by the Pentagon as avoiding any need for an immediate internal decision.⁶

When the proposal for a 200-missile force was brought to Kennedy, he was skeptical. He observed that the Herter proposal and his own offer in the Ottawa speech had been designed to dissuade the French from proceeding with a national nuclear capability and deal with any German ambitions this might stimulate. De Gaulle seemed determined, and had recently reiterated his goal of a purely French deterrent, its first units to become operational by the end of 1963.⁷ “Since we are clearly failing in our first aim”, he wondered, “is it wise to go ahead simply on the grounds of dealing with the Germans?” Bowie observed that the French were far from united in the pursuit of a national force, and that “one of our aims in making the original proposal to commit a Polaris force to NATO was to offer those Frenchmen who opposed the present policy an alternative which they could support and which they could offer France.” While the formation of France’s first-generation deterrent, based on *Mirage IV* bombers, was proceeding apace, the development of a successor force based on missiles was proving more difficult, with warhead miniaturization a particular challenge. As a result, a viable missile system was estimated as likely only some three or four years beyond de Gaulle’s target of 1967, and the cost would prove higher than originally planned. De Gaulle’s opposition to military integration within NATO was so deeply rooted that assisting the development of a French missile in the hope he would become more cooperative had no chance of success. It was, however, possible to wait him out, while the mounting cost and difficulty of a national effort inclined his successors towards a multilateral alternative that met French needs. The West Germans, on the other hand, were just as deeply committed to a cooperative approach within NATO.

When Kennedy asked if a force in which the US was likely to retain a veto would meet European needs, Bundy referred to the prospect of educating the allies to nuclear realities in NAC. Bowie added that it was more apt to speak of “joint control” than of a veto, and added that in the case of responding to a general attack, there would obviously be no need for discussion. McNamara observed that he still saw no military need for the force, and that those who did displayed an ignorance of the problems in controlling nuclear weapons that was dangerous in itself. He conceded the political need, but insisted that the proposed force must not distract from or compete with the more important strengthening of European conventional defences. The JCS were opposed to multilateral control of American Polaris submarines, he pointed out, and he would have grave reservations himself about NATO control separate from that of the President. Kennedy acknowledged that NATO control

outside a purely American chain of command was problematic, and cautioned against the United States seeming to press a hard-and-fast American position upon its allies.⁸ There was still support in some quarters of the administration for discreet help to de Gaulle's national program. The American Ambassador to France, General James Gavin, doubted that the technical obstacles to a French deterrent were insuperable or that the relevant information could be concealed indefinitely; as a result, it did not strike him as a practical policy to decline to assist France in order to hinder proliferation. He also agreed with the Pentagon in believing that the administration should be prepared to supply some of the materials sought by General Gaston Lavaud on his March 1962 purchasing mission to the United States. Lavaud had a list of items the French were interested in acquiring, including range testing equipment, guidance and propulsion equipment for ballistic missiles, as well as compressors and other submarine technologies. While these would help France develop its national nuclear capability, their sale was perfectly compatible with American legislation. By no means the weakest argument in favour of meeting Lavaud's requests was the \$50 million benefit to the balance of payments.⁹ Gavin contended that in any event the French program had met the McMahon Act test of substantial progress and that denying American aid could only slow down further progress on the *force de frappe*, not prevent it, with the additional difficulty making it more likely that France would seek German collaboration.¹⁰ Gavin was suspected of being too quick to adopt the French perspective,¹¹ and Rusk reiterated the State Department position that assistance to the French national program was contrary to official policy.¹²

Kennedy acknowledged that France sought assistance where there were no legal barriers, but "we have nailed our flag to the purpose of a single indivisible nuclear defense of the West, and if we now help the French to move in the opposite direction our whole nuclear policy will be undermined." It was true that France was now denied aid of the sort the United States had previously given Britain, but "the correct line of our policy now is gradually to move away from an intermittent partnership with the British and to use our own influence in the direction of a gradual phasing down of the British nuclear commitment", retention of which would become increasingly expensive and difficult. Rather than agree to furnish the items on Lavaud's shopping list, the United States should encourage France to concentrate its resources on improved conventional forces. While Gavin would not necessarily "convert President de Gaulle tomorrow-or ever", he might have success "in explaining to many

Frenchmen who may have important roles to play now and in the future that our position is in no sense hostile to France.”¹³

Gavin was emphatic that his own contacts in the French government and military saw the nuclear program as too far along, and with too much institutional support, to disappear, with French nationalism as likely to increase as wane after de Gaulle's departure. Indeed, American policy might force those otherwise amenable to basing French policy on close cooperation with NATO into the General's embrace.¹⁴ Nor, he suggested, was concern about American nuclear doctrine confined to Gaullists. The liberal commentator Raymond Aron had told Embassy officials that since SACEUR was an American, Europeans did not expect him to respond to political direction other than that of the American President. It was widely believed among informed European circles, Aron continued, that the superpowers had tacitly agreed to resist further proliferation and to avoid any situation in which either one might be attacked. This suited Soviet interests, especially regarding Red China, but was absurd in relation to the European NATO members who possessed the resources to develop nuclear weapons for the common defence. In particular, it was believed that the superpowers would be willing to engage in a nuclear war confined to Germany, sparing each other's territory. "The MRBMs in NATO territory", he added, "are directed not against the Soviet Union but against the satellites." Questioned about this, he said he had been so informed by a high-ranking French officer.¹⁵

Henry Kissinger had a similar conversation in February with General Stehlin of the French armed forces, who also claimed that the medium-range missiles in western Europe were aimed only at targets in the satellites, suggesting that "the United States wanted its European forces to be employed in a manner to guarantee a sanctuary for itself and the USSR, while the satellites and Western Europe were subject to nuclear devastation." When Kissinger replied that the Soviets could not possibly know this, so "in planning any attack on Europe, they would inevitably have to count the possibility that the IRBMs would retaliate against Moscow", Stehlin said "But I know this will not and this inevitably affects my views about a European Atomic Force." American presentations in NATO circles, he added, always created the impression that the United States sought a sanctuary from hostilities for itself. "When there was a showdown in areas where conventional weapons were suitable such as Indo-China and Laos, the US hastened not to commit itself", which indicated "the US reluctance to face nuclear war and perhaps any direct confrontation with the USSR."¹⁶ In another

conversation, with the Chief of the French Combined Staff, General Pugin, and several of his aides, Kissinger heard that in some areas France was making more progress than expected in its nuclear efforts, having learned from British mistakes. When Kissinger asked how the French thought they could protect a relatively small retaliatory force, given American difficulties in guarding a larger one, Pugin and his subordinates replied that rotating bombers between metropolitan France and colonial bases reduced vulnerability, and that in any event the prospect of even a few French bombers penetrating Soviet air defences would suffice as a deterrent.¹⁷ If Gavin could do little in the face of administration opposition to a more forthcoming stance towards France, Kissinger could at least publicly suggest, as he did in a few months later, that American support for a modest French national force made sense as a stepping-stone to a wider European capability.¹⁸

Nuclear cooperation with the Anglo-Saxons was blocked for the moment, albeit not technically necessary, yet events in the spring of 1962 were also pushing de Gaulle and Adenauer into a tighter bilateral embrace. The Kennedy administration proposed that the negotiations on western access to Berlin continue under a set of principles that included the formation of inter-German technical commissions, a nuclear nonproliferation agreement, recognition of the Oder-Neisse line, and a corridor to West Berlin governed by an international access authority on which the two blocs and both East and West Berlin would be represented. Although Schroeder had approved the principles, when Adenauer met with Nitze on April 13, he attacked them as entailing recognition of the DDR, and nonproliferation pledges that de Gaulle for one was bound to reject. He added that if their existence were made public they would have a calamitous effect on West German opinion.¹⁹ Despite the American insistence that the principles remain secret for now²⁰, they were quickly leaked to the German press,²¹ and Adenauer publicly suggested the *status quo* was preferable to negotiations on the basis proposed by the United States.²² The division between the Anglo-Saxon powers, committed to negotiations over Berlin and Germany, and the Franco-German axis, much less eager, was now stark.

In addition, negotiations among the Six for a political union with responsibilities for defence and economics, which de Gaulle had begun in late 1961, reached a deadlock in April, after France rejected Belgian and Dutch requests that Britain, though not an EEC member yet, be allowed to take part. De Gaulle had invited defeat by backing away from previous French concessions to the others, including acknowledgment of the primacy of the

Atlantic alliance and the importance of existing supranational structures, and aroused the concerns of the smaller nations about the extent to which their interests would be safeguarded in a Europe dominated largely by France and Germany. The British Ambassador in Paris, Sir Pierson Dixon, noted that the insistence of the Dutch and Belgians on dealing with the British application along with a political union, blocked all progress on the latter until the former was addressed.²³ He also suggested that, in light of de Gaulle's unhappiness with America's nuclear predominance within NATO, the case for Anglo-French nuclear collaboration as the core of a European defence structure, and the price of EEC admission, remained compelling. It was widely believed in French official circles that the prospect of nuclear cooperation would shift de Gaulle's position on British entry. This posed no insuperable problem for Britain, provided that any European arrangements were firmly anchored in NATO and thus compatible with American policy on nuclear sharing.²⁴ The Minister in charge of negotiations with the EEC, Edward Heath, then moved to assure France and the rest of the Six that British intimacy with the United States did not mean that Britain's membership would be incompatible with such European defence collaboration. At a meeting of the WEU Council he observed that London accepted that "the EPU will have a common concern for defence problems."²⁵ He later informed the Cabinet that the stalemate would force de Gaulle and Adenauer to accept British membership in order to make progress on political union.²⁶ While Britain had welcomed, and indeed taken advantage of, the deadlock on political union, and the United States was concerned that it could lead to a turn away from further integration, neither had precipitated the breakdown of negotiations. Yet de Gaulle blamed them as much as the smaller members of the Six, and decided to rely still more on the Franco-German tie as the basis of Europe's political organizing, now that the rest of the Six were apparently unwilling to fall in with his wishes.²⁷ Heath's suggestion of British interest in European defence cooperation would not be enough to sway him into basing political union on defence cooperation with Britain following its admission, and the American response to his behavior helped widen the gap between Washington and both Paris and London on nuclear sharing.

Walt Rostow of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff was one of the first American officials to argue for closer coordination of American initiatives to increase European unity. In late March he reminded Rusk that in order to promote the continent's political cohesion the United States had sought to link the tariff advantages of EEC

membership to the willingness to support its political development. On another track it had recognized the difficulty of political unity without some rough equality among the three leading European powers in nuclear matters and relations with Washington. To that end the administration had rejected bilateral nuclear assistance to France, “and we have looked somewhat vaguely to the long term prospect of incorporating the British and French national nuclear capabilities in a joint NATO effort.” The two lines of action had been pursued separately, and while negotiations on British entry to the EEC had begun, there was no concrete offer in the nuclear field. The refusal of aid to France in the absence of such an offer had heightened French resentment, and British adhesion to the EEC without a resolution of the nuclear problem would do little to increase Europe’s political unity. While de Gaulle might not enjoy majority support of his expansive conception of a purely independent *force de frappe*, there was a consensus for equality with Britain in nuclear matters. The British clearly regarded nuclear cooperation as part of the bargaining for EEC entry, and it was likely to loom large in French and German calculations. Barring the creation of a NATO nuclear force, France would persist in its present course and pressures for a Franco-German or Franco-German-British force would increase.

The interaction of nuclear and tariff negotiations could produce either a European bloc with its own nuclear force, independent of American control, and tending towards protectionism, or a Europe with low tariffs, economically open, and interdependent with the US in defence matters. To obtain the latter, the administration should move to present a clear-cut proposal for a NATO nuclear force at the NAC meeting in Athens. “Without forecasting the exact use of the British nuclear capability”, Rostow suggested, “we should soon approach the British quietly, make clear that we hope to see the special US-UK nuclear relationship subsumed in a more general NATO relationship” and encourage them to take the initiative to this end in the EEC negotiations. Without a concrete proposal, and a British willingness to wind down the bilateral nuclear tie, even Frenchmen who might not care for the Gaullist program or close ties with the FRG had no practical alternative.²⁸ If national deterrents, free of US control, continued to proliferate, or Britain, West Germany, and perhaps Britain created a joint European force, free of American control, the United States would be left with less control of events but just as likely to be drawn into any conflict. The other possibilities were that the Europeans created a joint capability and then negotiated the coordination of forces with Washington, or that “we negotiate a limited long-term nuclear

role for Europe within a unified Atlantic plan and command structure.” The latter was preferable, but would require that the administration formulate a more detailed plan than existed. It would also entail recognition that at some point American law would have to be changed to permit the sharing of nuclear technology and information with a European force, provided it were under multi-national ownership, control, and manning.

The fundamental question was whether the administration should wait until it was clear that the alternative was a European force under less American influence, or “at an early stage when the British are somewhat disabused with the costs of a national enterprise, have not yet combined their knowledge with Continental resources, and are considering what course to follow in exploiting their nuclear know-how in Common Market negotiations.” The dilemma was that the longer the Europeans were left to their own devices, the less likely they were to develop their forces within an Atlantic framework, and the greater the degree of autonomy they could negotiate in any coordination of forces; yet changing American law would meet great Congressional resistance unless “the alternatives (sic) were palpably more unpleasant and if we had a scheme both for European nuclear integration and for intimate US involvement with the resulting forces.” There was a case for caution, but British pressure for nuclear cooperation with France as part of an EEC bargain was forcing the American hand. This argued for informing Macmillan early on that sharing on any bilateral or tripartite basis was unacceptable, but that sharing in the context of a European force that could absorb the British deterrent and the Polaris submarines was another matter.²⁹

The American position at Athens was more cautious and more reactive than Rostow’s recommendation. On April 18th, Kennedy approved discussion of a possible seaborne Polaris force in NAC, “not as a US proposal but as a US contribution to the resolution of the issues involved in this question.” The President endorsed a document, drafted by Henry Owen, that reaffirmed American opposition to a French national force, and proposed a multilateral alternative. The resulting seaborne force had to be genuinely multilateral in ownership, financing, and control, and integrated into NATO defences, not part of a separate European defence. Shared control of the American Polaris submarines assigned to NATO was not on offer, but the United States would furnish warheads for the missiles, although they would remain in American custody. Washington also sought shared control on the force’s targeting.³⁰ The long-term thrust of American policy beyond Skybolt, Bundy reminded Kennedy, was to encourage the British to divert their resources to conventional forces and

accept, along with the other NATO allies, centralization of nuclear defenses in one, American-controlled, entity. British efforts to secure admission to the EEC through nuclear cooperation with France would constitute “appeasing the French with our secrets” and would not bring about greater interdependence between America and Europe.³¹ Kennedy was still concerned that the semblance of blanket opposition to his policies not hamper whatever chance there might be of improving relations with de Gaulle, and that discussion of a multilateral force not seem to be a thinly disguised attack on the *force de frappe*.³²

The administration had previously responded to the deadlock in the negotiations on political union by leaving it to the Six to seek as much political cohesion as possible within the existing European and Atlantic structures.³³ But at Athens Rusk noted that reports of de Gaulle’s recent behaviour in the discussions over a European Political Union and British accession to the EEC suggested that he opposed integration of the sort the United States had consistently encouraged, and was resistant to British membership in principle and not just on any particular set of terms. The Secretary explained in private discussions that American resistance to nuclear sharing with France involved more than a general opposition to nuclear proliferation. De Gaulle was not only taking an increasingly obstructive stance towards the construction of European institutions, he consistently advocated tripartite direction of NATO, against the wishes of its other members; had withdrawn the French Mediterranean fleet from NATO command; and denied nuclear storage rights to the US. Any discussion of nuclear assistance would have to address these concerns, and in any event de Gaulle had made clear that he was not prepared to make the request for assistance without which discussions could not proceed. There was far more involved in the question of nuclear assistance than whether France had met the criteria specified under the amended McMahon Act.³⁴

As we have seen, McNamara had little use for a multilateral seaborne force as a military tool, although he conceded it might have some political utility. His remarks showed far more interest in assuring the allies of American nuclear superiority, setting it in a strategic framework that justified central control of nuclear forces, and casting doubt on the military usefulness of independent national deterrents. He suggested that in nuclear war, as in conventional war, the United States sought to target the enemy’s military capabilities, not his cities (in other words, a counterforce strategy). The aim was to end hostilities before they escalated to the point where cities were destroyed. In formulations similar to those of the Bowie report, he remarked that efficient conduct of a war against the Soviet Union required

central control of nuclear weapons targeted against Soviet forces, with the aim of forcing the Soviets to cease hostilities rather than risk escalation to the destruction of their cities. Poorly coordinated forces would be less efficient in destroying the enemy's military capabilities, and might end up destroying those cities which sound strategy required be left intact as hostages. NATO's nuclear strategy took the world as its theatre, with targets particularly threatening to Europeans having the same priority as those posing a danger to North America. As a result, America's nuclear superiority deterred Soviet aggression, and thus Soviet resort to nuclear war during localized hostilities in Europe was improbable.

Uncoordinated nuclear forces, on the other hand, had little effect on the wider balance, were a costly diversion of resources, and complicated the conduct of nuclear war. While McNamara acknowledged the desire for greater European involvement in nuclear decision-making, he emphasized the possibility of more consultation within NATO as much as that of an Ottawa force. He also observed that the administration had committed five operational Polaris submarines to SACLANT, and planned to commit ten by the end of 1963.³⁵ In any event, the critique of small national forces proved the most significant feature of his presentation. The initial German reaction was favourable but the French defence minister, Pierre Messmer, appears to have grumbled about what he took as in part an attack on the *force de frappe*. Rusk, noting Spaak's concern that American behaviour not seem to validate de Gaulle's attitude in NATO and the Six, favoured "systematic, careful and sympathetic bilateral talks to see how far we can go within limits permitted by de Gaulle." Rather than assuming he would become more intransigent with his Algerian problem settled, "we should assume the opposite for purposes [of] full exploration."³⁶ In part because McNamara's remarks came at the close of the meeting, and no notes were taken, there was not room for formal discussion, and it took some time for the political implications to emerge.³⁷

A few days later, Kennedy took the opportunity to inform the visiting French Minister of Culture, Andre Malraux, that de Gaulle was wrong if he thought the United States was willing to retain responsibilities for Europe's defence without the ability to bring its influence to bear upon its allies. "General de Gaulle should make no mistake", he remarked, "Americans would be glad to get out of Europe." Just before Kennedy had been sworn in, his predecessor had advised him to reduce substantially American conventional forces in Europe, "although of course the nuclear guarantee was to be maintained. The President instead had built up American strength."

France, on the other hand, had not increased its contribution to NATO forces, and de Gaulle insisted on taking a line diametrically opposed to that of the administration on Berlin, NATO organization, nuclear weaponry, and other matters. De Gaulle had made an important contribution to western solidarity by reconciling with West Germany, and it was reasonable to expect him to be equally flexible in recognizing the utility of a European role for Britain, despite its historic stance as a maritime power with limited Continental commitments. Kennedy did not fear a neutralist third force in Europe, but he did have misgivings about the possibility of “a wholly separate, independent force unrelated to American responsibility and interest.” De Gaulle’s stance in European councils suggested he thought Britain had to be forced into a clear choice between the EEC and its Commonwealth connections. “A sharp choice here”, Kennedy observed, “would make things difficult for Prime Minister Macmillan, who had to contend with his Labor (sic) opposition.” The United States stood to lose in purely economic terms from British accession to the EEC, but that was outweighed by the benefits of a strong western bloc in which West Germany was securely anchored. The administration had adopted the position that all EEC entrants “should pay the full entrance fee”, but he had to wonder if “in fact General de Gaulle did not fear and oppose British entry.”

Malraux did not deny that de Gaulle might prefer British exclusion, but suggested that “if England (sic) really wished to join the Common Market, nothing could prevent her” and French concerns about Commonwealth privileges were similar to American ones. As for de Gaulle’s attitude to defence questions, this had to be understood in terms of the trauma of France’s collapse in 1940 and the centrality of national self-sufficiency in military matters to a healthy political climate. American thinking about nuclear weapons, he suggested, was rooted in the period of the American monopoly, but the underlying realities had changed. Any European entity with nuclear weapons at its disposal would have many economic and military interests in common with the United States, and his own opinion was that coordinated targeting of any European nuclear forces with those of the United States was probable.³⁸

De Gaulle’s own formulations were much less friendly in his May 15 press conference, in which he emphasized the need for Western Europe to reduce its dependence on the United States, and accused Washington of hypocrisy in promoting the incompatible goals of a tightly integrated Europe and British membership in the EEC. He also rejected the notion of

a supranational Europe, denied the need for negotiations with the Soviet Union over Berlin and reiterated that, while France was firmly committed to the Western alliance as a fundamental element of its foreign policy, NATO as an institution required modification in light of a changing distribution of military and economic power. "Integration", he claimed, was too often a euphemism for arrangements designed to perpetuate American military, political, and economic domination of Europe. "Une force atomique française se dissuasion commence à exister et va se développer sans cesse", he observed. While that force was "relativement modeste, il est vrai! Mais qui change et va changer complètement les conditions de notre propre défense, celles de nos interventions lointaines et celles du concours que nous pourrions apporter à la sauvegarde de nos alliés."³⁹

The harsh tone of de Gaulle's remarks was enough to shock the generally sympathetic Ambassador Gavin, who came away from a subsequent chat with the General convinced that "he thinks a Western Europe organized, undoubtedly under leadership of France, will be able to checkmate Eastern Europe."⁴⁰ Kennedy was sufficiently perturbed to publicly repeat, in a May 17 press conference, the warning he had delivered to Malraux, that while the United States had abandoned its past isolationism, a reversion was likely were Europe organized so as to depend on America for defence but exclude American political influence. He also insisted that there was no military need for additional national deterrents, and that "the NATO deterrent to which the United States has committed itself so heavily...provides very adequate protection."⁴¹ Bundy suggested that Gavin take the next opportunity to inform de Gaulle that the United States could not "stay out of all Europe's affairs while remaining ready to defend her if war should come" and that the political and economic organization of the Continent in ways that excluded any American influence would make it very difficult to maintain the current security guarantees. "In Berlin and Germany, in particular, all major questions of policy relate directly to the confrontations of (sic) the Soviet Union and therefore to questions of war and peace" and the administration could not stand aloof from European discussions of these questions while committed to repel any Soviet attack, a point it would not hesitate to press upon the West Germans if they were tempted to consider a Europe revolving around a Paris-Bonn axis.⁴²

The Ambassador then visited the General to present an autographed volume of Kennedy's speeches and resume the conversation. De Gaulle renewed his attack on America's "excessive leadership" within the Western bloc. As examples, he suggested that the result of

American pressures for negotiations with the Soviets over Berlin was “to commit France and Germany to course of action they could not agree to” and the President’s explicit opposition to an independent French nuclear force, which “shakes the very foundation of our Alliance in public mind.” The gap between Washington and Paris, Gavin concluded, was now wider than ever. The administration’s efforts to reassure Bonn about American nuclear strategy and dealings with the USSR on Berlin, and to encourage British entry to the EEC would inevitably be seen as calculated to isolate France.⁴³

Of course, while key administration policymakers would have preferred that the British deterrent as well as any French one be folded into a multilateral entity, they were more troubled by the latter. As Bundy wrote to Raymond Aron, the resumption of Anglo-American nuclear cooperation in 1957 and 1958 owed much to the impact of *Sputnik* and the need within NATO for “a kind of ‘forward strategy’ in nuclear weapons, and the reinforcement of the British in the nuclear field must have seemed a logical part of this undertaking.” In retrospect, assistance to the British might have been mistaken, and “it is our guess that over a period of time all merely national deterrents in the hands of powers of the second rank will become uneconomic and ineffective.” That the differential treatment of British and French nuclear aspirations was the result of the earlier British start and a subsequent change in American thinking was, no doubt, little consolation to Frenchmen.

And while it was improbable that American aid to the French program would lead to immediate requests for assistance from West Germany, this might eventually change. The German renunciation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons did not extend to acquiring them from others or collaborating in their design and production with others. While West Germany had no open spaces suitable for testing, “I do not find it hard to imagine a German argument that the lending of tunnels and open spaces is just as reasonable an act of partnership as the provision of technical information or specialized equipment.” The West Germans frequently pointed out that in the long term treatment of Germany on a par with other allies was a *sine qua non* of Bonn’s alignment with the West. The fact that they did not press this claim in the realm of nuclear technology at the moment did not preclude their doing so after Adenauer’s departure from the scene, one reason NATO and an integrated Europe interdependent with the United States were preferable to the loose coordination of separate national deterrents that de Gaulle appeared to prefer.

De Gaulle, Bundy went on, was correct in his assessment of the “depth and firmness of

the decision of Great Britain to base her policies on an intimate association with the United States.” An important distinction was that the goal of British policy was “not so much to establish autonomy as to maintain a right of cautionary counsel to the United States” or “an advisory relation to the safety-catch.” It was not altogether unfair, in light of de Gaulle’s conduct of foreign and defence policy, to conclude that “French policy aims, by contrast, at increasing independence from the United States.” The assertion that France desired no more than the same treatment enjoyed by Britain “hardly meets the question, in the light of divergence of national policies” and the United States had no way of knowing what commitments to the common defence or limits upon its own freedom of action France would consider reasonable in return for nuclear assistance. De Gaulle had neither engaged in discussions of these questions nor authorized his subordinates to do so. It was, Bundy concluded, “not normal that we should be required to take the initiative in a matter which involves the transfer of information that might be so used as to destroy us all.”⁴⁴

Despite his concern that it might be seen as part of an ongoing quarrel with de Gaulle, rather than a contribution to the effort to reassure allies about the wisdom of American nuclear strategy and the margin of advantage upon which it rested,⁴⁵ Kennedy approved McNamara’s delivery of a revised version of his remarks at Athens as a commencement address at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor on June 16.⁴⁶ Predictably, de Gaulle treated the speech as a public attack on the *force de frappe*, telling Rusk that while he recognized there were “in fact two centres of power in the world” the question arose of “whether there is an Alliance or whether there are only the two powers facing each other.” In addition to the apparent American hostility to allied nuclear forces, he added, protracted superpower discussions, such as those over Berlin, might create the impression in Europe that “these two were the only important powers and that there is nothing else to negotiate.”

Rusk replied that the United States did not seek to speak for others, and that the talks over Berlin were based on a negotiating position agreed within NATO, even if France had not agreed to it, and that American diplomats did not pretend to commit others in talks with the Soviets. He added that “the US has practically no bilateral problems with the Soviet Union. The real issue between the two is in fact the safety of places like Berlin and Western Europe.” As for nuclear weapons, the United States was doing what it could through consultation and the offer of an Ottawa force to involve its allies in nuclear decisionmaking. In his experience, “far from being able to act independently, we find that with the possession

of nuclear weapons we have less freedom of action than ever before.” Nuclear forces in NATO that might act in isolation from one another posed grave problems, and “defense in NATO must be indivisible.” De Gaulle insisted that France needed a nuclear force under national control, particularly in the event of Soviet aggression leading to the collapse of West Germany. As for the EEC, he reiterated that Britain was welcome in principle, but had to demonstrate a desire to enter whole-heartedly.⁴⁷ Neither seems to have had much effect on the thinking of the other.

Rusk concluded that de Gaulle’s fixed intent to acquire a nuclear force was “primarily psychological and subjective”, rooted largely in desire for status on a par with the United States and above the other European states. His argument for a French deterrent to guard against the contingency of a German defeat “seems to me to reveal the narrowness of his approach and the serious limitations on his appreciation of the nuclear weapon” and to show the need for “major efforts to educate both de Gaulle and other French officials on the nature and indivisibility of nuclear warfare.” The appeal of the *force de frappe* as a totem of independence from the United States would help ensure the continued backing even of many non-Gaullists, but “questions about integration of French nuclear forces with us or with NATO will probably be deferred until France has something operational.” Couve, in his conversations with Rusk, had struck a pragmatic note in acknowledging that the French force would probably be targeted in coordination with that of the US, although, like the British, independent. In Rusk’s assessment, “the French must still come clean in their attitude toward Germany” in which a desire for intimate collaboration vied with the insistence that France remain the senior partner. This might change once Britain joined the EEC, as most Frenchmen expected, and the need for a close but one-sided Franco-German axis faded. While de Gaulle had hoped to emerge as the spokesman of a united Europe, and therefore could not welcome British accession to the EEC, it was unlikely that France would “offer any overriding political objection.” It was unwise, he concluded, to try to resolve current disputes such as those over NATO and nuclear weapons until the question of British membership was settled.⁴⁸

Gavin echoed Rusk on the probable continuation of the French nuclear program after de Gaulle, and cautioned against overstating the extent to which others, such as Couve and Premier Georges Pompidou, might differ with him. No major political figure, he claimed, was prepared to see France relegated again to the modest position it had occupied in relation

to the United States during the 1950s. De Gaulle's argument for a French deterrent as a hedge against German defeat, he suggested, owed less to a misunderstanding of contemporary military realities than the suspicion that the Soviets might manage to absorb or neutralize Germany without the use of force, and that France would then require the wherewithal to resist Soviet intimidation. Despite the possibility of a multilateral force within NATO, it was probable that an independent European nuclear entity would eventually be formed, since economic and political integration would tend to spill over into the pooling of resources for defence. It was hard to envisage European defence cooperation that encompassed independent and uncoordinated French and British deterrents. Gavin also suspected de Gaulle was likely in the end to swallow British membership in the Common Market, not least on the assumption that entanglement in Europe would attenuate Britain's ties with Washington, but he agreed with Rusk that any initiative to overcome differences with him should await the conclusion of negotiations on Britain's EEC application. While de Gaulle sought a loose confederation of European states able to operate as a world power, Gavin went on, this was a long-term objective. De Gaulle expected this to grow out of greater coordination of policies as members solved those problems peculiar to themselves, such as France's with Algeria and Germany's pertaining to reunification. He was also realist enough to accept the essential congruence of French and American interests in the world and to remain within the confines of the Atlantic alliance.⁴⁹

It is debatable whether the reaction to McNamara's speech in Britain was in fact less predictable than de Gaulle's, but it certainly seems to have been less predicted in American circles. British responses, unsurprisingly, were connected to concerns over the impact on the already troubled EEC negotiations of the increasingly clear American opposition to independent deterrents. De Gaulle's purism on questions of national sovereignty could help Britain from one point of view, but hinder its entry from another. While the General shared Britain's dislike of supranational institutions, he was also disinclined to widen the EEC insofar as this might dilute French influence within it. Yet, the Foreign Office concluded, there was no reason to believe that he opposed British entry in principle. Not only was his attitude towards British membership likely to hinge upon the exact terms, but he would not court isolation by breaking with the other members should they come down in favour of the British bid, and once negotiations began they would acquire a momentum that would make it hard for him to stop the process short of an open veto.⁵⁰

By May, things looked different. After six months of technical negotiations in Brussels, negotiations were bogged down in the minutiae of agricultural commodity pricing, de Gaulle seemed less favourable than initially assumed, and it looked as if Macmillan would have to try some new line of argument if the negotiations were not to devolve into interminable and inconclusive wrangling.⁵¹ The prospect of an Anglo-French alternative to a Franco-German foundation for political union, an alternative based on nuclear cooperation, remained a useful card to play. In conversation with the French Ambassador, Macmillan referred to defence cooperation within a European political union, pointedly observing that “this development of a European entity within the alliance would involve developments on the nuclear level.” This meant an independent European striking force, and not merely shared control, he added.⁵²

When Macmillan spent a few days in Washington in late April, Rusk reminded him that “the US were determined not to help France in the nuclear field, either directly or indirectly through the United Kingdom.”⁵³ In his first conversation with Chauvel’s successor, Geoffroy de Courcel, he observed that the basis of any European political union should be an Anglo-French partnership similar to the turn-of-the-century *entente cordiale*. British admission to the EEC was essential to such a development. While ostentatiously declining to make an explicit and formal offer, Macmillan added that it was perfectly natural that Western Europe should pursue its own independent nuclear capability, and Britain and France should hold “their nuclear power as trustees for Europe.” De Courcel then asked if nuclear collaboration between Britain and France would be possible without American agreement, agreement that seemed unlikely given Washington’s current reluctance to help the *force de frappe*. Macmillan replied that American agreement was necessary, but that this was not out of the question.⁵⁴ De Gaulle subsequently informed Dixon that he had no interest in simply pooling the British and French deterrents; France required nuclear weapons under exclusive French control, given the unreliability of American nuclear guarantees. Moreover, Britain’s apparent need for American consent to any sharing of nuclear technology or knowledge meant London was really in no position to make an offer.⁵⁵

Macmillan then informed Ormsby-Gore that since de Gaulle was not drawing any strong or explicit link between nuclear cooperation and British membership in the EEC, Kennedy need not fear he would make any ill-judged offer at his forthcoming meeting in Champs with de Gaulle.⁵⁶ This is the point at which, some scholars argue, Macmillan changed his strategy, retreating from any overt link between nuclear assistance and EEC entry.⁵⁷ Yet this

shift can easily be overstated; Macmillan had sought for some time to obtain de Gaulle's acquiescence in British accession by combining hints at nuclear cooperation, vague enough to neither offend the Americans nor disappoint the General, with efforts to keep the process of negotiating entry moving along such that he could not put a stop to it without isolating France within the Six. This remained his broad approach, slightly modulated; a Foreign Office brief prior to the Champs meeting reiterated that Britain had to avoid any open break with de Gaulle while the negotiations were under way. The General was unlikely to push his opposition to British entry to the point where he would be exposed as the intransigent party if Britain kept in step with the rest of the Six, especially West Germany. An open rupture would only make sense towards the close of the negotiations and if it would leave de Gaulle standing alone as the obstacle to British membership.⁵⁸

Macmillan's fundamental problem was that McNamara's remarks at Athens, and then his public speech at Ann Arbor, drove the initial French and American positions on any nuclear arrangement further apart. The stark clarity of these positions made it more difficult to conduct negotiations on a footing of inoffensive generalities such that British entry would be almost inevitable before the limits of any nuclear offer to de Gaulle had become clear. When he met de Gaulle at Champs in June, Macmillan sought to reassure him by observing that Britain and France were as one in opposing supranational structures, and that the two would be able to ensure that political union took acceptable form. He indicated that he was fully prepared to sign the Treaty of Rome, and that he agreed with de Gaulle in wanting a Europe that was a great power in its own right, less dependent on the United States than at present. Britain, he argued, would be reasonable in its requests for special consideration and in any event a Europe that had links to the Commonwealth would be a stronger entity. De Gaulle contented himself with summarizing the costs British entry would impose on the current members and the difficulties of adaptation for all involved, but said if British admission were realistic, he would not stand in its way. On nuclear cooperation, he noted the similarity of his own thinking with Macmillan's. In the event of a European political union the use of British and French nuclear weapons would become the object of discussions with others. European nuclear planning "would not exclude NATO although it would not be solely concerned with NATO." In any event, "a small deterrent force would have to be kept separate for employment" under national control.⁵⁹

The Ann Arbor speech was not calculated to help matters, given McNamara's efforts to

impose clarity where Britain preferred ambiguity.⁶⁰ Official British nuclear doctrine into 1962 had attempted to split the difference between the American emphasis on stronger conventional forces in Europe and de Gaulle's advocacy of a tripwire strategy. The most recent White Paper on defence had rejected total reliance on nuclear weapons and called for a balance between nuclear and conventional forces, while also suggesting any conventional clash in Europe would quickly escalate to nuclear war. It had also proposed retention of the British deterrent in the form of the V-bomber force, at least through the 1960s.⁶¹ Watkinson noted that McNamara's speech was "not aimed at us but at the French. However, it is awkward and will be used by our critics against us." He expected the Opposition to raise in Parliament the matter of just how independent the vaunted British deterrent was, and for Rusk to face questioning from the press on his next visit to Britain, scheduled a few days hence. Watkinson's own preference "would be to side with the French and to seek to persuade the Americans to accept the French position for what, in fact, it is –that of a small highly inefficient nuclear power."

He was convinced that the more McNamara or other American officials seemed to attack the *force de frappe*, "the more it makes the General and those around him absolutely determined to carry on with their current deterrent policy." It was difficult to avoid contradicting either France or the US "particularly as I can see how much it is in our interests that we should not offend the French at this stage." One way to minimize inconvenient debate in Parliament would be for Rusk to say, in response to press questions, "not that we were the good boys and the French the bad in this respect", but that McNamara was merely reiterating agreed policy insofar as Bomber Command was integrated in targeting and operational matters with SAC.⁶²

Home informed Rusk that the government's opponents in the press and Parliament were likely to make use of McNamara's remarks to attack its policy of retaining the independent deterrent, in which case "we shall have to hit back and some hard things will have to be said." The government "do not necessarily accept all of Mr. McNamara's deterrent policy, and divergencies (sic) between ourselves and the United States on this might be revealed and have to be thrashed out in the House." It was in the interests of both Washington and London to find a way of "taking the heat out of debates on this issue if possible."⁶³ The Foreign Office drew the attention of British diplomats to the passage in which McNamara claimed that "limited nuclear capabilities, OPERATING INDEPENDENTLY, are dangerous,

expensive, prone to obsolescence, and lacking in credibility as a deterrent.” This, it seemed, did not support interpretations of the speech as an attack on the British deterrent, in light of Bomber Command’s integration with SAC, which, however, was not incompatible with a greater European role in NATO nuclear defences.⁶⁴ As the Foreign Office had already pointed out, there was no reason to think that de Gaulle regarded a British contribution to a NATO force as a test of Britain’s commitment to Europe; on the contrary, he was determined to proceed with a purely French deterrent. Accordingly, the official line was to stress British respect for French nuclear ambitions and the fact that, while Britain’s present capability was bound up with Anglo-American agreements that were not easily changed, official policy, as set out in the last White Paper, was to retain the V-bomber force as an independent entity through the decade, rather than to pool the national deterrent in a multilateral force.⁶⁵

The British Ambassador in Paris, Sir Pierson Dixon, warned that any clarification by McNamara or Rusk implying that the attack on independent nuclear forces was aimed at the French deterrent and not the British one “will not help the progress which I believe is gradually taking place of General de Gaulle resigning himself to our entry into Europe and deciding to make the best of it.” With the wider debate between Washington and Paris on NATO MRBMs likely to become polarized and acrimonious, “it would be embarrassing to take sides on the substance.” He favoured more emphasis on the British expectation that a “European view on defence” would emerge, and less on the current integration of British and American forces. Was it not possible, he wondered, to “admit publicly that a reorganization of the management of nuclear weapons in the West may become necessary in due course” but that the time for this was not ripe, while the ongoing Geneva discussions held out hope for agreement on disarmament? The problem with any discussion of American-European nuclear relations at the moment was that nothing could be settled until Britain had joined the EEC and the proposed political union had come into being.⁶⁶ Home replied that he was in general agreement, but “we could not, of course, have avoided asking the Americans to make it clear that the statement was not intended as an attack on our nuclear force” even if it was wise not to “rub it in further.”⁶⁷

When David Ormsby-Gore met with McNamara on the 21st, he noted that the Ann Arbor speech was likely to lead to questions when Parliament resumed in a few days, and pointed out “in the coming weeks we would find ourselves in a very delicate situation over our negotiations to enter the Common Market. It was not therefore in our interest to have to point

out all the time the differences between our position on nuclear weapons and that of the French.” Important as NATO MRBM requirements were, it was important that their discussion be left aside until the negotiations were concluded. McNamara acknowledged the importance of the Brussels negotiations, but “explained his own difficulties by saying that they resulted from years of muddled thinking on nuclear matters both in United States Government and military circles.” He had found himself dealing with many people who saw the threat of early resort to nuclear weapons as the solution to military problems, a view that was unrealistic in the extreme and “had resulted in a situation where United States military strength could rarely be used effectively in support of her foreign policy.” His efforts to clarify thinking in Washington and NATO were part of an urgent process of educating people to nuclear realities.⁶⁸ A few hours later, Ormsby-Gore met with George Ball, who assured him that he had just spoken to McNamara, who was ready to make clear at his next press conference that the Ann Arbor speech was not a criticism of the British deterrent.⁶⁹

McNamara then informed a reporter that his speech at Ann Arbor had described separate nuclear deterrents operating independently as dangerous, and “Britain’s Bomber Command aircraft, with their nuclear weapons, have long been organized as part of a thoroughly co-ordinated Anglo-American striking force and are targeted as such, although of course their political control remains with the British Government.” Therefore, he was not referring to Britain’s deterrent, as a fair reading of his entire speech demonstrated.⁷⁰ By 1962, RAF and SAC target selection were in fact integrated. British dislike of counterforce targeting was of only modest significance because American and British target lists overlapped considerably, despite the divergence of underlying doctrines. Nonetheless, there was already a clear shift away from the inclusion of urban centres as such in joint target lists, reflecting McNamara’s “population avoidance” strategy, which he publicly outlined at Ann Arbor. British planning for an independent countervalue offensive remained purely notional, a function of the extreme unlikelihood of the RAF ever attacking the USSR except in conjunction with SAC.⁷¹

De Zulueta informed the Prime Minister that in his discussions with officials prior to Macmillan’s trip to Champs, he had discovered that “it is doubtful whether we could in fact use our deterrent independently” since “there are no serious operational plans for us to do so. This is no doubt the point of Mr. McNamara’s observations.” The operational reality was less salient in Macmillan’s eyes than the principle. “But it is in fact our right”, he scribbled in the margin of de Zulueta’s note,⁷² informing Watkinson that legally “the President can use the

American deterrent without my agreement. I can use the British deterrent without his approval. We have a gentleman's agreement to consult each other 'if there is time to do so.'"⁷³

On June 26, Hugh Gaitskell asked in the House of Commons if it was "not perfectly clear that Mr. McNamara made a very powerful attack upon independent use of nuclear weapons", wondering how Macmillan's insistence on the independence of the British deterrent could be reconciled with McNamara's position. Macmillan replied "I am not responsible for what Mr. McNamara may have said", and referred to his understanding with Kennedy. The promise to consult if possible, he said, "does not take away the independent right" of either government to employ its nuclear weapons. Gaitskell then asked how Macmillan could assert Britain's right to make an independent decision to use nuclear weapons, and then "try to deny it to other people...if he is prepared to agree that there must always be consultation with the United States Government before any possible use of nuclear weapons, will he not go further and say that....neither side should independently decide to use nuclear weapons without the consent of the other?"

Macmillan noted that there were only two Western nuclear powers at the moment. "France will become a nuclear power", he said, "but it is not yet so fully." While the pursuit of disarmament was important, "there is the other purpose, as the Alliance proceeds, of seeing that we make the best arrangements with each other." He then descended into a convenient verbal tangle, observing "at the moment, what I have stated to be the position of the British Government is, in fact so; and I think there are powerful arguments against, prematurely at any rate, throwing away both this weapon and this arguing position."⁷⁴

The Americans, Home suggested to Macmillan, had handled the MRBM issue as a whole clumsily, simultaneously denigrating the military need for an MRBM force while promoting a multilateral force as politically desirable, provided the Europeans wanted it and were prepared to pay for it. They were right to see such a force as marginal in military terms, wrong in their estimate of its political value. The best course for the moment, he suggested, was to try to steer discussion to the military aspects, "in the hope that the Germans, and the others who have supported Norstad's claims, can be persuaded that there is no urgent need for MRBMs this way." This could drag out debate for several months, and defer if not avert altogether a clash with Washington about the multilateral force. He saw "no risk here of running into difficulties with de Gaulle. The French view on MRBMs is very similar to our

own.”⁷⁵

Home then suggested to Rusk that while discussion of NATO's MRBM needs from a military point of view was timely, serious consideration of an MLF should be deferred until the conclusion of the EEC negotiations. Rusk replied that the administration had presented its proposal, although it would have preferred to wait for the Europeans to bring forward their own ideas for meeting NATO's MRBM needs, “but these had not been forthcoming and continued silence on their part would have been misinterpreted as indifference.” The proposal had been put forth as a subject for exploration because Washington was “concerned not to present a cut-and-dried American plan as this too would not have aroused antipathies in various quarters.” Home said the British government was unimpressed by the MLF proposal, believing that the offer of increased consultation had been well-received at Athens, including by the West Germans, who were not pressing for a national capability. He suspected the consultative solution would prove an effective response to the wishes of NATO's non-nuclear members for a say in the alliance's nuclear decisionmaking. Rusk reiterated the administration's concern that the Germans would eventually develop national nuclear ambitions if an alternative such as the MLF were not provided.⁷⁶

Rostow had concluded after de Gaulle's remarks of May 15th that since the administration's disagreement with him over American nuclear relations with Europe was now public, there was a need for a clear American proposal on an MLF, to outflank de Gaulle with the French public and the West Germans. This could set out more precise conditions under which it might be possible to change American law so that the bilateral nuclear relationship with Britain could be transferred to a European entity, conditions such as truly multilateral ownership and manning, equal treatment of Britain, France, and West Germany, integration into Atlantic defences through NATO, and an agreed-upon control formula. He favoured permitting Macmillan to talk in such terms to de Gaulle at Champs. “Psychologically and politically”, he observed, “it might be proper to permit the British the chance to take the lead in finding the middle ground on which the trans-Atlantic partnership might be built.” Macmillan had to contend simultaneously with the demands of the Six for concessions, the wishes of his Commonwealth and EFTA partners to preserve as many of their privileged links with Britain as possible, an Opposition that might criticize any terms he reached as inadequate, and the gradual fading of exclusive Anglo-American ties. It would be a setback to America's hopes in Europe if he were forced to return home and announce that

agreement with the Six on tolerable terms had proven impossible. On the other hand, “if we would permit the British a grand (but carefully defined) Churchillian gesture to cover the retreat from the nuclear ‘special relation’ (sic) it might either move de Gaulle (if he is bargaining) or provide the rallying point for Western though (sic) in the outflanking and isolation of de Gaulle’s archaic position.” One advantage would be that it would appear as a European proposal, to which the administration was responding, rather than an attempt to impose an American blueprint on the NATO allies. The United States was “too powerful a factor in the equation-and our interests in the outcome are too great-for us to let the Europeans react to the de Gaulle-Kennedy exchange without some minimal guidance on the crucial nuclear issue.”⁷⁷

It is at best arguable that de Gaulle would have been more forthcoming at Champs had Macmillan been encouraged by Kennedy to make this sort of offer. In any event, Kennedy was not prepared to support such an initiative at this stage, not least because he still doubted “whether any results could be expected from pressing the British to support the NATO multilateral force.”⁷⁸ He was, however, ready to articulate a conception of European unity that could compete with de Gaulle’s. Administration officials were well aware of the damage that EEC arrangements such as the Common External Tariff (agreed in May 1960) and the Common Agricultural Policy (created in January 1962) might inflict on American exporters and the balance of payments. In negotiations with the United States under GATT auspices, the EEC had offered to reduce its external tariff by no more than 20%, the same percentage by which the President could reduce American tariffs under existing trade legislation. Kennedy sought deeper reductions in American tariffs as well as limits on the CAP. In January of 1962, he had called for the authority to reduce tariffs more dramatically in order to negotiate reciprocal reductions with the EEC. Protectionist industries, he claimed in his State of the Union message, were selfishly jeopardizing America’s balance of payments and the overall competitiveness of the economy at a time when the EEC was embarked on a period of rapid economic growth. He proposed replacement of the 1958 trade legislation, which would expire in 1962, with a five-year Trade Expansion Act that would authorize him to gradually eliminate completely tariffs on those goods where the US and EEC together amounted for 80% of global trade, as well as reduce other tariffs by up to 50%.⁷⁹ On July 4, Kennedy placed his proposal for reduced trade barriers within the framework of a Western Europe that was more united in both economic and political terms, and accepted its

interdependence with the United States. Implicitly rejecting what seemed to be de Gaulle's vision of an autarchic Europe dominated by a strong but exclusive Franco-German nexus, he postulated one that was committed to the lowering of tariff barriers and the integration of the developing nations into the global economy, as well as capable of shouldering more of the burdens of shared defence. He also explicitly welcomed British membership in the EEC. While the "interdependence speech" was elegantly turned and indicated what kind of Europe the Kennedy administration did *not* want to see emerge, it was short on the sort of specifics, particularly regarding nuclear arrangements, that might have complicated the negotiations for British EEC entry or suggested American pressure to accept the MLF. It underlined the American commitment to Europe (and in that sense represented a step back from the warnings against a resurgent isolationism that might have played into de Gaulle's hands during his efforts to forge a more autonomous continental bloc), but concluded it would be "premature at this time to do more than to indicate the high regard with which we view the formation of this partnership."⁸⁰

De Gaulle, of course, remained intent on securing Adenauer's support for any steps he might take regarding the British application and the evolution of the EEC. The Chancellor's July visit to France gave the General a further opportunity to strengthen the Franco-German axis so as to reduce the danger of his being isolated in either NATO or the EEC. Welcoming Adenauer at Orly airport two days before Kennedy's speech, de Gaulle observed that there had arisen "entre l'Allemagne et la France une cordiale cooperation. Ainsi, s'establit la base sur laquelle l'union de l'Europe."⁸¹ Adenauer informed Macmillan that during the visit, he and de Gaulle had discussed Britain's application to the EEC. In language reminiscent of de Gaulle's own discouraging formulations stopping short of overt opposition, he said that the British application was a welcome development and that British membership, if it could be arranged, would strengthen Europe. Yet, he noted, "it seemed necessary to us that all questions raised by the accession of such an important partner should be thoroughly examined."⁸² Changes in American personnel in Europe were making de Gaulle, if anything, more suspicious of American intentions. Ambassador Gavin, increasingly out of sympathy with the administration's policies toward de Gaulle, stepped down in July, after agreeing with Bundy on a formal letter of resignation that attributed his departure to a desire to spend more time with his family.⁸³ When Norstad's designated successor as SACEUR, General Lyman Lemnitzer, paid a courtesy call at the Elysee Palace, de Gaulle speculated that

Gavin's resignation and Norstad's scheduled departure at the end of the year were rooted in their reservations about administration policy on NATO nuclear dispositions. Lemnitzer said he had been present when Norstad told McNamara he wished to leave between late 1962 and early 1963, de Gaulle said "he could not help feeling that the policy differences on nuclear matters had an even greater part to play than he had ever expressed publicly."⁸⁴

When Kennedy met with his principal advisers on August 9 for a briefing on Berlin he wondered why Adenauer was so quick to side with de Gaulle against the Americans in matters of alliance strategy, and the group agreed "the Germans are sure of our support, but are not as sure of the French; therefore they defer more to French whims." Kennedy also expressed skepticism as to whether there was as much disagreement between the administration and the European allies on the use of nuclear weapons in defense of the Continent as it seemed. He was inclined to agree with the Europeans that "if the Russians started a mass attack against Europe, we almost would be forced to use nuclear weapons against the first Russians who came across the line." In practice, the differences meant little; the administration was "involved in a theoretical argument with our Allies; and no one ever gives on these." Rusk and McNamara were agreed that the European position was rooted in a misguided conviction that nuclear weapons made the most convincing deterrent and a reluctance to spend the money required for stronger conventional forces. The unique facts on the ground around Berlin were what made early resort to nuclear weapons problematic, Kennedy observed. It was the prospect of "actions to restore access which makes the European position invalid."⁸⁵

As for the diffusion of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear powers, Rusk had held a brief but encouraging conversation with Foreign Minister Gromyko at Geneva, which had led him to suspect that the Soviets might be prepared to show flexibility in concluding an agreement that would allow some nuclear sharing within NATO.⁸⁶ In any event, he was sufficiently encouraged to prepare a personal message for Gromyko, which he read to Ambassador Dobrynin on August 8. This emphasized the shared interest of the superpowers in preventing the emergence of new nuclear powers, while acknowledging that "the countries of greatest concern to us are not necessarily those of greatest concern to you." It ought to be possible, Rusk continued, to reach an agreement under which existing nuclear powers would not transfer nuclear weapons to others, and non-nuclear states would undertake not to develop or acquire them. The main point of difficulty arose with regard to multilateral arrangements.

The Soviet objection to multilateral arrangements in NATO, he claimed, was understandable but rested upon a misperception. “We consider the discussion of multilateral arrangements in the West,” he went on, “as, among other things, a means for preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons on a national basis.” While it was unclear what would ultimately emerge from discussions among the NATO powers, “the United States does not have in mind equipping other national forces with nuclear weapons under circumstances which would make it possible for national governments to make individual decisions about their employment.” In addition, current American law required that under all military arrangements with allies, American nuclear warheads remained under American custody.⁸⁷

Gromyko responded with a memorandum proposing a slightly more restrictive formulation in which nuclear powers would be obligated to transfer neither nuclear weapons nor technical information necessary for their manufacture, and non-nuclear states would agree not only not to produce nuclear weapons but not to acquire either the weapons themselves or the salient technical data. Any agreement also had to exclude “the transfer of nuclear weapons through military alliances to those states which do not possess them, i.e. the transfer of such weapons in indirect manner, irrespective of whether or not the national armed forces of these states are component parts of the armed forces of any military alliance.”⁸⁸

This, Rusk informed Kennedy, seemed to constitute a shift in the Soviet position. Gromyko’s message had not specified the necessity of a prior agreement on non-diffusion applying specifically to the two Germanys. While the language was ambiguous, neither did it seem to exclude a true multilateral force. Rusk proposed to conduct exploratory discussions with the British, and then the French and West Germans to consider the substance and negotiating tactics for concluding a non-transfer agreement.⁸⁹ In the margin, Kennedy cautioned Rusk to “get an understanding” of precisely what form of multilateral entity the Soviets might be willing to accept under the terms of any agreement.⁹⁰

The State Department’s Policy Planning Staff was unsure what Soviet intentions were. Walt Rostow noted this was the first time Moscow had indicated interest in a non-transfer agreement that was not focused on Germany. One possibility was that the Soviets wanted to discourage a Chinese nuclear capability they saw as imminent, and intended to force on Peking a multilateral arrangement in which effective control remained in Soviet hands. On the other hand, the Soviets might have no intention of pressing China to accede to any agreement, but be gambling that Washington would feel obliged to procure German

agreement nonetheless.⁹¹ As summer gave way to autumn, it was unclear what restrictions on nuclear sharing the Soviets would demand as part of any non-proliferation agreement, or what scope they would leave for the community of interdependence about which Kennedy had spoken in Philadelphia. Kennedy did see encouraging signs of a more flexible attitude on the part of at least some West German political figures, now that the construction of the Wall had seemed to discredit the *Politik der Starke*, and Adenauer had been reduced to a minority government and forced into a coalition with the FDP. Willy Brandt, the SPD's unsuccessful *Kanzlerkandidat*, delivered a series of lectures at Harvard in October, in which he argued that events had discredited Adenauer's approach, and that the Western powers needed to formulate their own variant of détente or peaceful coexistence. Changing the situation in Germany, he claimed, required that it be in the Soviets' own interest to accede to German desires for self-determination.⁹² When Kennedy met Brandt a few days later, he expressed his agreement with the thrust of his lectures, both assuring him of the American commitment to Berlin's security and urging him to explore all reasonable avenues of reducing tension. Brandt agreed on the need for flexibility, observing that "our attempt to stand on the status quo always leads to the status quo minus."⁹³

There was little evidence of flexibility in the administration's approach to nuclear sharing with France in any way that would support the *force de frappe*. After the Champs meeting, Macmillan had instructed the Chairman of the UKAEA, Sir Roger Makins, to assess possibilities for nuclear cooperation with France on the assumption of American agreement.⁹⁴ Makins noted that collaboration on a delivery system was one option, but was of limited relevance until after the expiration of the bomber-based deterrent which Skybolt was expected to prolong for some years. There was the additional worry that the Americans might respond to any British overtures to de Gaulle by themselves making France an offer that was more generous in the short term, but calculated to avert an independent European nuclear capability, and thus precluding French concessions on EEC in exchange.⁹⁵ British officials also urged Washington to take part in joint examination of European attitudes toward nuclear defence. A British working group prepared a somewhat indeterminate proposal for a NATO nuclear force that would encompass the British and French deterrents, and elements of the American one, but without requiring the creation of either a purely European defence authority or a new multilateral one.⁹⁶ Rusk warned McNamara that British interest in nuclear collaboration with France pointed in the direction not of a multilateral entity safely

embedded in NATO structures but of the extension of Britain's national capability in partnership with France. A European force free of any American influence would prove divisive within NATO, and encourage the Germans to seek their own national capability. The British, he insisted, had to be nudged in the direction of nuclear cooperation only within the concept of a multilateral entity rooted in NATO and in which the United States was a participant.⁹⁷ When McNamara met with Watkinson's successor Peter Thorneycroft in September, he observed that it was only the underlying Anglo-American political affinity that made it possible to combine integrated targeting with Britain's independent control of its own deterrent.⁹⁸ The obvious inference was that such arrangements could not be extended to France in light of de Gaulle's attitude towards his allies.

Macmillan directed Thorneycroft to sound out Messmer on whether French thinking on European nuclear cooperation was limited to the coordination of national deterrents with each country retaining political control of its own weapons, or if France were open to at least discussing a wider force that might have some multilateral features. At the same meeting, Aviation Minister Julian Amery argued for offering France assistance with delivery systems, such as bombers or a revived Blue Streak.⁹⁹ When the two Defence Ministers met, Messmer indicated that France was not averse to taking part in a larger deterrent force, perhaps through coordinated targeting with Washington and London. It was not prepared to consider putting the *force de frappe* into a multilateral force of the sort the Americans proposed, in which the interdependence of the constituent forces would render effective national control impossible.¹⁰⁰ Messmer later added that cooperation on aircraft or air-launched missiles was of little interest to France, now that ballistic missiles were displacing bombers as the preferred means of delivery.¹⁰¹

One other option for collaboration was the development of a submarine-based missile force, about which Watkinson and Messmer had engaged in preliminary discussions in June.¹⁰² Watkinson had concluded that the combination of the submarines Britain was already developing with the missile-launching technology on which the French were at work would provide a platform for retaining the independent deterrent after Skybolt and into the missile age.¹⁰³ In the wake of this discussion, representatives of a French naval contractor approached Foster Wheeler, the British subsidiary of an American engineering firm, to purchase elements of the Dreadnought nuclear submarine propulsion system. The propulsion system was separate from all of the weapons technologies a submarine-based missile force

might use, and the information was not classified. But the Foreign Office suspected the Americans might see a violation of at least the spirit of the 1957 agreement and instructed Ormsby-Gore to consult the State Department.¹⁰⁴ An official in the Bureau of European Affairs replied that “the export of even unclassified defence information and equipment is subject to determination”, and in light of past Anglo-American cooperation on submarine propulsion technology, “it was hardly possible to distinguish between United States and United Kingdom technical information embodied in given items of equipment.” Moreover, the United States was itself thinking of selling France such technology, mainly for balance-of-payments reasons.¹⁰⁵ The commercial element in American motivations was certainly an object of particular irritation in London.¹⁰⁶ De Zulueta tartly remarked upon “the high principles which the Americans express when they are dealing with our interests and the brutal self-interest with which they deal with their own,”¹⁰⁷ while Lord Hailsham, Lord President of the Council, suggested rejecting the American argument out of hand, since it was obviously not made in good faith.¹⁰⁸

Yet the substantive point loomed larger in Cabinet discussions; Thorneycroft observed that if the government followed the Foreign Office’s advice and stopped any sale in order to preserve American goodwill, “there was nothing that we could ever do in this field.” Macmillan agreed that the Americans would have to be informed of any deal, but only *after* formal agreement had been reached between the French and Foster Wheeler.¹⁰⁹ Any American objections were to be deflected on the grounds that Foster Wheeler was a private entity, not an arm of the British state, and therefore the government was not responsible for its actions.¹¹⁰ But before this matter could be clarified, the unleashing of nuclear weapons became a more tangible danger with the emplacement of Soviet missiles on Cuba.

Notes

1. As summarized in Kaysen to Bundy, January 10 1962, f. MLF General 1/61-6/62, Regional Security Files (RSF), Box 216, NSF Box 211-216, JFKL.
2. Kaysen to Henry Rowen, January 18 1962, idem.
3. "Nuclear Sharing and MRBMs", February 9 1962, n.s. but apparently by Kaysen, idem.
4. Memorandum of conversation, February 5 1962, "NATO Nuclear Questions", idem.
5. Memorandum of conversation, February 7 1962, "NATO's Nuclear Role", idem.
6. Summary of the February 22 meeting of the joint study group, in Kaysen to Bundy, February 22 1962, idem.
7. See de Gaulle's broadcast of February 5 1962, in his Discours et Messages, Vol. III (Paris: Plon, 1970), pp. 382-387.
8. Memorandum of conversation with the President, March 16 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 377-380.
9. Rusk to Paris, February 20 1962, f. France, General, 2 / 17 / 62- 3 / 4 / 62, ; Battle to Bundy, March 5 1962, f. France, General, 3 / 5 / 62- 3 / 10 / 62, both Box 71, NSF, JFKL.
10. Gavin to Kennedy, March 9 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XII, pp. 687-688.
11. See, e.g., Bundy to Kennedy, "Ambassador Gavin's Visit", February 28 1962, f. France, General, 2 / 17 / 62- 3 / 4 / 62, Box 71, NSF, JFKL.
12. Rusk to Gavin, April 18 1961, f. France, General, 4 / 3 / 62- 4 / 29 / 62, idem.
13. Draft letter, Kennedy to Gavin, n.d, not sent, f. France, General, 4 / 1 / 62- 4 / 12 / 62, idem.
14. Gavin to Rusk, April 12 1962, idem. After 1962, anti-Gaullist sentiment had room to grow, with the left and centre feeling free to oppose the General now that the Algerian conflict had been wound down. Earlier, Socialists and many centrists had unspoken reservations about his nuclear ambitions, and his hostility to both American leadership and European integration. See Julian Jackson, "General de Gaulle and His Enemies: Anti-Gaullism in France since 1940", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, v. 9 (1999), pp. 43-65.
15. Gavin to State Department, "French Strategic Viewpoints", April 9 1962, idem.
16. "Notes on Lunch with General Stehlin in Paris, February 5 1962", encls. in Kissinger to Kaysen, February 9 1962, f. France, General, 2 / 1 / 62- 2 / 9 / 62, idem.
17. "Memorandum of Conversation in Paris, February 5 1962", encl. in ibid.
18. See his "The Unsolved Problems of European Defense", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (July 1962), pp. 515-541.
19. Nitze memorandum of conversation with Adenauer, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. Xv, pp. 103-107.
20. Bundy to Rusk, April 7 1962, ibid, p. 102.
21. The exact source of the leak is unclear, but suspects include Brentano, Adenauer himself, and Heinrich Krone, the CDU leader in the *Bundestag*. See Roger Morgan, "Kennedy and Adenauer" pp. 16-31 of Douglas Brinkley and Richard T. Griffiths, eds., John F. Kennedy and Europe (Baton Rouge; Louisiana State University Press, 1999) and Arne Hofmann, The Emergence of Détente in Europe: Brandt, Kennedy and the Formation of Ostpolitik (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 190-191. At the time, the West German Ambassador in Washington, Wilhelm Grewe, was also suspected, but denied any involvement and claimed the leak was not in Bonn's interest. See memorandum of conversation, April 14 1962, "Leak of Documents", FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 109-111.
22. Extract from Adenauer press conference, May 7 1962, in American Foreign Policy: Basic Documents, 1962 (Washington, D.C.; GPO, 1966), pp. 668-669.

23. Paris to Foreign Office, March 21 1962, FO 371/167008, TNA.
24. Paris to Foreign Office, April 4 1962, DEFE 13/254, and Dixon to Caccia, April 7 1962, FO 371/166973.
25. Statement by the Lord Privy Seal to the Council of Western European Union, April 10 1962, FO 371/167114.
26. CC(62) 45, May 4 1962, CAB 128/36.
27. Oliver Bange, The EEC Crisis of 1963: Kennedy, Macmillan, de Gaulle and Adenauer in Conflict (London: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 62-63, and Jeffrey Glen Giauque, Grand Designs and Visions of Unity: The Atlantic Powers and the Reorganization of Western Europe, 1955-1963 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pp. 141-150.
28. Rostow to Rusk, March 24 1962, "European Unity", f. NATO / Nuclear Weapons / Aid 1962, Box 19a, Neustadt Papers, JFKL.
29. Rostow to Rusk, April 17 1962, "The Nuclear Role of Britain, France, and Germany", idem.
30. National Security Action Memorandum No. 147, April 18 1962, "NATO Nuclear Program", FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 384-387.
31. Bundy to Kennedy, April 24 1962, *ibid*, 1068-1069.
32. As noted in Ball (Acting Secretary) to Rusk, May 5 1962, *ibid*, p. 692.
33. Rusk to various Embassies, April 27 1962, *ibid*, pp. 82-84.
34. Rusk to State Department, May 4 1962, *ibid*, pp. 689-691.
35. Rusk to State Department, May 6 1962, *ibid*, pp. 692-693. See also Circular Telegram 1920, May 9 1962, *ibid*, pp. 389-393.
36. Idem.
37. Lawrence Freedman, Kennedy's Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 110.
38. Memorandum of meeting, May 11 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963 Vol. XIII, pp. 695-701.
39. Press conference of May 15 1962 at the Elysee Palace, Discours et Messages, Tome III, *op cit*, pp. 403-413.
40. Paris to State Department, May 16 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 702-703.
41. May 17 press conference, in PPP:1962, pp. 399-400.
42. State Department to Paris, May 18 1962, drafted by Bundy, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, p. 704.
43. Paris to State Department, May 28 1962, *ibid*, pp. 705-707.
44. Bundy to Aron, May 24 1962, f. France, General, 5 / 19 / 62-5 / 26 / 62, Box 71, NSF, JFKL.
45. As noted in Bundy memorandum for Kennedy, June 7 1962, f. Department of Defense, 6 / 62, Departments and Agencies Series, Box 274, NSF, JFKL.
46. Text of McNamara address at Michigan University (sic), 16 June 1962, as released by USIS, June 18 1962, PREM 11 / 3709, TNA.
47. Rusk (in Paris) to State Department, June 20 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 718-724.
48. Rusk to State Department, June 21 1962, *ibid*, pp. 725-727.
49. Paris to State Department, July 6 1962, *ibid*, pp. 727-730.
50. Foreign Office note, December 12 1961, FO 371 / 164832, TNA.
51. Foreign Office brief for Macmillan, May 11 1962, FO 371 / 166976.
52. Memorandum of Macmillan conversation with Ambassador Chauvel, April 19 1962, PREM 11/3793.
53. Memorandum of luncheon with Rusk, April 28 1962, FO 371/166969.

54. Memorandum of conversation with de Courcel, May 9 1962, PREM 11/3775.
55. Paris to Foreign Office, May 22 1962, *idem*.
56. Macmillan to Ormsby-Gore, May 29 1962, PREM 11/3712.
57. See, e.g., Ian Clark, Nuclear Diplomacy and the Special Relationship: Britain's Deterrent and America, 1957-1962 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994)p. 399, which attributes the shift to de Gaulle's apparent lack of interest, and Ralph Dietl, "'Sole Master of the Western Nuclear Strength'? The United States, Western Europe and the Elusiveness of a European Defence Identity, 1959-64", pp. 132-172 of Wilfried Loth, ed., Europe, Cold War and Coexistence, 1953-1965 (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 146, which emphasizes American resistance to nuclear sharing.
58. Foreign Office Brief for Discussion with the Prime Minister, May 26 1962, FO 371/166973.
59. Extract of conversation between the Prime Minister and General de Gaulle, 12.30 pm, June 3 1962, Record of the Prime Minister's meeting with General de Gaulle, June 2-3, 1962, PREM 11 / 3775.
60. Constantine A. Pagedas, Anglo-American Strategic Relations and the French Problem, 1960-1963 (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp. 200-201, correctly notes the significance of the speech for Anglo-American relations, and suggests that until this point most Britons had underestimated the extent to which the administration was now committed to the MLF and the phasing out of independent national deterrents, behind the anodyne rhetoric about the "special relationship" on appropriate ceremonial occasions. This seems to overestimate the commitment of the President and the Defense Secretary, insofar as the former never abandoned his doubts about the practicality and popularity of an MLF, and the latter was more concerned about clarifying allied understanding of nuclear strategy than winding up national deterrents *per se*.
61. Cmnd.1639, Statement on Defence 1962: The Next Five Years (London; HMSO, 1962).
62. Watkinson to Macmillan, June 18 1962, PREM 11 / 3775, TNA.
63. Home to Rusk, enclosed in Foreign Office to Paris, June 19 1962, Tel. 1637, *idem*.
64. Foreign Office circular telegram, guidance #245, "Nuclear Strategy "June 18 1962, *idem*. Emphasis in original.
65. Foreign Office circular telegram, guidance #224, "Britain and Europe: Nuclear Weapons", June 16 1962, *idem*.
66. Paris to Foreign Office, June 19 1962, Tel. 276, *idem*.
67. Foreign Office to Paris, June 20 1962, Tel. 1657, *idem*.
68. Washington to Foreign Office, June 22 1962, Tel. 1656, *idem*.
69. Washington to Foreign Office, June 22 1962, Tel. 1657, *idem*.
70. Washington to Foreign Office, June 23 1962, Tel. 1667, *idem*.
71. Ken Young, "A Most Special Relationship: The Origins of Anglo-American Nuclear Strike Planning", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 9/2 (Spring 2007), pp. 5-31.
72. De Zulueta to Macmillan, June 24 1962, and Macmillan's notation, PREM 11/3775, TNA.
73. Macmillan to Watkinson, June 24 1962, *idem*.
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75. Home to Macmillan, June 24 1962, PREM 11 / 2633, TNA.
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77. Rostow to Rusk, May 19 1962, "US-European Relations", f. NATO / Nuclear Weapons / Aid 1962, (1), Box 19a, Neustadt Papers, JFKL.
78. As noted in Kohler to Rusk, June 1 1962, *idem*.

79. State of the Union message, January 11 1962, PPP: 1962, p. 14.
80. Address of July 4 1962, Liberty Hall, Philadelphia, PPP: 1962, pp. 537-539.
81. Address of welcome to Chancellor Adenauer, July 2 1962, Discours et Messages, Vol. III, p. 427.
82. Adenauer to Macmillan, July 17 1962, PREM 11 / 3777, TNA.
83. See June 12 draft letter of resignation, encls. in Gavin to Bundy June 12, and Bundy to Kennedy, July 4 1962, both in f. France-General, 7/62-Gavin Resignation, NSF Box 71, JFKL.
84. Lemnitzer memorandum for Kennedy, July 24 1962, "Meeting with General de Gaulle, 23 July 1962", *idem*.
85. "Briefing for the President", August 9 1962, App. M. in John C. Ausland, Kennedy, Khrushchev and the Berlin-Cuba Crisis, 1961-1964 (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1996), pp. 171-175.
86. Memorandum of conversation, "Secretary's Geneva Trip, July 19-26", July 24 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. VII (Washington, DC; GPO, 1995), pp. 493-495.
87. Memorandum of Conversation, August 8 1962, "Non-diffusion of Nuclear Weapons", *ibid*, pp. 541-547.
88. Memorandum of conversation with Dobrynin, August 23 1962, "Non-diffusion of Nuclear Weapons", pp. 556-557, and attachment, "Message from Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko to Secretary Rusk, delivered Orally by Ambassador Dobrynin to the Secretary, August 23 1962", *ibid*, pp. 557-559.
89. Rusk memorandum to Kennedy, September 21 1962, "Agreement on Non-Diffusion of Nuclear Weapons", *ibid*, pp. 570-572.
90. Fn. 2, *ibid*, p. 571.
91. "Highlights of Discussion at Secretary of State Rusk's Policy Planning Meeting", August 28 1962 *ibid*, Vol. V (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1998), pp. 483-489.
92. Willy Brandt, The Ordeal of Coexistence (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1963).
93. Memorandum of conversation between Kennedy and Brandt, October 5 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XV, pp. 344-348.
94. Record of Conversation at Admiralty House, July 20 1962, PREM 11/3712, TNA.
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96. Problems of Nuclear Defence, October 18 1962, annex to Working Group on European Integration in Defence Policy, EIDP (WG) P (62)3, in Thomson to Barnes, November 21 1962, DEFE 10/547.
97. Rusk to McNamara, September 8 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, p. 1079.
98. "Nuclear Problems in Europe", memorandum of Thorneycroft conversation with McNamara on a visit to the United States, September 17 1962, DEFE 13/323, TNA.
99. Meeting of Macmillan, Thorneycroft and Amery, October 9 1962, PREM 11/3772.
100. Memorandum of conversation at the Ministère des Armées, October 17 1962, FO 371/163515.
101. Extract from record of meeting between Messmer and Sir Robert Scott, October 24 1962, DEFE 7/2135.
102. Extract from memorandum of Watkinson conversation with Messmer, June 7 1962, PREM 11/3712.
103. Watkinson to Macmillan, July 4 1962, *idem*.
104. Foreign Office to Washington, July 20 1962, Tel. 4094, *idem*.

105. Washington to Foreign Office, September 11 1962, Tel. 2280, *idem*.

106. As noted in Clark, *op cit*, p. 404, and Pagedas, *op cit*, p. 234.

107. De Zulueta to Macmillan, September 12 1962, PREM 11/3712, TNA.

108. Record of meeting at Admiralty House, October 15 1962, "Nuclear Submarine Parts for France", *idem*.

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110. Foreign Office to Washington, October 18 1962, Tel. 7301, FO 371/163339.

Chapter Eight: Cuba

Since the emergence of strong political and economic ties between the Soviet Union and Fidel Castro's regime, American policy towards Cuba had been framed with one eye cast (at least intermittently) on the possible reverberations where Soviet and American forces faced each other directly. In April of 1961, American-backed Cuban rebels landed at the Bay of Pigs with the aim of toppling Castro. Kennedy ruled out any overt commitment of American forces, to avert any clash with those of a Soviet proxy, and the absence of air support in particular reduced whatever chance there was of operational success.¹ While Castro's army was still contending with the exile forces, Khrushchev warned Kennedy that it was impossible to stabilize the situation at one potential flashpoint "while a new conflagration is ignited in another area."² Kennedy responded that "I trust that this does not mean that the Soviet Government, using the situation in Cuba as a pretext, is planning to inflame other areas of the world."³ After the defeat of the exiles, he told his predecessor that he had acted with restraint out of concern that the Soviets would respond with hostile actions around Berlin. Dwight Eisenhower replied that, on the contrary, visible American resolve would have deterred any Soviet initiative, and Kennedy's behaviour would merely embolden Khrushchev.⁴

In the summer of 1962, events on Cuba and their wider implications became a concern for the administration once again. Americans debriefed refugees, exiles, and others with first-hand knowledge of Cuban developments as part of Operation Mongoose, a program of low-level harassment of the Castro regime. This produced numerous reports of increased Soviet military assistance, including an influx of east bloc personnel and rumors that military aircraft were being delivered. The Director of Central Intelligence, John McCone, suggested that the Soviets were sending MRBMs to Cuba as part of a buildup of offensive weapons.⁵ While both Rusk and McNamara believed the buildup was limited to defensive weapons, Kennedy did order the development of a contingency plan for any deployment of nuclear weapons capable of offensive use on Cuba.⁶ He put Cuba within a broader context, directing that the current buildup be used to dramatize to America's NATO allies the extent of Castro's subservience to the Soviets and secure their cooperation in economic measures to isolate him, and that any blockade or invasion to force the removal of offensive weapons from Cuba be studied within the framework of aggravated tensions around Berlin. He also ordered consideration of the potential effects of both the deployment of an offensive

capability on Cuba and an American statement that such a deployment was unacceptable, as well as asking what was being done to remove the obsolescent (if not obsolete) Jupiters from Turkey, missiles the Turkish government now seemed intent on retaining.⁷

Walt Rostow observed that if the United States were to announce that it would not tolerate a nuclear delivery capability on Cuba, the Soviets might very well respond by pointing to the Jupiters deployed near Soviet frontiers. Yet the latter had been installed under established regional security arrangements that had become part of a relatively stable *status quo*, while the former would dramatically destabilize the Western Hemisphere. And although the Soviet buildup on Cuba might be intended to strengthen the Soviet bargaining position, Moscow had also given “hostages to fortune”, with Cuba vulnerable to American blockade in the event of intensified Soviet pressure on Berlin.⁸

The Director of the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Roger Hilsman, thought it unlikely that Moscow would, in any event, be prepared to trade any weapons it might put on Cuba for the removal of American ones on Soviet borders. The long lead time involved in an arms buildup on Cuba did not suggest synchronization with any Soviet move to ratchet up the pressure on Berlin, although it might tend to strengthen Moscow’s hand. The principal link was that a growing Soviet presence on Cuba might be seen by the Soviets as symbolic of the global correlation of forces shifting in their favour, and requiring the “normalization” of the situation in Berlin.⁹

American reconnaissance planes detected a proliferation of surface-to-air missile sites, but Rostow saw no threat to American security. Soviet actions, he suggested, could most plausibly be explained as intended to meet Castro’s concerns regarding overflights and low-level covert operations. In light of public doubts, domestically and abroad, about what the buildup’s military significance might be, the administration should inject a degree of clarity by stating that there were no nuclear weapons or delivery systems on Cuba, and that their deployment would be unacceptable.¹⁰ Roswell Gilpatric feared this would give the Soviets ground on which to issue legalistic challenges to American bases abroad, while not sufficing, in the absence of more concrete measures, to deter the Soviets from taking those steps upon which they had already resolved.¹¹ Nonetheless, on September 4, Kennedy issued a statement that there were SAMs on Cuba as well as more East Bloc personnel than previously thought. There was no evidence of surface-to-surface or other offensive weapons, and if they were deployed “the gravest issues would arise.”¹²

A few days later, Khrushchev told Kennedy's Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall, who was visiting the Soviet Union, that while he had read with dislike statements by some members of Congress urging Kennedy to invade Cuba, he was aware of the position Kennedy had taken "and expressed approval of it." As for Berlin, he said that while the Western powers could retain access for civilian purposes, their military presence had to end.¹³ The consensus within the American intelligence community was that Khrushchev would try to step up pressure on Berlin piecemeal before the eventual resumption of negotiations, and that if he brought the matter before the UN General Assembly, as rumoured, it would be to generate pressure from neutral states for either Western concessions or restraint in response to unilateral Soviet moves.¹⁴ Since the Soviet downing of a U-2 surveillance craft had destroyed the 1960 Paris summit, the United States had exercised timidity in conducting flights over Cuba or other areas where military action or legal challenge was likely. When McCone met with Bundy on October 5, he warned that current restrictions on U-2 flights under all but ideal weather conditions had rendered the intelligence community unable to report with certainty on the development of offensive capabilities on Cuba. Bundy doubted the Soviets were reckless enough to deploy nuclear weapons so far beyond their borders, and "therefore seemed relaxed over the fact that the intelligence community cannot produce hard information."¹⁵ The Special Group (Augmented), which oversaw Operation Mongoose under the direction of Attorney General Robert Kennedy, was agreed that the administration should consider "stating publicly that we propose to overfly Cuba in the interest of our own security and the security of the Western Hemisphere, and then to proceed even though doing so involved risk."¹⁶ Yet the historian Sherman Kent, writing as Chairman of the CIA's Board of National Estimates, warned that such an announcement would be condemned as raising tensions over Cuba even by friendly nations. The United States might find itself isolated on the legal question, and an announced intention to overfly Cuba would not by itself make the Soviets' course of action riskier and thus would not lead them to change it.¹⁷

It was not until October 14 that an overflight of western Cuba provided clear photographic evidence of MRBM sites. On the morning of the 15th, photoanalysts at the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC) located the principal components of an MRBM in a field at San Cristobal and those of twenty-four SAM sites that had not been identified before. An NPIC official then telephoned the CIA's Deputy Director of Intelligence, Ray

Cline, who alerted Bundy, who in turn informed the President the next morning.¹⁸ On learning that there was definitive proof of Soviet MRBMs on Cuba, Kennedy ordered a late morning meeting with the roughly fifteen administration officials who would form the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (ExComm), the ad hoc body that would advise him during the crisis. At its first meeting, the group viewed aerial photographs of missile sites under construction and missiles under tarpaulins. The absence of any warhead storage facilities nearby, McNamara pointed out, suggested the missiles were not yet ready to fire or capable of being readied within less than a day, perhaps even two. The time required for the missiles to be readied would be critical to the formation of American plans.

Rusk defined two broad courses of action, of which the first was a quick air strike to remove the missiles. The second would be some combination of military and diplomatic initiatives, the latter including discussions with key allies, overtures to Khrushchev and Castro designed to convince them that the missiles had to be removed, and arranging for the Organization of American States (OAS) to establish itself as the relevant consultative body and announce that the deployment of offensive missiles on Cuba violated the Rio Pact. Possible steps along the parallel military track included calling up reserve units and reinforcing forces in the southeastern states. Declaring a national state of emergency, Rusk went on, would give the administration the maximum freedom of military action. If it were to present the situation as one of such gravity, it would also have to assert the right to overfly Cuba and reject any claims to secrecy. The alternative course, an early air strike, would be difficult. As General Taylor observed, it was easiest in military terms to destroy the missiles while they were all above ground, a requirement that could be hard to reconcile with the equally compelling objective of removing them before they became operational. Moreover, even the destruction of all the existing missiles would not prevent the introduction of new ones. This could only be done, McNamara added, if the United States threatened to destroy further weapons once they were detected, and undertook open-ended surveillance of Cuba. Since it was unclear what control the Soviets had over the warheads, or what communications with the missile sites, any attack on missiles that might already be operational carried unacceptable risks.

Kennedy then turned the discussion to the question of Soviet intentions. Rusk noted that Khrushchev may have sought to offset American strategic nuclear superiority to some degree, as well as to expose the United States to the threat of attack the Soviets saw in

American MRBMs based in Turkey. He then suggested that “Berlin is very much involved in this.” For the first time, “I’m beginning to wonder whether Mr. Khrushchev is entirely rational about Berlin.” Khrushchev might intend either to bargain the missiles in Cuba away for Western concessions in Berlin or to provoke an overt American attack on Cuba that would provide him with cover to move on Berlin, much as the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt in 1956 had made it easier for him to crush the uprising in Hungary. Yet Rusk did not “really see the rationality of the Soviets pushing it this far unless they grossly misunderstand the importance of Cuba to this country.”

Treasury Secretary Douglas Dillon noted that a successful surprise attack on the missiles, coupled with a statement that the United States planned no further action, would allow the Soviets to simply step back, while the diplomatic approach might encourage them to say they would retaliate in the face of any move upon Cuba. Rusk replied that the Soviets might retaliate in any event, in which case “you have exposed all of your allies and ourselves to all these great dangers without the slightest consultation, or warning, or preparation.” Bundy also pointed to possible allied actions, adding that the Europeans would say “they can live with Soviet MRBMs, why can’t we?’ The Germans in particular “would feel that we were jeopardizing Berlin because of our concern over Cuba.” One possibility, he suggested, was to inform Castro through a third party that Soviet diplomats were already rumoured to be speaking about a trade of Cuba for Berlin, and that “the Soviets are preparing Cuba for destruction, or betrayal.” In the interests of his own people Castro would have to “break clearly with the Soviet Union and prevent this missile base from becoming operational.”¹⁹ The meeting closed with McNamara and his subordinates at the Pentagon undertaking to analyze the prospects of an air strike, while Rusk and his colleagues assessed the diplomatic options. While this went ahead, Kennedy would stick to his announced schedule.

When the group reconvened that evening, General Taylor said the Joint Chiefs of Staff were unanimously opposed to a limited air strike as inviting retaliation and forfeiting the advantage of strategic surprise in any later, and wider, strike. The lack of any sign of warheads at the missile sites meant there was no chance of immediate attack, leaving time to gather more intelligence on the entire set of possible targets on Cuba in preparation for a comprehensive air strike. McNamara recurred to the difficulty of locating and destroying every weapon and launcher. He also contended that an approach built around diplomacy, as recommended by Rusk, would not lead to the missiles’ removal and, by alerting the Soviets

and Cubans to their discovery, prejudice later military action. On the other hand, the risks of any military action escalating to wider hostilities were very high. A middle course worth considering, he continued, was a blockade to prevent the delivery of further weapons combined with open-ended surveillance of Cuba. While Kennedy was publicly committed to respond to any aggressive acts by Cuba, this did not necessarily entail steps to compel withdrawal of the MRBMs, which, he claimed, did not materially affect the nuclear balance between the superpowers. The crucial *military* requirement was that they not be launched. This could be met by a combination of blockade, surveillance and a declaration that “if there is ever any indication that they’re to be launched against this country, we will respond not only against Cuba, but we will respond directly against the Soviet Union with a full nuclear strike.”²⁰

Kennedy wondered again why Khrushchev would have deployed the missiles, if they had little significance for the wider strategic balance, and in light of his past caution regarding Berlin. Ball repeated the suggestion that the missiles on Cuba were part of a “trading ploy” over Berlin, and that Khrushchev might have planned to unveil them when discussing Berlin at the UN that fall. Ball and Bundy both took comfort in the notion that Khrushchev would not be so reckless as to put nuclear weapons in Castro’s hands. When the discussion turned to the possibility of an unannounced air strike, McNamara said that Khrushchev would retaliate, even if on a small scale, with implications for “our allies’ support of us in relation to Berlin.”²¹ Kennedy’s Ambassador to the UN, Adlai Stevenson, observed in writing that the administration had been prepared “for the widespread reaction that if we have a missile base in Turkey and other places around the Soviet Union surely they have a right to one in Cuba.” Its justification for any resort to force would seem less compelling to the rest of the world, and Kennedy should make it clear that the presence of nuclear missile bases anywhere was at least open to negotiation. The President, he continued, should indicate his willingness to discuss withdrawal of weapons systems such as the Jupiters in Turkey and Italy after those on Cuba had been removed, since “we can’t negotiate with a gun at our head.”²²

The next morning, Rusk observed that an American failure to act would constitute a clear retreat from past warnings against offensive weapons on Cuba, encouraging the Soviets to do as they wished elsewhere, with less fear of American retaliation. An unannounced air strike on Cuba would divide NATO as deeply as the Suez expedition, with the difference that it would be the leading power that was isolated from its allies. He then read a note by Charles

Bohlen, who had succeeded Gavin as Ambassador to France. Bohlen recommended an ultimatum to Khrushchev and an effort to justify a declaration of war in the eyes of America's allies. Limiting hostilities to a quick air strike, Bohlen wrote, was "an illusion", and especially if the Soviets retaliated in Turkey, Italy, or near Berlin, "the Allied reaction would be dead against us."²³

Llewellyn Thompson argued that the Soviets would be reluctant to run a blockade legally established pursuant to a declaration of war. Instead, they would claim the bases were Cuban, not Soviet (so as to deter a repetition of the Bay of Pigs) and that they posed less of a military threat than the American Jupiters in Turkey. "If we act, they'd better be Cuban missiles", Bundy observed, with Rusk adding that "our action should be aimed at Cuba just as much as possible." McNamara cautioned that, while the Soviets would not authorize the launching of missiles on Cuba against the United States, "they might nonetheless be used." While the Joint Chiefs and some of his advisers in the Pentagon disagreed, his own assessment was that the missiles were of little inherent military significance. The problem the administration faced was "a political problem... of holding the alliance together. It's a problem of properly conditioning Khrushchev for our future moves." The dilemma was that these both necessitated risky actions that "the shift in the military balance does not require."

Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson pointed out that Castro's past attempts to either join the Warsaw Pact or conclude a bilateral defense treaty had apparently failed. If the administration took military action against Cuba without warning, the Soviets would have some latitude in responding. If, on the other hand, the Soviets reacted to an American ultimatum or other communication by declaring the bases were theirs, "we have the problem of committing an action against a missile base that's theirs. And this might mean a war of different proportions." The salient question, the President noted, was whether the Soviet responses to a *fait accompli* and an ultimatum would be measurably different. The only offer that might encourage Khrushchev to withdraw his missiles from Cuba, he added, was for the United States to remove its from Turkey.²⁴

Bundy contended that an offer to dismantle the Jupiters could also follow an air strike on Cuba, so that if Khrushchev retaliated, he would at least have spurned a peaceful resolution. In any event, "I don't think we can keep that Turkish base(sic)." McNamara agreed that under any plausible sequence of American and Soviet moves, the lowest price the United States would pay for removal of the missiles on Cuba was the loss of those in Turkey and

Italy. "I doubt we could settle for that", he said. Dillon claimed Khrushchev was likely to seize Berlin but that immediate American action against Cuba might force him to reconsider. In that sense, Taylor added, action against Cuba reduced the danger to Berlin. Thompson, who agreed that the local conventional balance around the city made it a safer point for the Soviets to stand firm than Cuba, thought it more likely he would not attack the city immediately, but attempt to use the threat of doing so to divide NATO. A blockade had the advantage of slowing down the pace at which the next few steps were taken, and giving the Soviets more time for thought before any escalation. The President suggested the choice was between an early military action against the missiles on Cuba, which would alarm the allies because of the increased danger of general war in the short term, and a period of protracted tension at a lower level, which would gradually erode allied confidence that America, in the face of Soviet offensive weapons a few miles away, could lead NATO effectively. The group was agreed that any Soviet attack on Berlin would lead to the rapid defeat of the American forces there, with subsequent escalation to general war probably inescapable.²⁵

An additional element of instability was Khrushchev's own volatile temperament. Thompson recalled that when the Soviet leader had walked out of the 1960 Paris summit, members of the Soviet military had made a point of informing Thompson that the situation was not escaping control, "and showing they were concerned that Khrushchev was being impetuous and running risks." Khrushchev had taken personal credit for an aggressive stance on Berlin that had now led him to take an unwise gamble. Presumably, he would show any American communication to colleagues who might restrain him. Johnson said one option was sending a high-level emissary, with instructions to accept as a satisfactory response nothing less than Khrushchev's agreement to order the dismantling of the missiles. He wondered if it were possible to simultaneously remove the Jupiters in Turkey and substitute the deployment of Polaris submarines. Kennedy responded that Khrushchev might respond with an ultimatum of his own that would put the United States in a more difficult position. Arguably, it was easier to accept a *fait accompli*, when assuming the burden of any other response was too risky, than to agree to the same situation in advance. The United States would have responded harshly had Khrushchev given advance warning of his intent to crush the Hungarian uprising, but had done nothing after the fact.²⁶

Robert Kennedy proposed communication to the Soviets, but in vague terms. When Gromyko visited the White House later that day, the President might ask "What are you

doing in Cuba? What kind of missiles are you putting in?" Taylor added this would have the advantage of sending a warning without making American knowledge of the situation explicit; if Gromyko were to deny anything was afoot, this could be useful in building the record for any subsequent American measures.²⁷ At the end of the day, McNamara argued, the price America had to pay for removal of the missiles was likely to be the same, whatever course the administration followed. Advance warning had the advantage of giving Khrushchev a way out, and potentially reducing the need for the employment of force, as well as minimizing tensions with the NATO allies. The disadvantages were loss of the element of surprise, and the more consequential danger that Khrushchev would contrive to outmaneuver the United States. Resort to a blockade in the first instance could prevent divisions within NATO, but the Jupiters would ultimately be withdrawn, perhaps by Soviet military action. The best outcome would be their removal by agreement, with the missiles in Cuba either being withdrawn or placed under Soviet control "comparable to your control over the missiles in Turkey and Italy."²⁸ Ball observed that the combination of blockade and political discussions had the advantage that it did not prejudice the decision of whether further military action would be necessary to remove the missiles.²⁹

When he met with Kennedy, Gromyko repeated that the Soviet Union would insist on renewed progress towards a resolution of Berlin's status following the American mid-term elections, and that the western military presence would have to be removed. As for Cuba, Soviet assistance extended only to strengthening Cuba's defenses against further invasion attempts, and Moscow would respond to any American attack on the island.³⁰ That night, Kennedy dictated to a tape recorder his observations on the day's deliberations, including his private conversations with two veterans of the Truman administration, Acheson and onetime Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett.³¹ Acheson had briefly taken part in Ex Comm deliberations, where he had argued for an air strike before the missiles became operational, a position he reiterated in his private session with the President, adding that a blockade would stop the delivery of further weapons, but not remove those already there.³² Lovett was convinced that an air strike would trigger Soviet reprisals that might include Berlin, and "we'd be regarded as having brought about the loss of Berlin with inadequate provocation, [the European allies] having lived with these intermediate-range ballistic missiles for years." There was apparent agreement in the Ex Comm, Kennedy noted, that a crisis over Berlin was likely to come in two or three months, by which time the Soviets would have a formidable

arsenal in the Western Hemisphere. The emerging consensus was for a blockade, limited in the first instance to additional offensive weaponry, but susceptible to tightening as required. He wished to avoid a declaration of war “because it would obviously be bad to have the word go out that we were having a war rather than that it was a limited blockade for a limited purpose.”³³ Gromyko’s emphasis on Berlin appears to have confirmed Kennedy’s suspicion that the missiles on Cuba were intended to strengthen the Soviet hand in forcing an acceptable settlement of the city’s status. In a meeting with the Joint Chiefs on the morning of the 19th he noted that while Cuba had figured in his conversation with the Foreign Minister, “Berlin—that’s what Khrushchev’s committed himself to personally.”³⁴

The President’s first discussion of the crisis with a foreigner took place at lunch on the 21st, when he informed the British Ambassador, David Ormsby-Gore, that the missiles had been discovered. He and his advisers, he continued, had reduced the possible responses to an air strike the following day and a blockade, initially restricted to further weapons.³⁵ The President then asked the Ambassador to express his own preference between them. No purely diplomatic option was presented, and Kennedy’s formulation appears to have been designed to secure an initial British commitment to the blockade as the more restrained course.³⁶ Ormsby-Gore responded that few non-Americans would see the missiles as sufficient provocation to warrant an air strike. Moreover, “American action of this kind might well provide a smoke-screen behind which the Russians might move against Berlin under favourable conditions.” American standing in the world would be damaged by an attack on Cuba, and “the Americans could be blamed for triggering off (sic) this exchange of pawns in the most reckless manner.” Kennedy also observed that the ultimate resolution of the crisis might entail discussions leading to the dismantling of other weapons, such as the obsolete Jupiters in Turkey.

Macmillan had not received Ormsby-Gore’s account of the conversation before he was briefed by Ambassador David Bruce, the first of a number of near-simultaneous briefings of allied leaders by high-level American emissaries.³⁷ Macmillan and Home told Bruce there was a clear danger of the Soviets responding to the quarantine of Cuba by interrupting access to Berlin or threatening American bases in Turkey, and suspected Khrushchev might seek to prolong the crisis and delay American action by proposing a summit with Kennedy.³⁸

Later that day, as he briefed the allied officials taking part in four-party contingency planning for Berlin, Nitze emphasized the possibility of Soviet action against the city and

demands for the removal of American bases abroad, noting that neither allied disunity nor inaction in the face of a deployment that altered the strategic balance was acceptable. The importance of Berlin in Khrushchev's calculations would only emerge through his response to the quarantine, and it was possible that he had "contingent objectives" whose pursuit would depend upon the degree of resistance he met. Nonetheless, Gromyko's insistence on the importance of Berlin had been striking. The term "quarantine", rather than "blockade", was being applied to Cuba, he concluded, in part "to avoid the connection which Khrushchev is trying to make between Cuba and Berlin." Lord Hood, Minister at the British Embassy, observed that Soviet promises to do nothing in Berlin prior to the American mid-term elections had borne the proviso, "'unless the US acts.' This is the 'unless.'"³⁹ Acheson provided a similar warning in addressing the North Atlantic Council, observing that it might be impossible to avert Soviet retaliation around Berlin.⁴⁰

Macmillan informed Orsmby-Gore that he doubted a blockade, under another name or not, would procure removal of the missiles, given the probability of Soviet countermoves. Hence his preference for seizure of Cuba as a "*coup de main*, which will at least put one card in [Kennedy's] hands." Only Kennedy's apparent determination to proceed with his chosen course had prevented the Prime Minister from urging him to reconsider. In line with established British thinking that escalation of hostilities would prove hard to control once the superpowers directly confronted each other, Macmillan was thinking of an intervention of his own. He could not, he wrote, "allow a situation in Europe or in the world (sic) to develop which looks like escalating to war without trying some action by calling a conference of my own, or something of the kind, to stop it." After a blockade had failed, he observed, Kennedy would have to either rapidly seize Cuba as a bargaining chip, or enter the conference chamber in a weaker position and wait for Khrushchev to raise other issues such as Berlin and American bases abroad.⁴¹

In his first written response to Kennedy, Macmillan acknowledged receipt of the President's draft broadcast on the crisis, and said Britain would provide all possible support in fora such as the UN Security Council. He also expressed hope that Washington would make a compelling legal case for the proposed "quarantine." The use of blockade as a weapon had been controversial even in war, and was unprecedented in peace. Therefore, its defence "must rest not so much on precedent as on the unprecedented condition of the modern world in a nuclear age." The principal focus of concern, he went on, had to be

Khrushchev's reaction. If this were confined to the area around Cuba, it was likely to include naval escorts for east-bloc freighters designed to "force you into the position of attacking them. This fire-first dilemma has always worried us and we have always hoped to impale the Russians on this horn." Of course, Khrushchev might more easily respond elsewhere, in Turkey or around Berlin; in the case of the latter, he would be tempted to retaliate against one blockade by imposing another, inevitably leading to either uncontrolled escalation to general war or the convening of a summit conference. But if the latter was the standard technique for breaking the escalatory tit-for-tat, the fear of resumed escalation would only generate demands for concessions. If Khrushchev came to a conference, "he will of course try to trade his Cuba position against his ambitions in Berlin and elsewhere. This we must avoid at all costs." Another concern was that much of Europe had grown used to living under the threat of Soviet missile attack and would tend to oppose anything that smacked of an American overreaction to this familiar danger. Therefore, "European opinion will need attention."⁴² If the Prime Minister's message was one of measured support, his private inclination, de Zulueta informed Ormsby-Gore, was towards more decisive action than what Kennedy had apparently decided to take.⁴³

Kennedy's first telephone conversation of the crisis with Macmillan came after the broadcast in which he announced the discovery of the missiles and initial imposition of a quarantine on arms deliveries to Cuba, enforced by American naval vessels.⁴⁴ He acknowledged that the quarantine would not remove the missiles, and that Khrushchev might, as Macmillan's letter had suggested, use American interference with Soviet ships as justification for blockading or seizing Berlin. But "this seemed to be the action we could take which would lessen the chance of an immediate escalation into war, though of course it could bring that result." The quarantine of Cuba was limited to weapons for the moment so as to deny Khrushchev a pretext for retaliating against Berlin, but might have to be extended to petroleum products eventually. Macmillan warned about the dangers of allowing a protracted crisis to develop. He recalled how delay had proved fatal to British hopes during the Suez crisis, suggesting an American seizure of Cuba would at least make for a stronger bargaining position in any negotiations with Khrushchev. "If we do have to talk to him, and meet with him, in the last resort", he said, "the more cards in our hands the better."⁴⁵

The British had not been alarmed by the Soviet buildup on Cuba over the summer, concluding it aimed at a purely defensive capability. The Foreign Office also saw Moscow as

a restraining influence on Castro and doubted even new defensive weapons would be placed under Cuban control.⁴⁶ Now, British assessments seemed to echo American ones, with Home informing the Cabinet that Khrushchev was probably “seeking to improve his bargaining position particularly in relation to Berlin.” The Cabinet agreed upon an official line of support for American actions, including in the forthcoming UN Security Council debate.⁴⁷ Prior to the Cabinet meeting, Macmillan had briefed Gaitskell, who expressed his agreement with the government’s line and support for American action in principle, while suggesting the legal status of a blockade was at best unclear.⁴⁸

As Nitze had informed the Ambassadors of the major European allies, the administration was intent on proceeding with the quarantine even if the OAS resolution legitimizing it was not passed.⁴⁹ The legality of the measure remained a concern for Macmillan’s government. The Foreign Office instructed Ormsby-Gore to make clear that extending the quarantine to petroleum would be widely seen in Europe as compromising its narrowly military character, and the Ambassador relayed Kennedy’s continued reluctance to do so.⁵⁰ George Ball later reassured Lord Hood that, as the British wanted, the American vessels around Cuba would perform only perfunctory inspections of vessels from friendly countries.⁵¹ The Lord President of the Council, Lord Hailsham, acknowledged that international law had traditionally admitted of no right of peacetime blockade, but suggested that the ability to initiate nuclear war without warning or visible mobilization rendered the traditional distinction between war and peace academic. Insofar as wars of self-defense were permissible under Article 51 of the UN Charter, presumably lesser measures such as blockade were also allowable under contemporary conditions; as a result the government, if pressed, had an intellectually defensible alternative to the inconvenient conclusion that American actions were unlawful.⁵²

More generally, it would be problematic for Macmillan’s government to seem markedly more supportive of American actions than the other European allies at a moment when it was intent on displaying its European *bona fides*. As Ormsby-Gore noted, Kennedy had been irritated by the reluctance of Europeans such as the visiting West German Foreign Minister, Gerhard Schroder, to concede the seriousness of the threat posed by the missiles on Cuba. Kennedy “understands our dilemma with the Common Market negotiations at a critical stage”, but most American opinion regarded Kennedy’s actions to date as the very least that the Soviet provocation necessitated.⁵³ Home thought it important that Ormsby-Gore find out if Kennedy saw some form of summit or conference of world leaders as part of any

resolution. A broader agreement on disarmament and the dismantling of bases would be more palatable to European opinion than an outright swap of the missiles on Cuba for NATO bases or weapons in Europe. Macmillan was prepared to invite Kennedy and Khrushchev to a summit, in which removal of the missiles on Cuba would be incorporated into the first phase of a disarmament program. While the summit was held, the US would suspend its quarantine of Cuba, and the Soviets would deliver no more weapons.⁵⁴ In conversation with Bundy prior to Kennedy's next telephone conversation with Macmillan, Ormsby-Gore expressed his own conviction that a summit was unlikely to succeed given the distance between the two major parties as well as prone to increase tensions within the alliance because "it leaves no room for the French." Thinking of Macmillan's weakness for summits, well-planned or not, he suggested Kennedy make it clear that a summit meeting was not the venue for defusing the crisis, and Bundy advised Kennedy to emphasize to Macmillan that steps to remove the missiles constituted a precondition for the suspension of the quarantine.⁵⁵

Stevenson's presentation of aerial photographic evidence in the debate at the UN Security Council on October 24 led to the passage of a resolution calling for removal of the missiles, verified by UN inspectors, after which the US would lift the quarantine.⁵⁶ Aerial reconnaissance was necessary not only to demonstrate the reality of the threat but to monitor developments in a situation that could change quickly. From early on in the crisis, Kennedy was aware of the possibility of international incidents arising from continued overflights, and when the ExComm met on the morning of October 23, he approved a contingency plan to ensure tight centralized control of the American response should a plane be downed or fired upon. Retaliation would require the President's personal approval, or that of McNamara, should Kennedy be unavailable and the evidence of hostile action clear. The response to any interference with surveillance of Cuba would be the minimum necessary to remove the immediate danger.⁵⁷

On October 24, Khrushchev wrote to Kennedy that the quarantine was an act of aggression and Soviet vessels were not bound to obey it.⁵⁸ But Soviet actions from the 23rd to the 25th were circumspect, with several East Bloc vessels headed for Cuba changing course. As the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research concluded, the Soviets had still not admitted the deployment of offensive weapons on Cuba, had stressed the purely local nature of any Cuban-American disagreements, and issued no threat of general war or explicit statement that Soviet ships would try to run the *de facto* blockade. Khrushchev and his

colleagues had to know that any incident in Cuban waters or Soviet retaliation elsewhere would raise tensions dramatically.⁵⁹ When Kennedy spoke to Macmillan on the night of the 24th, he noted that several East Bloc ships had turned away from Cuba, but others were still headed towards it. Yet even if the Soviets did not attempt to introduce new weapons, work would continue on the missiles already on Cuba, and they would soon be operational. He would still confront the problem of whether to attack the missiles on Cuba at the risk of provoking Soviet retaliation in Berlin or elsewhere, which was why cessation of work on the missile sites had to precede suspension of the quarantine. This next stage of the crisis was “what I’d like you to think about.”⁶⁰

That evening Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs W. Averell Harriman telephoned Kennedy’s speechwriter and Special Assistant for Latin American Affairs, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. Harriman was convinced that “Khrushchev wanted us to help him get off the hook and that he was sending desperate signals to us to cooperate with him in moving toward a peaceful solution.”⁶¹ These signals included his orders to Soviet ships bound for Cuba to stop short of the quarantine line, and an open letter he had sent to the philosopher Bertrand Russell suggesting he was willing to attend a summit meeting with Kennedy. The first incident between Soviet and American vessels would engage Soviet prestige, and conduce to escalation. The overriding imperative was to leave Khrushchev an avenue of dignified retreat.⁶² Schlesinger relayed Harriman’s analysis in a message to Kennedy.⁶³ In conversation with Ball, Kennedy speculated that while he was unsure what Soviet thinking was, “we ought to give out a message in a way that gives them enough of an out to stop their shipments without looking like they completely crawled down.” He suggested that Stevenson urge the UN’s Acting Secretary-General, U Thant, to propose that the Soviets suspend all shipping bound for Cuba and the United States lift the quarantine for a few days while efforts to reach a diplomatic resolution went ahead. These talks would allow the Americans to raise the need for reliable inspection, presumably under UN auspices.⁶⁴

On the 25th, the columnist Walter Lippmann wrote in the *Washington Post* that Cuba and Berlin were not comparable because the latter was not a base for offensive weapons. A more accurate analogy, he suggested, was between Cuba and Turkey, “the only place where there are strategic weapons right on the frontier of the Soviet Union”, constituting a direct threat similar to the one the missiles on Cuba posed to the United States. Both the missiles in Turkey and those on Cuba could be dismantled without altering the military balance, he

continued, and the first stage in a wider program of disarmament could be the removal of missile bases from “fringe countries.” Turkey’s security would not be jeopardized, insofar as it would remain a member of NATO and benefit from the alliance’s security guarantees. Moreover, the Jupiters were obsolete, and indeed the Macmillan government was decommissioning the similar Thor missiles on British soil in accord with alliance strategic doctrine.⁶⁵

It is unclear if Lippmann’s column was seen in the Kremlin as an unofficial, and hence deniable, overture by the Kennedy administration.⁶⁶ While it had not been formally sanctioned by the administration, Lippmann had lunched with Ball on the 24th and summarized his argument; Ball had not tried to prevent him from saying his piece.⁶⁷ Following unofficial discussions within the North Atlantic Council, Finletter concluded that NATO’s Scandinavian members, and perhaps Britain, would be tempted by such a trade, although his own view was it would undermine the credibility of American nuclear guarantees. He also observed that the Turks were strongly attached to the Jupiters despite their military inutility, as tangible evidence of NATO’s commitment to Turkish security against nuclear aggression or intimidation. The Turkish government, he concluded, was likely to reject any proposal for removing the missiles that did not entail their replacement with another nuclear weapon system.⁶⁸

Also on the 25th, Thant called for a “standstill,” but one of two to three weeks rather than as many days, during which efforts to reach a diplomatic resolution would proceed.⁶⁹ Khrushchev accepted the proposal, and Kennedy responded that Stevenson was ready to talk with Soviet diplomats through Thant.⁷⁰ The ExComm was agreed that any resolution had to provide for the cessation of military construction on Cuba and removal of the missiles, with immediate verification by UN inspectors.⁷¹ The Bureau of Intelligence and Research believed Khrushchev was intent on avoiding a military clash with American forces, while pressure built on the United States to make concessions in order to resolve the crisis. This would allow for the missiles to become operational, while the mere passage of time added to the perceived legitimacy of their presence.⁷² On the morning of the 26th Kennedy informed the ExComm that he did not believe the quarantine would suffice to obtain removal of the missiles on Cuba; this would require either invasion or a trade.⁷³ He then told Ormsby-Gore by telephone that he could not wait long for Thant’s initiative to lead to agreement on removal of the missiles under satisfactory inspection.⁷⁴

Macmillan had spoken to a reconvened House of Commons on October 25, emphasizing Soviet duplicity and his agreement with Kennedy's conclusion that "to have accepted this would have thrown doubt on America's pledges in all parts of the world." Gaitskell responded that Kennedy had made it clear that he sought the removal of the missiles on Cuba, and that this would have to be accomplished either by attack or negotiation. He stressed the importance of a negotiated removal, drawing his own analogy between the missiles on Cuba and those on Turkey, both of which threatened the neighbouring superpower. If the Americans attacked the former, he said, the Soviets could justify attacking the latter on the same grounds. Gaitskell then asked whether Kennedy had consulted Macmillan before declaring a quarantine, adding that if he had not it would be "a very unsatisfactory state of affairs that one member of an alliance can take unilateral action even though this may clearly involve the gravest danger to other members." Macmillan responded that the pace of events had forced Kennedy to act rapidly, but that consultation with London had taken place and continued. He indicated that he would not attempt to mediate merely for the sake of seeming to do something, and suggested the UN was the appropriate venue for negotiations. He did not propose to embark on any unilateral overtures, which might be construed as a "break or wavering among the alliance-which is, perhaps, the main purpose of the Russian initiative." His other *desideratum* during the crisis would be that "no possible path of retreat which may be open should be closed." Asked by Labour's former Defence Minister, Emanuel Shinwell, if British vessels would be subject to inspection at the quarantine line, he evasively replied that British ships normally did not transport weapons. As for the quarantine's legality, "I do not think that this is the moment to go into the niceties of international law."⁷⁵

Despite at least two Soviet overtures, the Macmillan government was genuinely reluctant to undertake any unilateral initiative. The Soviet Naval Attaché in London, Yevgeny Ivanov, conveyed a message to Harold Caccia, now Permanent Under-Secretary, with the society osteopath Stephen Ward as intermediary. This said that any British proposal for negotiations would be welcome given the increasing difficulty of retreat by either superpower.⁷⁶ Then the Soviet Charge, V.A. Loginov, met with Home and reiterated that the situation had become riskier with the imposition of the quarantine, and that a British offer to mediate could reduce the danger. Home gave the noncommittal reply that Britain was paying close attention to events and would act where it could be helpful.⁷⁷ In Moscow, Frank Roberts echoed the

American assessment that Khrushchev had acted cautiously since Kennedy's broadcast and presumably anticipated similar prudence on the part of the Western powers. Any British initiative that seemed to separate London from Washington would play into Soviet hands, he concluded, and negotiation of an acceptable climbdown on Khrushchev's part was best accomplished through UN channels.⁷⁸ Macmillan did suggest to Kennedy that the time in which military action could readily be taken had passed, even if it might prove unavoidable in the end, and that diplomacy offered the more promising route. He agreed that acceptable inspection procedures were necessary for the quarantine to be raised while negotiations went ahead, but suggested "if there are no ships arriving, then the purpose of the quarantine is served." He also contended that stopping work on the missile sites would neutralize the threat posed by the missiles. Perhaps the main use of any further displays of American military might, he continued, would be "for persuading the Cubans to accept inspections."⁷⁹

The American Ambassador in Ankara, Raymond Hare, pointed to the difficulties in a trade of the Cuban and Turkish missiles. He conceded the latter were of little military significance, but sheer proximity made them loom larger than they should in Khrushchev's eyes and might make such a trade attractive to him. With the Turks bound to resist, it would be best to find a solution that did not involve the Jupiters. If their removal were inevitable, then it should be performed gradually, and agreed on a "strictly secret basis with [the] Soviets" rather than as an overt *quid pro quo*. Including Britain's relinquishment of the Thors and the dismantling of the Jupiters in Italy as elements of a wider proposal in which Turkey was not singled out might, he suggested, ease Turkish doubts.⁸⁰ Hare's British opposite number, Sir Bernard Burrows, had already reassured the Turkish government that London did not see the Cuban and Turkish missiles as comparable. Ankara, he observed, would take the withdrawal of the missiles as indicating a reduced American commitment to Turkey's defence, and resist unless it were completely separate from the resolution of the Cuban crisis and accomplished through NATO rather than bilaterally.⁸¹ Norstad, in Britain as part of his farewell tour as SACEUR, discussed the question with British officials and was of the same opinion.⁸² The British Ambassador to the United Nations, Sir Patrick Dean, had heard from Stevenson that the administration might consider UN inspection at some American bases abroad, such as in Turkey where the Jupiters were stationed, in order to obtain satisfactory inspection of the missiles on Cuba. It was also rumoured at the UN that the organization's former Undersecretary and now Dean of the School of International Affairs at Columbia University,

Andrew Cordier, had been approached by American officials about proposing such a deal.⁸³ Home did suggest to Ormsby-Gore that one option for consideration might be a British willingness to accept UN inspectors at the Thor missile sites in the UK. This would ensure that the settlement of the crisis was not confined to weapons which the superpowers had deployed near one another's borders, and it would have little effect on the balance of power since the missiles were already slated for removal. The Soviets and Cubans might be more willing to accept UN inspection, and if removal of the Jupiters was part of the deal the Turks would not feel singled out.⁸⁴

Yet that day brought indications a resolution not affecting the Turkish missiles might be possible. John Scali, ABC News diplomatic correspondent, was invited to lunch by Aleksandr Fomin, whom he knew as the Public Affairs Counselor at the Soviet Embassy, but was in reality the KGB station chief in Washington. Fomin urged Scali to find out if the administration was interested in a deal in which the missiles on Cuba would be dismantled and removed, under UN inspection, in exchange for an American undertaking not to invade Cuba. Scali immediately informed Hilsman of the conversation.⁸⁵

On the 26th, Kennedy chose to step up the use of aerial reconnaissance flights, not only for their direct intelligence value but to "dramatize the fact that the missile buildup in (sic) Cuba is continuing." Low-level flights would increase in frequency from two a day to one every two hours. Yet there would be no night reconnaissance flights, at least until the Soviets publicly rejected UN inspection.⁸⁶ By now, unilateral aerial surveillance was the central intelligence-gathering tool in the ExComm's conduct of the crisis, crucial not only to monitoring the situation on Cuba but to demonstrating the reality of the threat and the soundness of the American stance to a skeptical world. While Khrushchev attacked in harsh terms the imposition of the quarantine in replying to Kennedy's message informing him of the discovery of the missiles and the forthcoming response, he did not explicitly denounce American overflights of Cuba.⁸⁷ Castro, on the other hand, did, in an October 26th public message to Khrushchev that set out a litany of American sins ranging from the blockade to "violating our airspace" and including preparations for an imminent invasion.⁸⁸

On the night of the 26th, Kennedy and Macmillan spoke again by telephone. The President noted that one Soviet ship had been allowed to pass the quarantine line, and no other vessels were within two days' range of Cuba, but work on the missiles already there was apparently continuing. Macmillan then suggested immobilizing the British Thors for the duration of the

standstill proposed by Thant “if we want to help the Russians save face.” Kennedy proposed to “put that into the machinery” but cautioned that “we don’t want to have too many dismantlings” and there was the prospect that Khrushchev would also attempt to bring in the missiles in Turkey and Italy.⁸⁹ Macmillan followed up by sending Kennedy a recapitulation of the conversation, reiterating his willingness to suggest immobilization of the Thors to Thant as one element of a standstill. While this had “the disadvantage that it brings in the concept of bargaining bases in Europe against those in Cuba”, it might be “less invidious for us to take the lead rather than place the burden on the Turks.”⁹⁰

On the morning of the 27th, the State Department received a lengthy, emotional missive from Khrushchev to Kennedy which proposed that the Soviets declare that their Cuba-bound ships carried no weaponry, in exchange for an American pledge to neither attempt an invasion nor assist others in attempting one. At that point, “the necessity of the presence of our military specialists in Cuba will disappear.”⁹¹ But early on the morning of the 27th, a fresh message from Khrushchev was presented at the American message in Moscow, while simultaneously broadcast on Radio Moscow. This suggested an explicit trade of the Cuban and Turkish missiles, with on-site verification after the Cuban and Turkish governments had given their consent. In addition, the United States would issue a no-invasion pledge. For all this, “we would have to come to an agreement with you and specify a certain time limit...within two or three weeks, not longer than a month.”⁹²

The morning’s ExComm meeting had been under way for about an hour when the full text of Khrushchev’s message came in. The President feared that “you’re going to find it very difficult to explain why we are going to take hostile military action in Cuba” when Khrushchev’s position was “if you get yours out of Turkey, we’ll get ours out of Cuba.” He stressed the importance of not letting “the Turks issue some statement that’s wholly unacceptable.” Were Ankara to reject a seemingly forthcoming Soviet offer, “whatever we do in Turkey-in Cuba-it seems to me he has set the groundwork to do something in Turkey.” One question was whether it would be possible to stop escalating hostilities after a Soviet retaliatory strike on the Jupiters, but another was whether those targets could be removed before any American attack on Cuba. McNamara suggested one option was to conduct bilateral talks with Turkey and Italy to immobilize their respective Jupiters and announce that they had been replaced with Polaris missiles submarines stationed in the Mediterranean.” It was desirable to remove the Jupiters, an obvious target of Soviet retaliation, prior to invading

Cuba, in order to reduce the risks to those NATO allies. Moreover, such a step would put the administration “in a much better position to present this whole thing to NATO.” The President remained skeptical that the Turks would agree, despite the technical superiority of Polaris to the Jupiters, while McNamara suggested it was one thing to stand the missiles down prior to an attack on Cuba, another to trade them for the missiles there.⁹³

ExComm deliberations continued throughout the day, as did aerial reconnaissance over targets on Cuba and elsewhere. One plane on an air sampling mission entered Soviet airspace, narrowly avoiding direct contact with Soviet fighters scrambled to intercept it. And another craft disappeared over Cuba, and turned out to have been shot down. Arguably, these incidents reinforced Kennedy’s determination to secure a peaceful resolution before events escaped all control.⁹⁴ Kennedy insisted on no immediate reprisal for the downing of the surveillance plane and steered the discussion towards how to respond to Khrushchev’s public proposal. Various options were canvassed: removal of the Jupiters, but as a prelude to invading Cuba (as McNamara suggested); air strikes on Cuba, leading to invasion (as the Joint Chiefs of Staff advocated); outright rejection of the Soviet offer (the State Department had prepared a draft letter to this effect). Despite any political ramifications of removing the Jupiters, McNamara remarked, they were militarily every bit as obsolete as the Thors the British had recently announced they would dispense with in favour of more advanced systems, of which Polaris might be one. Turkish security would in fact rest on a firmer foundation were the Jupiters replaced by a Polaris submarine in Turkish waters. Despite his initial skepticism, the President was persuaded by Llewellyn Thompson that Khrushchev might respond favourably to a letter from Kennedy accepting his private proposal of the 26th and ignoring the public one. A sub-group of the ExComm drafted the letter, and another group of advisers met subsequently with the President, and devised an additional initiative. Ambassador Anatoli Dobrynin would be told privately that if the missiles were not removed, military action would follow. At Rusk’s urging, the US would undertake to remove the Jupiters after the resolution of the crisis, but with no explicit or formal connection.⁹⁵ Kennedy’s letter to Khrushchev of that night referred to the latter’s apparent offer to “remove these weapon systems from Cuba under appropriate United Nations observation and supervision” and the American willingness to issue a no-invasion pledge and lift the quarantine “upon the establishment of adequate arrangements through the United Nations to ensure the carrying out and continuation of these commitments.”⁹⁶

Kennedy met again with Ormsby-Gore, and explained the differences in Khrushchev's two messages. Substantively, he observed, there was something to be said for the analogy between the Jupiters in Turkey and the missiles on Cuba. But a trade was politically difficult, not least because only the warheads were in American custody; the Jupiters themselves were in Turkish hands.⁹⁷ He then informed Macmillan of his efforts to deal with Khrushchev's two messages, reiterating the importance of stopping work on the missiles on Cuba and dismantling them before any wider disarmament negotiations. He could not risk appearing to negotiate with Khrushchev bilaterally on matters affecting the interests of other NATO states; "any initiatives in this respect, it seems to me, should come from Europe."⁹⁸

In London, Harold Caccia had concluded from the last conversation between the President and the Prime Minister that Kennedy might well resort to force after two or three further days, with no more than *pro forma* consultation with Macmillan. At that stage, a British proposal for a summit would be read in Washington as a display of cowardice at the crucial moment of the crisis. He suggested a more limited initiative, within the next day. Home should inform Loginov that a cessation of work on the missiles on Cuba was essential and that Britain was prepared to immobilize its Thors at the same time. Patrick Dean should encourage Thant to call for such a standstill.⁹⁹ Home promptly called in Loginov, stressed the imminent danger of escalation and urged the Soviets to respond to any new proposal from the UN for a standstill, after which discussions on outstanding issues could proceed.¹⁰⁰ Dean was instructed to see if Thant was prepared to travel to Cuba and attempt to verify that work on the missiles had stopped and no new ones were being introduced. If Thant could confirm that nothing else was working, London would make a public offer to immobilize the Thors in order to get negotiations started.¹⁰¹

When Macmillan's press aide, Harold Evans, met the Prime Minister that night he found Macmillan intent on immobilizing the Thors while calling for a summit meeting in London. After Home had convinced Macmillan that this would prove unacceptable in Washington Evans was instructed to delete the salient paragraph from a teleprinter message to Kennedy.¹⁰² The message did express agreement with Kennedy's goal of avoiding a situation in which the United States alone negotiated with the Soviets on allied security interests and his belief that any such initiative had to be European. Macmillan proposed to publicly offer to immobilize the Thors during a standstill in which the quarantine was lifted, no additional missiles entered Cuba, and the existing missiles were dismantled, under UN verification.

Should Khrushchev accept the offer, a pause for serious negotiations would arise, and if he did not, he would be revealed as the intransigent party.¹⁰³ Bundy telephoned de Zulueta later that night, to say that Kennedy's preference was that Macmillan delay any such initiative for the moment but that at some point the administration might seek "NATO opinions on some form of a Turkey-Cuba trade."¹⁰⁴ In yet a further call to de Zulueta, he suggested that any British interest in a trade be expressed within the NAC. Elaborating on the administration's stance, he observed that an initiative of the sort Macmillan favoured might be appropriate, but only once the situation had deteriorated further and escalation seemed imminent.¹⁰⁵ Kennedy repeated to Orsmby-Gore his reluctance to risk the appearance of trading away European security interests in the form of the Jupiters, in exchange for withdrawal of the missiles threatening the United States. Still, at a later moment, "there might well be something to be said for you and perhaps the President of Turkey making an offer with regard to the supervision or even dismantling of existing missile sites."¹⁰⁶ With no apparent opening at the moment for his initiative regarding the Thors, Macmillan contented himself with a letter to Khrushchev suggesting that "once the problem posed by the offensive missile bases in Cuba has been dealt with under effective United Nations control and the situation in the area normalised, the way would be open for us all towards a more general arrangement regarding armaments" such as a test ban.¹⁰⁷ But by the time this was delivered, the Kennedy administration's efforts to reach an agreement without an overt Cuba-Turkey trade had borne fruit.

Robert Kennedy called Dobrynin to his office on the evening of the 27th and informed him that the downing of the surveillance aircraft had created pressure from the military for the President to authorize other planes to fire back if attacked. After an exchange of fire involving an American plane or the death of Soviet technicians in the attack on the missile sites that was inevitable if they were not removed by negotiation, "the situation might get out of control, with irreversible consequences." A solution was possible along the lines indicated in Khrushchev's first letter and the President's response, with America raising the quarantine and pledging not to invade Cuba in return for a cessation of work at the missile sites and the removal of the weapons themselves under UN inspection. But a Soviet response was necessary within the next twenty-four hours. When Dobrynin asked what could be done about the Jupiters, Kennedy replied that "the greatest difficulty for the President is the public discussion of the issue of Turkey." The decision to deploy the Jupiters had been taken in the

NAC, and their unilateral withdrawal by the United States would gravely impair NATO cohesion. To remove the missiles through NATO channels, “we need 4-5 months.” There could be no suggestion of a *quid pro quo* and “the President can’t say anything public in this regard about Turkey.”¹⁰⁸ On the morning of the 28th, Radio Moscow broadcast a message from Khrushchev announcing that construction would stop at the missile sites and the weapons would be dismantled for return to the Soviet Union. Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov was bound for New York to assist in the negotiations, and once the Cuba matter had been settled it would be desirable to proceed with talks on broader measures of disarmament. Khrushchev hinted at the limits to his capacity to restrain Castro by noting that “violation of Cuban airspace may also have dangerous consequences.”¹⁰⁹ He also sent President Kennedy a private missive, summarizing Dobrynin’s conversation with the Attorney-General. This noted Robert Kennedy’s insistence that there be no public discussion of dismantling the Jupiters and his apparent wish that further exchanges on the matter be through himself and Dobrynin.¹¹⁰ The Attorney-General then called Dobrynin in and forced him to withdraw the document, because it seemed to imply a *quid pro quo*. While an agreement had been reached, “we...are not prepared to formulate such an understanding in the form of letters, even among the most confidential letters” between Kennedy and Khrushchev.¹¹¹

Khrushchev also urged Castro to refrain from firing on American planes, suggesting surveillance flights were intended by the Pentagon to provoke Castro and provide an excuse for taking actions against Cuba.¹¹² Castro claimed that the most recent flights might have been part of attacks on Cuban installations and rejected American overflights as violations of Cuban sovereignty, but ordered his forces not to fire for the duration of the negotiations.¹¹³ He also rejected the non-invasion pledge as an insufficient American concession; he added his own demands or “five points”: the lifting of the American economic blockade of Cuba; a halt to all efforts to subvert his regime launched from American soil; an end to similar activities from US bases on Puerto Rico; cessation of all overflights of Cuba; and the return of the American base at Guantanamo to Cuban sovereignty.¹¹⁴ It was largely because of Castro’s resistance to effective verification and Soviet efforts to meet his demands as well as Kennedy’s that talks between the American and Soviet negotiators in New York dragged on until late November. When Thant visited Cuba, Castro rejected on-site verification by the Red Cross or UN personnel and the alternative of aerial surveillance under UN auspices as

incompatible with Cuba's dignity. He also threatened to shoot down any aircraft violating Cuban airspace.¹¹⁵ After hearing of the tenor of these discussions, Kennedy ordered further low-level reconnaissance flights and continued enforcement of the quarantine, but declined to approve a renewal of the high-altitude flights that were vulnerable to the surface-to-air missiles which the Cuban forces controlled.¹¹⁶ Khrushchev adopted several of Castro's five points, and called on Kennedy to lift the quarantine and the embargo, to return the American military base at Guantanamo to Cuban sovereignty, and to agree with Moscow on the need to move rapidly towards a Soviet-American agreement on the status of Berlin, over Adenauer's head, since Berlin could be the flashpoint of the next crisis.¹¹⁷ Gromyko then met with the American Ambassador in Moscow, Foy Kohler, and said the Soviet Union wished to codify the understandings arising out of the Khrushchev-Kennedy correspondence, suggesting that this correspondence amounted to no more than an agreement in principle, with the precise terms to be worked out prior to fulfillment.¹¹⁸

Thant informed Stevenson that Castro was bitter at Khrushchev, who had not consulted him prior to sending his October 27 letter to Kennedy, and had issued the five-point declaration so as to hinder Soviet negotiations with the Americans. It was clear that Cubans had been excluded from the missile sites and had never exercised control over the missiles.¹¹⁹ As an analysis by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research noted, when the Soviet Deputy Premier, Anastas Mikoyan, visited Havana he successfully pressed Castro to acquiesce in the dismantling and removal of the missiles and other weapons the US deemed offensive (save for Il-28 bombers deployed on the island some months earlier), and Red Cross inspection of incoming East Bloc shipping. Castro remained adamant in his rejection of on-site inspections or overflights. He had to be persuaded that he risked forfeiting Soviet support and Moscow had to understand that the absence of reliable verification severely undermined the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement. Only under those conditions "is there a good chance that the Soviets will do the necessary arm-twisting in Havana."¹²⁰

On November 3, Kennedy reminded Khrushchev that agreement on verification measures was a *sine qua non* of lifting the quarantine, and argued its maintenance could strengthen Mikoyan's hand in his ongoing talks with Castro.¹²¹ At lunch with Dobrynin that day, former Ambassador Thompson pointed out that rumours in the press to the effect that missiles were being secreted in Cuban caves made verification crucial for the administration and public opinion.¹²² On November 11 Khrushchev gave Kennedy "a gentleman's word" that the

bombers and related equipment would be removed “when the conditions are ripe.”¹²³ Robert Kennedy informed Dobrynin his brother was willing to lift the quarantine once Khrushchev gave the formal order to remove the bombers, without waiting for the actual withdrawal to be completed.¹²⁴ Agreement had not been reached by the 19th, and Kennedy informed Macmillan, de Gaulle, and Adenauer that if the Il-28s were not removed, the United States would take further action, possibly including an air strike if surveillance craft were fired upon. While he conceded that the situation overall was less risky than in October, he speculated that it might be harder for Khrushchev to seem to back down once again.¹²⁵ A further increase in tension was averted when Castro notified Thant that he would not object to or impede the removal of the bombers; he did, however, reiterate his warning that any reconnaissance plane in Cuban airspace would be attacked.¹²⁶ The next morning Khrushchev formally agreed to remove the bombers within a month.¹²⁷ Kennedy authorized the raising of the quarantine at an ExComm meeting that afternoon.¹²⁸ He announced this action at an evening news conference, but observed that important elements of his agreement with Khrushchev had yet to be carried out. Castro, he said, had not yet assented to on-site inspection of the removal of the weapons and a guarantee against their reintroduction. Asked if unilateral aerial surveillance was an adequate substitute, he was evasive, expressing a preference for “the kind of inspection on the ground which would make any other means of obtaining information unnecessary.”¹²⁹

The removal of the missiles and accompanying equipment from Cuba had been photographed by American surveillance craft flying over the Soviet vessels leaving Cuba. Kennedy’s disarmament advisor, John J. McCloy, expressed gratitude for Soviet cooperation to a member of the Soviet delegation to the UN, observing that “he understood the difficulties arising from Castro’s refusal of ground-based inspections and that now it was necessary to find new methods.”¹³⁰ At a December 13 NATO ministerial meeting, Rusk informed the representatives of America’s major allies that unilateral overflights of Cuba would continue in the absence of on-site inspection, justified under the Rio Treaty provisions for the security of signatory states.¹³¹ At a background news conference, he observed that “the present crisis is not over yet” and unilateral surveillance remained the only hedge against the reintroduction of offensive weapons.¹³² In February of the new year, Dobrynin relayed to Kennedy an aide-memoire stating that several thousand Soviet personnel on Cuba (those involved in guarding the offensive weapons and training Cuban cadres) would be

removed by March 15.¹³³ When the Kennedy administration proposed to make a public announcement, Dobrynin visited Thompson to convey Soviet objections to any statement implying the troop withdrawal was the result of bilateral discussions. If Washington simply released the text of the Soviet message, Moscow would not be compelled to make a statement of its own, but would reply to any American announcement with a note rejecting any hint of a negotiated withdrawal. Thompson remarked “it did not seem to be either in their interest or ours for it to appear that the Soviet withdrawal was the result of all the noise that had been going on recently.”¹³⁴

Thompson and Dobrynin were conversing again at a White House reception on the evening of the 21st when the President walked up. Thompson said he’d been on the point of suggesting that the superpowers had a shared interest in arranging a boat drill on a vessel removing Soviet troops from Cuba “in order that we could get some good pictures.” Dobrynin responded that “he did not think we would have any difficulty whatever getting good pictures by the same methods we had used when the missiles were removed”, namely photography from surveillance planes.¹³⁵ Yet Moscow remained averse to any explicit arrangement for aerial surveillance of or near Cuba that might be read as indicative of Soviet acquiescence in American demands. Following up on Dobrynin’s conversation with Thompson, the ExComm prepared an aide-memoire setting out procedures for aerial inspection of Soviet vessels, including how American planes would approach the ships they wished to photograph (from the stern, on a parallel course) and signal their peaceful intentions (dipping their wings), and the response of the ships (four or more blasts on a whistle), as well as radio communication procedures and the transmission beforehand of departure times and information on cargos to the United States.¹³⁶ After the document had been delivered to the Soviet Embassy, Dobrynin telephoned Thompson to say he could not transmit it because it “implied an agreement which did not exist.” Asked if it would be acceptable once references to the conversation of the 21st had been deleted, he warned that it “would be considered in Moscow as a kind of ultimatum since the Soviet Government would have to either accept our proposed procedures or protest them.” With Kennedy’s approval, Thompson spoke with Dobrynin again and relayed a modified draft which said the United States believed it was in the interests of both powers that information on Soviet troop withdrawals be shared. He confirmed that this information need not be made public, though he thought it would be to Moscow’s benefit that “the useful action being taken by the Soviet

Government be convincingly confirmed". After Dobrynin indicated its acceptability, the revised memo was forwarded to Moscow.¹³⁷ When Thompson later acknowledged the helpfulness of Soviet troop withdrawals in easing tensions over Cuba, Dobrynin noted "how difficult this question had been made by the sensitivity of Moscow to any situation in which it appeared they were acting under pressure."¹³⁸

In the immediate aftermath of Khrushchev's announcement that he would withdraw the missiles, Ormsby-Gore had raised the possibility of holding Cuba hostage to Soviet restraint around Berlin. A Western undertaking not to introduce offensive weapons into or near West Berlin would be linked to Soviet promises to refrain from action to isolate the city.

Moreover, Soviet aggression against Berlin would void the American pledge not to invade Cuba.¹³⁹ Macmillan's view was that Berlin was more valuable to the west than Cuba was to the Soviets, and such a link "might even encourage Mr. Khrushchev to feel that he might take Berlin at the risk not of nuclear war but only of the loss of Cuba." The threat of nuclear retaliation, he suggested, was a more effective deterrent of aggression against Berlin.¹⁴⁰

Home tended to agree, while thinking the offer of analogous verification measures against the introduction of offensive weapons into Berlin might help Khrushchev swallow intrusive verification on Cuba.¹⁴¹ Ormsby-Gore did raise his own more ambitious idea with Rusk, whose response was noncommittal.¹⁴² At this point, Ormsby-Gore said he now found the case against a Berlin-Cuba link persuasive.¹⁴³ In Moscow, Sir Frank Roberts had already seen not a link but an analogy between the Cuban situation and the German one. His view was that Khrushchev's deployment of the missiles on Cuba might have been motivated as much by a desire to deter another American invasion attempt and thus the overthrow of an ally as by a desire to strengthen the Soviet negotiating position in regard to Berlin or other possible flashpoints. The Soviets had deployed nuclear weapons on Cuba as a deterrent, much as the Americans had deployed nuclear weapons in Germany, and the former had no more contemplated relinquishing control of nuclear weapons to Castro than the latter would consider relinquishing it to Adenauer.

Since the decisions that could have led to nuclear war had rested with the superpowers throughout the crisis, Roberts continued, one of its consequences was a heightened awareness of how little influence other powers could exercise in the midst of such a confrontation.¹⁴⁴ To the extent that others could exert any influence at all, it would tend to be in multilateral fora such as the UN or through alliance decisionmaking structures. He did

credit Macmillan's seemingly whole-hearted backing of Kennedy's actions with fostering a Soviet perception of Western unity, where unilateral British initiatives would have allowed Khrushchev to play upon allied divisions and resist concessions himself.¹⁴⁵ In the wake of the apparently successful resolution of the crisis, Ormsby-Gore observed, Kennedy's own prudence had won the confidence of all his advisers and strengthened his personal position.¹⁴⁶ Yet it was unclear what kinds of initiatives he would be free to undertake. The President himself told Schlesinger "too many people will think now that all we have to do in dealing with the Russians is to kick them in the balls." Once the Soviets' duplicity in placing the missiles in Cuba secretly had been revealed, "they were in the wrong and knew it. So when we stood firm, they had to back down." This would not be the case where they saw themselves as in the right and had vital interests at stake.¹⁴⁷

Patrick Dean suggested to Joseph Godber, the British delegate to the disarmament talks in Geneva, that Khrushchev's footdragging on verification of the Cuban settlement had reinforced public and Congressional skepticism of Soviet intentions. Hard-line forces were ascendant in American politics, and the administration would be constrained to tread cautiously in any effort to improve superpower relations.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, Roberts suspected Democratic gains in the mid-term elections (a net addition of four seats in the Senate and a modest loss of the same number of House seats) and the defeat of some of his more outspoken conservative critics suggested public approval of Kennedy's conduct of the crisis was high and that he was in a stronger position to take further steps to ease tensions, in areas such as disarmament.¹⁴⁹

The Macmillan government's domestic critics emphasized the apparent lack of consultation in the crisis, Anthony Howard writing in the *New Statesman* that "the British Government...could hardly have had its dependent status spelt out more brutally", a particular blow to Macmillan, "with his fondness for talking of the special relationship."¹⁵⁰ An official study of Anglo-American consultation in the crisis overseen by Shuckburgh observed that both the North Atlantic Treaty and past Anglo-American understandings on nuclear weapons created an American obligation to consult Britain. But consultation could take the form of saying either "I am faced with the following alternatives. What do you advise?" or that of "I am proposing to do such and such. You must tell me if you see any objection." Kennedy had consulted Macmillan in the latter sense. Macmillan had been given the opportunity to advise Kennedy against imposing the quarantine as an initial

measure, to reserve his position, or even to say that his government would publicly oppose it. He had done none of these things, and indeed “approved of the action which President Kennedy intended to take, although he was not asked by the President to assume any formal responsibility for it.” The crisis could not reasonably be regarded as a NATO affair “except in the very technical sense that an incident might conceivably have occurred in the NATO area.” Britain had never claimed, and could not claim, the right of veto over American actions “in a vital decision affecting US security” and retained the corresponding right of autonomous action where its own vital interests were at stake.¹⁵¹

Gaitskell followed his previous line of general support for American actions combined with concern over the legality of the quarantine and the extent of consultation into the debate that followed Khrushchev’s announcement of October 28. He added that one troubling aspect of the crisis had been “the fear that the control of these missile bases might have been not in Soviet but in Cuban hands.” This danger, he added, “brings home to us the urgent necessity of doing something to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.”¹⁵² Shadow Foreign Secretary Harold Wilson hammered away at some of the same points, claiming that “the fact that we have the so-called independent nuclear deterrent has been a fatal bar to the hopes the whole world has of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons.” He rejected any suggestion that the crisis was confined to the Western Hemisphere and therefore Washington was not obliged to consult its NATO allies. British troops were stationed at a number of the world’s flashpoints, including Berlin, and “had a naval incident led to war we should have all been in it.” Even with the deterrent, Britain now counted for so little in the world that Kennedy could not be bothered to truly consult Macmillan, as opposed to informing him what he proposed to do. He asked rhetorically if it were true that while the deterrent was of little use, “we do not want at this time to upset President de Gaulle by working to limit the number of nuclear powers to a figure which would exclude Britain and exclude France?” The Liberal leader, Jo Grimond, recalled that defenders of the British deterrent had claimed “without it we might have to go naked into the conference chamber” but “with it we never got into the conference chamber at all.” The Cuban crisis, he argued, showed “how absurd it is for any country to pretend that it can pursue independent foreign and defence policies” and the need for greater consultation within NATO. While nuclear weapons might deter nuclear attack, they did not prevent conventional aggression and “the case for a shift in our policy towards greater conventional strength is now overwhelming.”¹⁵³

Macmillan contended that “having regard to the rapidity with which the crisis was developing” Kennedy consulted his allies as much as was feasible and that Britain had been informed of the diplomatic activity at the UN and directly between Washington and Moscow. He noted that neither Britain nor any other major ally had played into Khrushchev’s hands by breaking ranks and “a febrile, excited nervousity which expresses itself in frantic demands that somebody ought to do something or other is not always the most useful contribution.” Then he praised Kennedy for refusing to consider a trade of the Turkish for the Cuban missiles, which showed “the President of the United States is not willing to bargain away the interests of European defence against the interests of American defence.” He said he hoped to see early movement towards wider and verifiable disarmament and read aloud the letter he had sent to Khrushchev at the peak of the crisis “to range the British Government squarely with the President” and “support his demand that the missiles must be, by one means or another, taken away.” When Shinwell asked if Khrushchev had replied, Macmillan said “it answered itself, because he undertook to take away the missiles, which was the only thing we asked him to do”, to audible laughter.¹⁵⁴

The Kennedy administration was intent on concealing the extent of the superpower bargain, particularly with reference to Turkey. An interdepartmental task force was formed in late October to coordinate removal of the Turkish missiles by no later than April 1 (five months from Robert Kennedy’s commitment to Dobrynin).¹⁵⁵ McNamara persuaded the Turkish Defence Minister, İlhanı Sancar, to accept deployment of an American Polaris submarine in Mediterranean waters as a replacement for the Jupiters, sweetening the offer by stepping up the provision of nuclear-capable F-104G supersonic interceptors.¹⁵⁶ Stevenson informed his Turkish counterpart that the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Vasili Kuznetsov, had raised the Turkish bases, but that the American position was that this could only be discussed after the removal of the Cuban missiles, and that both Turkey and NATO would be consulted before substantive talks began.¹⁵⁷ But allied representatives on the NAC read news reports confirming the planned withdrawal of the Jupiters before the Council could discuss it, rendering any debate superfluous, and the process was completed in April.¹⁵⁸ Public statements by the administration presented the removal of the Jupiters solely as an exercise in modernizing NATO’s arsenal. In a background briefing to reporters, Rusk suggested the references to Turkish missiles in Khrushchev’s second letter had been inspired by Lippmann’s column and a suggestion along the same lines in a speech by Austrian Foreign

Minister Bruno Kreisky. But “there are no deals”, he claimed, adding “this is a matter on which the Turks are very sensitive.”¹⁵⁹ Kennedy also rejected the notion there had been a trade, adding that the Jupiters would be replaced by a submarine carrying Polaris, “a much more modern weapon” than the obsolete IRBMs. The British, he added, were phasing out the Thors, similar to the Jupiter and even newer, “so I think we are going to be in a stronger position.”¹⁶⁰

Kennedy also moved to promote an interpretation of the crisis in which a trade of the Cuban and Turkish missiles had been proposed by Stevenson, but emphatically rejected by the rest of the ExComm as damaging to NATO interests. This interpretation was first aired in a magazine article by the Washington columnists Stewart Alsop and Charles Bartlett, published after Bartlett spent much of a Sunday afternoon with the President at his rented estate in Virginia. The charge that “Adlai wanted a Munich”, which Bartlett and Alsop put in the mouth of an unnamed official, appears to have come from Kennedy himself.¹⁶¹ Stevenson suspected Alsop and Bartlett had relied on sources in the CIA, and complained to Schlesinger that he had actually rejected bargaining on the Jupiters while the Soviet missiles were actually on Cuba as tending to “divert world attention from the danger to world peace of the Soviet move in Cuba” as well as complicating relations with NATO allies.¹⁶² In the face of rumours that Stevenson might resign, Kennedy issued a public letter expressing his appreciation of the Ambassador’s advice during the crisis, and Pierre Salinger replied to press questions about the article by saying that while NSC discussions were necessarily confidential, Stevenson had “strongly supported the decision taken by the President on the quarantine and brilliantly developed the United States position at the United Nations.”¹⁶³

During the crisis itself, Kennedy and his advisers seem to have agreed that the missiles on Cuba were of far less military than political significance, and were preoccupied by the implications for the Western position in Berlin, a position that relied on the ability of nuclear weapons to offset superior local conventional forces. The threats that most concerned them were that the Soviets as well as the European allies would see the Soviets’ ability to strike the United States directly from Cuba as so radical a shift in the strategic balance that in the short run Soviet aggression aimed at Berlin might succeed, or that in the longer term others would perceive the United States as weaker and become more accommodating of Soviet desires. The superior nuclear arsenal of the United States was no more helpful than it had been during the longer Berlin crisis, and the more rapid pace of the latter crisis made both sides more

conscious of the capacity of events to escape control. As the crisis developed, American actions were driven more by a desire to maintain control over events even than considerations of bargaining, and the fear of escalation led to decisions in favour of cautious options (a quarantine rather than air strike, and then successive proposals for a diplomatic settlement, to be proposed by others as long as this was feasible, but in the end perhaps from an American source). Kennedy's preference for incremental decision-making that foreclosed few options proved well-suited to the circumstances in which he found himself.

Khrushchev's first letter speculated emotionally about the horrors of nuclear war and the dangers of unintended escalation, while Robert Kennedy drew Dobrynin's attention to those dangers in pressing for a rapid agreement. The crisis demonstrated the modest utility of nuclear superiority where efforts to convert it into military leverage risked uncontrollable escalation (even if such superiority had played some role in the Berlin crisis). Since *Sputnik* the Soviets had tried to derive geopolitical benefits from the coming of mutual vulnerability and the development of their own strategic nuclear capabilities, while the United States had sought to minimize the political damage this shift inflicted on NATO's political cohesion. After the Cuban crisis, the shared interest in averting nuclear war loomed larger as an objective for both superpowers, allocating gains and losses from shifts in the strategic balance smaller. Over the long run the Soviet failure to threaten Berlin during the crisis confirmed Western belief in the stability of the division of Europe, and Germany, symbolized by the Berlin Wall. By the same token, after the removal of the missiles from Cuba left no direct threat to American interests from that onetime flashpoint, the Kennedy administration's policy shifted towards low-level harassment and attempts to increase the Castro regime's economic isolation, but with invasion off the table. American policymakers saw less need to reassure European allies about either American strategic superiority or the reliability of American nuclear guarantees, and less need to offer more than lip service to European ambitions for nuclear autonomy. The increasing respectability of mutual assured destruction, and with it the acceptance of mutual vulnerability, in strategic debate reduced the perceived need for the Kennedy administration's arms buildup to reassure the allies. Nuclear weapons could now be a stabilizing force in world politics, provided they were under effective central control.¹⁶⁴ But if, as later accounts suggested, the Cuban crisis was a model of "crisis management"¹⁶⁵, the managers of the crisis had found dealing with the risks of escalation daunting. Acheson had favoured an air strike over a quarantine precisely because

he doubted that gradual and controlled intensification of pressure was feasible in the face of domestic and foreign opposition likely to lead to “the hopeless fly-paper of negotiation which only a Korean veteran can appreciate.”¹⁶⁶

In articulating some of the perceived lessons of the crisis, Ball told the NATO Parliamentarians' Conference that the possibility of Soviet actions in Europe meant that “in removing the offensive threat from Cuba we were unquestionably acting as much in Europe's interest as in our own.” The crisis had also illustrated the benefits of the measured response to aggression, with the decision for a quarantine enabling Kennedy to prevent rapid escalation and gain time, not least for such limited consultation with allies as the pace of events allowed. It also showed the need for channels of continuous consultation within NATO. “The lonely position of preponderance in the free world that we occupied at the end of the war was never congenial to our tastes”, he went on, and the United States had favoured European integration as creating a stronger European partner with whom consultation would be less cumbersome than with a dozen separate governments. It was natural that such a partner's desire for a greater voice in alliance councils would translate into increased cooperation in defence matters. But this need not take a nuclear form to be effective. The United States, he suggested, had been able to “modulate its response” over Cuba because of its capabilities across the spectrum of conventional as well as nuclear weaponry. “From a strictly military standpoint, we don't feel that the alliance has an urgent need for a European nuclear contribution”, but Washington was prepared to listen to European ideas for a multilateral capability that could be coordinated with NATO's other nuclear forces.¹⁶⁷

Walter Lippmann discussed the lessons of the crisis with Kennedy at the White House on November 8 and with Bundy over lunch the next day, incorporating their emphasis on the need for American control of the West's nuclear weapons into a speech he delivered in Paris towards the end of the month.¹⁶⁸ Lippmann presented the case for an American monopoly of Western nuclear power more frankly than Ball. American nuclear superiority, he observed, had sufficed to “deter the Soviet Union from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons to enforce its purposes in Cuba” but beyond that had proved irrelevant to the resolution of the crisis. Kennedy had wisely sought limited objectives, achievable through limited means. He had deterred Soviet efforts to break the quarantine by naval action and had demanded the removal of the offensive missiles, but had not insisted on Castro's removal or even the complete demilitarization of the island. Unintended escalation had been avoided largely

because the two leaders had kept channels of communication open, and neither had left the other without an avenue of dignified retreat. Had Kennedy openly consulted with his allies before imposing the quarantine, and his intent become known, Khrushchev could have seized the initiative by proclaiming the presence of the missiles or denouncing the quarantine in advance, thereby committing the superpowers to a “collision course” from which turning away would have been difficult.

The experience, Lippmann went on, has “confirmed us in the view that the command of nuclear power to balance Soviet nuclear power cannot be divided or shared”, with any such effort as risky as the presence of several pairs of hands on the steering wheel of a car navigating a particularly perilous road. Given the limited utility of nuclear weapons, the ongoing importance of conventional kinds (local conventional superiority, he noted, was essential to the quarantine), and the cost and difficulty of creating an effective European nuclear capability in addition to necessary conventional forces, it was “essential as a practical matter that there be a division of labour.” This would devote European resources to nonnuclear arms while all Western nuclear weapons would be “effectively integrated—that is to say, that they should have agreed targets, intimate reciprocal intelligence, and, for the moments of decision, a unified command.” The entirety of American strategic power had been deployed in the crisis, not to oust Castro, but to prevent a radical shift in the strategic balance. Washington would do the same in the event of a Soviet threat to the freedom of West Berlin, but not over questions of formal recognition or “juridical issues.”¹⁶⁹

Lippmann closed by saying that the present American monopoly of Western nuclear weapons was not a cause for Americans’ gloating but “a grim, costly, painful and dangerous responsibility which, through no ambition of their own, they find themselves committed to” and urging Europeans to assume the burden of providing for Europe’s conventional defense. Bundy had been struck by this formulation, observing that “we think of nuclear weapons as a terrible burden”, with modernized conventional forces “in the most intimate psychological terms a means of escape from the nuclear confrontation.” Some Europeans, of whom de Gaulle was an extreme case, thought of conventional forces in terms of the carnage of the two world wars, and “find comfort and escape in tidy little nuclear forces that will never be used.” Since Americans could not relinquish their nuclear burden, “the problem of policy is to find a way in which Europe can find a way in which Europe can play with self-respect and even pride the role which remains to her.”¹⁷⁰

Jean Monnet of the Action Committee for a United Europe had seen Kennedy's masterful handling of the crisis as dramatizing "the need for Europe to pull together so it can assume the role of partnership which the Americans have been talking about."¹⁷¹ De Gaulle had given unstinting public support to the United States, but also emphasized the possibility of repercussions around Berlin to Adenauer, suggesting that the deployment of missiles on Cuba might have been designed to provoke a settlement involving European interests.¹⁷² He also wrote to Macmillan that "il est vrai que ni vous, ni nous, n'avons été en l'occurrence consultés par les États-Unis" and suggested this required establishment of the tripartism he had proposed in 1958, so as to safeguard European interests in the future.¹⁷³ During a dinner at the Netherlands Embassy, Ambassador Alphand told Walt Rostow that "de Gaulle understands fully why the Cuba crisis had to be handled without consultation, but this technique could not work in a Berlin crisis." The General, he added, favoured rapid movement on "the problem of political consultation" with the initiative coming from Kennedy. He was prepared to accept Washington as the "locus of consultation" and to accept "West Germany as an equal of the Big Three."¹⁷⁴ Norbert Anschuetz, Counselor at the American Embassy in Paris, heard from British officials about de Gaulle's letter to Macmillan, as well as rumours that officials in the Foreign Ministry had found the idea of a great-power directorate very much on the General's mind, with the State Department's use of the quadripartite Ambassadorial Group for Berlin a potential model.¹⁷⁵

Yet de Gaulle's overtures also set the stage for angry denunciations of American domination at the first sign that Washington might be less interested in sharing substantive power, beginning with the French response to Lippmann's speech. As Bohlen reported, a substantial excerpt from the address ran in the Gaullist *La Figaro*, under the headline "The Direction Can Neither be Divided Nor Shared." An editorial in the opposition *L'Aurore* speculated if the superpowers were embarking on a division of the world *a la Yalta*, and warned this was unacceptable to a Western Europe that had recovered politically and economically from the Second World War. A similar leader in the populist *Paris-Presse* wondered if Europe would fall victim to the "superiority complex" affecting Kennedy in the wake of the crisis. The Director of the Foreign Ministry's Division of Political Affairs, Charles Lucet, spent two hours trying to persuade Lippmann that his analysis was wrong, and that his denigration of European capabilities, coming on the heels of the triumphalist depiction of Kennedy's conduct of the crisis in the Alsop-Bartlett article and on the eve of a

NATO ministerial meeting “looks to many French as coordinated attempt to attempt to impose American will on Europe in wake of Cuban victory.” One of Lucet’s colleagues, Jean de la Grandville, thought it was a “bad speech”, while another official at the *Quai d’Orsay*, Michel Legendre, found the portion dealing with Berlin particularly objectionable. The implication that American power would be deployed to prevent an outright seizure of the city, he suggested, but not brought to bear on questions of recognition gave Khrushchev a green light to resort to “salami tactics.” All of this, Bohlen concluded, illustrated “how far US has yet to go in order to drive home full implications of nuclear weapons.”¹⁷⁶ A few days after the Lippmann speech de Gaulle himself sent a warning shot in Kennedy’s direction. The events around Cuba, he wrote the President, “en venait à mettre en cause d’autres regions du monde où la politique et la sécurité françaises se trouveraient impliquées, comme, par exemple, l’affaire de Berlin.” French support for American actions over Cuba could not be extended to such other matters of contention. De Gaulle’s insistence on France’s sovereign rights in the negotiation of disarmament or other agreements remained unchanged.¹⁷⁷

In London, Ambassador Bruce was optimistic about the prospects of negotiations for wider disarmament measures, such as a test ban. Kennedy, he told Robert Estabrook of the *Washington Post*, seemed interested even if the chances of French or Chinese agreement were poor. London and Washington, he noted, were in broad accord on the issue, and Macmillan’s behaviour in the Cuban crisis suggested he “has certainly gotten over his effort to act as broker with the Russians.” While Gaitskell had shown courage in the past in fighting the unilateral disarmers in his party, Bruce thought he had harmed himself with his shift against the EEC and in his stance during the crisis. Gaitskell “now must rely on some very strange allies indeed”, and it was possible Labour would split, its right-wing members joining forces with the Liberals, its left forming a neutralist or crypto-Communist grouping.¹⁷⁸

Yet after the major phase of the crisis was over, Labour continued to emphasize the lack of American consultation, and attacked the government for clinging to a notionally independent deterrent that relied on American technical assistance, conferred no additional influence in world affairs, and hindered progress on non-proliferation. Opposition politicians also accused the Conservatives of trying to sustain their specious nuclear pretensions in order to conclude a bargain with de Gaulle in which nuclear collaboration would be exchanged for British entry to the Common Market. Moreover, elements of the press at least as favourable to the Conservatives as to Labour could point to the apparent elements of self-delusion

in government policy. The *Economist* editorialized that a British nuclear test scheduled to take place at an American facility in Nevada was an irrelevant gesture in the face of a tacit bargain by the superpowers to prevent the introduction of nuclear weapons into new geographic areas of the emergence of new nuclear powers. The magazine's writers may not have known the extent of Soviet-American cooperation in verifying the removal of the Cuban missiles or of the Turkish trade, but they correctly saw the Cuban settlement as the first stage of this unspoken arrangement. Presumably, they concluded, the Soviet Union would do what it could to obstruct a Chinese nuclear capability, and the Americans would not replace the obsolete Thors and Jupiters with other systems under dual control. The only nuclear weapons in Western Europe, eventually, would be those under American direction, and Kennedy could be expected to press Adenauer to augment his pledge not to manufacture nuclear weapons with one not to acquire them from others.¹⁷⁹

George Brown criticized the government for its failure to stop nuclear testing altogether and decision to continue with a planned test at American facilities in Nevada. British assertions of a right to test made it harder to discourage anyone else, including the French, from testing, he claimed. British claims to nuclear independence were specious given dependence on the United States for the delivery system. In any event, he correctly predicted, Washington would promptly drop Skybolt if the missile did not meet American needs. Rather than "trying to duplicate the provision and possession of nuclear weapons", he suggested, Britain should press for improved measures of nuclear consultation within NATO, which could prevent the emergence of a European nuclear deterrent of the sort to which Ball had referred in Paris. Such "dangerous ideas", were nothing more than an American effort to "get the Government out of their dilemma about their own independent deterrent." The effort to retain a national nuclear capability, he closed, might represent the vain pursuit of prestige "or a desire, perhaps, to be able to say to General de Gaulle next year, when we get nearer the date of entry to the Common Market, that we have something to share with him." Thorneycroft responded that "one should not talk in terms of a bargain about the Common Market...these are graver issues for all concerned."¹⁸⁰

Another Labour MP, Roy Mason, suggested there was a "growing uneasiness and fear" that the United States was prepared to risk nuclear war in direct defence of itself, but not of Europe. While American actions over Cuba had been firm, "the United States was noticeably hesitant over Hungary, Berlin, and the Berlin Wall." This, he suggested, lay behind the

government's determination to continue testing and retain the deterrent.¹⁸¹ A *Conservative* MP, Aubrey Jones, previously Minister of Supply under Macmillan, suggested that the Cuban crisis, by bringing the superpowers to the edge of the nuclear abyss, had "opened up an enormous psychological chasm" between the superpowers and everyone else, even states with modest nuclear forces. The United States and Soviet Union would be preoccupied by one another's actions in matters nuclear, not by anything Britain might do. The British deterrent bought no influence and "this point was finally and harshly brought home to us in the Cuban affair. Neither the United States nor the Russians (sic) took the slightest notice of us."¹⁸²

Gordon Walker reminded the House of McNamara's earlier observation after his Ann Arbor address that the British deterrent did not obstruct the workings of the West's nuclear defences because Bomber Command was integrated with SAC. In Gordon Walker's formulation, "the final great argument for the independent British nuclear weapon is that it is not independent." While the British deterrent might augment the strength of the American one, the claim that it purchased a right to consultation in Washington "was blown sky-high by Cuba." Britain's demonstration of its nuclear potency by continued testing merely made it harder to stop proliferation and was bound to lead to an independent European deterrent of the sort "which was given rather ambiguous support by George Ball over the weekend." If British testing were "a part of some devious Common Market policy, this would be absolutely reprehensible and indefensible."¹⁸³

A State Department scope paper for the December NAC meeting noted that the dominant note was likely to be relief at the end of the crisis and satisfaction at the solidarity displayed by the alliance. In the as-yet-unclear state of East-West relations, there would be a pronounced tendency to look to Washington for leadership. While the Cuban crisis had demonstrated "the value of a broad spectrum of military power", some European members were likely to overemphasize the role of American nuclear superiority and "it will be important to set the record straight on this matter, because it will profoundly influence NATO's actions across the board in the military area." American priorities were to preserve the heightened sense of solidarity, promise improved consultation, avoid any divisive initiatives regarding the EEC and encourage the Europeans to develop forces adequate for prolonged non-nuclear defence of the Continent. The administration would remain willing to discuss a sea-based MLF, coordinated with other NATO deterrent forces, if the allies wanted

one and it did not divert resources from the buildup of conventional forces required for protracted defence of the Continent. "The difficulties of crisis management in a coalition will be appreciated even if not explicitly explained" and interest in future consultation was likely to be considerable. Despite the Cuban experience, it was not clear that the Europeans would be prepared to modify NATO's current strategic concept, with its emphasis on early resort to nuclear weapons as a deterrent, and "recent European press comment emphasizing American opposition to individual national nuclear forces in Europe has heightened European sensitivity on this matter, especially among the French."¹⁸⁴

At the NAC meeting, Spaak argued for exploring the possibilities of agreement on Berlin now that Khrushchev's domestic political position had likely been weakened by the Cuban crisis rather than waiting until that position was stronger. Moreover, "Khrushchev may not be able to resist indefinitely internal pressures on him for signature East German peace treaty." Home added that Khrushchev would "want a pause before another trial of strength, if only to make his own deterrent more credible." He might be unable to respond to Western initiatives without giving his critics at home and in China the impression of another surrender. It was doubtful that Cuba and Berlin could be equated, since "former was of great importance to US and only marginal importance to USSR, while latter is of great importance to both."¹⁸⁵ Briefing the press, Rusk stressed the need to augment NATO capabilities, to avoid tempting the Soviets with conventional weakness around Berlin and prevent Khrushchev from miscalculating NATO's resolve, as he had misread that of the United States, in a spot where a miscalculation could prove still more dangerous. He noted that the administration could not provide weapons to an MLF in which it did not have a veto over the force's employment without a change to current law by Congress. "We are willing to listen," but were bound by existing law even if "we don't want that fact to inhibit them from generating ideas about what a multilateral force would be like." It was normal that an MLF would include the US since "from a strictly military point of view, separate nuclear action within the same alliance is almost inconceivable."¹⁸⁶ He did not yet know that the debate over national and multilateral nuclear forces was about to enter a new stage with the collapse of the Skybolt project.

Notes

1. Robert Weisbrot, Maximum Danger: Kennedy, the Missiles, and the Crisis of American Confidence (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), pp. 45-47. The literature on the Cuban missile crisis itself is extensive. Perhaps the single most influential study is Graham T. Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971; 2nd ed., with Philip D. Zelikow, London: Longmans, 1999), which presents Kennedy's actions as a model of "crisis management." A less favourable assessment can be found in Mark J. White, The Cuban Missile Crisis (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), which depicts Kennedy as an unreflective cold warrior, whose misguided efforts to unseat Castro helped precipitate the crisis. In White's account, both Kennedy and Khrushchev displayed an alarming belligerence at the opening of the crisis, and were forced by the dangers of escalation to moderate their behaviour and negotiate a settlement. L.V. Scott, Macmillan, Kennedy, and the Cuban Missile Crisis: Political, Military, and Intelligence Aspects (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999) depicts both Kennedy and Macmillan as moving from initially bellicose to more moderate positions. Weisbrot presents Kennedy as less of a cold warrior than many of his countrymen, and inclined to pursue as moderate a course as the situation itself and domestic politics allowed. Philip Nash, The Other Missiles of October: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Jupiters, 1957-1963 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), emphasizes Kennedy's awareness of the analogy between American missiles in Turkey and Soviet ones on Cuba, and his early and persistent advocacy of a trade. "One Hell of a Gamble"; Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964, by Timothy Naftali and Aleksandr Fursenko (New York: Norton, 1997), emphasizes Khrushchev's desire to protect the Castro regime from an anticipated invasion, his subsequent difficulty controlling Castro, and the role of back-channel contacts in defusing the crisis.
2. Khrushchev to Kennedy, April 18 1961, in Moscow to Department of State, April 18 1961, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. X (Washington: GPO, 1996), pp. 264-265.
3. Kennedy to Khrushchev, April 18 1961, encl. to Memorandum of Conversation with Ambassador Menshikov, April 18 1961, *ibid*, pp. 283-284.
4. Notes by Eisenhower of April 22 meeting at Camp David, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vols. X-XII, microfiche supplement, doc. 258.
5. McCone memorandum, "Discussion in Secretary Rusk's Office at 12 o'clock, 21 August 1962", and "Memorandum of Meeting with the President", August 23 1962, in Mary S. McAuliffe, ed, CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1992), pp 21-23 and 27-29.
6. "Memorandum of Meeting with the President", p. 27.
7. National Security Action Memorandum 181, by Bundy, August 23 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. X, pp. 957-958. Nash, *op cit*, pp. 95-97 and *passim*, emphasizes the administration's implicit awareness of analogies between Soviet missiles on Cuba and American ones in Turkey.
8. Rostow memo for Bundy, August 31 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. X, pp. 1001-1002.
9. Hilsman memo for Rusk, "The Meaning of Increased Soviet aid to Cuba", *ibid*, pp. 1014-1022.
10. Rostow memo for Kennedy, September 3 1962, in Laurence Chang and Peter Kornbluh, eds., The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: A National Security Archive Documents Reader, revised edition (New York: The New Press, 1998), pp. 76-84.
11. Attachment by Gilpatric to Carl Kaysen to Col. Theodore Clifton, Sept. 1 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. X, pp. 1007-1009.

12. "US Reaffirms Policy on Prevention of Aggressive Actions by Cuba", Kennedy statement of September 4 1962, read by Press Secretary Pierre Salinger to the White House press corps, Department of State *Bulletin*, September 24 1962, #1213, pp. 450-451.
13. Udall to Kennedy and Rusk, September 7 1962, in Moscow to State Department, September 7 1962, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, Vol. X, pp.498-499.
14. Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) 11-15-62, September 13 1962, *ibid*, pp. 495-498.
15. McCone memo of conversation with Bundy, October 5 1962, *ibid*, p. 115.
16. McCone memo of meeting, October 4 1962, *ibid*, pp. 111-112.
17. Kent memo for McCone, October 8 1962, *ibid*, pp. 119-122.
18. Ray Cline, "A CIA Reminiscence", *Washington Quarterly*, Number 5 (Autumn 1982), pp 89-91.
19. Transcript of Meeting , October 16 1962, 11:50 a.m., The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis, edited by Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow (Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press, 1997), pp. 45-76, qu. p. 55 and p. 61. The Ex Comm included Robert Kennedy, McNamara, Rusk, Ball, Gilpatric, Bundy, Sorensen, Llewellyn Thompson, Dillon, Taylor, Nitze, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson and Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America Edwin Martin. Not all were present at every meeting. Kennedy had suspected for some time that the Soviets actively sought to provoke a further American attack on Cuba as a pretext for taking Berlin. He mentioned this to Home in late September. See Home to Macmillan, October 1 1962, Prime Minister's Personal Telegram T. 480 / 62, PREM 11 / 3689, TNA.
20. Transcript of meeting, October 16 1962, 6:30 p.m., *ibid*, pp. 77-116, qu.113. Kennedy had already left the meeting when McNamara made this last suggestion.
21. *Ibid*, pp. 99-100 and 116.
22. Stevenson to Kennedy, October 17 1962, The Papers of Adlai E. Stevenson, Vol. VIII, edited by Walter E. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), p. 300.
23. Transcript of meeting of October 18th, 11 a.m., May and Zelikow, eds., p. 130.
24. *Ibid*, pp. 134-137.
25. *Ibid*, pp. 144-145. Nash, *op cit*, pp. 126-127 infers that the ExComm considered allowing the Soviets to retaliation after an American attack on Cuba with an attack on the Jupiters, with no American response to follow. This would have stopped the escalation of hostilities likely to follow an attack on Cuba with American losing a military asset of limited value. But the group does not appear to have been confident that escalation control would prove feasible in practice once Cuba had been struck.
26. May and Zelikow, eds., pp. 150-151.
27. *Ibid*, pp. 155-156.
28. *Ibid*, p. 143 and pp. 164-165.
29. *Ibid*, p. 147 and pp. 164-165.
30. Memorandum of conversation with Foreign Minister Gromyko, October 18 1962, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, V. XI, pp. 110-114.
31. Kennedy's remarks are reprinted in May and Zelikow, pp.171-172.
32. *Ibid*, p. 171. Acheson's thinking is set out at length in Acheson to Patrick Devlin, n.d. but November 1962, in David S. McLellan and David C. Acheson, eds., Among Friends: Personal Letters of Dean Acheson (New York; Dodd, Mead, 1980), p. 245 and "Dean Acheson's Version of Robert Kennedy's Version of the Cuban Missile Crisis: Homage to Plain Dumb Luck", *Esquire*, February 1969, pp. 44, 46, 76-77.

33. May and Zelikow, p. 172.
34. Transcript of meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, October 19, 1962, *ibid.*, pp. 175-177.
35. Ormsby-Gore's account of the conversation is in Washington to Foreign Office, October 22 1962, Tel. 2636, Prime Minister's Personal Telegram T.495 / 62, PREM 11 / 3689, TNA.
36. Scott, *op cit*, p. 43.
37. "Briefing of Charles de Gaulle by Dean Acheson, 10/23/62" and "Briefing of British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan on the Cuban Situation, 10/23/62", National Security Archive microfiche collection, The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: The Making of US Policy, (Washington, DC: Chadwyck Healey, 1992), docs. 00797 and 00880.
38. Record of meeting in de Zulueta to Samuel, October 22 1962, PREM 11 / 3689, TNA.
39. Meeting of military sub-group of quadripartite Ambassadorial Group, October 22 1962, App. O, John Ausland, Kennedy, Khrushchev and the Berlin-Cuba Crisis, 1961-1964 (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1996), pp. 182-183.
40. As reported in Mason to Foreign Office, Tel. 163, October 23 1962, PREM 11/3689, TNA.
41. Macmillan to Ormsby-Gore, Tel. 7395, October 22 1962, *ibid.*
42. Macmillan to Kennedy, October 22 1962, *ibid.*
43. De Zulueta to Ormsby-Gore, October 23 1962, *ibid.*
44. "Radio-TV Address of the President to the Nation from the White House", October 22 1962, The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962, doc. 00847.
45. Record of Telephone Conversation between Macmillan and Kennedy, October 22 1962, May and Zelikow, eds., pp. 284-286.
46. Slater memorandum, "Cuba", August 24 1962, FO 371/162374, TNA.
47. CC (62) 61, October 23 1962, CAB 128/36.
48. Record of Conversation at Admiralty House, October 23 1962, PREM 11/3689. Bruce and other American officials also briefed Gaitskell and Brown, with the latter vigorously supportive of American actions, the former more cautious. See Bruce to State Department, October 24 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962, doc. 1264.
49. Ormsby-Gore to Foreign Office, Tel. 2646, October 22 1962, *ibid.* The proclamation of the quarantine preceded the vote on the OAS resolution, presumably because opposition was less likely in the face of a *fait accompli*.
50. Foreign Office to Washington, Tel. 7418, October 23 1962; Ormsby-Gore to Macmillan, Prime Minister's Personal Telegram T. 505/62, October 23 1962, both *ibid.*
51. Washington to Foreign Office, Tel. 2682, October 25 1962, FO 371/162380.
52. Hailsham to Lord Dilhorne, October 25 1962, FO 371/162388. This was, of course, essentially Macmillan's reasoning in his October 22 letter to Kennedy, cited in n. 42, above. The need for the ruling principles of international law to catch up to the new military (and hence political and legal) environment created by modern weaponry was at the core of the Kennedy administration's public defense of the legality of its actions. See "The Legal Case for US Action on Cuba", address by State Department legal counsel Abram Chayes to the tenth reunion of the Harvard Law School class of 1952, November 3 1962, Department of State *Bulletin*, No. #1220, November 12 1962, pp. 720-723.
53. Ormsby-Gore to Macmillan, Prime Minister's Personal Telegram T. 505/62, October 23 1962, PREM 11/3690. Ormsby-Gore's assessment of American opinion is borne out by Weisbrot, *op cit*, *passim*.
54. Foreign Office to Washington, Tel. 7457, October 24 1962, PREM 11/3690, outlines Macmillan's thinking and instructs Ormsby-Gore to probe that of Kennedy.
55. Memconv by Bundy, October 24 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962, doc. 01193;

Washington to Foreign Office, October 24 1962, Tel. 2667, PREM 11/3690, TNA.

56. Statement to Security Council, October 24 1962, pp. 325-335 of Johnson, ed., op cit, Stevenson emphasized the secret nature of the Soviet deployment and the introduction of nuclear weapons into a geographical area previously free of them, as opposed to the conclusion of public agreements respecting the deployment of missiles in Western Europe under NATO auspices.

57. Bundy, "Executive Committee Minutes, October 23 1962, 10:00 a.m.", Chang and Kornbluh, eds., op cit, pp. 167-169.

58. Khrushchev to Kennedy, October 24 1962, *ibid*, pp. 173-174.

59. Intelligence note from Hilsman to Rusk, October 23 1962, "Strident Soviet Statement on President Kennedy's Speech Evasive Regarding Countermoves", Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962, doc. 00939.

60. Record of Telephone Conversation, October 25 1962, May and Zelikow, eds., pp. 384-389.

61. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Journals, 1952-2000, edited by Andrew Schlesinger and Stephen Schlesinger (New York: Penguin Press, 2007), pp. 175-176, entry for October 28, 1962.

62. *Ibid*, p. 176. Khrushchev's October 24 letter to Russell is in American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1962 (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1963), pp. 421-422.

63. Schlesinger seems to have sent a copy to Stevenson, which is reproduced in US Mission to the United Nations to Department of State, October 24 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, V. XI, pp. 187-188.

64. Record of telephone conversation between Kennedy and Ball, October 24 1962, 11:15 p.m., *ibid*, pp. 190-191; See also record of telephone conversation between Ball and Stevenson, October 24 1962, 11:45 p.m., *ibid*, pp. 192-3. It is unclear if Kennedy had in fact read Schlesinger's memo by this point, although it seems likely. He did discuss Harriman's thinking in a telephone conversation with him on October 25, although I have found no direct record of it. Harriman told Schlesinger of the conversation later that day. See Schlesinger, op cit, p. 176.

65. Walter Lippmann, "Blockade Proclaimed", *Washington Post*, October 25 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962, doc. 1271. Thorneycroft had announced in the House of Commons on August 1 that the missiles on British soil would be dismantled in the coming year. Gordon-Walker had welcomed the announcement on behalf of the Labour Party, noting that target coverage from sea-launched missiles made the Thors superfluous, but that Labour would have accepted their continued presence had they met a genuine military need. See House of Commons *Debates*, Fifth Series, V. 664, cols. 557-558.

66. Nash, op cit, pp. 133-134.

67. Ronald Steel, Walter Lippmann and the American Century (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), p. 535.

68. Finletter to Rusk, Polto 505, October 25 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, v. XI, p. 213.

69. Thant to Kennedy and Khrushchev, October 25 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962, doc. 1110.

70. Kennedy to Thant, October 25, 1962; Khrushchev to Thant, October 25 1962; *ibid*, docs. 01405 and 01407.

71. McCone Memorandum for the File, "Executive Committee Meeting 10/25/62-10 a.m.", McAuliffe, ed., op cit, p. 306.

72. Hilsman note for Rusk, October 25 1962, "Soviets Continue to Seek Abandonment of Quarantine While Missiles Stay"; Hilsman note for Rusk, "Soviet Strategy in UN

Discussions of Cuba”, Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962, docs. 01310 and 01311.

73. Summary Record of ExComm Meeting, October 26 1962, 10:00 a.m., by Bromley Smith. Chang and Kornbluh, eds., pp. 187-193.

74. Ormsby-Gore to Foreign Office, October 26 1962, Tel. 2691, PREM 11/3690, TNA.

75. House of Commons *Debates*, Fifth Series, v. 664, cols. 1054-1061.

76. Caccia to Roberts, October 24 1962, Tel. 1039, PREM 11/3690, TNA.

77. Record of Conversation between the Foreign Secretary and Soviet Chargé, October 25 1962, PREM 11/3691.

78. Roberts to Caccia, October 25 1962, Tel. 1039, PREM 11/3690, TNA.

79. Macmillan to Kennedy in de Zulueta to Bundy, October 25 1962, T. 505/62, *ibid*.

80. Hare to Department of State, October 26 1962, Tel. 587, Chang and Kornbluh, pp. 231-232.

81. Ankara to Foreign Office, October 25 1962, Tel. 1268, FO 371/162380, TNA.

82. As later reported in Stoessel (Paris) to State Department, November 11 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962, doc. 2246.

83. New York to Foreign Office, October 25 1962, Tel. 1747, FO 371/162387.

84. Foreign Office to Washington, October 26 1962, Tel. 7554, PREM 11/3690.

85. Scali notes of conversation with Aleksandr Fomin, October 26 1962, Chang and Kornbluh, eds., pp. 194-195. The timing of Khrushchev’s second message suggests that Fomin acted of his own accord, and was not part of a larger Soviet initiative. See Andreas Wenger, Living with Peril: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Nuclear Weapons (Lanham, MD.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), *op cit*, p. 288.

86. See note 73, *supra*.

87. Khrushchev to Kennedy, October 23 1962, Chang and Kornbluh, eds., pp. 171-173. See also same to same, October 24 1962, *ibid*, pp. 173-175.

88. Castro to Khrushchev, October 26 1962, *ibid*, pp. 199-200.

89. Macmillan-Kennedy telephone conversation, May and Zelikow, eds., p. 482.

90. Macmillan to Kennedy, October 27 1962, *idem*.

91. Khrushchev to Kennedy, October 26 1962, Chang and Kornbluh, eds., pp. 195-198.

92. Khrushchev to Kennedy, October 27 1962, *ibid*, pp. 207-209.

93. Transcript of ExComm Meeting of October 27 1962, May and Zelikow, pp. 542-543.

94. In, e.g. David Welch, “Intelligence Assessment in the Cuban Missile Crisis”, *Queen’s Quarterly*, 100/2 (Summer 1992), pp. 421-437.

95. Transcript of ExComm Meeting of October 27 1962, Chang and Kornbluh, pp. 225-230.

96. Kennedy to Khrushchev, October 27 1962, *ibid*, pp. 233-235.

97. Washington to Foreign Office, October 27 1962, Tel. 2701, PREM 11/3691, TNA.

98. Kennedy to Macmillan, October 27 1962, Prime Minister’s Personal Telegram T. 516A/62, *ibid*.

99. Caccia to Home, October 27 1962, PREM 11/3690.

100. Foreign Office to Washington, October 27 1962, Tel. 7574, PREM 11/3691.

101. Foreign Office to New York, October 27 1962, Tel. 4020, FO 371/162387.

102. Harold Evans, Downing Street Diary: The Macmillan Years, 1957-1963 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), p. 225, entry for October 27 1962.

103. Macmillan to Ormsby-Gore, October 27 1962, T. 517/62 and T. 518/62, both in PREM 11/3691, TNA.

104. Memorandum of telephone conversation by Bundy, October 27 1962, f. UK General 10/15/62-1/12/62, Box 170a, NSF, JFKL.

105. Memorandum of telephone conversation between Bundy and de Zulueta, October 28, 4

a.m., PREM 11/3691, TNA.

106. Washington to Foreign Office, October 27 1962, Tel. 2707, *ibid.*

107. In Foreign Office to Moscow, October 28 1962, Tel. 2758, *ibid.*

108. Dobrynin cable to Soviet Foreign Ministry, Cold War International History Project (hereafter CWIHP) *Bulletin*, No. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 79-80. See also Robert F. Kennedy memo to Rusk, October 30 1962, CWIHP *Bulletin*, Nos. 8-9 (Winter 1996), pp. 346-347.

109. Khrushchev communiqué to Kennedy, October 28 1962, Chang and Kornbluh, eds., pp. 236-239.

110. Khrushchev to Kennedy, October 28 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, v. VI, p. 189. Gromyko instructed the Soviet negotiators in New York not to raise the Turkish missiles, which were the subject of direct negotiations between Moscow and Washington. See Gromyko to Soviet Mission at the United Nations, November 1 1962, CWIHP *Bulletin*, Nos. 8-9, pp. 309-310.

111. Dobrynin to Soviet Foreign Ministry, October 30 1962, CWIHP *Bulletin*, Nos. 8-9, p. 304.

112. Khrushchev to Castro, October 28 1962, Chang and Kornbluh, eds., p. 249.

113. Castro to Khrushchev, October 28 1962, *ibid.*, p. 250.

114. Castro to Thant, October 29 1962, *ibid.*, pp. 251-252.

115. Summary of Thant meeting with Castro, Dorticos and Roa, October 30, 1962; Summary of meeting with same, October 31, 1962; *Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962*, docs. 01693 and 01747. As Thant's military aide, General Inderjit Rikhye, observed to Ball and Gilpatric, Castro and his colleagues had already experienced an unwelcome surprise after accepting the missiles and finding they would be under exclusive Soviet control. New York to State Department, November 1 1962, *ibid.*, doc. 01839.

116. Bundy, "NSC Executive Committee Record of Action", November 1 1962, 10:00 a.m., *ibid.*, doc. 01843.

117. Khrushchev to Kennedy, October 30 1962, *Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962*, doc. 01735.

118. Memconv of Kohler meeting with Gromyko, October 30 1962, doc. 01734.

119. Stevenson cable to Rusk, November 1 1962, Chang and Kornbluh, eds., pp. 259-260.

120. Hilsman memo for Rusk, "The Situation in Light of the Mikoyan Talks and Castro Speech", November 2 1962, encls. In William H. Brubeck to Bundy, Documents for Consideration", *Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962*, doc. 01883.

121. Kennedy to Khrushchev, November 3 1962, *ibid.*, doc. 01984.

122. Thompson memconv of Lunch with Dobrynin, November 3 1962, f. USSR-Subjects, Dobrynin Talks-Thompson Tabs 1-20, 4/6/62-5/20/63, Box 185, NSF, JFKL.

123. Khrushchev to Kennedy, November 11 1962, Chang and Kornbluh, eds., pp. 279-283.

124. Kennedy's oral message to Khrushchev, as delivered by Robert F. Kennedy to Dobrynin, November 12 1962, *ibid.*, p. 283.

125. Kennedy to de Gaulle, Adenauer, and Macmillan, November 19 1962, *Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962*, doc. 02418.

126. Castro to Thant, November 19 1962, *ibid.*, doc. 02115.

127. Khrushchev to Kennedy, November 20 1962, *ibid.*, doc. 02489.

128. Bundy, "Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting", November 20 1962, Chang and Kornbluh, eds., pp. 304-306.

129. Kennedy news conference of November 20 1962, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1962* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1963), pp. 830-838.

130. Zhukov to CPSU, November 2 1962, CWIHP *Bulletin*, Nos. 8-9 (Winter 1996), pp. 313-314.

131. US mission to NATO to State Department, December 15 1962, Second Session, 30th NATO Ministerial Meeting, in, Lot 58 d 133, f. 91, 12 “NATO, including NATO Defence, 1961-1962”, Box 84, RG 59, USNA.
132. Text of press conference in Rusk to Department, December 15 1962, *ibid*.
133. Translation of Soviet aide-memoire of February 18 1963, Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962, doc. 02938.
134. Thompson memconv with Dobrynin, February 21 1963, f. “USSR-Subjects, Dobrynin Talks-Thompson Tabs 1-20, 4/6/62-5/20/63, Box 185, NSF, JFKL.
135. Thompson memconv, February 22 1963, encls. in Brubeck to Bundy, March 3 1963, *ibid*.
136. Draft aide-memoire, attached to Brubeck to Bundy, February 23 1962, *ibid*.
137. Thompson memconv, February 25 1963, encls. in *idem*.
138. Thompson to Rusk, Ball, and Bundy, “Visit of Ambassador Anatoliy (sic) Dobrynin”, April 11 1963, *ibid*.
139. Washington to Foreign Office, October 28 1962, Tel. 2710, PREM 11/3691, TNA.
140. Macmillan to Home, October 29 1962, *ibid*.
141. Foreign Office to Washington, October 29 1962, Tel. 2715, *ibid*.
142. Memconv between Rusk and Ormsby-Gore, October 28 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, v. XI, pp. 288-289.
143. Washington to Foreign Office, October 30 1962, Tel. 2733, PREM 11/3691, TNA.
144. Moscow to Foreign Office, November 7 1962, despatch 132, FO 371/166217.
145. Moscow to Foreign Office, November 12 1962, despatch 133, FO 371/166208.
146. Washington to Foreign Office, November 9 1962, No. 185, FO 371/162401.
147. Schlesinger, *op cit*, p. 177, entry for October 29 1962.
148. Geneva to Foreign Office, Tel. 655, December 12 1962, PREM 11/4554, TNA.
149. Moscow to Foreign Office, November 12 1962, Tel. 2251, PREM 11/3996.
150. Anthony Howard, “Caution in Westminster”, *New Statesman*, October 26 1962, Vol. 64, #1650, p. 554.
151. “Cuba and Anglo-American Consultation”, November 6 1962, FO 371/166970.
152. House of Commons, *Debates*, Fifth Series, v. 666, October 30 1962, cols. 18-20.
153. Cols. 157-158 and 182-183, *ibid*.
154. *Ibid*, cols. 34-35, and 40-41.
155. Nash, *op cit*, pp. 152-153. The administration had sporadically considered removing the Jupiters, from late 1961 to late 1962, but Kennedy had never issued a definitive order for their removal, despite their obsolescence. See *ibid*, pp. 109-111.
156. McNamara to Sancar, January 5 1963, FRUS, 1961-1963, v. 16, pp. 743-744, cited by *ibid*, p. 163.
157. New York to State Department, November 1 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962, doc. 1595.
158. Nash, *op cit*, pp. 163-164.
159. Transcript of Rusk press briefing, October 28 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962, doc. 1589.
160. Kennedy press conference of January 24 1963, PPP:1963, p. 98. Nash, p. 166, notes most of the American press accepted the administration line. The first public acknowledgment that American and Soviet officials had even discussed a trade came in Robert F. Kennedy’s posthumous Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), p. 109. Here Kennedy records Dobrynin’s reference to the Jupiters and his own rejection of any *quid pro quo*, followed by the comment that the

missiles were obsolete and the President had ordered their dismantling some time ago; "it was our judgment that, within a short time after this crisis was over, those missiles would be gone." In 1989 Theodore Sorensen acknowledged that in preparing the manuscript after Kennedy's assassination, he had edited the diary entries that formed the core of his account so as to delete references to an outright deal. See Sorensen's comments in Bruce J. Allyn, James G. Blight, and David A. Welch, eds., Back to the Brink: Proceedings of the Moscow Conference on the Cuban Missile Crisis, January 27-28, 1989 (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1992), pp. 92-93.

161. White, op cit, pp. 166-168. See Stewart Alsop and Charles Bartlett, "In Time of Crisis", *Saturday Evening Post*, December 8 1962, pp. 16-20. Nash, p. 167, persuasively argues Kennedy was intent on rendering charges that there *had* been a trade implausible. White, pp. 168-169, suggests Kennedy envied Stevenson's popularity among liberals and feared a Stevenson challenge to his renomination in 1964. This seems fanciful in the extreme.

162. Stevenson to Barbara Ward, January 12 1963; and Stevenson to Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., n.d. but evidently January 1963, in Johnson, ed., op cit, p. 371 and pp. 386-387.

163. Kennedy to Stevenson, December 5 1962, p. 350, and editorial note on p. 349, *ibid*.

164. Wenger, op cit, pp. 279-285 and 295-312. See also Mark Atwood Lawrence, "Kennedy's Cuban Dilemma: The United States and Castro after the Missile Crisis", pp. 153-74 of Manfred Berg and Andreas Etges, eds., John F. Kennedy and the 'Thousand Days': New Perspectives on the Foreign and Domestic Policies of the Kennedy Administration (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2007). Bradley Zakarin, "'Cliches of Our Forebears': The Kennedy Administration, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Monroe Doctrine", *ibid*, pp. 175-196, notes Kennedy was laying the groundwork for a negotiated settlement even during the tense days of the quarantine, and that allied, indeed world, opinion constituted the primary stakes of the contest.

165. See, e.g., Allison, op cit.

166. Acheson to Patrick Devlin, n.d. but clearly December 1962, p. 245, McLellan and Acheson eds., op cit.

167. "NATO and the Cuban Crisis", Ball address to NATO Parliamentarians' Conference, Paris, November 16 1962, Department of State *Bulletin*, #1223, December 3 1962, pp. 831-835.

168. Steel, op cit, pp. 536-537.

169. Text of Lippmann speech to luncheon of the Anglo-American Press Association, Paris, November 29 1962, encls. In Jan Krause to Bundy, November 26 1962, f. France-General, 12/1/62-12/6/62, Box 71A, NSF, JFKL. This address was later published as "Cuba and the Nuclear Risk", *Atlantic Monthly*, 211/2, February 1963, pp. 55-58.

170. Bundy to Lippmann, November 13 1962, f. France-General, 10/6/62-11/30/62, Box 71A, NSF, JFKL. If anything, Bundy saw the risks of extensive consultation during the crisis as having been greater than Lippmann suggested. "To get a clear, sharp, well-defined and limited action from the United States Government was hard enough-to get it from two interlocking alliances would have been almost impossible", he wrote. Had American intentions leaked out, he speculated, Khrushchev might even have painted himself into a corner by admitting Cuba to the Warsaw Pact.

171. Robert Schaetzel memo for Bundy, November 8 1962, recounting Schaetzel conversation with Monnet's aide, Max Kohnstamm, Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962, doc. 2118.

172. The Council of Ministers issued a public declaration of support for American actions on October 24. See Charles de Gaulle, Lettres, Notes et Carnets, Vol.IX (Paris: Plon, 1986), p. 270. De Gaulle to Adenauer, November 6 1962, *ibid*, pp. 270-271.

173. De Gaulle to Macmillan, November 6 1962, *ibid*, p. 272.

174. Rostow memconv, November 9 1962, f. France-General, 10/6/62-11/30/62, CF, Box 71A, NSF, JFKL.

175. Paris to State Department, November 15 1962, f. France-General, 12/1/62-12/6/62, CF, Box 71A, NSF, JFKL.

176. Bohlen to State Department, December 1 1962, *ibid*. It is worth keeping in mind that if, as Marc Trachtenberg argues, 1963 marked the emergence of a stable European settlement, it was far from universally apparent at the time. See A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, *passim*).

177. De Gaulle to Kennedy, December 1 1962, Lettres, Notes et Carnets, *op cit*, pp. 278-279.

178. "Fizzles and Ferment", *The Economist*, November 17 1962, v. 205, #6221, pp. 639-640.

179. House of Commons, *Debates*, Fifth Series, v. 667, November 17 1962, cols. 892-895.

180. *Ibid*, cols. 908-909.

181. *Ibid*, cols. 913-916.

182. *Ibid*, cols. 943-945. Of course, the military insignificance of a purely *British* deterrent was a plausible argument *for* a joint European one, as the Conservative MP Julian Critchley observed. See *ibid*, col. 918.

183. Estabrook memconv, n.d. but November 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962, doc. 1792.

184. "NATO Ministerial Meeting, Paris, December 13-15, 1962", scope paper, December 6 1962, f. NATO, including NATO Defense, 1961-62, Box 84, Lot 58d133, RG 59, USNA.

185. US Mission to NATO to State Department, December 15 1962, Polto 692, *ibid*.

186. Text of Rusk background briefing, December 15 1962, in Paris to State Department, December 15 1962 Secto 26, *ibid*.

Chapter Nine: Nassau to Brussels

One assessment of the crisis surrounding Skybolt's cancellation identifies two interpretations of British policy. One, the "muddle" thesis, explains Britain's apparent surprise at the American abandonment of the project in terms of imperfect communication between Britons and Americans. The other, the "mischief" thesis, holds that British decisionmakers feigned insensitivity to American warnings that the missile might be scrapped, in order to encourage the perception that American actions had let Britain down and oblige Washington to offer superior Polaris system as a replacement.¹ While the distinction is plausible enough, its ultimate significance can be overstated; there is widespread agreement that the seemingly abrupt abandonment of Skybolt proved surprisingly convenient for British purposes, foreseen or not.²

There had long been a question mark over Skybolt's future; before Eisenhower and Macmillan had reached agreement upon its development, the Missile Panel of the President's Science Advisory Council had concluded that if the missile could not be dropped outright (the preferred option), its production should be expedited, since its useful life was likely to be short.³ Skybolt's projected place in the American armoury, as a "defence suppression" weapon to pave the way for a bomber offensive meant that it would be of little use once the American deterrent was dependent primarily upon ballistic missiles.⁴ In British thinking, as we have seen, Skybolt was a stop-gap, pending the availability of Polaris without politically unacceptable conditions. Even in the wake of his agreement with Eisenhower, Macmillan's doubts about the weapon ever materializing had been strong enough for him to inform Harold Watkinson that cancellation would create a deterrent gap between 1965 and 1970, and to urge consideration of other options.⁵ When Peter Thorneycroft, Defence Minister after a July 1962 Cabinet shuffle, visited the United States in September 1962, he informed McNamara that he was aware of reports that rising development costs might reopen the question of the missile's future, and that cancellation would jeopardize both the future of Britain's deterrent and the standing of Macmillan's government. McNamara reassured him that while escalating costs (now approaching \$500 million for development, with the American order likely to cost more than \$2 billion, rather than the present estimate of \$1.75 billion) were a concern, the operating assumption was that Skybolt would be produced.⁶

But in early November, McNamara told Ormsby-Gore that the combination of rising costs, relative inaccuracy, and possible delays in delivery meant Skybolt was now under

reconsideration, with the Joint Chiefs of Staff to recommend either continuation or abandonment within the next two weeks, followed by his own recommendation to Kennedy. Ormsby-Gore observed that Britain had scrapped Blue Streak in favour of Skybolt, and undertaken modifications of its V-bombers to accommodate Skybolt. Cancellation would be taken in some quarters as “a means of bringing pressure upon the British Government to abandon their independent nuclear deterrent”, leaving the United States with a monopoly of Western nuclear weapons. Despite any increase in costs, Britain would want the program continued “in view of the political considerations.” McNamara said no final decision would be made before consultations with London, and conceded that British reliance on Skybolt created a “continuing obligation.” He also “said quite categorically that, of course, there was no question whatever of the United States bringing pressure on us to abandon our nuclear effort.” Other options were continued development of Skybolt for British use alone (which was likely to be prohibitively costly), the Hound Dog air-launched cruise missile (which would require yet more modifications to the V-bombers), or a ballistic missile such as the ground-launched Minuteman or the sea-launched Polaris.⁷ McNamara’s own record of the conversation does not refer to the discussion of alternative systems,⁸ and this is most convincingly understood in terms of his awareness of opposition from the State Department to any offer of Polaris, except as part of a multilateral force.⁹

When McNamara telephoned him the next day to relay the same warning, Thorneycroft responded that Britain would then require an alternative weapon with “the same degree of independence Skybolt would have”, and mentioned Polaris as one option. He concluded that McNamara had “taken the point.”¹⁰ Richard Neustadt’s March 1963 study concluded that the crisis was largely produced by the absence between early November and early December of the sort of exchanges that might have clarified each party’s understanding of the other’s position.¹¹ But later scholarship has demonstrated that there was considerable debate within the Macmillan government behind the façade of inactivity.¹²

The British Air Attache in Washington met with the American Secretary of the Air Force, Eugene Zuckert, who indicated that the USAF representative on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Curtis LeMay, would fight hard to ensure a recommendation in favour of continuing Skybolt, and with it the role of the British and American air forces as custodians of the two powers’ respective deterrents.¹³ Air Minister Hugh Fraser had responded to rumours of Skybolt’s possible demise by telling McNamara that the Cuban crisis had confirmed in

British eyes the importance of both the nuclear deterrent and the close Anglo-American ties on which the Macmillan government had founded its foreign and defence policies, ties Skybolt's cancellation would jeopardize.¹⁴ Fraser saw an argument for a direct approach by Macmillan to Kennedy, but concluded a premature Prime Ministerial intervention would leave Britain with no remaining options should the situation then worsen.¹⁵ Ormsby-Gore had concluded by November 18 that both McNamara and Kennedy grasped the political implications of cancellation, and interventions by political leaders were unnecessary.¹⁶ Home agreed, but emphasized the need to prevent news of the possible cancellation becoming public before McNamara and Thorneycroft met in December.¹⁷

Thorneycroft strongly favoured dropping Skybolt in favour of Polaris. Continuing Skybolt for British purposes alone dramatically raised unit costs (with no guarantee that the manufacturer, Douglas Aircraft Corporation, would be interested), Hound Dog posed technical challenges, and a ground-based system like Minuteman was hard to deploy effectively on the small British land mass. Polaris was the only "efficient alternative," and would require a fleet of seven hunter-killer submarines; the first of these would be available in 1970, the full force by 1974. This left a deterrent gap after the V-bombers became indisputably obsolete and before Polaris was on stream. He proposed to ask McNamara for Polaris should Skybolt be abandoned, along with a public reaffirmation of American support for the British deterrent, and the loan of several submarines to carry the missiles until the British submarines were ready. If McNamara were not prepared to offer Polaris without strings, he proposed to say that Macmillan would raise the issue with Kennedy.¹⁸ Thorneycroft also appears to have understood that there was less enthusiasm for a multilateral force in the Pentagon than among the State Department's Europeanists, in addition to doubting there was much support in Europe aside from West Germany.¹⁹

Macmillan himself told a meeting of Ministers that he preferred to "play Skybolt along for another year to eighteen months in order to avoid political difficulties at home" and then to attempt to secure Polaris.²⁰ He did not initiate a full-scale discussion of the British deterrent's future; Neustadt concluded from a later interview with the Prime Minister's Principal Private Secretary, Timothy Bligh, that he moved carefully because of a "nascent sentiment in the Cabinet for giving up nuclear deterrent" that had grown for some months without quite coalescing. Reginald Maudling, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, was looking for economies in defence; Heath had staked his political future on the negotiations for EEC

entry, and inclined to oppose efforts to acquire a new weapons system that might complicate them; Butler had never shared Macmillan's conviction that possession of nuclear weapons was crucial to Britain's international standing.²¹ Harold Evans, Macmillan's press adviser, noted that cancellation would expose the government to attack for wasting money already spent on the V-bombers, whose useful life would now be shortened; for relying on American aid rather than constructing a fully independent deterrent (either alone or in conjunction with France, as Gaullists like Thorneycroft advocated); and for attempting to maintain a nuclear force, and with it a world role, that were clearly beyond Britain's resources.²² There was also the danger that Skybolt's cancellation would force decisions about the future of the deterrent that British officials believed their American counterparts had agreed to defer until the result of the EEC application was clear.²³ Ormsby-Gore reminded McNamara of the need for secrecy regarding Skybolt's difficulties after the missile failed its fifth flight test, at least until after McNamara had met with Thorneycroft and then Macmillan with Kennedy at a scheduled year-end summit at Nassau.²⁴ Macmillan doubted the Ambassador's judgment in raising the failed test with McNamara, as likely to make it harder to defer a decision.²⁵ Aviation Minister Julian Amery seized upon the Joint Chiefs' recommendation in favour of continuing with Skybolt as justification for telling the Americans, unless they were to offer Polaris without strings, that Britain would produce Skybolt on its own. He thought it possible the Kennedy administration would keep Skybolt afloat rather than overrule the Joint Chiefs and see the British then go ahead with it.²⁶

When McNamara met with Solly Zuckerman on December 9, they discussed Skybolt and possible alternatives. Zuckerman claimed Polaris was the only alternative "which did not appear to suffer from technical or political objections or both." McNamara responded that provision of Polaris, particularly for submarines rather than surface vessels, might prove difficult for the administration and added "that it was likely to cause us embarrassment in our negotiations over the Common Market." Zuckerman replied that Skybolt, also a ballistic missile produced in cooperation with the United States, "implied the same difficulties" and "whatever else, our position as an independent nuclear Power in the public eye should not be shaken." His impression was that McNamara was "determined to be helpful."²⁷ McNamara had told Ormsby-Gore that if the British did decide against retention of an independent deterrent, "he could see no political or military advantage in our promulgating such a decision at the present moment."²⁸ Ormsby-Gore was equally sure that McNamara was

sensitive to the political implications of Skybolt's abandonment, but had found himself unable to make a persuasive argument on economic or military grounds for continuing the project.²⁹

The State Department favoured offering Britain Hound Dog, Skybolt's continuation under British auspices, or Polaris, but the last only as part of a mixed-manned, multilateral force. Still, some were aware of the disadvantages of cancelling Skybolt. Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs William Tyler noted that cancellation would undercut the value of Britain's deterrent as a bargaining chip in the EEC negotiations. Moreover, the apparent betrayal of America's closest ally "would be a serious blow to our whole alliance system."³⁰ Yet he also argued that European resentment of Anglo-American nuclear collaboration was only kept within reasonable bounds by the expectation it would not continue into the ballistic missile age. Aid to a British Polaris force on a bilateral basis was bound to heighten European resistance to British EEC membership on the grounds Anglo-American intimacy was incompatible with full membership. The political costs of denying France lesser forms of aid to the *force de frappe* would increase, as would West German irritation at nuclear discrimination.³¹ Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Henry Rowen, suggested arrangements short of providing Polaris to Britain only as part of a multilateral force deserved consideration. Britain's agreement to take part in a regional or Atlantic force "has the merit of moving the British in the international direction which we support while keeping open an independent alternative for them in a way unlikely to excite European resentment." Another option was American support for a national MRBM force in return for a British undertaking to multilateralize it when a true MLF was formed. The State Department disliked this as encouraging Britain to subsequently oppose an MLF as well as generating European resentment, but "it seems worth some thought."³²

Such forms of "multilateralism lite" would be central to the ultimate resolution of the crisis. McNamara now knew that only the provision of Polaris without strings would meet British needs. At the height of the Cuban missile crisis, he had observed that Britain might well replace its Thors with Polaris, and Kennedy had not ruled this out of court.³³ When he arrived in London to talk with Thorneycroft, he gave a press conference at the airport, observing that Skybolt's costs had risen and all five flight tests had failed.³⁴ This public rubbishing of Skybolt made it impossible for Macmillan and Thorneycroft to support its acquisition, even were they so inclined; two days later, Patrick Gordon Walker mockingly

asked Thorneycroft “whether he now seriously expects delivery of the Skybolt missiles?”³⁵ George Brown subsequently observed that if Skybolt materialized at all it would be later than planned, and less accurate to boot.³⁶ One school of thought holds that McNamara, through political insensitivity to the Macmillan government’s political predicament and narrow focus on Skybolt’s technical infirmities, helped worsen the situation.³⁷ Yet his attentiveness to the implications for the EEC talks, and his referring to Polaris in his telephone conversation with Thorneycroft (covering his tracks by deleting this from his record of the exchange) suggests otherwise. His press conference eliminated Skybolt as a satisfactory weapon in most British eyes, and increased the Macmillan government’s vulnerability in the short term to criticism for gambling on a flawed system and relying on the Americans to provide it. But it also doomed any effort to revive Skybolt as an alternative to Polaris and set the stage for Anglo-American convergence on provision of the latter. As Thorneycroft later told Neustadt, “he thought it a bit ‘premature’ but possibly quite useful since that afternoon he was to get an offer of Polaris.”³⁸

To be sure, Thorneycroft was unpleasantly surprised when McNamara, as instructed by the State Department, opened by offering him the option of continuing Skybolt alone, or purchasing Hound Dog. Thorneycroft reminded him of Britain’s acceptance of American Polaris submarines at Holy Loch, and the expectation that the Americans would provide Skybolt. Cancellation, coming on the heels of McNamara’s own Ann Arbor speech and Lippmann’s address in Paris following the Cuban crisis, looked like a transparent attempt to force Britain out of the nuclear field, regardless of any budgetary or technical arguments. If Skybolt were abandoned, Britain would require nothing less than a public American undertaking to sustain the independent deterrent. McNamara indicated he was prepared to make such a statement, but added “we would have to consider Germany, France and, for that matter, you and your commitments to the Common Market.” Thorneycroft then said “if you would support us publicly, we would not worry about the Common Market.” He noted McNamara had not mentioned Polaris, despite referring to it during their telephone conversation of the 9th. McNamara said he could not recall if he had mentioned Polaris or not, and then asked “would you buy Polaris systems if we could make them available?” Thorneycroft replied that he would, but noted Britain would need to rent Polaris submarines for several years to prevent a deterrent gap. Paul Nitze, who was accompanying McNamara, observed that this would prove a particularly hard sell with the JCAE. McNamara then asked

Thorneycroft if Britain would “consider saying that after you got your own Polaris-type submarine force you would make it part of a multilateral force?” Thorneycroft responded that Britain could not accept this as a condition of sale, though “after the announcement and the decision, then the UK can go in with multilateral arrangements just as the US can”, but entering them “as an independent power.” Nitze then asked if Britain would consider an operational arrangement similar to that governing coordination of Bomber Command and SAC. Thorneycroft answered “we could make collaborative arrangements of that kind. Are these forces operable on their own? That is the test. We have no objection to integrated operations, but there must be the possibility of separate even if degraded operations.”³⁹

The Kennedy administration’s adherence to the strict gospel of multilateralism was qualified by the perception that the Labour Party was problematic as an alternative government. Not only had Gaitskell seemed unreliable during the Cuban missile crisis, but he had moved his party in an anti-EEC direction. Over 1962, he became convinced that de Gaulle would block entry under almost any conditions, leaving him every reason to take a hard line against any sacrifice of British interests, stealing the Conservatives’ traditional advantage as the party of patriotism.⁴⁰ In a July speech he had warned against the dangers to Commonwealth links and the difficulty of economic planning under conditions of membership.⁴¹ At the party conference in October, he had wondered aloud what larger political unit the EEC might become. If this were limited to consultations among its leading figures, it would not lead to changes in de Gaulle’s attitude to NATO or Adenauer’s to Berlin or to progress on nonproliferation. If Western Europe became a state in its own right, “it is not going to be very easy...to prevent that state having its own advanced independent store of nuclear weapons.”⁴² His increasing hostility to British entry was echoed by left-wingers such as Frank Cousins, head of the Transport and General Workers’ Union, who suggested European socialists wanted Britain in the EEC mainly to resist the power of monopolistic cartels, as well as centrists like Denis Healey, who suggested Macmillan’s turn to Europe reflected his antipathy to the rise of Afro-Asian power in the UN and the Commonwealth. EEC enthusiasts like Roy Jenkins warned in vain that if Britain stepped back from the EEC or tried to break it up, Western divisions would be exacerbated.⁴³ While disagreements over the EEC did not neatly break down along lines of left *versus* right, Gaitskell’s stance allowed him to woo many on the left who had differed with him on nuclear disarmament and other issues, and to unify his party.⁴⁴ And he was not shy about relaying his views to the

Americans. In a memorandum to Kennedy sent on the day McNamara met with Thorneycroft, he proposed continued negotiations combined with measures to reduce trade barriers and promote economic growth worldwide. He observed that there was no guarantee that a more cohesive Europe would be a bulwark of NATO rather than a disintegrative force. Moreover, American pressure for British entry was likely to generate resentment among Britons who did not favour membership and raise the question of whether a Britain that stood outside the EEC was no longer a worthwhile ally. Nor was it helpful to relations among the major powers “for it to be thought that you were suggesting that Britain should enter in order to keep the new Community on the right lines”, as was already widely believed in France.⁴⁵

If Macmillan and the Conservatives lost the next election, the result, a State Department briefing paper concluded, would be a Labour government hostile to the EEC and inclined to quasi-neutrality in foreign affairs. Macmillan’s popularity had been hurt by the appearance of British irrelevance to the outcome of the Cuban crisis, and the cancellation of Skybolt would further undermine the apparent wisdom of his reliance on strong Anglo-American bonds. Though Washington might well have right on its side, the British would feel betrayed and it was possible that “de Gaulle will point to this episode as proof of the danger of relying on another country for nuclear weapons.”

Macmillan had committed himself to EEC membership beyond the point where he could back down without humiliation. Politically, he required not only a satisfactory outcome to the negotiations in Brussels, but entry early enough to dispel fears that entry entailed the loss of British identity or harm to the British economy. Possession of the independent deterrent remained at the heart of Britain’s status as a world power and the main tangible benefit of close relations with Washington.⁴⁶ Even were Macmillan to secure Skybolt’s continuation, the V-bomber force would become obsolete in the mid-1960s, and perpetuating the deterrent into a subsequent generation would require resources no British government could command. Britain could not evade this dilemma indefinitely, but American actions could “help Macmillan to put off the clear posing of the issue, and to temporize with its implications” until after the conclusion of the Brussels negotiations. Reiteration of the American offer to allow Britain to carry on with Skybolt was desirable in order to “record the offer and the fact that it was made on terms which...were equitable”, even though the system was now “politically too tarnished” to continue. If Macmillan felt unable to go on with Skybolt, Polaris were not offered on terms that extended the deterrent into the age of the MRBM, and

the price of EEC entry proved too high for him, the consequences for American policy could be grave. Any trend in British opinion toward recognizing the unsustainable cost of the deterrent, and its divisive effects within Europe, would end. A solution that entailed studying the conditions under which Britain might obtain Polaris would at least postpone the salient decision until the Brussels negotiations had been concluded.⁴⁷ But, as Henry Owen of the Policy Planning Staff wrote to Ball, the point of helping Macmillan domestically was to enable him to take Britain into the EEC. If the price of American aid was “to torpedo the negotiations, we haven’t made much of a bargain.” Selling Polaris to Britain on a national basis would arouse Continental hostility and prejudice the EEC application. American willingness to sell it to Continental states would raise the specter of a West German nuclear capability, and thus increase domestic British resistance to entry. The proposed study process “may not fully meet Macmillan’s domestic problem, but is less likely than Polaris to backfire in a degree that would seriously set back EEC negotiations.” This would not be the case were the study one of “how we sell a national Polaris to the UK”, which would be as counter-productive as an outright sale.⁴⁸

The American position was settled at a meeting between Kennedy and his main advisers on December 16. Ball argued vehemently that selling Britain Polaris would lead inevitably to the question of how to respond to French and then German nuclear aspirations, and the decision on Polaris might well prove the biggest one Kennedy ever took. Kennedy dismissed this, noting “that we get every week, George.” McNamara summarized his conversation with Thorneycroft, adding that he had declined to give the unambiguous assurance of American support for the British deterrent Thorneycroft had requested. He suggested consideration of selling Britain Polaris, under the same rules of use and control as pertained to other systems covered by bilateral agreements. He had found little enthusiasm for a multilateral MRBM force among his European counterparts, and it was doubtful that the administration’s current position would work. It was impossible to persuade the Europeans to pay for an MLF as well as strengthened conventional forces, but that was what existing policy required. Kennedy himself emphasized Macmillan’s political requirements, after relying on Skybolt as a replacement for the abandoned Blue Streak. The meeting concluded with an agreement to offer the British Polaris on the condition that the submarines were ultimately put into “a multilateral or multinational force in NATO.”⁴⁹ It has been suggested that the ambiguity of this formulation was the result of sloppy staff work on the American side during the run-up

to Nassau and the distractions of the Cuban crisis in the preceding weeks.⁵⁰ Yet there is no evidence in the record of egregious haste or disorganization, and the tenor of the discussion indicates that most of the participants were keenly aware of the distinction. A more persuasive explanation is that the dominant personalities in the room, Kennedy and McNamara, were prepared to defer to the Europeanist case to the extent of presenting a truly multilateral force as one option, but not to that of insisting on it. The formulation adopted at the meeting allowed for a retreat from insistence on a force in which national contributions were irrevocably intertwined to acceptance of one to which they were assigned on looser terms. The Europeanists understood this well enough to engage in damage limitation; if a sale of Polaris went ahead, Tyler and Rostow wrote to Rusk, the administration should limit the resentment it created among the European governments whose help was needed in overcoming de Gaulle's resistance to British accession to the EEC. The transaction should be defended solely as fulfillment of obligations rooted in the Skybolt agreement, it should be clear the British submarines would be incorporated into an MLF were one to be established, and participation on the same terms must be open to the Continental allies. Britain could hardly ask the other European powers, in the course of the Brussels talks, to renounce any nuclear ambitions of their own and decline to participate in an MRBM force while itself acquiring Polaris. The resulting "forward movement in the multilateral field" could help divert the European governments from focusing on the discriminatory element of the Anglo-American nuclear relationship, and persuade them that any British national Polaris capability was a transitional arrangement *en route* to a multilateral force.⁵¹

Before meeting with Kennedy at Nassau, Macmillan was scheduled to meet de Gaulle at Champs. The Brussels negotiations were bogged down in discussions of technical issues, most of them pertaining to agriculture. De Gaulle, Sir Pierson Dixon wrote from Paris, was in a more commanding position domestically, as a result of the end to the Algerian conflict, Gaullist gains in the November 25 legislative elections and his victory in a referendum on the direct election of the President. The General, he concluded, no longer needed to draw out the negotiations in the hope that the British would withdraw their bid in frustration, but was in a strong enough position to openly press Macmillan to back out.⁵² After McNamara's visit to London and the apparent collapse of Skybolt, Dixon added that the Prime Minister needed to display self-confidence and dispel any suspicion that recent difficulties had undermined British resolve to enter the EEC.⁵³

Macmillan opted to place Europe's current discontents in the context of the possible resumption of Soviet aggression around Berlin, and to respond to the General's argument that the Cuban missile crisis had demonstrated the need for arrangements giving the European powers a stronger common voice. Europe, he would argue, had to be put in good order before the Soviets triggered any fresh crisis. When the two met, Macmillan insisted that Britain was intent on retaining its nuclear independence, regardless of American hopes for a multilateral force or whether Washington honoured its obligation to provide an acceptable alternative to Skybolt. He was not prepared to compromise Britain's control of its own deterrent in order to obtain American technological assistance. If need be, Britain would manufacture its own weapons system. Of course, this did not preclude cooperation with others in planning and targeting, as in the joint nuclear capability the two had discussed in June. He linked nuclear cooperation to European political union once again, observing that increased political cohesion in Western Europe was necessary to prevent the superpowers from disposing of European affairs as they saw fit. Adverting to the Five's refusal to discuss political union without progress on Britain's application, he suggested such progress would lead to the early emergence of the European political identity de Gaulle sought in order to prevent the emergence of a superpower condominium. He was not prepared to compromise on some form of association in which Britain had some economic links with the EEC but no voice in its direction, one option de Gaulle proposed. De Gaulle said it was certainly true that the five had delayed movement on political union in order to force discussion of the British bid, but added that he had abandoned the proposal for political union, and now viewed the EEC as a purely economic grouping.

He "had been impressed by the PM's determination to possess and keep an independent British atomic power", and said France had never declined to work with Britain in this field. It would "be quite wrong to rely solely on the Americans." Yet if he was open to nuclear cooperation, he did not offer flexibility on the British EEC application in exchange. He noted he had grave concerns about British accession, which would require far-reaching changes to the workings of the EEC.⁵⁴ It would not be possible, he suggested at the next session, for Britain to join as soon as Macmillan seemed to wish.⁵⁵ At the final meeting, he bluntly said France, as the dominant power, was happy with the EEC in its present configuration. British entry might lead to the adhesion of others, changing the Community's nature. This, Macmillan concluded, suggested that de Gaulle was not merely insistent on Britain meeting

certain conditions in order to join, or on conducting a delaying action in the hope that the talks would collapse without his incurring the blame for their failure. Instead, he harboured “a fundamental objection of principle”, which “should have been put forward at the very start.”⁵⁶ The baldness of de Gaulle’s rebuff came as a shock to Macmillan, and both Prime Minister Georges Pompidou and Couve de Murville told Dixon they could not account for his demeanour.⁵⁷

In the days leading up to Nassau, Macmillan had to contend with claims from his political opponents that, regardless of the result of the talks, Britain’s deterrent was not independent, since it “depends entirely upon whether the Americans make it.” The Liberal leader, Jo Grimond, noted that the USAF had stopped production of the B-52 bomber, its primary vehicle for carrying Skybolt, some months back. Now Britain had to either carry on with Skybolt alone or purchase an expensive alternative. This marked, he said, “the absolute failure of the policy of the independent deterrent”, and “everybody else in the world knew this, except the Conservative Party.”⁵⁸ Harold Wilson cautioned against seeking an alternative to Anglo-American nuclear collaboration in an arrangement with France entailing British entry to the EEC in return. A “Common Market deterrent”, he argued, would divide NATO and be “highly provocative to the Soviet Union if it is felt that Germany is having any part whatsoever in having a finger on the nuclear bomb.”⁵⁹

The V-bomber force would survive for some time, Macmillan observed, and if Skybolt were delivered, it would be independent insofar as “it will be our property. The warhead will be manufactured by us and will be under our sole control.”⁶⁰ Thorneycroft added that failed flight tests of the sort to which McNamara had referred were by no means uncommon, and no final decision on Skybolt’s future had been made. To be sure, discussions with Kennedy would touch on possible alternatives, “of which the most important is Polaris.” He cautioned that if Britain relinquished its deterrent, as the government’s critics demanded, it would then have to “rely exclusively upon a deterrent controlled from the United States.”⁶¹

Ambassador Ormsby-Gore flew down to Nassau with Kennedy, and *en route* they hashed out the so-called 50-50 offer, under which Britain would carry on with Skybolt, the United States paying a “cancellation fee” equal to half of the remaining development costs. Neustadt’s report concluded this was an attempt on Kennedy’s part to show American good faith in carrying out obligations to an ally, but without extending the British deterrent into the age of the ballistic missile.⁶² As Ormsby-Gore later told Neustadt, the offer also helped him

and Macmillan check Thorneycroft's pressure for a showdown. The defence minister had borne much of the criticism for relying on American assurances, and was in any event inclined to nuclear cooperation with France. He was prepared to break with Washington rather than accept any compromise in which he would appear the defeated party. The government, he believed, could blame the Kennedy administration for the rupture in Anglo-American relations and appeal to the electorate on the basis of nuclear independence, perhaps in close alliance with France. As Ormsby-Gore pointed out, the Americans need only release the 50-50 offer to disprove any claim that they had attempted to force Britain to abandon the independent deterrent. But the 50-50 offer, he told Neustadt, was hardly practical, given Macmillan's disenchantment with Skybolt on any terms.⁶³

It is more convincing to see Kennedy as using the 50-50 offer to armour himself against charges that he had declined to honour an obligation to an ally, and to place evidence of American good faith on the record of the conference as a hedge against its ultimate failure. Moreover, an initial offer limited to Skybolt would mollify the Europeanists who opposed putting Polaris on the table at all, and strengthen the American negotiating position in imposing multilateral terms on any sale.⁶⁴ On the day of the meeting that settled the American position going into the conference, Kennedy had told a television interviewer that the United States, with Polaris and Minuteman, gained little from Skybolt. "We don't think", he remarked, "that we are going to get \$2.5 billion worth of national security."⁶⁵ This can be dismissed as merely a gaffe on Kennedy's part, echoing McNamara's downbeat evaluation of the weapon's merits and further humiliating Macmillan.⁶⁶ It is, at the very least, interesting that both he and McNamara would make public statements that made a solution based on Skybolt politically impossible for Britain. The foreseeable effect was to set the stage for a perfunctory discussion of its continuation to establish American good faith, followed by negotiations on Polaris.

Macmillan, Thorneycroft and Home arrived at Nassau on the 17th, while Kennedy, McNamara, Bundy, Ball, and Ambassadors Bruce and Ormsby-Gore landed early on the 18th. At the first formal meeting, on the morning of the 19th, Macmillan pointed out that his government had always assumed a tacit connection between Holy Loch and Skybolt in the agreement he and Eisenhower had reached. But Skybolt had now been thoroughly discredited. Moving from "a lame horse, Skybolt, to what was now the favourite, Polaris", would not elicit intense opposition on the Continent. Both were ballistic missiles. There was

no point of principle in whether the missile delivering a warhead was launched from a bomber or a submarine. France and West Germany, he went on, might not like the history of exclusive Anglo-American nuclear cooperation, but they accepted it as accomplished fact. He rejected any suggestion that a bilateral deal on Polaris would prejudice Britain's bid to enter the EEC. The discussions were now bogged down in discussions over agriculture, which were likely to prove decisive. Their outcome "would not be affected by decisions about nuclear delivery systems." When he and de Gaulle had met at Champs, the General had offered no response to his announced intention to seek Polaris as a replacement for Skybolt. (Not, strictly speaking, untrue, insofar as de Gaulle had indicated his opposition to British membership in principle, regardless of any proposed nuclear arrangement, though Macmillan did not inform the Americans of this.) There was a long history of coalition warfare, in which nations had pooled their forces for the duration of a given conflict, and no reason the same approach could not be carried into the organization of Europe's nuclear defences. American and European nuclear weapons could remain under national control, while operationally interdependent through integrated planning and targeting. He cautioned against insistence on attaching multilateral conditions to the provision of Polaris, threatening that any strains within NATO over an Anglo-American deal on Polaris would pale in significance compared to the impact on Anglo-American relations should Washington appear to exploit Skybolt's difficulties to extinguish the British deterrent.

Kennedy responded that American reluctance to help de Gaulle produce the *force de frappe* had embittered Franco-American relations, and further extension of exclusive Anglo-American nuclear ties was bound to make them worse still. The course of West German politics after Adenauer's departure was uncertain, and that uncertainty would affect relations between the Federal Republic and its NATO partners. Skybolt and Polaris were not equivalent weapons, because the latter would clearly prolong Britain's deterrent beyond the useful life of the V-bomber force. When Eisenhower and Macmillan had concluded the Skybolt agreement, France had not yet detonated a nuclear device and established that it had met the McMahon act criterion of substantial progress towards a national capability. That France was now eligible for American aid under this standard, but had been denied it nonetheless, was a persistent sore point in bilateral relations, and discrimination in favour of Britain with Polaris would make it more sensitive yet. This was why Britain should accept the 50-50 proposal.

Macmillan replied that the recent publicity surrounding Skybolt made it “impossible for anyone to believe in its effectiveness in the future.” Kennedy pointed out that if the Americans gave Britain Polaris instead, this would leave no logical grounds for denying provision of a delivery system to any other European ally that possessed a nuclear bomb. Ball added that the continued existence of a British deterrent, and the example of de Gaulle’s nuclear effort might tempt West Germany to develop a nuclear capability, alone or in partnership with France. If Britain insisted on Polaris, Kennedy suggested, an Anglo-American study of possible alternatives to Skybolt over the weeks ahead would allow for calm analysis and a prudent decision. Consideration of Polaris, in a nicely ambiguous phrase opening the door for further exploration, had to proceed “in a much more European atmosphere.”

Home took issue with the notion that German nuclear ambitions posed a serious danger, noting there was no support elsewhere in NATO for a German nuclear role, and de Gaulle himself was opposed to German acquisition of nuclear weapons as alarmingly provocative to the Eastern bloc. Macmillan reiterated that he had no interest in Skybolt, and discussion turned to finding terms on which the United States might offer Polaris and Britain might accept. Kennedy indicated that Polaris might be available “under certain conditions”, and Macmillan that he was “in favour of a multilateral force” and that the sharing of targeting and other information within NATO was desirable. It would not be possible for Britain to irrevocably place its entire deterrent at the disposal of a multilateral decisionmaking body. Short of that, he might entertain multilateral arrangements. He observed that if an acceptable solution proved elusive, his government would not expel American bases or abrogate other Anglo-American agreements. But, he added, Anglo-American relations would be strained, and the government would be attacked for displaying an unreciprocated loyalty. His realignment of British policy in the direction of closer links with Europe, culminating in the EEC application, had already left him vulnerable to criticism for doing too little to uphold Britain’s sovereignty; this was the tack Gaitskell had adopted. Macmillan was not free to relinquish the essential independence of Britain’s deterrent, furnishing his political adversaries with still more ammunition and making it harder yet for him to take Britain into the EEC. By the close of the session, he had indicated the bounds within which he was prepared to contemplate multilateral arrangements, while hinting that failure to reach agreement would gravely damage Anglo-American relations.⁶⁷

When the two delegations met again after lunch and a private conversation between Kennedy and Macmillan discussion turned upon the precise formulation under which British Polaris submarines would be assigned to a multilateral force. Kennedy was emphatic that this protect the United States from any charge of unequal treatment of its allies. Macmillan was equally emphatic that Britain required the capacity to withdraw its nuclear forces from NATO command should a national emergency arise. Kennedy suggested only a direct attack on Britain itself qualified, Macmillan that dire threats to British interests, though not necessarily to Britain's actual survival, did. He and Home cited examples such as Khrushchev's saber-rattling against London during the Suez crisis, an Iraqi attack on the oil wells in Kuwait, or a threat to Singapore. The point was that Britain needed the ability not only to deter direct attack with the weapons, but to support its foreign policy and underwrite its role as a world power. This meeting also saw the final significant discussion of the 50-50 offer. Kennedy asked McNamara if he would buy Skybolt if the United States possessed no other strategic system. He said such circumstances would leave no alternative to making a success of Skybolt, but "it would cost an immense amount of time and money." There was "no merit" in the idea of continuing Skybolt just to meet British needs. In purely military terms, Polaris was a better investment for Britain, and the resultant savings could be channeled into the necessary strengthening of NATO conventional forces.⁶⁸ It has been suggested that McNamara was sabotaging Kennedy's promotion of the 50-50 offer,⁶⁹ but this neglects the extent to which Kennedy himself had echoed his Defense Secretary in publicly rubbishing Skybolt. It seems equally plausible that the two were simply underlining the unworkability of a solution based on Skybolt before definitively abandoning the system and nailing down the terms of a Polaris sale.

On the night of the 19th, Thorneycroft made the case for abandoning the effort to find a formulation both sides could swallow. He feared it would prove impossible to find a formula for assigning Polaris to NATO that would allow the deterrent to support British policy while also meeting NATO obligations. Moreover, any agreement would soon be subject to competing British and American interpretations, and the electorate might resent the need for substantial future expenditure on a weapon that was not under unambiguous and unconditional national control.⁷⁰ Macmillan noted that publication of the 50-50 offer would make it hard to establish American betrayal. Should a break prove unavoidable, the government would need to have a record of its own position to defend. "Many people", he

noted, “will feel attracted by the concept of some ultimate NATO organized force,” hazy as the details might be. Others would think that Kennedy’s formula “goes at least some way to give us an ‘independent’ force in certain emergencies.”⁷¹ He was a shade less optimistic in a note to Butler, but acknowledged that Kennedy was “a political animal” capable of understanding the political dangers for both Macmillan and himself in a way that the Europeanists did not.⁷²

The next morning the two leaders groped towards a *modus vivendi*. Macmillan conceded that the differences between Skybolt and Polaris were substantial enough that an offer of the latter would mark a new stage in bilateral nuclear cooperation. But Britain was still a global power and needed an independent deterrent to backstop its foreign policy. Kennedy retreated from the Europeanist insistence on a tight connection between Polaris and any multilateral force. “A decision to provide Polaris submarines to the United Kingdom”, he suggested, “could be defended as a first step towards the creation of a multilateral force”, and sold on those terms as helpful to the United States, Britain, and Europe. But the conditions governing Polaris had to allow him to make the same offer to de Gaulle should he ask. It would not be acceptable if they enabled Britain to engage in nuclear intimidation of Nasser or another non-nuclear adversary. It was another thing to provide Britain with the wherewithal to deter intimidation by a nuclear-armed foe, as in the case of Khrushchev’s sabre-rattling over Suez. To address Kennedy’s political difficulties, he was prepared to assign some, perhaps all, of Britain’s V-bombers to NATO, in conjunction with American and French forces, pending the deployment of the Polaris submarines. This would serve as an indication of British interest in the multilateral concept, and allow Macmillan to use the formulation on which he had relied before in the face of Opposition charges that Britain’s deterrent was not truly independent, namely that Britain continued to make “an independent contribution to the Western deterrent.”⁷³

Having made those concessions he could accept, Macmillan recurred in the afternoon session to the need for language in the Polaris agreement that unambiguously affirmed the right of national withdrawal. If this proved impossible, his government would have no choice but to reconsider its foreign policy in its entirety. The presence at the conference of Thorneycroft, who was palpably unwilling to swallow an agreement that did not safeguard what he saw as Britain’s nuclear sovereignty, presumably demonstrated that this threat could not be dismissed out of hand.⁷⁴

The agreement that was concluded that afternoon stated that Kennedy would make Polaris missiles (*sans* warheads) available to Britain, for emplacement in British-built submarines. They would “be made available for inclusion in a NATO multilateral force” and “be used for the purposes of international defense of the Western alliance in all circumstances” save “where Her Majesty’s Government may decide that supreme national interests are at stake.” Britain would not have to cover development costs for Polaris.⁷⁵ Kennedy and Macmillan also reaffirmed previous understandings that neither Britain nor the United States would employ its nuclear weapons without consulting the other. Before withdrawing the Polaris submarines, Macmillan and his successors would “give as much notice as possible to the President of the United States.”⁷⁶ France might join the proposed multilateral force on “terms similar to those agreed with the United Kingdom”, but British efforts to support the creation of an MLF were not conditional on French participation. NATO’s non-nuclear members might contribute personnel and funds for the operation of mixed-manned vessels, including submarines.⁷⁷

After Macmillan informed the Cabinet as a whole of what he, Home, and Thorneycroft had negotiated, both Butler and Chief Whip Martin Redmayne noted widespread concern over the degree to which the multilateral commitment offset the right of withdrawal. Redmayne also observed that Macmillan’s obvious need for an agreement going in to the conference was likely to overshadow Kennedy’s concessions.⁷⁸ On his arrival in London on the 22nd, Thorneycroft remarked that under Nassau’s terms, Britain retained the capacity to inflict unacceptable damage on any aggressor, “even if we had no allies left at all. Therefore this is a formidable deterrent and a formidable addition to the armoury both of Britain and of the Western Alliance.”⁷⁹

But hopes that Nassau might appear as a triumph for Macmillan were short-lived, not least because the Pentagon conducted the first successful flight-test of Skybolt the day after the conference. As Ormsby-Gore reported from Kennedy’s retreat in Palm Beach, the President was appalled at the credibility this gave to rumours that Washington had seized on Skybolt’s difficulties to drive Britain out of the nuclear business. He considered the test “the first bad mistake that McNamara had ever made,” with the only plausible excuse being that after previous postponements on political grounds, McNamara dared not risk Congressional accusations that he was intent on preventing a successful test. Kennedy thought the problem “could have been circumvented by giving the Air Force permission to fire the missile a week

or so later.” McNamara was on a skiing trip when Kennedy heard the news, so it was “the luckless Gilpatric who received the full blast of the Kennedy fury.” This “awe-inspiring exhibition”, Ormsby-Gore told Macmillan, “again and again emphasized with the most vivid choice of words the trouble it would cause you in London.”⁸⁰

The extent to which Macmillan had won or lost at Nassau was not solely a question of British domestic politics. The decision to make the same Polaris offer to France led to Bohlen, who was present at Nassau, being sent to Paris to raise the matter in conversation with de Gaulle. The Kennedy administration also informed Adenauer of the offer to France, but the wording proved tricky. It would hardly do to offer France precisely the same assistance as Britain; France lacked the technology to build either warheads or submarines, and was in no position to take advantage of an offer limited to missiles. Bohlen’s message to de Gaulle referred to “similar’ aid, where that to Adenauer referred to “the same.” As Neustadt writes, it seems likely de Gaulle was soon aware of both versions.⁸¹ Dixon followed up on Bohlen’s message by meeting with de Gaulle, who remarked the offer deserved consideration, but was unlikely to be of much practical interest, since France had no submarines for housing Polaris.⁸²

Macmillan moved to set the Nassau understanding in the framework of a renewed effort to link the prospect of European political cooperation, resting on nuclear collaboration, to Britain’s EEC bid. He hoped, at the very least, to ensnare de Gaulle in discussions of nuclear cooperation that would continue beyond of the Brussels negotiations, and make it impossible for the General to block British entry. On the night of the 27th, de Zulueta met with the Counselor at the French Embassy, who asked if Washington would allow Britain to provide France with nuclear information as the next stage in making new arrangements for NATO’s nuclear defenses. De Zulueta replied that “much depended on the climate of opinion and I did not see much happening in this respect until the Common Market negotiations were out of the way.” Asked if close Anglo-French nuclear ties could be forged even if the negotiations failed, he “pointed out this would be difficult with the anti-European and particularly anti-French feeling which would inevitably be aroused in this country if the negotiations now broke down.”⁸³ Macmillan himself urged de Gaulle to accede to Nassau. He reassured him against taking the multilateral element too seriously, observing “the truly multilateral deterrent is clearly far in the future” but “a tripartite trusteeship in nuclear strength on behalf of NATO and Europe”, with national rights of ultimate use, was feasible.⁸⁴ Dixon responded

that he did not think this version of nuclear tripartism was attractive to de Gaulle, whose 1958 memorandum had sought a global, not a purely European, arrangement. Moreover, “there is a risk that if I were to describe the Nassau arrangement as in essence a form of tripartism in NATO de Gaulle is capable of passing this on to Adenauer, whose suspicions are already aroused.”⁸⁵ In Bonn, Christopher Steel pointed out that Adenauer was reported to have welcomed Nassau as a first step towards an MLF but to fear a raising of the nuclear threshold in Europe and the creation of a nuclear directorate in NATO, with the Germans left to bear the primary burden of conventional defence.⁸⁶ Macmillan, as Timothy Bligh observed, was aware that Adenauer’s resistance could complicate any move towards tripartism, but believed “the French not the Germans will decide the Brussels outcome.”⁸⁷

The main British objective, Macmillan wrote to Ormsby-Gore, had to be ensuring that de Gaulle did not reject the Polaris offer, either because the multilateral dimension offended him or the right of national withdrawal was not safeguarded well enough. It was doubtful that the American offer to non-nuclear powers would come to anything, but “if multilateralism is de facto restricted to nuclear powers, then we may achieve what is really one of de Gaulle’s major purposes, but without offending the other powers who will have the concept of multilateralism ahead of them.” Neither British nor French submarines could be constructed in fewer than six or seven years. Britain could, however, make an interim offer of V-bombers to SACEUR in order to demonstrate its commitment to the multilateral principle. But ultimate control would remain with the owners, which “follows very much the theme which I tried to explain to de Gaulle at Rambouillet.”⁸⁸ Macmillan’s impression from his last talk with de Gaulle, he wrote, was that he had not definitively chosen between a return to tripartism and the pursuit of a purely European political hegemony. His question was whether “if de Gaulle could be tempted into what would at present amount to a tripartite system as the first step towards multilateralism (with the European non-nuclear powers attached in some form of consultation still to be worked out)”, and French national rights preserved, it might be possible to provide France with the warheads. It would “be an understanding, though not part of the written agreement, that President de Gaulle should bring the Brussels negotiations to a successful conclusion.”⁸⁹ Ormsby-Gore responded that both Kennedy and Rusk accepted the need to avoid alarming de Gaulle by early and excessive emphasis on the multilateral element in Nassau, but watering this down in order to get de Gaulle to subscribe would antagonize Bonn. Ormsby-Gore replied that the sixth paragraph of the Nassau communiqué

had referred to the coordination of current national capabilities under a single NATO command (a multinational force, mainly British and American in composition), and its seventh had called for creation of a multilateral force, in which mixed-manning would mingle national contributions such that they could not readily be withdrawn, and preclude its diversion to national ends. Insofar as paragraph six dealt with forces that already existed, it “was a project for the immediate future.” Paragraph seven dealt with forces “that in the nature of things could not exist for some time and the organization of which could not, therefore, sensibly be decided in detail at present.”⁹⁰

The NAC’s meeting on January 12 provided the major opportunity for progress on either of the two tracks set out in the Nassau agreement. The Foreign Office instructed the British delegation there was “little advantage now in NATO in trying to reach a decision on distant theoretical possibilities.” Instead, talks should concentrate on the assignment of forces from SAC and Bomber Command to NATO command, with forces capable of withdrawal from exclusively national use rather than inextricably intertwined. Targeting for the NATO force should be integrated with that of Anglo-American strategic forces outside NATO, “so as to minimize the risk of any split in the unity of the ‘indivisible’ nuclear defence of the Western Alliance.” The British and American governments should “retain a veto, if possible, not only on the use of their own elements of the NATO force but by extension, if possible, on the use of any eventual NATO multilateral force as a whole.”⁹¹

But the Americans, as Ormsby-Gore had pointed out, were inclined to place more emphasis on the multilateral track. It is certainly arguable that Nassau was something of a charade, insofar as Kennedy had decided before the conference even began to put preservation of the current Anglo-American partnership ahead of longer-term Europeanist objectives by making Polaris available to Britain, with multilateral trappings mainly to minimize the offense to other allies. Macmillan had been given the stage to resist, and then defeat, any effort to wind up the British deterrent, while the merits of continuing with Skybolt had been canvassed in order to discredit that course in front of the Europeanists and Skybolt’s remaining enthusiasts in the air forces. McNamara can be viewed as the principal winner, insofar as he had engineered a reversal of the April 1963 directive restricting assistance to national nuclear forces, and opened the door to discussions that might entice de Gaulle into adopting a more cooperative stance within NATO.⁹²

Yet what consensus there was behind the administration’s new position was no firmer than

that behind the old one. As Rusk told a meeting of subordinates, McNamara could be expected to press for an exploration of all possible avenues for cooperation with France, on the grounds that Nassau had indeed constituted a fundamental reorientation of American nuclear policy. But the key was sufficient change in French policy to make American help worthwhile.⁹³ A memo prepared for the meeting by Henry Owen noted that of the two tracks leading from Nassau, it was the creation of a mixed-manned force open to participation by all NATO members, not the provision of Polaris for British and French multinational forces, that should be emphasized. Progress on the former would mitigate European, particularly German, resentment over the discrimination inherent in the latter. In addition, a British Polaris program would be costly, and there was no evidence of strong support for it; the government in power after the next election, whether Labour or Tory, was likely to wish to dispense with it, and a mixed-manned force would make the transition easier. Cancellation of the British program could, in turn, lead to abandonment of the French one after de Gaulle's departure, with an MLF a broadly acceptable alternative. But if the Germans were to be dissuaded from seeing a mixed-manned force as second-rate in the wake of Nassau, and pressing for a national capability of their own, Washington would have to demonstrate it had not abandoned the MLF. This required private assurances that "US aid for the UK Polaris program is not the start of a new road, but the last milestone in (sic) an old one" and that "since the help we are offering France is not sufficient to mitigate greatly the costs and difficulties of its national programs, a French turn-around may well be in the cards too in the long run, even if the French accept our offer." The strongest sign of American belief in the virtues of mixed-manning would be for Washington to indicate that its own contribution to the MLF called for in the Nassau communiqué would be through a mixed-manned force.⁹⁴

At a meeting of Ministers on the 31st, Macmillan and Home outlined how Nassau had given Britain a survivable second-strike deterrent likely to last at least fifteen years once in place. The main political problem, Hailsham pointed out, was that Skybolt's collapse had dramatized the extent of British nuclear dependence on the Americans. Macmillan pointed out that there was nothing in Nassau to prevent Britain from manufacturing its own warheads, alone or in cooperation with others, a point worth bringing to de Gaulle's attention. He proposed inviting Messmer to London for a briefing on technical issues relating to Nassau's implementation, in order to entice the French with the prospect of cooperation on the Polaris warhead. Thorneycroft recommended telling him that Nassau's proposed

assignment of the V-Bombers to NATO was a British suggestion, and consistent with de Gaulle's preference for a NATO effectively if informally run by the three major Western powers.⁹⁵

Dixon concerted this invitation with Bohlen, observing that such a briefing "might bring home to the French the extraordinary (sic) complex and costly work involved in developing Polaris type missiles", but assuring him that Messmer would not be offered nuclear secrets.⁹⁶ The Foreign Office encouraged Dixon to drop a hint about technical cooperation, but warned there were two dangers to avoid: agreement could not be reached in advance of a conclusion to the Brussels talks, since de Gaulle would be left with no incentive to drop his objections to British entry; nor should he gain the impression that Britain considered itself bound to engage in nuclear cooperation with France whether admitted to the EEC or not.⁹⁷ After Dixon outlined British thinking about Nassau and the assignment of the V-bombers to NATO, de Gaulle replied that he could understand Macmillan's actions. Indeed, at Rambouillet, he had suspected the Prime Minister was turning his attention from Skybolt to Polaris. But France, with no submarines or a warhead suitable for Polaris, was in a different position. He said Messmer might go to London, but wondered if Britain could help France with warheads or reactors for submarines. "He thought not, under our arrangement with the Americans." Dixon replied that he could not answer that question himself.⁹⁸ The vague offer to de Gaulle, he later told Bohlen, "was probably the only sort of bait which might persuade him not to turn down the American offer out of hand."⁹⁹ But the General's closing remarks, he reported to London, had been an attempt to extract a definite offer, and he had recurred to his reluctance to put France in a position of nuclear dependence on the Americans.¹⁰⁰ De Gaulle's wariness of the Americans, Dixon concluded, was so intense that he would not accept any American offer, however generous, if linked to a multilateral force, much less bend on British accession to the EEC in exchange for help with the warhead or submarines. He would simply pocket any British concessions without allowing himself to be pinned down on EEC entry. The only means of inducing de Gaulle to bend to British entry, he suggested, was to increase the pressure on him from the Five. The other leaders save Adenauer would tend to agree with Macmillan about the desirability of British inclusion in any European political union, and to prefer strong NATO ties over an inward-looking Europe dominated by France. If de Gaulle could be isolated within the Six, confronted by the threat of the Five shaping European political arrangements in cooperation with France unless he bowed to British entry, he would

recognize reality. But to get the five to stand firm, “American help and influence will be needed (and in order to get this we must play the Polaris agreement absolutely straight.)”¹⁰¹

Ormsby-Gore discussed de Gaulle’s likely actions during Christmas conversations with the President at Palm Beach, finding him optimistic that the General might be inclined to accept the Polaris offer if given American assistance on both nuclear-powered submarines and warheads. While it might be possible to provide help with the submarines, “giving [France] information on atomic warheads would mean a complete reversal of United States policy”, and there was little chance of persuading Congress to go along. There would be even less interest in allowing Britain to furnish de Gaulle with warheads “containing much of United States know-how.” The only conditions under which American policy might change would be if conclusion of a test ban agreement with the Soviets were within reach, and assistance to France would obviate the need for a French testing program. In that case, “the deal with the French would be a reasonable price to pay for gaining such a major United States policy objective.” This would be “more complicated than a straight deal in the context of the Common Market negotiations, but it could be made to serve the same ends, and I fear that straight deal might prove to be a non-runner.”¹⁰²

The Ambassador met with Ball’s deputy, Schaetzel, who was responsible for handling American dealings with France in the wake of Nassau. The State Department, Schaetzel said, had not yet formed any clear idea of how to push the MLF forward within the NAC. While “we should not give the impression that an Anglo-Saxon team was running NATO”, Ball and Shuckburgh should concert their remarks to the NAC. Since action could be taken on the multinational forces immediately, while there was little that could be done to push the MLF forward at the moment, progress on the former would be more rapid in the near term. But the Nassau agreement had to be presented as following logically from the Ottawa force idea and NATO’s recent discussions.¹⁰³

The British were aware of both German misgivings about Nassau and concern in Bonn over de Gaulle’s stance within NATO and towards Britain’s EEC bid. As an analysis by the Embassy in Bonn noted, German interest in an MLF had always been driven by a fear of overt discrimination in NATO nuclear decisionmaking, a fear that Nassau had brought into sharp relief. The more Britain emphasized its willingness to proceed to a multilateral arrangement, the more this would allay German anxieties. Some German officials had expressed the fear that Nassau was a blueprint for a tripartite nuclear force whose connection

to NATO would prove purely nominal.¹⁰⁴ The German Ambassador in Paris, Herbert Blankenhorn, told Dixon some of his colleagues had heard from the French that the MLF might be placed under the command of an American general outside NATO. Dixon assured him that British thinking assumed the initial assignment of NATO nuclear forces to SACEUR, but the matter was one for NATO as a whole to decide. Blankenhorn said Adenauer was disappointed in de Gaulle's continued opposition to multilateralism within NATO.¹⁰⁵ But in Bonn, Christopher Steel saw Adenauer as so much under de Gaulle's spell that American pressure would not divert him from supporting the French position in Brussels at the end of the day. American influence should instead be used "to frighten the others on whom we must rely" to bring the negotiations to a successful close.¹⁰⁶

Isolating de Gaulle by wooing the Five with the prospect of a European political arrangement, its defence identity rooted in the Nassau agreement, and trying to win over de Gaulle himself with the prospect of nuclear cooperation were not in fact successive strategies for bringing the Brussels negotiations to a successful close, but alternative means between which Macmillan had not made a definitive choice by the time of the General's famous double veto. Even as the Foreign Office was working with the State Department to present the MLF to NAC in an appealing light, the Prime Minister drafted instructions for Thorneycroft's conversations with Messmer. The defence minister was to ask what progress the French were making in pursuit of their own warheads, and what aid Britain might furnish, but stop short of any *quid pro quo* regarding Brussels.¹⁰⁷

At the January 12 NAC meeting Shuckburgh presented the Nassau agreement as a contribution to meeting NATO's nuclear requirements, with the early assignment of British V-bombers to SACEUR as an earnest of British goodwill. Britain and the United States proposed to work with other members on the development of a mixed-manned force, open to all NATO states, the particulars of which were to be determined by those who chose to take part.¹⁰⁸ Ball took a broadly similar line, but emphasized the American conviction that the multilateral component offered to put NATO's present nuclear and non-nuclear states on a footing of equality.¹⁰⁹ He seems to have been even more emphatic on this point in his private conversations with European leaders, particularly with Couve on the 11th and then with Adenauer on the 13th. Discussion of a multilateral force of some sort, he acknowledged, had been going on for some time, with the United States prepared to consider any proposal NATO's European members brought forward. Washington now found itself "forced by

decision to use Polaris to take the initiative ourselves in proposing a plan to key European countries.”¹¹⁰ The result of Ball’s explanations, Bohlen later complained to Neustadt, was that the truly “multilateral”, i.e. the mixed-manned, component of NATO’s nuclear forces was now the focus of attention. An MLF was no longer a somewhat ill-defined objective which might gradually emerge from the initial assignment of national forces to NATO, but the goal of early American moves towards arrangements that would essentially make it impossible to ever disaggregate national contributions from a wider force. As a result, Bohlen charged, de Gaulle lost any interest he might have had in even discussing the MLF, and determined to reject Nassau, and with it Britain’s EEC application.¹¹¹

De Gaulle, of course, provided an alternative explanation for his own actions in the semiannual news conference he held on January 14. Britain’s traditional maritime links with far-flung markets and sources of raw materials, he claimed, had led it to organize its economy along fundamentally different lines from those of its European allies. British membership of the EEC was possible, he went on, but only when Britain was prepared to adapt to the requirements of the EEC rather than modify EEC institutions and procedures to meet its own needs. The protracted and inconclusive talks in Brussels suggested it had not reached that happy state, and British admission now would merely subsume the EEC under a broader Atlantic entity under American domination. It might be possible to associate Britain with the EEC so as to preserve its trade with the Six. As for the Nassau agreement, France’s lack of submarines for launching Polaris or warheads to arm it meant the Anglo-American offer was of no interest to it. Nor were Nassau’s terms compatible with France’s insistence on national control of her own defences. True, France would retain the right to withdraw its weapons from under foreign or pooled command, but this was likely to prove difficult in the circumstances of any actual nuclear crisis, and with the encumbrances of shared control, communications and administration that a multilateral force entailed. Europe could not rely upon the United States for its nuclear defense, and De Gaulle would not compromise France’s independence in nuclear matters in the manner that Macmillan, he tacitly charged, had compromised Britain’s.¹¹²

Perceived Anglo-American inaction in response to the erection of the Berlin Wall had brought de Gaulle’s differences with Washington over NATO strategy to the fore and encouraged him to cultivate Adenauer by playing on the Chancellor’s fears of abandonment by his allies. The Cuban missile crisis, by demonstrating the perils of forcible revision to the

Cold War's territorial status quo, opened up the prospect of superpower cooperation to settle the German question without reference to France and reinforced the importance to de Gaulle of the Franco-German bond.¹¹³ By the close of 1962, de Gaulle's efforts to enmesh Britain in negotiations about agricultural minutiae had immobilized the talks in Brussels but not discouraged Macmillan from pursuing the application, and the General failed to dissuade him even with the force of his blunt opposition at Rambouillet. Nassau enabled him to paint Britain as having opted for Atlantic over European ties once again and to risk an outright veto. He decided to reject both the British application and the Polaris offer on the eve of Adenauer's visit to Paris to sign a bilateral treaty of freedom and before the Five could revive the negotiations, forcing the Chancellor to fall in with his wishes rather than jeopardize the bilateral relationship the treaty symbolized.¹¹⁴ He subsequently attempted to cement Adenauer's support by falsely claiming that Macmillan had spurned his offer of nuclear cooperation with France in favour of American aid at Nassau, as well as offering to use the *force de frappe* as a European, not a solely French deterrent, and even hinting that Germany might eventually get nuclear weapons of its own. Adenauer in turn pledged to seek French advice regarding the MLF.¹¹⁵ To the extent that Ball's disambiguation of the MLF mattered, it seems to have done so mainly by ensuring Adenauer's ready acceptance and then allowing him to demonstrate or withhold his support for the project when bargaining with Washington or Paris.

Macmillan reacted to de Gaulle's press conference by rejecting any talk of association short of membership, and allowing pressure on de Gaulle from the Five to mount.¹¹⁶ Withdrawing the application, he told the Cabinet, would play into de Gaulle's hands; instead, readiness to continue talking would raise the price of a veto and confirm the Five in their resistance to de Gaulle's efforts to exclude Britain without incurring the odium of an overt veto.¹¹⁷ In Brussels, Heath stated Britain was prepared to accept a common external tariff and the food prices entailed by a common agricultural policy as well as to relinquish its EFTA connections upon accession. He rejected negotiations for association as no more likely to succeed than the present ones, and anything less than membership as preventing Britain from making its contribution to European unity. The West German Foreign Minister, Gerhard Schroeder, arranged for the Bundestag's foreign affairs committee to formally welcome Heath's declaration.¹¹⁸ The ferocity of de Gaulle's remarks, the British delegation reported, had antagonized the other delegates, leaving the French isolated.¹¹⁹ In the face of growing

opposition, France moved to adjourn the negotiations indefinitely, despite the conviction of the representatives of the Five and the European Commission that agreement was possible. The British delegates and those of the Five agreed on a declaration of opposition to the French effort to close down the talks, with Heath intent on ensuring that “it should emerge clearly that it was the French who were alone responsible.”¹²⁰ Adjournment, Schroeder reassured Heath, would take place only over German objections.¹²¹

Efforts to isolate de Gaulle were complemented by efforts to isolate Adenauer within his own government. It had been clear for some time that Adenauer’s coolness to British entry and sympathy with de Gaulle were not universally shared in Bonn. As early as July the German Ambassador in London, Hans Herwarth, and Schroeder’s principal aide, Karl Carstens, informed Steel that Ludwig Erhard and Schroeder were opposed to a tight Franco-German bloc and would resist Adenauer’s rush into de Gaulle’s embrace.¹²² After de Gaulle’s press conference, Schroeder promised Heath to rally opinion within the West German cabinet to limit Adenauer’s freedom of action during his visit to Paris.¹²³ When the departing Ambassador Steel paid a farewell call on the Chancellor on January 18th, Adenauer claimed to oppose an end to the Brussels talks, leading Steel to conclude his cabinet colleagues had managed to restrain him.¹²⁴ After talking with Schroeder and Carstens, Steel concluded that the Bundestag might repudiate the treaty Adenauer and de Gaulle had concluded, perhaps even forcing the Chancellor to step down.¹²⁵

Macmillan had responded to the press conference by urging Kennedy to bring pressure to bear on the Germans and deepen French isolation at Brussels. Kennedy quickly placed de Gaulle’s “*double non*” in the context of Nassau and the nuclear situation after Cuba. De Gaulle, he claimed, would play on Adenauer’s fears by telling him “that we made an accord to sell out Berlin” and were intent on reaching a settlement of East-West differences with the Soviets that could entail a denuclearized Europe. The President promised to exert pressure on Adenauer, including through old friends such as Acheson, to set limits on Franco-German cooperation.¹²⁶ This was knocking on an open door. While Adenauer’s fears of American isolationism and British unreliability led him to seek a strong Franco-German alignment as reinsurance, Atlanticists such as Schroeder and Erhard preferred the development of an outward-looking Europe over a Gaullist one as strengthening American ties to the Continent.¹²⁷ Officials in the German foreign office worried that in the aftermath of de Gaulle’s press conference the treaty would exacerbate Europe’s divisions and perhaps

embolden the Soviets over Berlin.¹²⁸ Its legal branch concluded that the treaty required the approval of the Bundestag, not merely the Chancellor's signature.¹²⁹

The former American proconsul in Berlin Lucius Clay, and Acheson both told the German Ambassador in Washington, Heinrich Knappstein, that NATO's unity and commitment to Berlin's defence would be undermined if the Bundestag passed the treaty unamended.¹³⁰ On behalf of Schroeder, Carstens told Kennedy he would seek an amendment or preamble setting Franco-German reconciliation within the framework of Germany's continued commitment to NATO.¹³¹ Acheson urged a leading member of the Bundestag's foreign affairs committee, Kurt Birrenbach, to attach a reservation or declaration in favour of NATO and British membership of the EEC. This would, he suggested, extricate West Germany from the awkward situation in which Adenauer had placed it by acquiescing in a veto that de Gaulle had defended with reference to Britain's Atlantic ties. He cautioned against thinking that Germany could exchange reliance on American nuclear weapons for a voice in the use of the *force de frappe*. De Gaulle would never concede this.¹³² Adenauer himself told the American Ambassador, Walter Dowling, that the Franco-German treaty was intended to formalize the reconciliation of historic adversaries, a reconciliation Washington had long promoted, not to undermine Western unity. It would make it harder, not easier, for Khrushchev to divide the Western powers. Britain, he suggested, bore much of the blame for its failure to enter the EEC, but he would work for its eventual entry.¹³³ Kennedy lamented to Ormsby-Gore that the treaty was designed to produce a Europe responsible for its own defence, and allow de Gaulle to negotiate a *détente* in which the forces of both superpowers would be withdrawn from central Europe. The result would be a Western Europe susceptible to Soviet domination and, he noted, Adenauer did not appear to grasp how dangerous French policy was.¹³⁴

Kennedy's concern that de Gaulle sought to expel American influence from Europe in order to pursue an illusory *détente* can be derided as hysterical and the product of British machinations,¹³⁵ and it seems that the General's desire to overcome Europe's Cold War divisions was a very long-term objective; he remained wary of dialogue with Moscow as long as Berlin's status was unclear, and saw changes in Soviet behaviour as a precondition of warmer relations. Moreover, dramatic steps in the direction of *détente*, if not reciprocated, risked weakening his hold on Adenauer; indeed, de Gaulle seems to have been pleased by Soviet attacks on his close alignment with Adenauer as encouraging German revanchism.¹³⁶

Yet the combination of de Gaulle's double veto and the Franco-German treaty must also be seen in the context of the fluid world situation following the Cuban confrontation. The Kennedy administration was concerned to prevent the British from lapsing into isolationist defeatism in the wake of de Gaulle's press conference as well as to rally the other European allies against de Gaulle. The application of American pressure on Bonn was part of the counter-offensive, but by no means all of it.

Three days after de Gaulle's press conference, Walt Rostow was in London, consulting with Harold Caccia of the Foreign Office. They agreed on the importance of keeping open the option of British accession to the EEC, and preventing de Gaulle from reshaping the EEC along autarchic lines with attenuated transatlantic links. The strengthening of NATO's conventional forces in Germany had to go ahead, so as to reassure Bonn the English-speaking powers were committed to a forward strategy, and give the lie to Gaullist charges to the contrary. If Britain's EEC membership was blocked for the moment, efforts to promote Atlantic unity on other fronts should be pressed, including the post-Nassau MLF. The British would be tempted to withdraw in the face of a European rejection, so the other Atlantic powers had to appear to be unambiguously engaged with them in a joint effort to build an outward-looking Europe and prevent the construction of a Gaullist, protectionist one.¹³⁷ When Rostow met the next day with his old friend Michael Cary of the Cabinet Office, Cary mentioned that Britain might be tempted to cut troop levels in Germany; Rostow emphasized the importance of averting a situation where "we-who had fought two bloody wars over Germany-would abandon the Germans to de Gaulle politically."¹³⁸

Kennedy moved to demonstrate that the MLF was a serious response to European nuclear concerns by appointing long-time State Department official Livingston Merchant as his special envoy for the MLF, with a remit to visit NATO capitals and gauge allied interest. He announced the appointment during his January 24 news conference, but was careful to define the MLF as a response to European desires, noting it was up to the Europeans to decide if they wished to go ahead. He acknowledged the right of other states to decide if they wished to become nuclear powers. But it was, he suggested, "inaccurate and not really in the Alliance interest to justify it on the grounds that the United States would fail to defend Europe by whatever means necessary." He rejected de Gaulle's suggestion that American actions over Cuba cast doubt on the reliability of security guarantees to Europe. This was, he suggested, "peculiar logic" and led to the absurd conclusion that "if we had not acted in

Cuba, that would have proved we would defend Europe.” It was possible, he conceded, to argue that the United States would not necessarily come to the aid of Western Europe against a nuclear-armed aggressor, but “can’t someone say that perhaps France will not come to the assistance of Germany, and then everyone decides they must rely upon their own deterrent.” He also denied the withdrawal of the Jupiters from Turkey were in return for Soviet concessions elsewhere; “we are going”, he said, “to put Polaris submarines in there, a much more modern weapon.” While British membership of the EEC was for the Six to decide, it was desirable because “it helps build a united Europe which, working in equal partnership with the United States, will provide security for Europe.”¹³⁹

Kennedy was equally intent on limiting American exposure on the MLF at a mid-February meeting of officials to discuss Merchant’s mission. He opened by wondering if “the United States might be tying itself too closely to a project that might fail.” He had the impression of limited British interest as well as emphatic French opposition. Only the Germans seemed enthusiastic, but it was by no means clear their interest would survive discovering what they might actually receive for their money. He had his doubts as to how attractive anyone would find an MLF unless the United States were prepared to relinquish its veto over the launch of the missiles in any force, something for which he saw no justification so far. Rusk replied that the alternative to the multilateral route was a proliferation of additional national deterrents, and in the absence of an American initiative there was greater risk of Franco-German nuclear cooperation. If the Europeans could muster insufficient enthusiasm for the MLF, so be it, but the effort had to be made. Kennedy then suggested that the multinational forces outlined in paragraph six of the Nassau agreement might form an alternative; existing forces would not entail large additional outlays and the Europeans would have no grounds for demanding abandonment of the American veto. Merchant suggested this could be a fallback position if he found little interest in the MLF. Rusk added that the United States had committed itself to exploring the multilateral route at Nassau, and could hardly decline to do so now that de Gaulle was raising doubts about the reliability of American nuclear guarantees. The most pressing need at the moment was “whether or not we wanted to toss Europe into de Gaulle’s lap. And the principal antidote to de Gaulle at this time was organizing Europe along the lines of the multilateral force.”¹⁴⁰

By early February of 1963, de Gaulle was effectively isolated within the EEC and Adenauer within his own government (the United States having agreed to play the heavy on

this front).¹⁴¹ But this had to be offset against the successive humiliations of the Skybolt episode and the double-veto. The Macmillan government had entered 1963 looking distinctly shopworn, following a series of byelection defeats in 1962. As an analysis from the American Embassy noted, its signature policies of EEC entry and retaining the deterrent had both collapsed. But Macmillan's indications that he would maintain informal ties with the Five rather than change course and the evident support of the Five had limited the damage to its electoral prospects, and unified the Conservatives around eventual entry. In part a closing of ranks against France, this also reflected the lack of a plausible alternative strategy.¹⁴² Macmillan had effectively rallied public sentiment, not least in a speech to the Conservative Party conference in Liverpool, in which he had contended that if de Gaulle had objections to British entry on principle he should have voiced them earlier, and denied that he had deceived the General at Rambouillet by speaking of Anglo-French partnership before scurrying off to seek American aid in propping up the deterrent.¹⁴³

In the NAC, Shuckburgh burnished Britain's credentials as a spokesman for European cooperation on defence, claiming "it is from a European point of view that we welcome the opportunity which Nassau provides for greater European participation in NATO's nuclear defence."¹⁴⁴ Tabling the Nassau agreement in the House of Commons, Macmillan gamely defended it as both safeguarding British interests and a step towards greater European cooperation in NATO. With Polaris, Britain would extend the life of the deterrent and be in a position to resist nuclear blackmail. While the various blueprints for a NATO nuclear force were of varied merit, "these suggestions are not to be despised" and it was right "that we should regard this Polaris fleet of ours, when it comes into being, as under normal conditions part of our contribution to the general Western scheme of defence." Britain would make a start by assigning V-bombers to SACEUR.¹⁴⁵

George Brown claimed a NATO force would raise insoluble problems of command and control. It would take time and money to build the Polaris submarines, and Polaris in turn would become obsolete. He rhetorically asked if Britain had influence now as a result of the deterrent, to cries of "Suez" and "Brussels." West Germany, he suggested, had acquired influence in NATO by building up its conventional forces, an example Britain might follow.¹⁴⁶ Jo Grimond claimed the other allies were interested not in Britain's power, but in "consultation about the power of the Americans and the use by the Alliance of nuclear weapons." Nuclear weapons had not brought Britain influence during the Cuban crisis or

prevented France and Germany, who did not have nuclear arms, from being consulted as well.¹⁴⁷ Richard Crossman compared Macmillan's policy unfavourably to that of de Gaulle, who did not "run to President Kennedy and say, 'Please, Mr. Kennedy, make me a little independent.'" Britain could not afford to maintain a conventional contribution on the same scale as France or Germany, not least with its residual overseas commitments and without conscription. He called for a redirection of resources into conventional forces and suggested that Nassau merely perpetuated an unfounded equation between nuclear weapons and independence, thereby goading the Germans and others to consider the pursuit of nuclear capabilities of their own.¹⁴⁸ *Campaign*, the principal Gaitskellite organ, trotted out the argument on which Labour's unilateral and multilateral disarmers had reached a *modus vivendi*, namely that Blue Streak's failure had demonstrated the unaffordability of an independent deterrent on Britain's resources, and that "in spite of Macmillan's doubletalk, the Nassau conference between him and President Kennedy marked the final, humiliating collapse of the defence policy which the Tory Government has followed for nearly three years."¹⁴⁹ But as Macmillan and his critics faced off in early 1963, the fortunes of the Nassau agreement, the MLF and Britain's deterrent were less clearcut than either might think.

Notes

1. Ken Young, "The Skybolt Crisis of 1962: Muddle or Mischief?", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 27/4 (December 2004), pp. 614-635. The "muddle" thesis was articulated early on in Richard Neustadt's post-mortem on the affair, later published with additional reflections as Report to JFK: The Skybolt Crisis in Perspective (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999). A major secondary study in the same vein is John Baylis, Ambiguity and Deterrence: British Nuclear Strategy, 1945-1964 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). Ian Clark, Nuclear Diplomacy and the Special Relationship: Britain's Deterrent and America, 1957-1962 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) emphasizes divisions in the British government between residual support for Skybolt in the Air and Aviation ministries, and the preference for Polaris in the Ministry of Defence and on Macmillan's part. Donette Murray, Kennedy, Macmillan and Nuclear Weapons (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000) and Nigel Ashton, Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) both emphasize British efforts to exploit the situation so as to provoke a full-blown crisis in Anglo-American relations.
2. See Ashton, pp. 161-192; Murray, pp. 57-104; Clark, pp. 357-373, and Baylis, pp. 312-317.
3. Report by Missile Panel, July 20 1960, f. Missiles July-September 1960, Box 12, White House Office of the Special Assistant for Science and Technology, cited by Lawrence Freedman and John Gearson, "Interdependence and Independence: Nassau and the British Nuclear Deterrent", pp. 179-203 of Kathleen Burk and Melvyn Stokes, eds., The United States and the European Alliance since 1945 (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1999), 191.
4. Young, op cit, p. 621.
5. Macmillan to Watkinson, November 19 1960, PREM 11/3261, TNA.
6. Record of Meeting, September 19 1962, PREM 11/3779.
7. Washington to Foreign Office, November 9 1962, Tel. 2832, PREM 11/3716.
8. Note of Conversations Relating to Skybolt, November 9 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 1085-1086.
9. As argued by Murray, op cit, p. 168.
10. Record of conversation in Hockaday to Samuel, November 9 1962, idem.
11. Neustadt, op cit, pp. 48-61.
12. Clark, op cit, pp. 352-372; Murray, pp. 169-176; Baylis, op cit, pp. 315-317.
13. RAF Staff, Washington, to Air Ministry, November 12 1962, PREM 11/3716, TNA.
14. Fraser draft telegram to McNamara, November 2 1962, AIR 19/1076.
15. Fraser to Thorneycroft, November 2 1962, idem.
16. Washington to Foreign Office, November 18 1962, Tel. 8470, PREM 11/3716.
17. Foreign Office to Washington, November 20 1962, Tel. 2891, idem.
18. Thorneycroft to Macmillan, "Skybolt", December 7 1962, idem.
19. John Rubel memo for McNamara, November 9 1962, "Recent Discussions and Conferences in Europe", f. Government Consulting-Skybolt/Atlantic Affairs, 8/62-11/62, Skybolt-Nassau Miscellaneous Classified (2), Box 19, Papers of Richard E. Neustadt, JFKL.
20. Note for the Record by Timothy Bligh of Macmillan meeting with Ministers, December 9 1962, PREM 11/3716, TNA.
21. Neustadt memo of conversation with Timothy Bligh, August 1 1963, f. Government Consulting-Skybolt/Atlantic Affairs, 8/62-11/62, Skybolt-Nassau Miscellaneous Classified (2), Box 19, Neustadt Papers, JFKL.
22. Harold Evans memo, "Skybolt and the Press", December 12 1962, PREM 11/4147.

23. Working Group on European Integration in Defence Policy, EIDP (WG)/P(62) 8, December 4 1962, DEFE 10/547.
24. Washington to Foreign Office, November 28 1962, Tel. 2981; same to same, November 29 1962, Tel. 2987, both PREM 11/3716.
25. Macmillan to Thorneycroft, December 3 1962, *idem*.
26. Amery to Thorneycroft, December 7 1962, encls. in Lovelock to de Zulueta, December 7 1962, *idem*.
27. Zuckerman to Thorneycroft, in Washington to Foreign Office, December 9 1962, Tel. 3098, *idem*.
28. Ormsby-Gore to Macmillan, April 13 1962, PREM 11/3783.
29. Ormsby-Gore to Foreign Office, n.d., PREM 11/4229.
30. Tyler draft memo for Bundy, "Implications for the United Kingdom of Decision to Abandon Skybolt", October 31 1962, encls. in Brubeck to Bundy, November 2 1962, f. Government Consulting-Skybolt/Atlantic Affairs, 8/62-11/62, Skybolt-Nassau Miscellaneous Classified (2), Box 19, Neustadt Papers, JFKL.
31. Tyler draft memo to McNamara, "Skybolt", November 24 1962, encls. in Tyler to Rusk, November 24 1962, *idem*.
32. Rowen draft memo for McNamara, "More on Skybolt", November 28 1962, *idem*.
33. Fn. 95, Chapter Eight, *supra*.
34. Neustadt, p. 69.
35. House of Commons, *Debates*, fifth series, Vol. 669, December 13 1962, col. 579.
36. *Ibid*, December 19 1962, col. 897.
37. Clark, p. 365; Murray, pp. 65-67.
38. Neustadt, p. 69. McNamara later told Neustadt that he went to London "under no illusions that any of the [three] options would be acceptable. He didn't think the British would accept them; neither did Bundy; neither Rusk." His assumption was that "the British would have been working up a response and, in effect, would tell us what the fourth alternative should be." Rusk, in addition, preferred to "let the British stop the effort-rather than Rusk being the goat with his own people." See memcon with McNamara, May 30 1963, f. Government Consulting, Skybolt/Atlantic Affairs, Atlantic Assignment, 1963, Box 19A, Neustadt Papers, JFKL.
39. Transcript of December 11 1962 meeting between McNamara and Thorneycroft, f. Government Consulting-Skybolt/Atlantic Affairs, 8/62-11/62, Skybolt-Nassau Miscellaneous Classified (2), Box 19, Neustadt Papers, JFKL. Murray, pp. 69-70, notes that McNamara was apparently unaware that the British were the ones who had insisted that the original agreement on Skybolt allow either party to terminate the project unilaterally. But it does not follow that he would have seen the problem in a fundamentally different light had he known there was no explicit obligation to provide a replacement in the event of cancellation. The State Department's instructions to McNamara are in Rusk to McNamara, November 24 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, Vol. XIII, pp. 1086-1088.
40. Brian Brivati, *Hugh Gaitskell* (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p. 409. The Labour Party was in thrall to conceptions of Britain's unique role in the world at least as grandiose as those it attributed to the Conservatives. Labour's leading figures assumed that the Attlee government's program of postwar reconstruction would provide an example for the Europeans, not merely offer Britain a template for economic modernization. Ironically, the social protections and corporatist structures of the EEC meant it never was the untrammelled Continental market many Labourites feared. See *idem*, "A Problem of Synchronicity: The Labour Party, European Integration and the Search for Modernisation", pp. 193-208 of

Roger Broad and Virginia Preston, eds., Britain and European Integration (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2001).

41. Gaitskell speech to Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, July 12 1962, pp. 645-661 of Philip M. Williams, ed. The Diary of Hugh Gaitskell, 1945-1956 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1983).

42. *Report of the Sixty-First Annual Conference of the Labour Party* (London: Labour Party, 1962), p. 158.

43. *Ibid*, pp. 173, 175, 181.

44. Brivati, *op cit*, pp. 407-418.

45. Gaitskell memo for Kennedy, December 11 1962, Williams, ed., *op cit*, pp. 661-677, 671. Gaitskell had previously suggested to American audiences that a politically cohesive Western Europe might seek nuclear weapons of its own. See his speech to Liberal Party luncheon, New York, February 17 1962, "Western Democracy in the Modern World", f. UK General, 1/62-7/62, Box 127, POF, JFKL.

46. "Current Political Scene in the United Kingdom", December 13 1962, f. Presidential Trips, Nassau, Macmillan talks 12/62, Briefing Book, Box 230, NSF, JFKL.

47. "Nuclear Aspects of Macmillan Visit", December 15 1962, n.s., f. NATO weapons-Cables, Skybolt, Box 171, NSF, JFKL.

48. Owen memo to Ball, "Skybolt", December 16 1962, *idem*. Emphasis in original.

49. Memconv, December 16 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 1088-1091.

50. Baylis, pp. 324-326.

51. Tyler and Rostow memo for Rusk, "Handling of Polaris Sale", December 17 1962, f. Government Consulting-Skybolt/Atlantic Affairs, 8/62-11/62, Skybolt-Nassau, Miscellaneous Classified, (3), Box 19, Neustadt Papers, JFKL.

52. Paris to Foreign Office, November 28 1962, FO 371/166979, TNA.

53. Dixon ""Notes for Prime Minister's meeting with General de Gaulle", December 14 1962, *idem*.

54. Record of a Conversation at Rambouillet, December 15 1962, PREM 11/4230.

55. Record of a Conversation at Rambouillet, December 16 1962, 10 am, *idem*.

56. Record of a Conversation at Rambouillet, December 16 1962, 12 noon, *idem*.

57. Memconv with Pompidou and Couve, December 16 1962, *idem*.

58. House of Commons, *Debates*, fifth series, Vol. 669, December 13 1962, col. 581.

59. *Ibid*, December 19 1962, col. 1243.

60. *Ibid*, December 18 1962, col. 581.

61. *Ibid*, December 19 1962, cols. 894-897.

62. Neustadt, pp. 88-89.

63. *Ibid*, pp. 88-89.

64. Ashton, *op cit*, pp. 174-175.

65. Transcript of interview with the President, December 16 1962, f. Skybolt/Atlantic Affairs, NATO Defence Policy Conference, Box 20, NSF, JFKL.

66. Murray, pp. 81-82.

67. Record of a Meeting held at Bali-Hai, the Bahamas, December 19 1962, 9:50 a.m., PREM 11/4147, TNA. See also the American record in FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 1091-1101.

68. Record of a Meeting held at Bali-Hai, the Bahamas, December 19 1962, 4:30 p.m., PREM 11/4147. See the American record at FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 1102-1105.

69. Ashton, p. 180.

70. Thorneycroft to Macmillan, December 19 1962, PREM 11/4147, TNA.

71. Macmillan to Thorneycroft, December 19 1962, *idem*.
72. Macmillan to Butler, December 19 1962, *idem*.
73. Record of a Meeting held at Bali-Hai, the Bahamas, December 20 1962, 10:30 a.m., *idem*.
74. On Thorneycroft's attitude, see Neustadt, p. 89. It was at Nassau, not London, that McNamara concluded Thorneycroft saw "going it alone" as a sensible course for Britain; see Memcon with McNamara, June 29 1963, f. Government Consulting, Skybolt/Atlantic Affairs, Atlantic Assignment, 1963, Box 19A, Neustadt Papers, JFKL. Murray, p. 100, argues that Macmillan could not plausibly reverse the reconstruction of Anglo-American relations that had been the centerpiece of his foreign policy. Probably so, not least because disclosure of the 50-50 offer would undercut claims of American betrayal. Yet the prospect of renouncing the deterrent's independence in a deal over Polaris might well have made this desperate gamble an acceptable alternative. And the rise in anti-American sentiment of which Macmillan warned could plausibly have encouraged either a Conservative government under a successor or a Labour government to distance itself from Washington at a time when American relations with the other major allies were troubled.
75. "Joint Communique and Statement on Discussions between the President and the Prime Minister, Nassau, Bahamas, December 18-21, 1962", Department of State, Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1962 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1963), p. 245.
76. Kennedy to Macmillan, December 21 1962, PREM 11/4147, TNA.
77. Macmillan to Kennedy, December 21 1962, *idem*.
78. Butler to Macmillan, December 21 1962, D 2:50 p.m., Codel 62; Redmayne to Macmillan, December 21 1962, encl. in Butler to Macmillan, D 2:13 p.m., Codel 63, both *idem*.
79. Text of Thorneycroft statement, December 22 1962, *idem*.
80. Ormsby-Gore to Macmillan, December 28 1962, in Foreign Office to Washington, December 28 1962, *idem*.
81. Neustadt, p. 97.
82. Paris to Foreign Office, December 21 1962, Tel. 632, PREM 11/4147, TNA.
83. De Zulueta to Macmillan, December 28 1962, *idem*.
84. Foreign Office to Paris, December 28 1962, Tel. 3474, *idem*.
85. Paris to Foreign Office, December 29 1962, Tel. 640, *idem*.
86. Bonn to Foreign Office, December 28 1962, Tel. 1066, *idem*.
87. Bligh to A.C.I. Samuel, December 31 1962, *idem*. Emphasis in original.
88. Macmillan to Ormsby-Gore, December 30 1962, in Foreign Office to Washington, December 30 1962, Tel. 3484, *idem*.
89. Macmillan to Ormsby-Gore, December 31 1962, in Foreign Office to Washington, December 31 1962, Tel. 9736, *idem*.
90. Washington to Foreign Office, January 1 1963, Tel. 3250, *idem*. The texts of the Nassau communiqués are in Bahamas Meetings: Texts of Joint Communiques, Cmnd 1915 (London: HMSO, 1962).
91. Foreign Office to UK Delegation, December 31 1962, Tel. 1681, PREM 11/4147.
92. This is the interpretation of Marc Trachtenberg, A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 362-363. But Trachtenberg assumes greater support for the April 1961 policy than seems to have been the case, thereby overstating the subsequent shift in policy.
93. Memo for the Record, "Meeting with the Secretary of State on Nassau Follow-Up,

December 28 1962", f. Government Consulting 1959-66, Skybolt/Atlantic Affairs; 12/62, Skybolt-Nassau (Classified), Box 19A, Neustadt Papers, JFKL.

94. Owen memorandum, December 27 1962, "The Multilateral Force", idem.

95. Record of Meeting at Admiralty House, December 31 1962, 6:00 p.m., PREM 11/4147.

96. Paris to Foreign Office, January 2 1963, tel. 8, idem.

97. Foreign Office to Paris, January 2 1963, tel. 12, idem.

98. Paris to Foreign Office, January 2 1963, tel. 2, idem.

99. Paris to Foreign Office, January 3 1963, tel. 8, idem.

100. Paris to Foreign Office, January 3 1963, tel. 6, idem.

101. Dixon to Home, January 4 1963, tel. 15, idem.

102. Washington to Foreign Office, January 2 1963, tel. 7, idem.

103. Washington to Foreign Office, January 3 1963, tel. 12, idem.

104. Rose (Bonn) to Foreign Office, January 3 1963, tel. 6, idem.

105. Paris to Foreign Office, January 3 1963, tel. 12, idem.

106. Bonn to Foreign Office, January 10 1963, tel. 25, FO 371/171301.

107. Macmillan to Thorneycroft (draft), January 9 1963, PREM 11/4148. Ralph Dietl, "'Sole Master of the Western Nuclear Strength'? The United States, Western Europe and the Elusiveness of a European Defence Identity, 1959-64", pp. 132-172 of Wilfried Loth, ed., *Europe, Cold War and Coexistence, 1953-1965* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 148, claims there was no effort to woo the French. Constantine A. Pagedas, *Anglo-American Strategic Relations and the French Problem, 1960-1963* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), stresses Macmillan's efforts to woo de Gaulle and the reservations of the Foreign Office. Oliver Bange, *The EEC Crisis of 1963: Kennedy, Macmillan, de Gaulle and Adenauer in Conflict* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000) emphasizes British efforts to make the Americans apply pressure to Bonn.

108. British draft statement to North Atlantic Council, in Washington to Foreign Office, FO 371/173394.

109. Statement by the Hon. George W. Ball, Undersecretary of State, before the North Atlantic Council, January 11 1963, FO 371/173396.

110. Bonn to State Department, January 14 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, Vol. XIII, pp. 478-482.

111. Neustadt, pp. 104-106.

112. De Gaulle press conference, January 14 1963, in his *Discours et Messages*, vol. IV (Paris: Plon, 1971), pp. 61-79.

113. Erin Mahan, "Delaying Détente: Kennedy, de Gaulle, and the Limits of Alliance Politics", pp. 57-75 of Manfred Berg and Andreas Etges, eds., *John F. Kennedy and the 'Thousand Days': New Perspectives on the Foreign and Domestic Policies of the Kennedy Administration* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2007), p. 60.

114. Jeffrey Glen Giauque, *Grand Designs and Visions of Unity: The Atlantic Powers and the Reorganization of Western Europe, 1955-1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pp. 182-185.

115. Memorandum of Adenauer meeting with de Gaulle, January 21-23 1963, *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1963* (Bonn: Politisches Archiv des Auswärtiges Amtes, 1994), Vol. I, pp. 137-150.

116. Macmillan to Heath, January 15 1963, PREM 11/413.

117. Cabinet Conclusions (63)4, January 17 1963, CAB 128/37.

118. Codel 41 by Dixon, January 17 1963, FO 371/171413.

119. Codel 23 by Eric Roll, January 15 1963, PREM 11/4523.

120. Codel 40 by Heath, January 17 1963, idem.

121. Codel 41 by Dixon, January 17 1963, *idem*.
122. Foreign Office memorandum on Steel conversation with Herwarth and Carstens, July 11 1962, FO 371/164789.
123. Codel 32 by Heath, January 16 1963, PREM 11/4523.
124. Bonn to Foreign Office, January 18 1963, tells. 65-68, *idem*.
125. Bonn to Foreign Office, January 19 1963, tel. 73, *idem*.
126. Transcript of telephone conversation between Kennedy and Macmillan, January 19 1963, *idem*.
127. Bange, pp. 122-123. Bange also sees personal ambition at work, most notably in the form of Schroeder's angling to succeed Adenauer. The record provides little warrant for believing that he would have acted otherwise under different conditions.
128. Auswärtiges Amt memo of January 19 1963, Akten 1963, Vol. I, pp. 105-108
129. Legal office memo of January 14 1963, *ibid*, pp. 73-74.
130. Knappstein to Auswärtiges Amt, January 28 1963, and January 30 1963, *ibid*, pp. 228-230.
131. Carstens to Schroeder, February 6 1963, *ibid*, pp. 292-294.
132. Acheson to Birrenbach, February 16 1963, pp. 242-244 of David S. McLellan and David C. Acheson, eds, Among Friends: Personal Letters of Dean Acheson (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1980).
133. Memorandum of Adenauer conversation with Dowling, January 24 1963, Akten 1963, Vol. I, pp. 162-165.
134. Ormsby-Gore to Macmillan and Home, January 26 1963, tel. 294, PREM 11/4523.
135. See Bange, pp. 177-192.
136. As argued by Mahan, *op cit*, pp. 61-63.
137. Memcon by Rostow, "Where we go from Brussels", January 18 1963, f. United Kingdom, General 1/11/63-1/29/63, NSF Box 171, JFKL.
138. Memcon by Rostow, "Next Steps", January 18 1963, *idem*.
139. Kennedy news conference of January 24 1963, Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy, 1963 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1964), pp. 92-100. For the persistent rumours of a deal involving the Jupiters, see Raymond Aron to McGeorge Bundy, May 9 1963, and Bundy to Aron, May 15 1963, f. France, General, 5/1/63-5/23/63, Box 71A, NSF, JFKL.
140. Memcon, "The Merchant Mission and the Multilateral Force", February 18 1963, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 502-504.
141. Giauque, pp. 185-195 notes this. Dietl, *op cit*, p. 148 claims the strategy of isolating de Gaulle failed.
142. London to State Department, January 31 1960, tel. 2890, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 127-1128.
143. Pre-delivery copy of Macmillan remarks at Conservative Party conference, Liverpool, January 21 1963, in London to Bundy, n.d., f. UK General, 1/30/63-2/11/63, NSF Box 171, JFKL.
144. Shuckburgh statement in North Atlantic Council, January 30 1963, FO 371/173399.
145. House of Commons, Debates, Fifth Series, Vol. 670, January 24 1963, cols. 963-974.
146. *Idem*, cols. 982-983, January 30 1963.
147. *Idem*, col. 998.
148. *Idem*, cols. 1013-1014.
149. Cited on Brivati, Hugh Gaitskell, pp. 391-392.

Chapter Ten: Merchant to Moscow

The Merchant mission coincided with a period of wider uncertainty about East-West relations and world politics in the wake of the Cuban crisis. It was as yet unclear whether the tacit superpower bargain over the missiles on Cuba and the Jupiters would lead to further cooperation to prevent nuclear confrontations and proliferation. China had strongly criticized Khrushchev's removal of the missiles as betrayal of a socialist ally, and his domestic rivals had questioned his recklessness in deploying them in the first place. Much would depend on whether Khrushchev defended the Cuban settlement as demonstrating the perils of brinkmanship and a precedent for agreement on other issues such as nuclear testing and Berlin, or if he sought to regain prestige by adopting a more aggressive stance. If Kennedy's successful handling of the Cuban crisis seemed to inaugurate a relatively stable *status quo* in Europe, de Gaulle's claim that Europe needed to secure its interests through development of an independent nuclear identity would be less persuasive. But either the resumption of Soviet aggression or overt superpower collusion to settle outstanding differences over the heads of the Europeans could vindicate his analysis.

Khrushchev responded to the Nassau conference by indicating the Soviet Union was prepared to accept a limited number of on-site inspections as part of an agreement to limit nuclear tests, but that an MLF was incompatible with British and American advocacy of non-proliferation.¹ The Foreign Office believed that Khrushchev wished to build on the negotiated settlement of the Cuban crisis and show his critics that his policy of peaceful coexistence could produce benefits, but that if an agreement could not be reached soon, neither side would be able to resist the temptation to resume testing.² The combination of Red China's public attacks on Khrushchev's timidity and its own invasion of India at the same time sharpened perceptions of Chinese belligerence and relative Soviet moderation. Kennedy himself publicly warned against the danger of aggression by a China that seemed to practice a uniquely belligerent brand of Communism,³ and claimed the West was safer if Moscow dominated the Communist world in light of Khrushchev's pursuit of the same ends by brushfire wars and peaceful competition between economic systems.⁴ The State Department agreed that Khrushchev was interested in proving that Moscow could profit from peaceful coexistence and that he might have concluded, especially after his deception over Cuba, that the United States would never contemplate an uninspected agreement. It also suspected that China's past insistence on its right to conduct tests and become a nuclear power had

constrained Soviet willingness to negotiate an agreement, but that Khrushchev might be prepared to ignore Chinese objections and conclude an agreement that would deepen the Sino-Soviet split, but might obstruct China's nuclear progress.⁵ Carl Kaysen suggested that the Cuban crisis had dramatized the shared superpower interest in avoiding nuclear war, with the prospect of a Chinese nuclear capability a danger to the security of both.⁶ In Moscow, Ambassador Foy Kohler argued that progress towards a superpower détente was likely to stall until Khrushchev decided whether to pursue a rapprochement with China (which would set sharp limits on the improvement of relation with Washington) or accept the Sino-Soviet split as enduring and move closer to Washington in response.⁷ Kennedy himself told Ormsby-Gore that an agreement on the basis of the administration's current terms of seven annual on-site inspections would probably fall short of Senate approval in the current climate.⁸ Not only would agreement with the Soviets on test limitation be a tough sell domestically, but the Franco-German treaty now suggested that meeting German desires for a voice in NATO nuclear decisionmaking was a more pressing matter. Moreover, as Kennedy remarked at an NSC meeting, if the MLF or any fallback option based on multinational forces were to work at all, it would have to make progress before France had a national nuclear capability. At that point, "we have much less to offer Europe" and Germany in particular could find the risks of dependence on France less than those of reliance on a United States that might once again become involved in a nuclear crisis in which the Europeans had no stake but from which they could not remain aloof. And without Germany, "our NATO strategy makes no sense."⁹

The MLF, Rostow had suggested to Kennedy, might seem a rather cumbersome mechanism for dealing with West Germany's possible nuclear role, but most of the major innovations in Europe's organization since 1945 had been efforts to make the Continent safe for German power (a NATO structure in which West Germany could safely be rearmed; the ECSC, which put the raw materials of war under international direction; an EEC in which German economic power was integrated into wider patterns of trade). The MLF was part of a familiar and historically successful pattern of organizing Europe to contain German power, and its prospects would not be clear until Merchant had met with the potential participants. The German desire for equality, he argued, was genuine and lasting, and the Germans would ultimately seek whatever nuclear status Britain and France had, regardless of considerations of strategy and military utility; "we are dealing here more with the question of who outranks

whom in Europe than we are with the right of who has the right to kill Russians *en masse*.” He suggested chances of British participation were better than they might seem, not least because Labour, if it won the next election, “is more likely to move towards multilateralism than towards a complete opting out from the nuclear game.” If the British were to take this route, “it will be difficult for the French to hold out alone for long.” The risk of exploring the possibility was worthwhile as long as any failure was the result of European decisions, and Merchant was able enough to cover his flank and avert embarrassment.¹⁰

But, as Merchant was to discover, enthusiasm for the MLF was not universal, certainly not in London. While Macmillan’s Cabinet had accepted the Nassau agreement, with Butler and Carrington arguing that Britain would acquire an invulnerable second-strike deterrent, the group worried that extending the same offer to France meant that Britain’s deterrent was no more independent than France’s. Cost was a concern too. Carrington estimated that Britain could build a force of four to seven Polaris submarines carrying between four and sixteen missiles, providing a complete deterrent between 1969 and 1971. The cost would fall between £220 and £290 million, a saving of some £100 million over the completion of Skybolt. Chancellor Maudling and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, John Boyd-Carpenter, both noted their reservations about the expense.¹¹ Macmillan himself had been wary enough of possible attempts by American officials to undo what he had achieved at Nassau during the detailed negotiations of the Polaris agreement that he informed Thorneycroft that it might even be necessary to threaten to walk away from the deal. He even asked Thorneycroft to determine if Britain could, or at least threaten to, manufacture its own version of Polaris in the event of a serious disagreement.¹² Thorneycroft reported this was not practical.¹³ (To be sure, Macmillan may have been concerned in part to reassure doubters that he would fight hard to prevent American renegeing on Nassau and to establish that the alternative path of nuclear self-reliance was unlikely to yield a weapon on par with Polaris.)

Macmillan managed to use the threat of renewed Anglo-American differences to drive a hard bargain on the financing of Polaris. McNamara objected to British insistence on financing Polaris in the same manner as Skybolt, with the United States bearing all development costs. Not would only Congress complain about a program to which Britain contributed nothing but from which it would derive a next generation deterrent, but American allies had to understand the costs of nuclear weapons; indeed, the Skybolt fiasco had come about because Britain had invested no development funds and thus had no incentive to pay

attention to the rising costs.¹⁴ Macmillan offered only to pay a 5% surcharge on the sale price of each missile it bought, warning that a public quarrel on this point would inflame nationalist and isolationist feeling.¹⁵ Kennedy reluctantly acceded to the proposal,¹⁶ and then to its extension to versions of Polaris other than the current A3.¹⁷ Macmillan raised the threat of a public spat once again when the State Department pressed for a separate memorandum of understanding on the Polaris sale that he feared would reopen the terms of the Nassau agreement,¹⁸ and the American officials gave way.¹⁹

British worries about the costs also dovetailed with reservations about the underlying politics of the American emphasis on the mixed-manned element. The utility of Nassau from a British perspective, Dixon observed, was that it provided for short-term measures congenial enough to Britain (namely steps towards a multinational force) while setting long-term objectives about which London had reservations (the mixed-manned MLF). As long as Britain's entry into the EEC and the terms of any European political union were unsettled, the precise arrangements governing an MLF could not be nailed down. This "provides us with a convincing and sincere argument to put to the Americans for not going multilateral now, or even discussing the concept in any detail."²⁰ Speaking at a conference on foreign policy issues, Home reiterated that the objective of the Nassau agreements was to meet the need of the European allies for a share in NATO's nuclear control arrangements, before placing a question mark over the mixed-manned element. "So far the contributions are national", such as the assignment of the V-bombers and later Britain's Polaris submarines, to SACEUR. He said that NATO would discuss multilateral arrangements, including whether the credibility of the deterrent could be maintained under conditions of shared control. "The problem", he went on, "is whether there are not too many fingers on the safety catch" and whether an adversary could count on the allies failing to reach agreement on a nuclear response to aggression. A rational foe, he suggested ambiguously, might not need absolute certainty in order to be deterred, only a reasonable fear. But in any event, the multinational element would soon be in place, and "the United States and United Kingdom nuclear forces would act independently if necessary in the last resort."²¹

An assessment by Sir Robert Scott, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence, concluded that a British contribution to an MLF, tentatively estimated at 5-10% of total costs, might come to £100 million, since total costs for the force were projected to average £225 million annually over ten years. This spending would compete with, if it did not preclude

outright, the financing of a national Polaris program. He worried that American emphasis on the mixed-manned force over the other elements of Nassau might actually be designed to force Britain to abandon its own Polaris program in favour of a contribution to the MLF.²²

Thorneycroft observed in a March Cabinet meeting that the stronger conventional forces Washington insisted on could require £300-400 million in additional NATO spending over the next three years. In these circumstances, he suggested, Britain should avoid any major expenditures on the mixed-manned force, whether through specialized personnel, warheads, or port facilities. Instead it should take the line that “in accordance with the Nassau Agreement, our own contribution to the NATO nuclear force would consist of the British Polaris submarines, to be obtained under that agreement.” Within the NAC there was support for the British notion of a multi-national NATO nuclear force, except on the part of the French representatives. The problem was that the United States seemed to doubt that a multi-national force would suffice to divert pressures for new national deterrents, and, with the Merchant mission, seemed intent on promoting a mixed-manned force from which national contributions could not be withdrawn. There were objections to such a force: it would not significantly affect the East-West balance and was militarily superfluous; it was more likely to stimulate German nuclear aspirations than to quench them. In addition, the Merchant mission discussions seemed to focus on a force based on surface vessels rather than submarines; while a force of surface ships could be constructed sooner, it would be more vulnerable than a submarine force, as well as more costly, hence less attractive to European opinion. Retention of the American veto would reveal the illusory nature of the nuclear independence the MLF offered. But in spite of the force’s drawbacks, the Americans would tend to make it the focus of their NATO planning, which “would entail the risk that British nuclear forces might be excluded from this planning and that the United States would attach correspondingly less importance to their maintenance.”

Macmillan reiterated that Britain’s Nassau commitments had been to assign V-bombers to SACEUR, an undertaking already fulfilled, and to make British Polaris submarines available for inclusion in a multilateral force along with at least an equal number of American vessels. The projected NATO nuclear force would include these American and British submarines, and “a NATO element, which might or might not, consist of the internationally-manned element which the United States Government were now trying to create.” But Nassau did not oblige Britain to actually contribute to the mixed-manned force, and the Merchant mission

might create the impression it did. The British objective, Macmillan went on, was to prevent Germany and other NATO states from developing national nuclear forces; it was by no means clear that either a multinational or a multilateral force would do this. The most promising route was conclusion of a test ban agreement with the Soviets, along with wider arrangements that would inhibit the spread of nuclear capabilities. In the meantime, British actions should “avoid discouraging the United States in their attempt to win support for the concept of an internationally-manned force, while at the same time avoiding any obligation to contribute to it.”²³

Despite the difficulties the Kennedy administration would face in securing Senate approval of a test ban agreement, there was some basis for thinking that a British initiative might be worthwhile. The head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, William C. Foster, told Joseph Godber that Kennedy’s political difficulties might make it more convenient for Britain to make an overture to Moscow.²⁴ At the multilateral talks on disarmament in Geneva, Godber and Senator Hubert Humphrey advised the Soviet delegate, Vasili Kuznetsov, that further Soviet concessions on issues such as the number of on-site inspections were a prerequisite for progress towards agreement. Godber suggested that a message from Macmillan to Khrushchev could reinforce this message.²⁵ Macmillan then moved to link limitations on testing more explicitly to nonproliferation, suggesting to Ambassador Bruce that a separate pledge on nonproliferation might complement any agreement on testing.²⁶ One argument for seeking agreement with Moscow was that Bonn’s signature on test ban and nonproliferation agreements would contain German nuclear ambitions more effectively than participation in an MLF. Soviet criticism of the MLF as a form of proliferation and a barrier to any treaty suggested that shared superpower fears of German nuclear aspirations might provide a basis for agreement.²⁷ He urged Kennedy to consider testing Khrushchev’s intentions by offering a compromise of five on-site inspections as part of a test ban, with a parallel agreement on nonproliferation.²⁸ Kennedy told Ormsby-Gore that negotiating an agreement which the Senate would not pass was to invite a major political defeat for the administration. He also doubted that any agreement that was ratified would long survive any nuclear test by China. The danger of a Chinese nuclear capability, Ormsby-Gore responded, made it more urgent to find out from Khrushchev if he saw this threat as a strong argument for reaching agreement on nonproliferation measures.²⁹

Kennedy’s formal reply to Macmillan speculated that Khrushchev was embattled at home

and at odds with his Chinese critics, and might be neither inclined nor politically strong enough to make significant steps towards agreement. He took note of a recent suggestion by a Soviet physicist to an American colleague, George Kistiakowsky, at a meeting of the disarmament group Pugwash, to the effect that a compromise on five inspections was possible. He suggested this might be an effort to find out if further Soviet movement would elicit a receptive hearing and that it made more sense to wait for any new Soviet overture than to make a fresh Western proposal.³⁰ Yet Kennedy also discreetly encouraged British efforts to sound out Khrushchev; Bundy informed Ormsby-Gore that further British suggestions were more than welcome,³¹ and the President himself warned in a press conference that if agreement to halt the spread of nuclear weapons could not be reached, by the end of the decade there might be ten nuclear powers, rather than the present four, making for a more dangerous world.³² Earlier in March, Harriman, Rostow, and Schlesinger had dined with Ambassador Dobrynin, and Harriman, Schlesinger observed, “obviously had designed the evening to make certain points with Dobrynin.” He referred to the shared Soviet-American interest in preventing China from acquiring a nuclear capability, but this “did not elicit much reaction.” He then turned to the political difficulties of ratifying any test ban treaty. While both leaders had domestic critics to deal with, “on the whole it seemed probable that it would be easier for Khrushchev to go up to six on-site inspections than for Kennedy to go down to three.” This hint, Schlesinger concluded, “seemed to register with Dobrynin.”³³

Ormsby-Gore also understood that Khrushchev was under fire from domestic and Chinese critics, and that it was unclear what direction Soviet policy would ultimately follow. The hint at the Pugwash meeting, he argued to Macmillan, was more an effort to elicit a new Western overture than one to ascertain how a Soviet one would be received. Khrushchev was seeking evidence of Western intentions before jumping either way, and it made sense to sound him out in private.³⁴ Macmillan then wrote again to Kennedy, arguing that instead of waiting to see whether Khrushchev broke decisively with Beijing or tried to woo his opponents with concessions, the West should offer incentives that might shape his decision. If Khrushchev concluded agreement on test limitations was possible, he might opt for cooperation to solve outstanding issues and demonstrate the merits of peaceful coexistence. Macmillan did not insist on a direct link between test limitation and nonproliferation, proposing only that agreement on the former might lead to exchanges about the latter.³⁵

The Merchant mission soon demonstrated the difficulties involved in selling some Europeans on the benefits of an MLF. The military drawbacks of a ship-based force had been pointed out by NATO planners in SHAPE, who noted that surface vessels were more vulnerable, harder to maintain on station, and subject to continuous surveillance when on the open seas. The low accuracy and slow response times of sea-based systems could reduce their effectiveness against particular targets that might be of critical importance to European allies; compensating for the low accuracy would require higher yields in the warheads, openly contradicting American policy's support for discriminate use of nuclear weapons.³⁶ Not only was West German acceptance of American leadership at stake but to American Proponents of the MLF early evidence of German interest was necessary to put momentum behind the negotiations.³⁷ Kennedy wrote to Adenauer that early progress on a seaborne, mixed-manned force was necessary to avoid divisive national efforts by NATO members to develop their own nuclear capabilities, as well as an integral part of the modernization of NATO forces, which would progress from the replacement of obsolete IRBMs in Turkey and Italy by American Polaris submarines to a truly multilateral force.³⁸

But when Merchant met with members of Adenauer's government, he found limited enthusiasm for the American proposal. This was for a force of twenty-five surface vessels carrying sixteen Polaris A3 missiles each, under SACEUR's command in peacetime and the political control of a committee on which all participating nations would sit, each with a veto. Thus the missiles could only be launched with the unanimous concurrence of the participants. Defence Minister Kai-Uwe von Hassel expressed reservations about the cost and vulnerability of a surface force. Merchant responded that a surface force could be completed more quickly in order to demonstrate progress. There were also problems peculiar to submarines; obtaining JCAE consent to transferring warheads to a multilateral force would be difficult enough for a surface force, but harder still for one consisting of submarines. Moreover, the supply of non-American personnel required for mixed-manning of a submarine was small, and crews in which no nation could exercise predominance were central to the multilateral concept. Should one nationality be in effective control of either the engine or the missiles "it could then be said that MLF was no more than a façade." It might eventually be possible for the United States to reconsider its position on the inclusion of submarines. Abram Chayes, accompanying Merchant, said the pressing need was to convey a sense of forward movement on the MLF; this would elicit participation by others, notably

Italy, and prevent emergence of the perception that the MLF was a German-American bilateral project, a perception that would arouse opposition elsewhere. The Americans hoped to reach agreement on a basic document by May, followed by creation of a preparatory commission that would prepare a complete charter for ratification by 1964.³⁹ Adenauer hinted at concerns over the unanimity requirement, telling Merchant that he had grave doubts about the trustworthiness of Harold Wilson, who had become leader of Britain's Labour Party after Gaitskell's sudden death in January. Would Wilson veto the use of the force in a crisis, or adopt a position of such reluctance to employ it that the deterrent would lose credibility?⁴⁰ Kennedy assured Adenauer that a militarily useful surface force was feasible, and that if others jibed at the cost of twenty-five ships, a smaller force was conceivable. He made the case for unanimity in any decision to launch the missiles, noting that any use of the MLF would "almost inevitably require the immediate support of the full strategic strength of the Alliance as a whole." Since this strength consisted primarily of American forces, "the American Government must have a particularly intense concern with any decision to fire any NATO strategic forces." Yet he suggested that Bonn had an interest in a veto of its own, so that the force could not be engaged against its wishes. If, however, the European participants were not intent on individual vetoes, "we would support an initial control scheme which required the concurrence of the United States and any combination of the other participants."⁴¹

In a meeting with Merchant and several of his colleagues, the Italian foreign minister, Giuliano Alessandrini, suggested that majority voting was required to "give Europeans the sense that they are really equal partners" and would not always be constrained by American veto, though he conceded that initially unanimity would probably be unavoidable.⁴² Finletter reported from NATO headquarters that while the European members would probably accept surface ships if this were put to them on a "take-it-or-leave-it basis", they saw themselves as being fobbed off with a second-rate force and at least one might object to the initial unavailability of submarines. Moreover, while Merchant had been instructed not to seem to present a hard-and-fast American plan, there was a widespread impression in the NAC that this was precisely what he had done.⁴³

British reservations were equally clear. Jean Monnet told Merchant "the UK must make up its mind to join Europe" and for that reason he thought it crucial that Britain become a founder member of the MLF, even if it made only a very small contribution. He saw de

Gaulle's rejection of the Nassau offer as "a 'mercy'" and hoped the United States would treat the offer as withdrawn.⁴⁴ But the British were content to emphasize the multinational aspect of Nassau as an immediate step, and to allow the obstacles to the multilateral one to emerge in subsequent discussion. The Chief of the Defence Staff, Lord Mountbatten, told Kennedy in February he saw no military need for an MLF and thought getting personnel of different nationalities to work together was likely to prove difficult in practice, particularly in submarines.⁴⁵ Home informed Bruce that Britain would press within the NAC for proceeding along both multinational and multilateral tracks, not the latter to the exclusion of the former.⁴⁶ The Merchant mission itself provided Britain with an excuse for downplaying the multilateral track. John Thompson, the head policy planner in the Foreign Office, told Henry Owen that while Britain would support the MLF, it "feared that this support looked like tailing along after the US" whereas promotion of the multinational element looked more like an independent British initiative.⁴⁷ By the middle of March, the Macmillan government had not yet made a clear commitment to take part in the MLF and Rusk feared a British lapse into resentful isolationism if Macmillan did not take advantage of the MLF to engage in the shaping of a non-Gaullist Europe.⁴⁸ Merchant believed that Britain would not risk exclusion from the MLF lest a German-American tie replace that between Washington and London, and he called for using "the leverage we possess with Britain to prevent them (sic) wrecking our policy."⁴⁹

This was to underestimate the British conviction that the Merchant mission was merely stimulating German nuclear ambitions whose intensity the Americans exaggerated, a conviction that was not limited to those sitting on the government benches. Wilson's shadow Foreign Secretary, Patrick Gordon Walker, told Merchant that he agreed with the importance of treating Germany as an equal in nuclear matters, but that it was unwise to create a European force that risked turning NATO into two linked alliances, one on each side of the Atlantic. If the Labour Party won the next election, it would allow the V-bombers to become obsolete, and not replace them with Polaris or any other system. This would not only reverse the spread of nuclear weapons, "it would also put us in a position to say to Germany 'No nuclear weapons' without treating them as a second-class nation." The only safe way of meeting any German desire for a voice in NATO nuclear decisions was for all to accept that the United States was in fact the only "real nuclear power" and reorganize the alliance such that Britain, Germany and eventually France were brought into close and ongoing

consultation with Washington, which “would have to share many secrets with us and allow us to share with them the great moral burden of the nuclear deterrent.” The MLF might prove to be a sham, with command really American, in which case Bonn would take part in response to American pressure, and to atone for the Franco-German treaty, but eventually seek real equality. Alternatively, decisionmaking would be shared, but the force would be subject to so many vetoes it would not be a credible deterrent and thus fail to meet any desire for equality.⁵⁰ In an off-the-record briefing for American reporters in London, Wilson himself indicated agreement with Brown’s criticism of the British deterrent as unaffordable and of doubtful independence, and proposed to channel the savings from allowing the deterrent to expire into expanded conventional forces. He also attacked a purely European deterrent as an alliance within the alliance, with any German access to nuclear weapons as not only divisive within NATO but recklessly provocative to the Soviets. He also rejected Macmillan’s claim that the Brussels talks had been on the verge of success when de Gaulle brought them to a halt, and said that any new negotiations would have to start from scratch. Labour would promote the global expansion of trade through GATT, rather than petition for entry to the EEC. Nassau, he insisted, was simply an American effort to save Macmillan from the humiliation of returning home empty-handed.⁵¹

Wilson also told Arthur Schlesinger that he favoured a single deterrent, under American control, with others enjoying rights of consultation, reiterated he would not purchase a successor to the V-bomber, and rejected the MLF as amounting to proliferation, not retarding it. Brown added that the Labour Party was united in opposing Polaris and the MLF, the left seeing abandonment of the deterrent as a step towards neutralism, but mainstream figures such as himself doing so out of confidence in the reliability of the American deterrent. Schlesinger found no support for the MLF, with mixed-manning universally regarded as an unworkable gimmick. In the long run, it was widely assumed, any demand for equality could only be met by the extreme measure of relinquishing the American veto. Even those who might have backed an MLF had they believed the German demand was real, such as Grimond and Brown, thought the Merchant mission was itself generating what demand there was. The seemingly sudden shifts in American policy, from pressing the Europeans to beef up their conventional forces to promoting the MLF, and from favouring submarines to supporting surface vessels, had “seriously impaired the post-Cuba picture of US policy as intelligent, consistent and firm.”⁵²

The MLF and pursuit of a test ban agreement were designed in part to meet differing ends; the former that of precluding German development of a national nuclear capability, the latter that of improving East-West relations. That the two existed in some tension reflected the difficulty of simultaneous pursuit of these ends.⁵³ They were not always posed as clear alternatives, but over the summer of 1962 evidence mounted of the many obstacles to creating the MLF while prospects of a test ban agreement visibly brightened. More broadly, the outlines of the world situation after the Cuban crisis grew clearer. The Sino-Soviet divide seemed to widen, with China's ability to constrain Soviet rapprochement with the West much reduced and Moscow willing to make concessions on the terms of a test limitation agreement. At the same time, it seemed that Khrushchev was not intent on renewing aggression against Berlin, and indeed was prepared to accept the territorial *status quo*. Early indications of a shift in German thinking against Gaullism and towards both a more assertive strategy of coexistence and confidence in American guarantees of European security in turn reduced the salience of Bonn's disapproval as a brake on American negotiating positions.

By May, France's obvious hostility to the MLF and West Germany's hesitant support left Britain's position central to the force's prospects. Over lunch with Ormsby-Gore, Ball offered an expansive view of German interest and expressed hope that Britain "would be able to come in now and form a common front with the Germans and ourselves so that we could move forward together." Ormsby-Gore replied that Britain's recent commitment to buy Polaris missiles and build warheads and submarines for them left few resources for additional nuclear undertakings. Macmillan saw Britain's national Polaris force as its contribution to NATO's nuclear strength. His government would "give the multilateral force 'a fair wind' and support it in general", but was unlikely to make a commitment to participate in a mixed-manned force or accept a specific percentage of the force's costs.⁵⁴ A few days later Rostow told Caccia that the goal of meeting German nuclear aspirations before Bonn either opted for a national deterrent or nuclear partnership with France was now achievable, but British participation was necessary. Caccia replied that Britain had not yet seen persuasive evidence of German pressure for a nuclear role, and that the cost and limited military value of a mixed-manned force made British participation unlikely.⁵⁵ The occasional administration official managed to muddy the waters by indicating a lack of conviction in the MLF's merits. State Department Consultant Henry Kissinger informed Heath that he saw little support for the MLF anywhere, except for a few Germans "who thought membership might give them a

special relationship with the Americans.” His own belief was that eventually Europe should construct a deterrent based on coordination of British and French forces, a development that was in America’s interest “because this would help build British influence in Europe.”⁵⁶

The Foreign Office warned that British refusal to take part in the MLF risked alienating the Americans as well as the European governments who had supported Anglo-American efforts to isolate de Gaulle in Europe. Moreover, if the force failed as a result of British footdragging, de Gaulle’s claim that the Nassau agreements were a dead end for Europe would be vindicated.⁵⁷ Macmillan instructed Home to continue evading a definite commitment at the May meeting of the NAC in Ottawa, and to try to prevent any firm agreement before or during Kennedy’s scheduled summer tour of Western Europe.⁵⁸ NAC agreed to proceed with a NATO Nuclear Force (NNF) that would include a mixed-manned element, and an Inter-Allied Nuclear Force (IANF) along multinational lines *a la* Paragraph Six of the Nassau communiqué, including the V-bombers, American Polaris submarines, and similar forces from any other members who chose to participate. Britain had continued to indicate more interest in the multinational force, but, Home noted, events had progressed since Nassau. Whatever its military irrelevance, the MLF had acquired considerable political importance as a totem of Europe’s ability to organize itself along anti-Gaullist lines. Britain’s lack of enthusiasm could complicate relations with the Americans and several of the Five, and if Britain declined to take part the United States might go ahead with Germany alone, creating both a nuclear force over which Britain would have no control, and a German-American tie that might displace the Anglo-American one.⁵⁹ Ormsby-Gore relayed Kennedy’s fear that dropping the MLF might strengthen Franco-German cooperation, with a nuclear dimension.⁶⁰ One theme that was tentatively raised in Cabinet discussions was that Washington’s very insistence on British participation suggested a certain lack of confidence in the merits of the MLF and in the desirability of proceeding on a bilateral basis with Bonn.⁶¹

In April and May the information Kennedy received about the progress of Merchant’s efforts suggested that there was limited enthusiasm anywhere for the MLF, and serious challenges that would have to be met if the force were to be created. To sound out allied military opinion, the Kennedy administration had sent the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Claude V. Ricketts, on a tour of European capitals; Ricketts had found strong reservations in British naval circles, based as much on the diversion of funds from other

programs to an MLF as on doubts about the force's military effectiveness.⁶² At a late April meeting with Kennedy, Merchant argued for pursuing a preliminary agreement in time for Kennedy's European visit. This would be necessary to have final agreement in place for Congressional ratification later in 1963, so that the issue did not become entangled in the 1964 elections. Kennedy also learned from Merchant and his colleagues that the Europeans would expect a transfer of ownership of the warheads to the corporate ownership of the force's governing body, requiring amendment of American law. The JCAE was likely to insist on retention of the American veto which, Bundy suggested, Bonn would ultimately swallow.⁶³ Rostow had concluded from his recent talks with Europeans that what pressure existed for national deterrents was rooted in the desire for an insurance policy in the event of an eventual American reversion to isolationism, and therefore was likely to survive the present arguments over British and French deterrents. This meant the political success of the MLF required that the eventual abandonment of the American veto not be ruled out in perpetuity. Even if the MLF went ahead, it was unlikely that the United States would wish to go further in the direction of sharing direction of NATO's nuclear defenses. So the European desire for insurance would still have to be met by the presence of American conventional forces in Europe and particularly in West Berlin.⁶⁴ By mid-May, Kennedy was concerned enough about the MLF's prospects to sound out Couve on the odds of Franco-German nuclear collaboration if the MFL failed. Couve told him France did not trust the Germans enough to help them develop nuclear weapons or to share control of its own. He insisted that French dislike of the MLF was rooted in the conviction that it was unwise to bring Germany closer to a national nuclear capability. In no event would France provide West Germany with information or technical assistance that might ease the development of a German national deterrent.⁶⁵

It also looked as if British reluctance to participate might preclude meeting the timetable Merchant had proposed in any event. At the end of May, Gordon Walker visited Washington. In conversation with Kennedy, he reiterated the argument that German desires for a nuclear role were less pronounced than the MLF's backers thought, and that any force that appeared to bring Germany closer to possession and operation of nuclear weapons would divide NATO. In addition to making the case for Labour's policy of allowing Britain's deterrent to run down and offering Germany nuclear equality on the basis of a share in American nuclear policy, he advised Kennedy to at least wait until after the next British election, likely in the

same year as Kennedy's own reelection campaign. If the Labour Party lost, its policy would have been repudiated by the British public and it would have nothing more to say. If it won and found, contrary to expectations, that Germany would not go along with its policy, it would accept that there was no alternative to the MLF. Moreover, "Macmillan would not easily give way on MLF before an election" because doing so would "remove from his hand the nuclear card he wanted to play against us." Kennedy should not trust Macmillan on this issue. He would "delay, accept in principle, ask questions," but hold back from any firm commitment. Gordon Walker doubted that the question of retaining the deterrent would harm Labour in the election; "so long as we were thought to be genuinely firm and realistic on defence, the people would not mind so much about technical arguments." The Labour Party would stick to the line that the deterrent's independence was spurious, and that Britain was neglecting conventional forces, including the British Army of the Rhine, in order to perpetuate the illusion.⁶⁶

By mid-June, Bundy was sufficiently concerned about the obstacles to further progress to send a lengthy memo to Kennedy advocating a modification of the American position before the President's visit to Europe. "If we press the MLF through in the next twelve months", he wrote, "we shall have only grudging support among the very people in whose interest the force has been designed." Not only was France, as predicted, adamantly opposed, but those who supported the idea elsewhere did so mainly out of a desire to prove themselves reliable allies. There was little genuine interest in Bonn, only a desire to appear supportive of an American initiative and to make up for the damage the Franco-German treaty had inflicted on relations with Washington. In Britain, there was no support for the MLF among political figures of stature, and where backing existed, as in parts of the Foreign Office, it was merely a reluctance to fall out of step with the Americans and jeopardize Anglo-American intimacy. Actual British participation in the mixed-manned force was almost unthinkable because it "would be regarded as an extraordinary case of subservience to US pressure." The widespread impression in Europe that Washington was intent on pushing the MLF had arisen because direct responsibility for the project had been vested in officials such as Ball, Merchant, Rostow, Owen, and Schaetzel, who were strongly committed to European integration and determined to press the force as a means to that end. They had gained a bureaucratic base after Nassau and had "pressed the case more sharply and against a tighter timetable, at every stage, than either you or the Secretary would have chosen." While the

MLF's prospects were now bleak and the administration more deeply linked to it than was wise, disengagement had to be gradual and executed with caution; "a hasty reversal would not only be wrong on the merits but very damaging to our prestige." Instead, the administration should "switch from pressure to inquiry", in essence to Kennedy's past view of an MLF as one possible response to European desires, with no sense of a deadline and discussion widened to include other means of reordering NATO's nuclear arrangements. If the Germans were prepared to accept the shift, "no one else will criticize it in any major way, and we shall be able to change the course of negotiations with very modest damage to the US or her President."⁶⁷

Between mid-April and early June, the prospects of a test ban agreement had begun to brighten in tandem with the darkening of those of the MLF. At the May NAC meeting, Home and Rusk were of mind in thinking that while a comprehensive test ban agreement might be out of reach, a partial ban, outlawing tests underwater, in the atmosphere, or in outer space, but permitting them underground, could prove acceptable to both the Soviets and the Senate.⁶⁸ While welcoming any evidence of American flexibility, Macmillan doubted that the Soviets, less skilled and experienced in underground testing, would be interested in this compromise.⁶⁹ In line with the Kennedy administration's general stance of waiting for clear evidence of a shift in Soviet thinking before making any dramatic gestures in support of disarmament, a joint letter from Kennedy and Macmillan to Khrushchev had attempted to place the ball in the Soviet leader's court. It suggested that while agreement on test limitations would not settle all East-West differences, it might open the way to further agreements, and proposed tripartite discussions among either the three nuclear powers' representatives at the negotiations in Geneva or diplomats in Moscow. If these talks produced consensus on particular measures, a final agreement might be approved by the three leaders at a summit.⁷⁰ Khrushchev replied that he saw little hope that further bargaining over numbers of inspections would lead to a breakthrough, particularly with further American and French tests scheduled for the weeks ahead and throwing the sincerity of British or American overtures into question. He was, however, willing to receive American and British emissaries in Moscow.⁷¹ Macmillan sent Kennedy a draft reply proposing that preliminary talks be held in Moscow in either June or July. This, he suggested, would continue the dialogue until after the visit of the Chinese leaders to Moscow for talks with their Soviet peers. These talks would clarify the depth and durability of the Sino-Soviet divide, and Khrushchev might

clarify his own stance on relations with both China and the West after their conclusion.⁷² The American reply largely followed Macmillan's draft.⁷³

In a separate letter to Kennedy, Khrushchev also voiced pessimism that much could be done to reduce tensions between the superpowers unless the Berlin and German problems were addressed. Berlin's status and Germany's borders had to be defined, perhaps as part of a wider non-aggression pact between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.⁷⁴ There was some discussion of this proposal at the May 1963 NAC meeting, with both Rusk and Home suggesting that a further crisis over Berlin would be much less likely if a non-aggression pact were concluded. Couve and Schroeder rejected a pact as replacing four-power jurisdiction over Berlin with that of the UN, and as *de facto* recognition of the DDR, thus stabilizing the Pankow regime as surely as the separate peace treaty Khrushchev had long threatened to conclude. Better the existing tension over Berlin, and the threat of renewed Soviet aggression, Schroeder concluded, than a pseudo-détente that would rule out Germany's reunification and confer legitimacy on its current division with no Soviet concessions in return.⁷⁵

Kennedy signaled the increasing importance of agreement on test limitations in his June 10 commencement address at American University, a speech that was prepared by his principal speechwriter, Theodore Sorensen, with contributions from Kaysen, Schlesinger, Bundy and Rostow, in a process that circumvented both the State and Defense departmental bureaucracies; apparently neither McNamara nor Rusk had the chance to review drafts.⁷⁶ The speech was in part an effort to test, and generate, both Congressional and public support for an agreement to limit tests.⁷⁷ One school of thought sees the speech as marking a dramatic departure in American policy, and as rooted in Kennedy's own personal growth, notably his clearer perception of the dangers of the Cold War and greater confidence, after the Cuban crisis, in his own ability to exercise the powers of his office.⁷⁸ It is more convincingly understood as a typically cautious and incremental step in the direction of détente, and as aimed at the European allies as well as the Soviets, Capitol Hill, and the American public. The message for the European audience was that neither the pursuit of a test ban agreement nor a broader reduction in East-West tensions cast doubt on America's European commitments, particularly the nuclear guarantee.

The address called for a reexamination of America's own attitudes towards the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the dangers of nuclear war, pointing out that general warfare in the age

of nuclear plenty would inflict destruction wildly disproportionate to any political goal. But Kennedy also asserted his own interpretation of the lessons of the Cuban crisis and of the virtues of flexible response. "While defending our own vital interests", he said, "nuclear powers must avert those confrontations which bring an adversary to a choice of either a humiliating retreat or a nuclear war." In pursuit of this goal, "America's weapons are nonprovocative, carefully controlled, designed to deter, and capable of selective use." This made it possible to "seek a relaxation of tensions without relaxing our guard." America no longer needed "to use threats to prove that we are resolute." Its commitments to the defence of Western Europe, and of Berlin in particular were reliable because of an underlying identity of strategic interests, and "the United States will make no deal with the Soviet Union at the expense of other nations and other peoples." Kennedy said talks among the three nuclear powers on a comprehensive test ban treaty would soon commence in Moscow, and that as a demonstration of good faith the United States would enter a unilateral moratorium on atmospheric testing.⁷⁹

Kennedy's late June trip to Western Europe was designed to dramatize America's commitment to its allies and to rally support for a non-Gaullist conception of European unity. Speaking for the MLF's convinced adherents, Rostow urged the President to reaffirm the fundamentals of past administration policy, albeit with more tactical flexibility. It was important, he wrote, to press solutions to Europe's problems that treated Germany as an equal, though without creating the impression of a bilateral alliance with Bonn.⁸⁰ He urged Kennedy to take advantage of his scheduled remarks at Frankfurt's Paulskirche and other occasions to indicate a willingness to reiterate his openness to "a distinct European role in the control of European forces."⁸¹

The tour did mark a retreat from the recent efforts to promote the MLF, but the pace of this retreat inevitably depended in part on what Bonn was prepared to accept. In the face of the MLF's infirmities, West German willingness to amend the Franco-German treaty now loomed as perhaps the main tangible measure of Bonn's support for the Atlantic alliance, not its interest in the MLF.⁸² Yet expressions of widespread and durable support for the Kennedy administration's approaches to both Europe's nuclear defense and Berlin were also important as indications of how far and fast the administration could move in the direction of East-West détente. The signs were encouraging. Throughout the 1950s, the SPD had vied with Adenauer in its devotion to reunification as the goal of West German foreign policy, but had

envisioned a very different route. It had assumed reunification on the basis of all-German elections leading to an independent but nonaligned Germany, which Moscow was expected to allow in exchange for permanent German nonalignment. The SPD had initially opposed integration into the Western bloc through NATO membership and participation in the EEC as precluding reunification, and had fiercely resisted the equipment of the *Bundeswehr* with nuclear weapons.⁸³ A measured critique of NATO strategy by its leading thinker on defence, Helmut Schmidt, contended that the alliance's doctrine of massive retaliation was unworkable given the Soviet bloc's larger conventional forces and the imminence of mutual nuclear vulnerability between the superpowers. While this doctrine was premised on Soviet aggression in Europe taking the form of either conventional attack on a large scale or the use of nuclear weapons, Schmidt wrote in a 1961 tract, the Soviets were now in a position to engage in limited aggression or intimidation to which nuclear responses lacked credibility.

In an echo of American and other proponents of flexible response, Schmidt argued that NATO had to augment its conventional forces in order to more credibly deter limited aggression, and to centralize control of nuclear weapons in order to calibrate its response should it occur. Vulnerable and uncoordinated national forces, he added, in unwitting anticipation of McNamara's Ann Arbor speech, were militarily inefficient and encouraged uncontrolled escalation. While multilateral forces might have some political appeal as alternatives to national deterrents, they too were of little military utility, and any German nuclear capability would alarm the Soviets and the other members of NATO, and give Washington incentives to withdraw its guarantees of European security. The projection of Soviet and then Western military power into the heart of Europe meant that reunification in the short term was a chimera. Bonn could promote incremental measures to build confidence across the Berlin Wall and the inter-German boundary within a framework of competitive but peaceful coexistence, and only in step with the American ally upon which German security was now irrevocably dependent.⁸⁴ Schmidt's thinking was reflected in Brandt's 1961 campaign platform, which criticized massive retaliation and proposed that NATO's European allies concentrate their efforts on conventional forces, with greater consultation on nuclear policy within the alliance.⁸⁵ Schmidt himself was a consistent critic of the MLF as militarily superfluous and politically divisive, preferring an allied share in the making of US nuclear policy.⁸⁶

In the aftermath of Kennedy's speech at American University, Brandt spoke to a Rotary

International convention, suggesting that the construction of the Berlin Wall had discredited Adenauer's *Politik der Starke* and dogmatic insistence on isolating the DDR, and that reunification had to be seen as a long-term project. In Berlin and elsewhere, he continued, Western strategy was more likely to succeed if it accepted realities on the ground in order to change them through engagement with the Soviet bloc.⁸⁷ He forwarded a copy to Kaysen, who complemented him on the speech, likening its overall approach to Kennedy's recent commencement address.⁸⁸ Brandt and Kennedy met in Bonn on June 25, with Brandt finding himself in agreement with the thrust of Kennedy's planned remarks before the Berlin Wall and Kennedy interested in Brandt's hope to promote controlled contacts between East and West Berlin, beginning with visits by West Berliners to family members in the East over Christmas and New Year's Day.⁸⁹ Later that day Kennedy spoke in the Paulskirche, where he assured the audience once again that "the United States will risk its cities to defend yours because we need your freedom to protect ours." He also moved to offset the recent pressure on behalf of the MLF by reiterating that the particulars of European unity were for Europeans themselves to decide, with no "right course or any single pattern."⁹⁰ In conversation with Adenauer that day, Kennedy noted there was little chance of the British doing much more than discuss the MLF, given Labour's opposition to the force and the likelihood of an election in 1964. He "doubted if much progress could be made in near future" but thought it was necessary to "keep concept alive for a year or maybe more, even though there were just two of us participating" while fleshing out other measures such as strengthening the IANF and improving consultation within NAC. This way, "we would know best way to proceed if we should fail in MLF project."⁹¹

In his speech the next day in Rudolf Wilde Platz, Kennedy was given a tumultuous reception, particularly when he affirmed his solidarity with the citizens of the beleaguered city in the declaration "Ich bin ein Berliner," both Brandt and Adenauer on the platform behind him. But for all his impassioned denunciations of the Communist system, Kennedy's pledges were still limited to the defense of the city against further pressure, not to its early reunification or that of Germany. He set the collapse of the barriers between East and West as a long-term objective, noting that when that event came, Berliners would have "the sober satisfaction of knowing that they were in the front line."⁹² In an address later that day at the Free University of Berlin, he defined reunification as a long-term objective, acknowledging the need to "deal with the realities as they actually are." Yet he also implied it was an

inevitability, noting how the requirements of a technologically advanced society included intellectual and personal freedom, so “history itself runs against the Marxist dogma, not towards it.”⁹³

If Kennedy was encouraged in his course by the emphatic agreement with his position expressed by Brandt and his associates,⁹⁴ they in turn found American endorsement of a fresh approach to East-West relations lent credibility to their advocacy of flexibility in addressing the German and Berlin questions.⁹⁵ A few weeks after Kennedy’s visit, and during the Moscow talks on a test ban treaty, Brandt and his aide Egon Bahr spoke at a theological school in Tutzing on the same themes. Brandt said that Germany’s eventual reunification could only take place with Soviet consent, requiring Germany to work with Moscow, not against it, to overcome the present division.⁹⁶ Bahr added that this would also require dialogue with the DDR, rather than its isolation, though not necessarily *de jure* recognition.⁹⁷

The Kennedy administration had welcomed the Bundestag’s addition to the Franco-German treaty of a preamble reaffirming Bonn’s NATO and EEC commitments as confirming Adenauer’s isolation and the resistance of the German political class to Gaullism, though keeping a watchful eye on its implementation.⁹⁸ The emergence of a post-Adenauer Germany and the extent of Kennedy’s political victory over de Gaulle became clear in the weeks after his visit. When Ambassador George McGhee met with Ludwig Erhard, set to succeed Adenauer in October, the Chancellor’s designated successor observed that while de Gaulle had been well-received during his German visit of 1962, the “more recent reception for Kennedy amounted to plebiscite in favor of ‘one power in the world’ that can defend Germany” and praised the concept of a united but open Europe which Kennedy had articulated as preferable to de Gaulle’s narrow nationalism. Erhard, McGhee concluded, was intent on defending German interests, which he saw as closely aligned with those of the United States, in his dealings with the General.⁹⁹

The success of Kennedy’s trip had left a sour taste in de Gaulle’s mouth and nudged even Adenauer to chafe at his anti-Americanism. When the two met for the first of the consultative meetings stipulated in the treaty, Adenauer was quick to say that his doubts about American and British reliability were as strong as ever, and France’s friendship still a pillar of German policy. But, he noted, Kennedy had made a favourable impression on the German public, and the vehemence of his statements of German-American solidarity had allayed doubts about depending on American military power. Could de Gaulle not consider downplaying his

opposition to American leadership in NATO and allowing relations with Washington to improve? De Gaulle grumbled that Kennedy's trip and his claims that American commitments to Europe could be relied upon merely demonstrated his increasing appetite for American domination of Europe through Atlantic institutions.¹⁰⁰ That Kennedy, not de Gaulle, had the stronger claim on the loyalties of the rest of Adenauer's government became clear in de Gaulle's conversations with Erhard, who annoyed the visitor by insisting that relations with Washington and London were as important as those with Paris, and by contending that the shape of the EEC had to be determined by mutual accommodation, not Germany falling in with French preferences for a highly protectionist CAP.¹⁰¹

If the climate of German opinion suggested Kennedy need not accept Adenauer's objections to confer a German veto on his efforts to conclude a test ban agreement or improve East-West relations, Macmillan's continued wariness of the MLF reinforced the President's inclination to discreetly back away from that initiative. His meeting with the Prime Minister at Birch Grove saw him try once more to find out how far Macmillan was willing to go in promoting the force, as well as discuss strategy for the talks in Moscow, at which Harriman and Lord Hailsham would represent the United States and Britain. Rusk and Home had already reached tentative agreement to pursue a comprehensive ban, but if Khrushchev refused to accept adequate provisions for inspection, to settle for a partial one.¹⁰²

Macmillan, whose government had been hit by several embarrassing scandals, indicated that he was in no position to run political risks for the MLF. He reiterated his established position that finding a role for the nonnuclear members in NATO's nuclear decisionmaking was a legitimate undertaking, and that his government had demonstrated its commitment by agreeing at Nassau to assign the V-bombers and later Polaris submarines to NATO. Kennedy conceded that the MLF might not be the solution to the problem, but its critics had yet to identify an alternative that was any more likely to work. He was concerned that if the MLF ostentatiously failed, Bonn might demand land-based MRBMs. These would be seen as a large step towards a German national deterrent, whatever safeguards were in place, so this was not an acceptable alternative. He did not press for a firm British commitment, only for agreement to take part in further discussions that would explore NATO nuclear arrangements, along with the United States and West Germany. Macmillan replied that he could not take part in a formal conference dealing with the MLF alone. Nor, he responded to Kennedy's further prompting, could he participate in discussions "relating to problems

connected with the MLF.” Hailsham added that it might be possible for Britain to take part in broader discussions of NATO’s nuclear requirements, touching on the MLF, but without prejudice to the question of its eventual participation. While the British were obviously interested in deferring further action on the MLF, Rusk was insistent that there be no public link between the MLF and the Moscow talks, “lest this matter create the impression in the minds of the Soviets that the MLF was negotiable.”¹⁰³ As for the Moscow talks, Macmillan was emphatic that Harriman and Hailsham should be allowed considerable latitude and not unduly constrained by military or scientific advice about the minutiae of testing and inspections. The very modest military improvements that underground testing on a small scale might produce, he suggested, were insignificant compared to the opportunities to improve East-West relations that agreement would make possible. Kennedy noted that if Khrushchev was intent on an agreement that would justify refusal of Soviet nuclear aid to China, he might insist in return on parallel Western commitments to prevent France from further testing, which de Gaulle was sure to resist.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, the Soviet representative at the Geneva talks had relayed to an American official a message from Khrushchev which noted that Kennedy and Macmillan had yet to clarify the role that France, on the verge of becoming the third Western nuclear power, would play in any agreement. The Soviet assumption was that “France should assume commitments analogous to those of the USSR, the US and Britain.”¹⁰⁵

The clear change in the Soviet position for which Washington had waited before investing any great hopes in the Moscow talks finally came on July 2. Speaking in East Berlin, Khrushchev welcomed Kennedy’s American University speech as reflecting a new realism in American policy, agreeing with him that nuclear war was too destructive to wage. He suggested that a partial test ban (allowing underground tests and reducing the salience of intrusive inspections), while not enough to reduce the risks of nuclear war as a stand-alone measure, could do so if complemented by a non-aggression pact (NAP) between the two alliances, and a German peace treaty.¹⁰⁶ The most credible explanation for Khrushchev’s shift is that he had concluded the deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations had passed the point of no return, and that a reduction in East-West hostility could offset the deepening splits within the Communist world. Negotiation of a partial, rather than a comprehensive, ban would reduce Kennedy’s difficulties securing ratification, quickly provide Khrushchev with proof that his policy of peaceful coexistence could elicit American cooperation, and restore his fortunes in

the aftermath of the botched Cuban gamble. As well, a test ban treaty would strengthen his hand in resisting Chinese pleas for nuclear assistance. If China declined to accede, he could reassert Soviet leadership of the Communist bloc by attacking Beijing's recklessness.¹⁰⁷

Macmillan, who had previously doubted that Khrushchev would find a partial ban acceptable, was quick to see that he was now intent on early agreement and that negotiations were more likely to succeed than if they had been aimed primarily at a comprehensive ban. Once agreement had been reached, he wrote Kennedy, "we may be able to approach much more effectively the problems that we have with France, Germany, etc. and Khrushchev may be able to do something with China."¹⁰⁸ He believed efforts to either go beyond negotiation of a partial ban to conclude a comprehensive one or to simultaneously negotiate an NAP would lead to protracted and inconclusive exchanges.¹⁰⁹

The Americans were equally wary of any link between the test ban negotiations and the conclusion of an NAP, though it was not clear if Khrushchev would actually insist on dealing with the two at the same time. Harriman noted any such connection was likely to alarm Adenauer.¹¹⁰ Kennedy assured the Chancellor that Harriman and Hailsham would not accept any linkage, and that he understood that an American and a Briton could not negotiate an NAP on behalf of NATO as a whole. The allies need not fear any three-power discussion touching on their interests, and he hoped that none of them would denounce Khrushchev's speech. Should the Soviets raise the subject of an NAP, there would be no discussion without consultation of all NATO members.¹¹¹ Rusk made the same points to Schroeder,¹¹² and Ball to French and German officials.¹¹³ Kaysen informed Brandt, by now probably the administration's favourite German, that an NAP, if prudently framed, could reinforce the current stability in Germany and prevent any resumption of the Berlin crisis (and thus, it followed, support Brandt's policy of accepting the *status quo* in order to overcome it). In any event, Harriman would not compromise German interests in Berlin or elsewhere.¹¹⁴

Kennedy also wrote to de Gaulle, suggesting that an NAP would "prevent the recurrence of further Berlin crises" and asking that France refrain from criticism until Harriman and Hailsham had the opportunity to determine if Khrushchev was intent on linking a test ban and an NAP. He observed that while a test ban would not halt proliferation alone, it was the necessary first step. As for the problems a test ban would pose for France, he noted that, as Bohlen had suggested to Couve, "it is our desire to take into account your needs in this situation."¹¹⁵ A few days before the mission to Moscow began, Bundy told Caccia that some

measure of agreement on non-dissemination was likely, and that this might have implications for the MLF's future. Khrushchev would do what he could to restrain China from developing a nuclear capability, while the United States brought its leverage to bear on France. Caccia was skeptical that it would be feasible to either bully or tempt de Gaulle into giving up his freedom to test.¹¹⁶

When the NSC met on July 9, Rusk was emphatic that any NAP had to be accompanied by an acceptable agreement on Berlin; otherwise the West Germans and the French would be furious. He also insisted that any discussion of a non-dissemination treaty not touch upon the MLF, which was still vital enough to Bonn that it could not be traded away as part of any agreement with Moscow without damage to NATO. Bundy suggested that Harriman could tell Khrushchev that he and Hailsham could not undertake to bind other members of NATO in a three-power discussion, and that any tentative agreement would have to be discussed in NATO before it could be acted upon.¹¹⁷ The next day, Harriman suggested that Kennedy's recent visit to Germany had bolstered not only his personal popularity but public trust in his leadership and the reliability of American guarantees. He was now better positioned to seek compromise with Khrushchev on German issues without fear of public alarm. Kennedy agreed. He rejected Harriman's proposal that he consider some form of recognition of the DDR as too much for Bonn to swallow. He was prepared to promote incremental measures to increase contacts across the Wall, as Brandt advocated, and to discuss non-dissemination measures that might affect the MLF if this was necessary to give Khrushchev cover for obstructing Chinese efforts to develop nuclear weapons. Kaysen's formal minute of the conversation said that Harriman should not give "any specific assurances on the MLF."¹¹⁸ But Harriman's annotation of his copy claims "this is contrary to his personal, verbal conversation."¹¹⁹

Given the similarity of the basic British and American negotiating positions, the British role in Moscow was a relatively modest one, although Hailsham was widely regarded within the American delegation as poorly briefed and inclined to relinquish agreed-upon positions without insisting on Soviet concessions in exchange.¹²⁰ At the first session, coming on the heels of the departure of the Chinese delegation from Moscow, Khrushchev repeated his familiar argument that inspections were thinly-disguised espionage. While he was happy to conclude a comprehensive ban without inspections, he knew this was unacceptable to the United States. Rather than haggle endlessly over numbers of inspections, he would agree to a

partial ban. He submitted a draft treaty for a partial ban, as well as a draft NAP. While he did not insist on an explicit link, he did say the two would complement each other. Harriman replied that the consultation within NATO this would require meant that agreement on an NAP would take far longer than the few days required to conclude a partial test ban. In order to pass muster with Bonn, any NAP would have to define interference with Western access to West Berlin as aggression. Nonetheless, the Kennedy administration was willing to discuss prospects of an NAP with its NATO allies. Khrushchev was clearly determined to secure French adhesion to the treaty. The draft he presented included spaces for signatures by representatives not only of the three powers taking part in the talks, but by France as well. Harriman raised the possibility of a non-dissemination agreement, under which signatories could not transfer nuclear weapons, technology or information to states that did not already possess a nuclear capability. This was apparently too far for Khrushchev to go, either because he was reluctant to turn so overtly against a Chinese nuclear capability or because he knew it would take time and effort for the Western powers to agree upon abandonment of the MLF, which the Soviets held to be a form of proliferation. He responded that a partial test ban treaty would tend to retard proliferation, and that a non-dissemination agreement should be negotiated separately at some later date.¹²¹

Hailsham tried to convince Macmillan that London and Washington should commit themselves to press all NATO members to agree to an NAP.¹²² Perhaps, he subsequently added, the participants in Moscow could reiterate their adherence to the provisions of the UN Charter in regard to one another.¹²³ Rusk and Ball informed Ormsby-Gore that while this did not represent a substantive departure from current policy, it was politically dangerous, and both de Gaulle and Adenauer would claim that Britain and America had compromised European interests in order to reach agreement with the Soviets.¹²⁴ As a result, Hailsham, whatever his personal reservations, did not break ranks with the Americans. When the Soviets presented a draft communiqué that included a pledge by the signatories to engage in discussions with their respective allies about the conditions governing further discussions to conclude an NAP, Rusk noted that this was an implicit commitment to the goal of an NAP, something the French and Germans would not accept.¹²⁵ When Harriman told Foreign Minister Gromyko that any explicit commitment to pursue an NAP would prove divisive in NATO and might complicate acceptance of the test ban treaty, Gromyko then agreed to a vaguer undertaking to undertake consultations on an NAP, with the goal of achieving a

solution all parties could accept.¹²⁶ When Harriman raised the particular question of Chinese adherence, Khrushchev was evasive. When Harriman then asked if the Soviets would restrain China in return for American efforts to ensure French accession, he still refused to be drawn. Harriman concluded that Khrushchev was still reluctant to oppose China's nuclear ambitions overtly, preferring to maneuver it into isolation as the price of its non-adherence.¹²⁷

Kennedy elaborated upon his previous letter to de Gaulle by informing him that "the United States Government would be willing to explore alternatives which make French testing in these three environments [covered by the treaty] unnecessary." While there were "both political and technical problems here, we hope they are capable of solution", and he hoped that de Gaulle would not make an early decision against the treaty.¹²⁸ Macmillan agreed to this initiative, suggesting it be placed within the framework of tripartite discussions after the conclusion of the treaty,¹²⁹ and had Dixon relay a message to de Gaulle that also suggested the assistance to the French that rendered testing superfluous could be available in exchange for France's signature.¹³⁰ Kennedy also explained to Adenauer that French accession presented a particular problem for de Gaulle, given the need to continue testing in order to construct the *force de frappe*. He planned to "explore with General de Gaulle whether that problem cannot be worked out in such a way as to permit France also to join in the test ban" and thought it desirable to reach "a fully unified Western position." Kennedy also hoped "that your government will be an early signer, and its support will be an important reinforcement of the agreement." In exchange, he promised that if the Soviets pressed again for an NAP, as was likely, "we shall stick to our announcement that no arrangements of this sort can be negotiated without reference to our major allies."¹³¹

There were reservations about the offer to de Gaulle in the State Department. Rostow saw risks in open American pressure on de Gaulle to sign the treaty, creating the impression of willingness to damage relations with a key ally for the somewhat speculative benefits of Soviet efforts to restrain Chinese nuclear progress. The real incentive for China to sign, he argued, was to avoid Japanese and Indian nuclear programs in response to its own capability, but this was not yet clear to Beijing. To aid de Gaulle would put the administration in the impossible position of asking Congress to simultaneously ratify a treaty justified in part as a nonproliferation measure and amend the McMahon Act so as to allow proliferation through aid to the French program. In the short run, it was better that France remain outside the treaty. He argued for the continued refusal of aid to the *force de frappe*, combined with

indications of American willingness to assist the European nuclear force that de Gaulle claimed was his ultimate goal. This could be combined with an offer to reorganize NATO politically, with the creation of the new positions of Chairman of a North Atlantic Defence Council, and NATO foreign and defence ministers, with two of them going to Europeans.¹³² It was, he suggested, just possible that in the wake of the test ban treaty, Macmillan would “have more freedom of action to be sensible than he felt at Nassau” and that de Gaulle, with the Germans drifting out of his control and his *Mirage* bombers about to become operational, would accept this as a fall-back position.¹³³

But de Gaulle was no more interested in cooperation on Anglo-American terms than he had been before. He indicated in a July 29 press conference that France’s deterrent was at a technological stage of development at which testing was necessary, and that he was in any case disinclined to sign an agreement which had been negotiated over his head. He hoped it would be possible for France and the three other nuclear powers to discuss disarmament issues in the near future, and was concerned that any exploration of an NAP not infringe upon European, including German rights. As for France, it had no intention of committing aggression against anyone in any event. For good measure, he said that differences between Paris and Bonn remained over the EEC and the MLF, with West German cooperation on matters such as the CAP crucial to the success of the Franco-German treaty.¹³⁴ As one of Bundy’s aides noted, he had minimized the significance of the treaty rather than attacking it, suggesting he was aware of its popularity even in France. His call for four-power suggestions was an effort to ensure French inclusion in any future negotiations, since it was too late for him to join in the Moscow exercise in light of his past positions.¹³⁵ At a luncheon with de Gaulle and former Vice-President Nixon a few days later, Bohlen expressed satisfaction that the General had not rejected all future consideration of French adhesion to the treaty. De Gaulle replied that “he had left the matter somewhat open but...there was no chance of France adhering to the test ban.” Both Bohlen and Nixon speculated about the possibility of American aid to France to replace the information gained from testing, in return for France’s signature. Nixon said this was both politically and technically feasible, but de Gaulle replied that he could not see any American government, of either party, offering such help, that the precedent of Anglo-American nuclear collaboration could not be duplicated, and that were this possible it would have already happened.¹³⁶

Prior to Rusk's departure for Moscow for the August 5 signing of the Partial Test Ban Treaty, Kennedy listened to Llewellyn Thompson and Harriman argue the merits of exploring an NAP. While Thompson emphasized the likely West German skepticism, Harriman contended that Khrushchev attached great importance to an NAP, and that a failure by the NATO powers to consider it would prevent further easing of East-West tensions. Moreover, a broader East-West détente would promote the German contacts that Brandt favoured while an NAP could be framed in terms that guaranteed Western access to Berlin. Kennedy noted that the situation in Berlin was now stable, so Adenauer would have no cause for complaint if talks about an NAP went ahead and contributed to a gradual increase in contacts across the Wall. Yet with the test ban treaty still facing Senate ratification, he urged caution.¹³⁷ As for Adenauer, he announced in mid-August that West Germany would sign the treaty, pleasing Kennedy.¹³⁸ An irritated de Gaulle, who had brusquely given Kennedy and Macmillan formal notification that France would not sign,¹³⁹ warned the Chancellor that "avant tout dans le domaine des rapports des Anglo-Saxons avec la Russie soviétique, requiert des vous et de nous une grande vigilance" lest the basic interests of both France and Germany become the victims of their collusion.¹⁴⁰

A USIA assessment of European press reactions to the PTBT found widespread agreement that the Sino-Soviet split made Khrushchev's overtures to the West more credible than they would otherwise have been. Even in France and Germany there was general public and press approval of the agreement itself, albeit tempered by wariness of the concessions that might be involved in subsequent moves in the direction of détente, with de Gaulle's outright refusal to sign receiving considerable criticism.¹⁴¹ The treaty's tendency to widen the Sino-Soviet split and isolate China was a major element in the administration's effort to secure Senate ratification. "Communist China's refusal to sign the treaty has isolated it on this issue from other nations in Asia", Rusk wrote to Senator Fulbright, and while the PTBT was unlikely to deter Beijing from seeking a nuclear capability, "it will incur condemnation and political costs around the globe for testing in the face of the Treaty."¹⁴² Roger Hilsman explained to the skeptical columnist William S. White that by opting for the treaty and a reduction in East-West tensions, Khrushchev had guaranteed a sharpening of the Sino-Soviet rivalry as well as Beijing's isolation within the Communist bloc, whereas he might have reconciled with Mao and reasserted Communist unity by abandoning peaceful coexistence. Rather than ease the pressures on Khrushchev, this intensified them; White found this a fresh and persuasive

argument.¹⁴³ Rusk also reassured Senators that allowing the DDR to sign did not imply recognition, an argument Kennedy made to Adenauer.¹⁴⁴ The endorsement of the treaty by the AFL-CIO Executive Council claimed Khrushchev's decision for the treaty and peaceful coexistence was a function not only of the split with China but of Kennedy's willingness to resist Soviet aggression, as demonstrated during the Cuban crisis. Yet it indicated possible limits to public support for détente, warning that Soviet proposals for an NAP should be viewed skeptically, as likely efforts to divide NATO.¹⁴⁵

Within the administration, it was now accepted that other American interests in the Cold War competition had been joined by that of strengthening the Soviet position against China within the Communist world, seen as reducing the chances of nuclear war and at least potentially allowing "a European settlement on the basis of a modified *status quo*."¹⁴⁶ For the MLF's backers, Rostow argued against relinquishing the force, which, he argued "should be bargained away only for its cause-the Soviet MRBMs in western Russia." He saw sharp limits to how far Moscow would go to deny China a nuclear capability, since "such a venture would mean a total denial of ideological commitment to Communism."¹⁴⁷ By August, as a State Department Intelligence and Research note pointed out, the increasingly open Sino-Soviet differences over nuclear weapons were narrowing Soviet freedom of action, insofar as "Moscow cannot, without blatant discrimination against China, appear to acquiesce in special Western nuclear arrangements for the benefit of China." Yet this also enabled Moscow "to call on the West to reciprocate with a categorical denial of nuclear weapons to West Germany."¹⁴⁸ It was also understood within the administration even on the eve of Harriman's mission that any Soviet-American cooperation to thwart the spread of nuclear weapons would have the greatest immediate impact on West Germany, the European state with the largest political investment in the MLF. Pressing Germany to reaffirm and extend its previous renunciation of nuclear weapons risked driving Bonn into de Gaulle's arms. Washington would have to extend its own commitment to Germany's defence throughout the life of any treaty in order to prevent this.¹⁴⁹

In the wake of the test ban treaty, the West German government was more supportive than ever of the MLF. Whatever its technical problems, it offered to link American and European forces so as to preclude American withdrawal from Europe as the culmination of a superpower détente. In a September meeting with Rusk, Schroeder made it plain that Bonn was wary of any NAP that did not include explicit guarantees for Berlin and still saw forward

movement on the MLF as politically necessary so as to undercut the appeal in Germany of de Gaulle's call for an exclusively European nuclear defense, though he did not believe that de Gaulle would ever share direction of the *force de frappe*. Those who thought otherwise misconstrued French policy, he said; France would be more troublesome than America on the matter of too many fingers on the trigger. Rusk reassured him that the United States would not agree to abandon the MLF as part of any non-dissemination agreement with Moscow and would consult with Bonn should serious explorations of an NAP commence. While Schroeder indicated the priority Atlantic ties had in West German policy, he also claimed he disagreed with those who thought Germany had to choose between America and France.¹⁵⁰

Couve also referred to the undesirability of Germany having to choose, but while grumbling that the Kennedy administration seemed intent on forcing Bonn to make just such a choice.¹⁵¹ One can be forgiven for thinking he might have been less inclined to complain had the choice, such as it was, been for France. By October de Gaulle appeared deeply isolated in Europe, as a CIA assessment concluded. Adenauer was gone, Erhard was intent on complementing the EEC with worldwide trade liberalization, and Schroeder was not only supportive of the MLF but, however reluctantly, acquiescent in superpower negotiations touching on European security, provided that Bonn was consulted when her own interests were at issue. Von Hassel had even entered into a joint tank production contract with the United States, a matter on which de Gaulle might have expected to be consulted under the Franco-German treaty.¹⁵² From Paris, Dixon confirmed that German resistance to de Gaulle's efforts to eliminate the influence of "les Anglo-Saxons" in Europe and the General's own unilateralism had neutralized the Franco-German treaty.¹⁵³ In Bonn, Frank Roberts noted Schroeder's dismissal of the notion that de Gaulle would ever offer Germany a share in the direction of the *force de frappe*.¹⁵⁴ The trend was neatly punctuated by de Gaulle's first summit with Erhard alone, at which the Chancellor rebuffed the General's attack on the reliability of American commitments by stating that the United States was the only nuclear power on which Germany could rely, and firing a warning shot with the observation that it would indeed be regrettable were Bonn forced into a choice between Washington and Paris.¹⁵⁵

The MLF remained an obstacle to negotiation of an explicit agreement with the Soviets on non-dissemination; during exploratory talks at the UN, Foreign Minister Gromyko stated that it would be impossible to conclude such an agreement while the MLF went ahead.¹⁵⁶ But if

preserving good relations with Bonn and maintaining de Gaulle's isolation dictated keeping the MLF alive, the weakness of the Gaullist alternative reduced the incentive for moving ahead. Indeed, the lack of enthusiasm outside West Germany and Soviet objections argued for moving slowly at best.

In the face of the Foreign Office's continued insistence that British abstention from the MLF discussions would jeopardize Anglo-American relations,¹⁵⁷ the Macmillan government had agreed to take part but only on the understanding that attendance at the talks did not commit Britain to actually take part in the MLF.¹⁵⁸ But the nature of British participation would be determined by Home's visit to Kennedy on October 4. Following discussion of Soviet insistence that the MLF blocked agreement on non-dissemination, Kennedy asked just how much support there was in Britain for the force. Home replied that "one of the problems was that the MLF at the moment did not have a single friend in Parliament." Thorneycroft and much of the defence establishment were strongly opposed. Kennedy observed that he was unsure how much support there was in Congress.¹⁵⁹ In July Kennedy had urged McNamara to explore a demonstration project for the MLF, focused on its mixed-manning aspect. This would see personnel from several NATO members embark on a demonstration cruise aboard an existing vessel.¹⁶⁰ The effect of the project would be to provide early and tangible evidence of progress, without addressing the knotty questions of how a force would be structured and controlled or committing the less enthusiastic participants to further involvement in the MLF.¹⁶¹ Would Britain, Kennedy asked, consider taking part in the experiment? Home quoted Field Marshal Montgomery's comment that "the battle would be inside the ship rather than outside." Britain might be able to provide some men, but he still thought it prudent to move slowly on the MLF. Kennedy replied that even if discussions on the broader questions were inconclusive, "the ship could sail around for as much as a year and a quarter or a quarter and a half and the Germans would be satisfied" and deterred, to the extent this was still necessary, from flirting with any Gaullist alternative.¹⁶² The demonstration project would provide the appearance of momentum, but "would in fact be a time consuming experience."¹⁶³ Attending the first meetings of the new MLF Steering Group in Paris, Shuckburgh presented a further statement that Britain's presence did not entail any commitment to take part in the force.¹⁶⁴ At parallel talks in Washington, British representatives agreed to proceed with a demonstration project and signed a Memorandum of Understanding setting out the terms under which participating personnel would engage in an

eighteen-month cruise on a mixed-manned surface vessel.¹⁶⁵ By then, Kennedy had been assassinated and Macmillan, under the weight of poor health and embarrassing scandals, had resigned. But in October's crucial decision, Macmillan had acquiesced in an active British role in one aspect of the MLF only because Kennedy had made it clear that he hardly expected the force itself to ever take to the waves.

Notes

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2. Kennedy remarks at luncheon for Japanese trade delegation, December 4 1962, Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy: 1962 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1963)pp, 850-851. On the Kennedy administration's wary view of Red China, see Noam Kochavi, A Conflict Perpetuated: China Policy During the Kennedy Years (Westport, CT.: Praeger, 2002).
3. Kennedy press conference, December 17 1962, *ibid*, p. 900.
4. Foreign Office memorandum, "The Probable Soviet Attitude on Nuclear Tests", January 31 1963, FO 371/171110, TNA.
5. Rusk to Paris, January 22 1963, Topol 982, f. NATO Disarmament, Box 84, Lot 58-D122, Lot Files, Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, USNA.
6. Kaysen memo for Bundy, October 31 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. V, p. 553.
7. Moscow to State Department, March 16 1963, *ibid*, p. 642.
8. Washington to Foreign Office, February 26 1963, tel. 627, FO 371/171231.
9. Meeting of NSC Executive Committee, January 25 1963, FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, pp. 487-491.
10. Rostow memo for Kennedy, February 19 1963, "Germany and European Unity", f. Staff Memoranda, Rostow, W.W., 1/62-7/63, Box 65, POF, JFKL.
11. CC (62)76, December 21 1962, CAB 128/36.
12. Macmillan to Thorneycroft, December 26 1962, PREM 11/4147.
13. Record of Meeting at Admiralty House, December 31 1962, 6 p.m., *idem*.
14. Washington to Foreign Office, for Thorneycroft, January 15 1963, tel. 154, PREM 11/4148.
15. Macmillan to Ormsby-Gore, January 15 1963, *idem*.
16. Ormsby-Gore to Macmillan, January 26 1963, *idem*.
17. Washington to Foreign Office, for Thorneycroft, tel. 382, *idem*.
18. Macmillan comment on Wright to Bligh, February 15 1963, PREM 11/4149.
19. Washington to Foreign Office, February 23 1963, tel. 606, *idem*.
20. Dixon to Home, January 7 1963, PREM 11/4151.
21. Speech by Home at Wilton Park Institute conference, February 18 1963, encls. in London to State Department, February 21 1963, A-1891, f. UK General 2/12/63-3/5/63, Box 171, NSF, JFKL.
22. Scott memorandum, March 11 1963, "NATO Nuclear Force: The Merchant Mission", FO 371/173439.
23. CC (63) 18, March 25 1963, CAB 128/37.
24. Geneva to Foreign Office, February 19 1963, tel. 37, FO 371/171192.
25. Minute by Godber, February 25 1963, *idem*.
26. Memcon with Bruce, March 4 1963, FO 371/173292.
27. Macmillan to Ormsby-Gore, in Foreign Office to Washington, March 12 1963, tel. 2549, FO 371/171235.
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Conclusion

In November 1963, Richard Neustadt's verdict on British actions at Nassau and Brussels was that "for them, politically, the next best thing to joining the EEC with honor was a kick in the face by de Gaulle. The next best thing to keeping SKYBOLT was getting POLARIS. In the event they got their second-best."¹ A scholarly assessment made almost forty years later, on the other hand, concluded that the events leading up to the double veto left Macmillan's government "the only party...with nothing to show but shambles."² The choice of time-frame is crucial to a sound judgement, but, oddly enough, British strategy seems more successful in its long-term than in its immediate consequences.

The 1964 election that replaced Home with Harold Wilson in Downing Street was above all a vote of non-confidence in the Conservatives; the swing against the government was the largest, and the Conservative share of the total vote, the lowest, since 1945. Macmillan's, and then his successor's, efforts to paint the Conservative Party as a champion of economic dynamism were discredited by the combination of sputtering domestic growth and the failed EEC bid, while Wilson's promise to replace the aristocratic amateurism of the Tories with national efficiency through technocratic planning was both effective and well-timed. Wilson not only exploited the mood of rising public concern over Britain's economic performance and place in the world, he assigned the question of national decline a centrality to partisan debate it had not occupied since turn-of-the-century arguments about tariff reform and which it would retain at least into the early 1980s.³ Nor could Home gain traction by changing the subject to the retention of the deterrent, with economic issues overshadowing all else. Wilson depicted the bungled effort to enter the EEC as a reflecting a Conservative failure to understand that British economic success was a function of domestic performance, mocked the independence of the deterrent in familiar fashion, and even turned the PTBT to his own advantage by suggesting it had created "a chance of a breakthrough" on nonproliferation and further measures of disarmament and detente.⁴

If Macmillan's policies seemed to have failed comprehensively by 1964, and certainly produced no electoral dividends for his party, their longer-term benefits gradually became visible. Anglo-American efforts to marginalize de Gaulle within Europe and Adenauer within his own government were successful. At the end of 1963, the Franco-German treaty was regarded as little more than formal acknowledgment of the reconciliation that had taken root some time before. The preamble added by the Bundestag had reaffirmed Bonn's underlying

Atlanticist orientation, underlined Adenauer's isolation as the sole advocate within his government of the Franco-German tie as the basis of West German foreign policy and marked the failure of de Gaulle's goal of making West Germany something close to a French satellite. French complaints about American efforts to force Bonn to choose between Washington and Paris reflected frustration over German refusal to seek greater distance from the United States. That Erhard made clear at his first meeting with de Gaulle that he would not follow the French lead on issues of either European integration or NATO defences when doing so would strain Atlantic ties confirmed the failure of de Gaulle's bid for a European Third Force revolving around a Franco-German dyad. This left France in a weaker position to resist measures upon which its major allies were of one mind, including British accession to the EEC. De Gaulle remained intransigent on matters of Europe's organization until his 1969 retirement, but he lacked consistent backing from any of the Five. While the CAP was established on a protectionist basis, the Kennedy round of GATT negotiations in 1967 contained EEC trade discrimination against American goods, and stalemate on other questions was the norm. Paris and Bonn would not manage to agree on further steps in the EEC's development under Georges Pompidou succeeded de Gaulle.⁵

Initially, rhetorical commitment to the MLF was part of the price Washington itself had to pay in exchange for Bonn's maintenance of a tolerable independence from Paris, as visible reassurance against American withdrawal from Europe and as a possible solution to the problem of nuclear inequality which West German accession to the PTBT had revived. When the State Department Europeanists managed to convince Kennedy's successor to abandon Kennedy's final stance of indefinite delay behind the façade of the demonstration cruise and continued discussions, and to make progress on the MLF once again one of the highest priorities in America's European policy, the familiar problems returned. Despite protracted discussions, a realistic control formula that would meet the European desire for the long-term possibility of abandoning the US veto proved hard to contrive, and while Home persuaded Washington to delay pressure for a firm British decision until after the 1964 election, Wilson was, of course, more hostile to the MLF, and had seized upon the SPD's opposition to a German national deterrent as partial justification for his own position.⁶

Despite his left-wing associations, Wilson resembled Gaitskell in his essential Atlanticism, regarding America, not the EEC, as the template for modernity and the Anglo-American bond as the most important relationship in British foreign policy.⁷ As Gordon Walker, his

first Foreign Secretary, observed, close Anglo-American cooperation and nuclear equality with Germany, on the basis of a common non-possession of nuclear weapons and voice in American nuclear policy, were the main elements of Labour's approach to Atlantic matters. Since this was likely to prove unpalatable to the party's left, it would be appeased with strong opposition to the MLF.⁸ He also predicted that Italy's lack of enthusiasm, if reinforced, would make British participation indispensable since Washington would not proceed on a bilateral basis with Bonn.⁹ In the face of continued Soviet attacks on the MLF as proliferatory, Wilson proposed a variant of the IANF, the Atlantic Nuclear Force (ANF), in which American, British, and Continental contributions to a mixed-manned force would be governed by an executive on which all would have a veto.¹⁰ This was intended to provide political cover with the left for Wilson's decision to retain the deterrent, as well as offer an alternative to the MLF which the USSR might be able to accept.¹¹ At his first summit with Wilson in December 1964, Johnson, learning, as Kennedy had, about the obstacles to progress with the MLF, withdrew active American encouragement and placed the burden on the British and the Germans to settle their own differences before further steps could be taken. This also enabled McNamara and other skeptics about the practicality of "hardware" solutions to the problem of Germany's nuclear role, to press for a consultative solution instead, while the MLF faltered in occasional and inconclusive Anglo-German exchanges. The Germans correctly concluded Britain would not present them with an acceptable formula without American pressure and Johnson realized British antipathy to the MLF made Anglo-German agreement unlikely, dissuading him from pressing Wilson.¹²

By early 1965, Bundy, McNamara, and Ball were agreed that the MLF's prospects were dim enough that a fallback position based on increased nuclear consultation in NATO was required. McNamara had suggested consultative measures as early as the 1962 Athens NAC meeting, and a Special Committee was created later in 1965 to discuss consultative measures, leading to the formation of a permanent Nuclear Planning Group in 1966. A study overseen by Acheson in 1966 recommended more vigorous measures in pursuit of détente, but through NATO, lest de Gaulle attempt once again to seek an easing of East-West tensions with France as spokesman for Western Europe. Later that year the superpowers reached agreement on a Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), with Kurt Georg Kiesinger, head of the Grand Coalition that succeeded Erhard's government in December, agreeing to sign and to formally renounce all hope of a "hardware solution" only under intense pressure from

Johnson and numerous changes to the text in response to his concerns. In parallel with increased moves in the direction of détente, the Johnson administration promoted the 1967 Harmel Exercise, which led to NATO's adoption of deterrence and détente as complementary goals, and eased German fears by making NATO a vehicle for collective direction of East-West negotiations, rather than reserving that field to Washington.¹³

Isolated within NATO and without allies in his effort to construct a Third Force where the *force de frappe* provided a nominally European nuclear capability, de Gaulle announced in March 1966 that he was withdrawing France from NATO's integrated military command structure. While this crystallized support in France for use of the deterrent as a purely national instrument, it forfeited any say in NATO's major decisions. France lost the power to impede the Harmel Exercise, or the compromise on NATO doctrine in 1967 around a modified version of Flexible Response that called for stronger conventional forces but did not forego the option of first resort to nuclear weapons. France's absence, and the acknowledged military dependence of both Britain and Germany on America eased the development of consensus within the alliance.¹⁴

Agreement on the NPT and the replacement of the MLF by the NPG meant there was no longer as much need for Britain to pay lip service to the need for a European defence identity in order to buy its way into the EEC. With the world role proving unsustainable at an acceptable price, and Washington's preference for British membership still clear, in 1967 Wilson moved to avert Germany, now firmly in the Atlanticist camp, replacing Britain as the principal American ally by opting for a second application, this time recognizing that Britain would essentially have to sign on to EEC arrangements as they were. He did not offer nuclear cooperation. De Gaulle issued a second veto, and when Britain made its third application, the Conservatives under Heath had replaced Wilson and Pompidou, who had succeeded de Gaulle, knew France would pay a high price in standing and influence in Europe if it went ahead with a third veto against the clear wishes of the Five. Heath had hinted at Anglo-French nuclear cooperation and a downgrading of Anglo-American ties in order to ingratiate himself with the nominally Gaullist Pompidou. The Germans made it clear that they would oppose entry on the basis of a nuclear bargain, and Pompidou was, in any event, eager to balance Germany's economic might with British entry, as well as concerned that the government in Bonn, now headed by Brandt, would prove too reckless in pursuing better East-West relations. After difficult negotiations, and despite the costs it would bear as a

result of the CAP, Britain joined in 1972.¹⁵ Britain retained its deterrent not only through the lifetime of Polaris, but beyond, with Prime Minister James Callaghan persuading President Jimmy Carter at the 1979 Guadeloupe summit to make the Trident C4 missile available as a successor, both to maintain Britain's defenses and for possible inclusion in eventual disarmament negotiations with Moscow.¹⁶ The only serious discussion of Anglo-French nuclear collaboration in British politics since Heath seems to have come in 1986. At that point, the alliance between David Owen's Social Democratic Party and David Steel's Liberals was foundering over differences between the former, who were insistent on a post-Polaris deterrent, and the latter, who were prepared to relinquish nuclear weapons. A shaky compromise would have seen Britain form a joint nuclear force with France, which was intent on remaining a nuclear-weapon state.¹⁷ While political quarrels over the deterrent and British membership in the EEC cropped up, these were henceforth completely independent issues.

Nuclear sharing and the organization of Europe were both shaped by the series of nuclear crises that began in 1957 and ended in late 1962. *Sputnik* put the credibility of extended deterrence into question, and generated demands for a voice in NATO's nuclear decisions from the three major European allies. The Eisenhower administration's decision to deploy IRBMs under bilateral agreements as an interim measure, rather than fall in with Norstad's call for a force under explicit NATO direction made the conclusion of particular agreements crucial to the fortunes of nuclear sharing. The 1958 revision of the McMahon Act that allowed closer cooperation with Britain struck de Gaulle as perpetuating a privileged Anglo-American nuclear partnership and discriminating against France. After his early exchanges with Dulles and his 1958 proposal that NATO be run by its three major powers, the Eisenhower administration concluded his insistence on national control of France's nuclear arms made agreement on anything short of formal tripartism, which was out of the question, unlikely. This confirmed the administration in its reluctance to assist the development of the *force de frappe* and complicated Macmillan's early overtures for nuclear assistance in return for closer British ties with Europe.

Khrushchev's ultimatum over Berlin made the reliability of American security guarantees a matter of pressing concern, and Macmillan's trip to the USSR gave de Gaulle the opportunity to reinforce Adenauer's suspicions that Britain would not stand by West Germany in a crisis and to tighten Franco-German bonds. Eisenhower's public confidence in

the credibility of extended deterrence in the case of Berlin and his insistence that contingency planning for the city's defence command the support of all the Western powers, despite his underlying sympathy with British beliefs that some concessions might prove necessary in the end, placed a ceiling on disagreements between France and Germany on the one hand and Britain and America on the other. At the same time, his reluctance to impose the logic of the Bowie report on America's allies, and to leave a definitive solution of the problem of nuclear sharing to his successor, deferred the emergence of open and sustained conflict over the pooling of national deterrents.

The renewal of tensions around Berlin in 1961 gave the new Kennedy administration incentive to clarify what its leading figures regarded as NATO's unconvincing and outmoded strategic doctrine, and to advocate the strengthening of the alliance's conventional forces in order to create a more credible deterrent to Soviet aggression aimed at Berlin than the threat of early resort to nuclear weapons. The administration narrowly defined the West's indispensable interests in Berlin, and sought to convince the European allies of the case for a conventional defense of Berlin without further inflaming their doubts about American willingness to risk nuclear conflict in defense of the Continent.¹⁸

The erection of the Berlin Wall may appear in retrospect as the first step in the consolidation of a comparatively stable territorial *status quo* around Berlin, but it was not universally appreciated at the time. In the absence of unambiguous statements by Khrushchev that this was the case, it seemed equally plausible that it was merely the first step in the city's incremental isolation and subsequent takeover. With further aggression viewed as possible, particularly but not solely by some Europeans, NATO strategy for Berlin's defence displaced other issues from Kennedy's agenda. His administration was now concerned to reassure the Europeans by building up both strategic nuclear forces and conventional forces around Berlin, and emphasizing that the United States enjoyed nuclear superiority over the Soviets. It also made the case for flexible response, putting the need for central control of nuclear weapons and the disadvantages of small and uncoordinated deterrents at the heart of the debate about NATO's overall nuclear strategy.

But Kennedy's emphasis on stronger conventional forces reinforced Adenauer's suspicions of Anglo-American softness and left him more open to the program the Berlin crisis allowed de Gaulle to put forward. This would organize Europe around a tight Franco-German axis, German partnership purchased by French resistance to compromise or

negotiation over Berlin and a willingness to brandish nuclear weapons in its defence, in exchange for the reduction of Anglo-American influence in Europe, with Britain's marginality reinforced by its exclusion from the EEC. The Franco-German alignment made it almost impossible for the Kennedy administration to impose flexible response upon NATO as a whole.¹⁹

The widespread assumption that the Cuban missile crisis was connected to Berlin (either with the Soviet deployment as deliberate preparation for renewed pressure for Western concessions there, or with American actions against Cuba risking Soviet seizure of the city in retaliation) affected both American actions during the crisis and allied responses to them. The danger of unintended and uncontrolled escalation of hostilities, particularly around Berlin, led Kennedy and his advisers to carefully calibrate their use of the military instrument, choosing the minimal exertion of power compatible with achieving the desired end. In Bonn and Paris, the lack of consultation regarding American decisions that might determine whether hostilities broke out in Europe generated alarm.

Superpower cooperation (both that which genuinely took place, and that which was suspected) to defuse the crisis and circumvent Castro's obstruction of a verifiable settlement also struck de Gaulle and Adenauer as possible prelude to collusion in imposing a Berlin settlement over their heads. Thus the Cuban crisis intensified those divisions within NATO which the Berlin Wall had brought to the surface, enabling de Gaulle to reject Britain's EEC bid and the Nassau agreement and formalize the exclusive Franco-German tie by treaty.²⁰

The official and unofficial expressions of the Kennedy administration's interpretation of the crisis and its lessons served to validate French and German suspicions. The assertion of the need for effective central control of nuclear weapons seemed to renew the attack on national nuclear forces implicit in McNamara's remarks at Athens and made public in his speech at Ann Arbor, while the claim that America's local conventional superiority had proved as important as the strategic nuclear balance to the outcome appeared as a mere pretext for confining NATO's European members to non-nuclear roles.

Macmillan had not been particularly troubled by the limited nature of what Anglo-American consultation took place during the crisis, and he welcomed indications of reduced American interest in an MLF and optimism about the possibility of negotiating agreements on disarmament and nonproliferation with the Soviets. Yet the perception that Britain had been a mere bystander despite possession of its own deterrent augmented the plausibility of

his critics' contention that Britain's nuclear weapons bought little real influence in a world in which the crucial decisions rested in the hands of the superpowers. American utterances about the virtues of central control of nuclear arms reinforced the impression created by the Ann Arbor speech, that Washington sought to compel the abandonment of Britain's deterrent. The imminent cancellation of Skybolt fit all too neatly into this narrative, as the final, fatal blow at British nuclear independence. Macmillan may have secured the far superior Polaris system at Nassau, but the successful test of Skybolt following the conference served as apparent proof that cancellation had been a political, not a technical or financial decision.

In that light, the Anglo-American agreement on Polaris was taken as increasing Britain's nuclear dependence on America, though designed in part to mitigate Macmillan's political embarrassment. Thus Macmillan's political opponents got the better of the domestic debate (as the 1964 election results demonstrated), while de Gaulle had a convenient pretext for rejecting the Nassau offer and bringing the negotiations in Brussels to a close. He could now depict Macmillan as having fatally compromised Britain's nuclear independence and chosen trans-Atlantic over European ties, in order to justify Britain's continued exclusion from the EEC and the consolidation of a closed European bloc in order to thwart Kennedy's imposition of American nuclear hegemony on Europe. Where Kennedy's interpretation of the Cuban crisis held that central control of Western nuclear defences was necessary, de Gaulle's held that France (and a Western Europe dominated by France) required nuclear weapons under its own exclusive control.

Yet this ultimately proved a harder sell in the aftermath of the Cuban crisis than in that of the Berlin Wall, because the renewal of aggression against Berlin was more plausible in the earlier instance than in the later one. While the connection between the missiles in Cuba and the possibility of hostilities in Berlin, still the principal flashpoint of the Cold War, had generated alarm during the crisis itself, the risk of escalation that had forced caution on both sides now suggested that further Soviet pressure on Berlin was unlikely. Cuba established that the post-*Sputnik* improvements in the USSR's strategic position did not necessarily translate into Soviet gains in the event of a nuclear confrontation between the superpowers. In such a crisis, the inhibiting fear of uncontrolled escalation were what counted. (Though this could also increase the appeal of sacrificing minor interests, especially if they were merely those of allies; Kennedy opted for the tacit deal involving the Jupiters over military

escalation,²¹ but moved to discredit the rumours of such a trade lest they legitimize de Gaulle's charge that he was prepared to sell out his allies to minimize the risks of nuclear war.) After Cuba, subjective calculations of American and Soviet resolve mattered less; there was a recent, and seemingly unambiguous, precedent in which firm but measured American resistance, and awareness of the dangers of war by miscalculation, had induced Khrushchev to climb down. Moreover, Khrushchev's moves towards a more conciliatory stance on East-West issues, including Berlin as well as disarmament, suggested his understanding of how little could be changed without risk of nuclear war, and thus indicated his acceptance of the territorial *status quo*. Subsequent superpower competition avoided flashpoints such as Berlin and Cuba, where neither could safely exercise force without challenging the other's acknowledged vital interests, with all the risks that entailed; conflicts by proxy, generally in areas not only peripheral to the superpowers in geographic terms, but of limited inherent significance to the global balance, superseded direct confrontation. Where Moscow or Washington felt compelled to intervene in localized conflicts largely for reasons of prestige or to reassure regional allies, it would do so in places like Vietnam or Afghanistan.²²

Kennedy's and Khrushchev's decision to seek a limited ban rather than a comprehensive one, and to shelve for the moment such divisive issues as an NAP or a non-dissemination treaty, enabled both to quickly produce tangible benefits from their respective moves in the direction of *détente*. The acceleration of the Sino-Soviet split during the Cuban crisis gave Khrushchev further reason to reduce East-West tensions, while the spectre of Chinese nuclear weapons made it easier for Kennedy to point to Khrushchev's relative moderation as reason for strengthening his position within the Communist bloc and to sell skeptics on the merits of the PTBT.

The stabilization of the European *status quo* after the Cuban crisis strengthened the position of critics of Adenauer's rigidity, ranging from Brandt in the opposition SPD to Schroeder and Erhard within the governing coalition. The success of Kennedy's visit to Berlin, and the public's faith in his commitment to its defence, reinforced the emerging partnership between Kennedy and Brandt in the promotion of *détente* and incremental reunification through East-West contacts.²³ Adenauer's close alignment with de Gaulle separated him from not only the Kennedy administration but his own colleagues, and made it possible for the man once regarded as so crucial to German stability that he enjoyed an effective veto over American initiatives towards the Soviets to be isolated in his own

government and replaced as the embodiment of an acceptable (in American eyes) Germany.²⁴

Macmillan's conscious linking of Britain's bid for EEC membership with wider questions of Western stability and cohesion was, on balance, a qualified success. It enabled him to overcome the reservations of Cabinet colleagues about the turn towards Europe and, when de Gaulle's double veto came, to secure active American support of the dual strategy of isolating de Gaulle within Europe and Adenauer within his own government. His handling of the connection between Europe's nuclear defenses and its economic and political organization was equally adroit. Anglo-American differences over tripartism and national deterrents were too wide for him to offer de Gaulle a nuclear bargain as unambiguously as he may have wished, though he certainly danced across the boundary of what the Foreign Office considered tolerable from time to time. Yet his hints to de Gaulle were vague enough that, in the wake of the double veto, he could change tack and confirm resistance of the Five to Gaullism through advocacy of European political cooperation and a shared identity on defense matters that was less nationalistic than de Gaulle's conception, albeit with a carefully hedged commitment to its truly multilateral element. That commitment was measured so as to forestall the development of the MLF by Washington and Bonn on a bilateral basis (the emergence of a strong and exclusive German-American tie as an alternative to the Anglo-American one was, of course, something Macmillan had been concerned to prevent since the deliberations on the Polaris-Holy Loch agreement) and contain American criticism of the British stance, while allowing indefinite prolongation of any definitive decision.

As for Kennedy, the preference for incremental measures that addressed the most pressing questions while avoiding irrevocable decisions on others that he followed during the Cuban crisis served him equally well in the aftermath of the *double non*. He used the MLF as a rallying point against de Gaulle, but reserved his own commitment to it, responding to Soviet objections and allied reluctance by encouraging further discussion and deferring any final decision on the force's future. He also pushed ahead with improved East-West relations to the point where further proliferation was impeded by the PTBT, but not beyond what either domestic or allied opinion would accept; the limited nature of the 1963 détente was as much a function of the fact that it was largely a means to particular ends, ends that had been met by the end of 1963. Bonn's accession to the PTBT and Khrushchev's clear determination to deny nuclear assistance to China can be seen as the foundations of a more explicit nonproliferation regime, but in their own right they raised additional barriers to a German

bomb and the political costs of pursuing a Chinese one.²⁵

Interdependence, as understood by Macmillan and accepted by Kennedy, related as much to matters of diplomacy as those of military cooperation. As one study notes, de Gaulle's double veto was self-defeating insofar as it confirmed close Anglo-American cooperation to defeat his conception of Europe.²⁶ British dependence on American assistance went beyond the provision of Polaris to isolating de Gaulle and Adenauer and setting limits to Franco-German cooperation. This eventually made it easier for Wilson to torpedo the MLF, retain Britain's deterrent, and seek EEC entry. That he would pay Macmillan's strategy the implicit compliment of following the path it made possible is, perhaps, a more reliable indication of that strategy's merits than his earlier polemics against it, although one can be forgiven for doubting if Macmillan took much consolation from the fact.

As well, a Western Europe where France had been reduced to a minority of one on questions of both economic integration and defence was not a Western Europe which France could plausibly attempt to lead, while Bonn was inhibited by Germany's own history and the sensibilities of her allies from transmuting its economic might into political leadership of the Continent. Macmillan had feared British exclusion from the EEC largely on the grounds that a steadily uniting Europe from which Britain was absent might supplant his country as Washington's ranking ally. Franco-German disagreements, France's wider isolation in both the EEC and NATO, and deadlock on Europe's political development precluded the emergence of a cohesive European bloc able to play such a role. *Faute de mieux*, Britain remained America's principal collaborator in Europe even before circumstances allowed it to enter the EEC. Thus Anglo-American interdependence was preserved, even in the temporary absence of the structural change to Europe's organization which Macmillan had sought as its institutional foundation.

Notes

1. Neustadt to Bundy, November 9 1963, f.Government Consulting, Skybolt/Atlantic Affairs, Atlantic Assignment, 1963, Box 19A, Neustadt Papers, JFKL. Emphasis in original.
2. Oliver Bange, The EEC Crisis of 1963: Kennedy, Macmillan, de Gaulle and Adenauer in Conflict (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 236.
3. On the 1964 election, see Kevin Jefferys, "British Politics and the Road to 1964", *Contemporary Record*, 9/1 (Summer 1995), pp. 120-146. On Wilson's use of national decline as the central theme in his critique of the Conservative record, see Andrew Gamble, "Theories and Explanations of British Decline", and Robert Eccleshall, "Party Ideology and National Decline", pp. 1-22 and 155-183 of Richard English and Michael Kenny, eds., Rethinking British Decline (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).
4. Wilson, "Eve of Conference Speech on Foreign Affairs, Scarborough, 1963", in his Purpose in Politics (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), pp. 3-13, 9. See also idem, The New Britain: Labour's Plan (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), passim.
5. Jeffrey Glen Giauque, Grand Designs and Visions of Unity: The Atlantic Powers and the Reorganization of Western Europe, 1955-1963 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pp. 219-223.
6. Scarborough eve of conference speech, Purpose in Politics, p. 9.
7. See Steven Fielding, "'But Westward, look, the land is bright': Labour's Revisionists and the Imagining of America, 1945-1964", pp. 87-103 of Jonathan Hollowell, ed., Twentieth-Century Anglo-American Relations (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).
8. Robert Pearce, ed., Patrick Gordon Walker: Political Diaries, 1932-71 (London: The Historians' Press, 1991), pp. 299-300, "Thoughts on Foreign Policy", August 1964 memorandum.
9. Ibid, p. 297, entry for February 4 1964.
10. "Atlantic Nuclear Force", memorandum handed to the United States, December 1964, FO 371/179079.
11. John W. Young, "Killing the MLF? The Wilson Government and Nuclear Sharing in Europe, 1964-66", *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 14/2 (April 2003), pp. 295-324.
12. James Ellison, The United States, Britain and the Transatlantic Crisis: Rising to the Gaullist Challenge, 1963-68 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 19; Thomas A. Schwartz, Lyndon Johnson and Europe: In the Shadow of Vietnam (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 50-53.
13. Schwartz, pp. 110-162.
14. Samuel F. Wells, Jr., "Nuclear Weapons and European Security", pp. 63-75 of Michael J. Hogan, ed., The End of the Cold War: Its Meaning and Implications (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 70-71.
15. Beatrice Heuser, NATO, Britain, France and the FRG: Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe, 1949-2000 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), p. 161. Heath's suggestion is in his Old World, New Horizons: Britain, the Common Market and the Atlantic Alliance (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 72-73.
16. Kenneth O. Morgan, Callaghan: A Life (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 619-621.
17. Ivor Crewe and Anthony King, SDP: The Birth, Life and Death of the Social Democratic Party (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 341-356. Owen appears to have taken the idea seriously, Steel to have seen it as a tactical device for papering over the disagreement.
18. As noted in Andreas Wenger, "The Politics of Military Planning: Evolution of NATO's Strategy", pp. 165-192 of Vojtech Mastny, Sven G. Holtsmark and Andreas Wenger, eds.,

War Plans and Alliances in the Cold War: Threat Perceptions in the East and West (London: Routledge, 2006).

19. Erin Mahan, "Through the Looking Glass: The Berlin Crisis and Franco-American Perceptions of NATO, 1961-1963", pp. 89-106 of Andreas Wenger, Christian Nuenlist and Anna Locher, eds., Transforming NATO in the Cold War: Challenges beyond Deterrence in the 1960s (London: Routledge, 2007).

20. Id., "Delaying Détente: Kennedy, De Gaulle, and the Limits of Alliance Politics", pp. 57-75 of Manfred Berg and Andreas Etges, eds., John F. Kennedy and the 'Thousand Days': New Perspectives on the Foreign and Domestic Policies of the Kennedy Administration (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2007), 60.

21. See Andreas Wenger, Living with Peril: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Nuclear Weapons (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), pp. 297-298, for this view of the crisis.

22. Ronald Steel, "The End and the Beginning", pp. 103-112 of Hogan, ed., op cit.

23. On this partnership, see David C. Geyer, "Setting the Stage: John F. Kennedy, Willy Brandt and the Origins of Ostpolitik", pp. 39-56 of Berg and Etges, eds., op cit.

24. On Adenauer's changed status in American eyes, see Giauque, op cit, p. 222.

25. On the limited nature of the 1963 détente, Jennifer W. See, "An Uneasy Truce: John F. Kennedy and Soviet-American Détente, 1963", *Cold War History*, 2/2 (January 2002), pp. 161-198, is useful but does not thoroughly discuss Kennedy's short-term goals.

26. James Ellison, The United States, Britain and the Transatlantic Crisis: Rising to the Gaullist Challenge, 1963-68 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 188-189.

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