EUROPEAN/AMERICAN RELATIONS OVER THE S.D.I.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the dispute that arose between the United States and key European members of NATO (Britain, West Germany and France) over the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). The debate is traced from its inception on March 23, 1983, when Reagan announced his decision to accelerate ballistic missile defence research, to the eclipse of SDI as a major source of transatlantic and international controversy when Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev signed the INF Treaty in December 1987. The transatlantic SDI debate is investigated to determine: (1) the underlying cause, or reasons, for the controversy, (2) how the Alliance managed the differences which arose, and (3) how East-West relations affected the manner in which the controversy was handled. This study includes analysis of past transatlantic controversies about military strategy; reasons why Reagan launched SDI as a unilateral programme; the nature and reasons for West European opposition to SDI; how compromises over SDI were sought and effected (or rejected) between the U.S. and Britain, West Germany and France; the role of the ATBM debate in the SDI controversy; and the significance of the Reykjavik summit and the INF treaty in the SDI debate. Three main and related conclusions emerge from this study. First, that differing conceptions of what constituted a credible nuclear strategy and a stable nuclear regime, rather than the issue of BMD deployment, was the primary cause of the SDI controversy. Second, that in managing the SDI dispute, the Alliance ignored the salience of differing conceptions of strategy and sought agreement on the terms of SDI research in order to maintain NATO unity. And third, that contrary to what the literature on alliances posits, the improvement in East-West relations toward the end of the SDI debate increased rather than decreased NATO unity.

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ACRONYMS

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile
ASAT	Anti-Satellite Weapon
ATBM	Anti-Tactical Ballistic Missile
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defence
CDU	Christian Democratic Union, West Germany
CSU	Christian Social Union, West Germany
FDP	Free Democratic Party
GLCM	Ground Launched Cruise Missile
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
INF	Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces
LNO	Limited Nuclear Option
MAD	Mutually Assured Destruction
MIRV	Multiple Independently Targeted Reentry Vehicle
NAA	North Atlantic Assembly
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPG	Nuclear Planning Group
SAC	Strategic Air Command
SALT I	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks I
SALT II	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks II
SDI	Strategic Defence Initiative
SDIO	Strategic Defence Initiative Organization
SEP	Selective Employment Plans
SLBM	Sea Launched Ballistic Missile
SLCM	Sea Launched Cruise Missile
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Talks
WEU	West European Union

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I. THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN/AMERICAN RELATIONS OVER SDI

This study examines the controversy that the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) engendered within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the manner in which this controversy was managed. The primary questions that this thesis seeks to answer are: Why did the Reagan Administration's decision to pursue SDI cause such controversy within the Alliance? And how, and to what extent, did the United States, Britain, West Germany and France reconcile their disagreements about SDI?

The disagreement over SDI within the Alliance has been primarily attributed to the assumption that the United States and Europe had divergent security interests and that the deployment of BMDs would therefore affect European and American security differently. A central argument forwarded in this study is that the transatlantic controversy was not primarily due to the prospect of BMD deployment; rather SDI caused controversy because it highlighted and heightened long-standing disagreements within the Alliance about nuclear strategy, arms control, and the conduct of East-West relations. SDI thus became a vehicle through which these prior differences manifested themselves; it was not however their primary cause.

The second argument forwarded in this thesis concerns that manner in which the SDI controversy was managed. I argue that rather than confront the doctrinal differences exacerbated by SDI, the Alliance deliberately ignored them in order to maintain transatlantic unity and instead focused on finding areas of agreement that were peripheral to the main issues evoked by SDI. While this method of papering over important differences constituted the primary means by which the SDI controversy was managed, a seemingly contradictory element of decision-making within the Alliance dictated the manner in which SDI arose and was occasionally handled within the Alliance: unilateral American action.

Explaining how these seemingly contradictory methods coexisted and why papering over differences was the method to which the Alliance consistently reverted, despite the Reagan Administration's occasional unilateral initiatives, can most appropriately be explained by reference to the detailed analysis presented in the main text of this study. Yet, to provide a basis for understanding the underlying dynamics of the transatlantic SDI debate, it is necessary to understand the essential dilemma of the Alliance.

From its inception in 1949, NATO relied on the US strategic nuclear guarantee to deter a Soviet attack against Western Europe. Ensuring the credibility of this guarantee has been a central preoccupation of Alliance members throughout NATO's history. While some American officials questioned this reliance on nuclear weapons even before it became official NATO policy, the credibility of the American nuclear guarantee was not seriously questioned until 1957 when the Sputnik launch demonstrated the Soviet Union's ability to deliver nuclear warheads to US territory. Since that time the United States has attempted, in the words of Albert Wohlstetter, "to reconcile the possibility of increasing self-destructive levels of violence with the original and continuing purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons, namely, to deter a Soviet invasion of Europe."[1]

In response to this dilemma the Kennedy Administration advocated a strategy of "flexible response" for the Alliance. Its primary objective was to try to reduce NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons and, to the extent that nuclear reliance was still necessary, to rely on limited nuclear options in order to limit both the levels of damage and the likelihood of escalation. In general, West European governments opposed these changes on the grounds that by reducing the prospect of devastating retaliation they weakened the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons and thereby increased the likelihood of a Soviet attack on Western Europe. Furthermore, West European officials argued that in the event of conflict the more limited scenarios envisaged by US planners could lead to a limited nuclear war on European territory.

Given these West European objections, American officials had to attempt to reconcile their desire to fashion what they considered a more credible NATO strategy with the necessity of maintaining Alliance unity. Accordingly, the NATO strategy that emerged in 1967 reflected a compromise between the United States and West European governments. In concrete terms, the strategy of flexible response, while increasing NATO's conventional forces and reducing reliance on indiscriminate nuclear strikes, retained the essential elements of the strategy it was meant to replace: ultimate reliance on US strategic nuclear forces to deter Soviet attack against Western Europe. Perhaps more importantly, however, the flexible response debate demonstrated the extent to which the requirements of strategic credibility and Alliance cohesion were increasingly coming into conflict.

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[1] Albert Wohlstetter and Richard I. Brody, "Continuing Control as a Requirement for Deterring," in A. B. Carter, J.D. Steinbrenner, and C.A. Zracket (eds.) Managing Nuclear Operations, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1987), p. 178.

Recognizing this inherent dilemma, the United States, beginning in the late 1960's, attempted to bring its key West European allies into its nuclear planning process through the creation of the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG). The premise of the NPG was that joint decision-making on issues directly affecting NATO strategy would engender greater Alliance consensus. Consequently, the NPG was an important step in enabling NATO to function as a genuine Alliance.

At the same time, the NPG was unable to solve the dilemma inherent in the American nuclear guarantee. As long as NATO's security ultimately rested on the strategic nuclear guarantee of the United States, and as long as the Soviet Union possessed the ability to retaliate with devastating effect should the United States execute this guarantee, the underlying nature of NATO's security was tenuous. For, whatever one's views about the willingness of the United States to defend Western Europe, the fact that in doing so it ensured its own destruction was bound to create incessant and nagging doubts about the credibility of the US nuclear guarantee and thus the credibility of NATO strategy. Moreover, this strategic dilemma was bound to drive the United States to change NATO strategy in order to reduce the likelihood that in defending Western Europe it would bring about its own destruction despite the knowledge that in doing so it risked antagonizing West Europeans.

Understanding this dilemma is essential to understanding why the United States alternated between unilateral actions and papering over differences in order to reduce disagreement in managing the SDI controversy. In essence these two strategies of management reflected the two competing requirements of the Alliance: ensuring a credible strategy and maintaining unity. The introduction of SDI as a fait accompli and the Reykjavik proposals reflected the US desire to increase the credibility of NATO strategy, while the desire to paper over differences reflected the desire to maintain Alliance unity. Investigating how these usually contradictory requirements were reconciled will be a primary objective of this study.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature on Alliances

The existing literature on Alliances can be conveniently divided into three main areas: Alliance formation, Alliance performance, and the effect of Alliances on the international system.[2] Of these three main categories, the one most directly relevant to this thesis concerns the issue of Alliance performance. Although an extensive literature exists on the topic of Alliance performance, there are few widely accepted theories regarding the manner in which Alliances function or what factors are most important in the way they manage disputes. Indeed, the entire literature on Alliance performance suffers from a paucity of generally accepted theories, a criticism that is almost universally advanced by scholars.[3]

Despite these shortcomings, certain general propositions about Alliance performance have gained acceptance within the field. Two are of particular relevance to this thesis. First, that nuclear weapons generally have a deleterious effect on Alliances. And second, that the perception of the external threat confronting an Alliance is the major determinant of Alliance cohesion.

The first proposition - that nuclear weapons tend to undermine the efficacy of Alliances - enjoys a reasonably wide consensus in the literature. As Henry Kissinger remarked, "Nuclear weapons tend to introduce inconsistencies into traditional Alliances, because no country will die for another."[4] This proposition about the effect of nuclear weapons on Alliances is particularly relevant for this thesis because the assumption that nuclear weapons have a deleterious effect on Alliances derives from assumptions regarding the degree to which the vulnerability of a country to nuclear retaliation renders its nuclear guarantees to allies less credible - an assumption underlying the Reagan Administration's decision to pursue SDI. The SDI controversy within NATO should, therefore, shed light on the validity of this assumption regarding the effects of nuclear weapons on Alliances.

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[2] See for instance Holsti, Hopmann, and Sullivan (eds.) Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973), p. 12.

[3] Michael Don Ward, Research Gaps in Alliance Dynamics, (Denver, CO: Monograph Series in World Affairs, Volume 19, No. 1, 1982).

The second proposition concerning Alliances that is relevant to this thesis - that as external threats increase so does Alliance cohesion - is perhaps the most universally accepted assumption in the Alliance performance literature. According to the authors of an extensive review of the Alliance literature, "Probably the most widely stated proposition about Alliances is that cohesion depends upon the external danger and declines as the threat is reduced."[5] And after rigorously testing this proposition the authors concluded that "cohesion is thus largely dependent on the intensity of that threat, and the major cause of their [Alliances] disintegration may be the reduction or disappearance of the external threat."[6]

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[4] Henry Kissinger, "The Changing Nature of Alliances." Paper read at a meeting of the U.C.L.A. National Security Studies Program (May 15, 1964). While this notion enjoys relatively wide acceptance within the literature there are exceptions. See for example, A.F.K. Organski, World Politics. 2nd edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968. p.331-332: "Nuclear weapons do not reduce the value or number of alliances."

[5] Holsti, op. cit., p. 17.

Yet, it will be argued in this case that the relationship between external threat and Alliance cohesion was the opposite of that posited in the literature, namely, that as the degree of external threat diminished Alliance cohesion increased. One purpose of this thesis will be to investigate and test the assertion forwarded by a prominent student of Alliances who argues that "policies designed to improve East-West relations are not necessarily compatible with those designed to enhance the cohesion of NATO."[7]

The NATO Literature

There have been useful empirical studies on the effect of external threats on NATO cohesion. They suffer, however, from two major shortcomings. First, they deal with a period of the Alliance's history when the implications on nuclear parity had yet to be grasped. Second, these studies examined the Alliance before the detente of early 1970's which, of course, had a great effect on NATO.

For the most part, the literature on NATO is dominated by historical accounts. There are exceptions[8], of course, but in general there has been little systematic study of, or general conclusions about, how NATO manages its disputes. Nevertheless, the extensive literature on the Atlantic Alliance is valuable. The history of past disputes have been exhaustively chronicled.[9] Usually, they concerned themselves with a particular country,[10] or a particular mechanism by which the Alliance handles its disputes. There have also been useful comparisons of ways that the Alliance has dealt with different issues.[11] Moreover, excellent studies have been conducted on the strategy of the Alliance, its shortcomings, strengths, and possible remedies for the strategic dilemmas that confront the Alliance.[12]

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[6] Holsti op. cit., p. 41.

[7] Holsti, op. cit., p. 144.

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[8] Edwin H. Fedder, NATO: the Dynamics of Alliance in the Postwar World, (New York; Dodd, Mead & Co., 1973).

[9] For example, see David N. Schwartz, NATO's Nuclear Dilemma's, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1984); Jane E. Stromseth, The Origins of Flexible Response, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); Paul Buteux, The Politics of Nuclear Consultation in NATO 1965-1980, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); and Lawrence S. Kaplan, NATO and the United States: The Enduring Alliance, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988).

[10] See for instance Catherine M. Kelleher, Germany and the Politics of Nuclear Weapons, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), and Wilfred L. Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959).

[11] See for instance David N. Schwartz, NATO's Nuclear Dilemmas, op. cit.

[12] See for instance, Henry Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and American Foreign Policy, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957).

The Literature on SDI and NATO

The literature on both the Strategic Defense Initiative and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is extensive.[13] Numerous edited volumes exist that detail particular aspects of the transatlantic controversy over SDI; they cover such topics as the implications of SDI for the ABM treaty, NATO strategy, East-West relations, European industrial competitiveness, as well as the position of various countries toward the American initiative.[14] Moreover, there are some excellent book length studies that examine both SDI and NATO and focus either on the military implications of the prospective deployment of ballistic missile defences, or the implication of Soviet BMD activity on the Western Alliance.[15]

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[13] The literature on both SDI and NATO is voluminous. On SDI major works by proponents of SDI include Keith B. Payne, Strategic Defense: "Star Wars" in Perspective (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Press, 1986); Alun Chalfont, Star Wars: Suicide or Survival, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985); and Angelo Codevilla, While Other Build: A Common Sense Approach to Strategic Defense, (New York, NY: Free Press, 1988). For works critical of SDI see E.P. Thompson, Star Wars: Science Fiction, fantasy, or serious probability, (New York: Pantheon, 1985); Stanford A. Lakoff and Herbert F. York, A Shield in Space?: Technology, Politics, and the Strategic Defense Initiative, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

[14] See for example Stanford Lakoff and Randy Willoughby (eds.) Strategic Defense and the Western Alliance, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1987); Hans Gunther Brauch (ed.), Star Wars and European Defence, (London: MacMillan Press, 1987); Regina Cowen, Peter Rajcsanyi, and Vladimir Bilandzic, SDI and European Security, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1987); and Fred S. Hoffman, Albert Wohlstetter, and David S. Yost (eds.),Swords and Shields, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1987).

To date, the transatlantic SDI controversy has not been adequately studied. To be sure, the issue of SDI and the NATO Alliance has been explored by scholars; yet little systematic study of the effect of SDI on the Atlantic Alliance exists. Thus while the above mentioned studies raise important questions, they do not offer a comprehensive account or analysis of the manner in which the Atlantic Alliance conducted, managed, and ultimately resolved the controversy to which the SDI gave rise.

The work that comes closest to doing so is Ivo H. Daalder's The SDI challenge to Europe.[16] Daalder describes various important aspects of the transatlantic dispute about SDI. He portrays the political, strategic, and technological "challenge" which SDI posed to Britain, France, and the Federal Republic of Germany. While he ably describes the objections which European countries voiced concerning SDI, by his own admission, he offers little analysis: "While at times analytical, the SDI story is mainly told through an examination of diverse European reactions to these multiple facets of the SDI programme."[17] Thus this book offers no central theme or argument that provides the reader with a basis for understanding the underlying forces of the transatlantic controversy and consequently no framework within which to understand the nature and ultimate outcome of the European/American dispute about SDI.

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[15] For a study warning of the negative implications of the prospective deployment of BMD's see Ivo H. Daalder NATO Strategy and Ballistic Missile Defence, Adelphi Paper 233. For a study which takes a more positive view of the implications of BMD deployment see Robert M. Soofer, Missile Defenses and Western European Security, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988). For an excellent study of the impact of Soviet BMD on NATO see David S. Yost, Soviet Ballistic Missile Defense and the Western Alliance, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

[16] Ivo H. Daalder, The SDI Challenge to Europe, (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1987).

The generalizations and conclusions which Daalder offers tend to simplify the essential nature of the transatlantic controversy. In so doing, he presents a somewhat inaccurate picture of the origins of SDI[18], the reasons underlying the European reaction to SDI. Daalder exaggerates Europeans' enthusiasm for nuclear weapons. For instance, in contrasting the American and European view of the desirability of retaining a regime based on nuclear deterrence he states that: "this conviction on the part of Americans [that nuclear weapons should be abolished] is not, however, shared by all Europeans and is thus one instance where security interests profoundly diverge." This is at best only partially true. Indeed, the British Labour Party was during most the SDI debate committed officially to the policy of unilateral disarmament and the removal of American nuclear weapons from British soil, while the West German SPD was officially committed to the creation of nuclear free zones in Central Europe and the transcendence of nuclear deterrence through a security partnership with the East. The Labour Party and the SPD's opposition to nuclear deterrence played a significant role in determining the opposition which both the British and West German governments faced when they decided to support SDI research. For despite the anti-nuclear aspects of SDI which worried the British and German governments, the Labour Party and the West German SPD tended to view SDI as a continuation of American attempts to increase the warfighting potential of its arsenal and augment the capacity of US leaders to confine nuclear war to European territory. Thus the extent to which nuclear weapons were viewed in Europe as integral to European security interests was highly dependent on the party which occupied power in Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany. Consequently, Daalder presents a somewhat inaccurate portrayal of the way that the controversy was managed within the Alliance. Moreover, his study covers only the first half of the transatlantic debate about SDI.

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[17] Daalder, op. cit. p. 6.

[18] Daalder attributes the Reagan Administration's decision to pursue SDI to an American propensity to view "technology as a substitute for policy itself." In fact, while the United States has at times demonstrated an unwarranted faith in technology, Daalder's interpretation underestimates the salient importance of political and strategic factors in determining Reagan's decision to launch the Strategic Defense Initiative. See Daalder, op. cit., p. 4.

Most importantly for the purposes of this study, Daalder, in the opinion of this author, misinterprets the reasons why SDI created such controversy within the Alliance. He states "that Europe and the United States have divergent security interests. The implications of a fundamental, indeed, revolutionary change in the security system which the deployment of strategic defences might bring about, must therefore be analyzed from the perspective of these differing interests."[19] He contends that "the deployment of strategic defenses may improve some NATO member countries's security but make matters worse for others."[20] His contention, then, is that the intra-Alliance dispute about SDI was primarily attributable to differing US and West European strategic interests and the differing manner in which deployment would affect the respective sides of the Atlantic.

III. THESIS STATEMENT AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Thesis Statement

A central argument that this thesis will attempt to demonstrate is that the Strategic Defense Initiative caused controversy within the Alliance because it highlighted and heightened long-standing disagreements between the United States and its key West European allies about what constituted a credible NATO strategy and a stable strategic regime. I attempt to refute the proposition that the intra-Alliance controversy about SDI was due to the United States and its West European allies having divergent security interests that, in turn, would dictate differing implications for deployment in the United States and Western Europe.

Above all, I argue that despite the differences that were highlighted and heightened by SDI, the Alliance attempted to paper over these differences by ignoring the fundamental doctrinal disagreements that were exposed by SDI. In side stepping fundamental differences, the Alliance attributed the controversy caused by SDI to the distant prospect of deployment. Accordingly, the management of the SDI issue focused on creating restrictive criteria governing research that ensured that there was a clear distinction between research and deployment; furthermore it was held that any deployment decision would have to observe strict criteria of cost effectiveness and negotiate the prospect of deployment with the Soviet Union. Significantly, these criteria and stipulations did not address the fundamental doctrinal issues raised by SDI; they were means by which to avoid addressing them and therefore became instruments for papering over the most significant issues raised by SDI.

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[19] Daalder, op. cit., p. 33.

[20] Ibid.

A third and subsidiary argument that is forwarded concerns the role that East-West relations played in the debate. I argue that as East-West relations improved Alliance cohesion increased; it did not diminish as the alliance literature predicted.

Significance

The issue of why SDI caused such disagreement within the Alliance and how this disagreement was managed has significance both for policymakers and scholars. The SDI had particular significance for the NATO Alliance because it constituted the first major inter-governmental disagreement about strategy since the advent of nuclear parity. While the INF controversy engendered wide-spread controversy among Western European publics, NATO's decision grew out of a common desire to reinforce the credibility of established strategy and not, like SDI, a desire to change the strategy itself. What SDI thus signified were profound American doubts about its ability to extend nuclear guarantees to non-nuclear allies under conditions in which it was itself vulnerable to devastating retaliation should it implement these guarantees. In this sense, the SDI transatlantic controversy raises important questions about the viability of alliances in the nuclear age.

Another significant question raised in the transatlantic SDI controversy concerns the nature of alliances themselves. As was stated above, current theory on alliance performance stresses that alliances are more unified when the threat from outside is greatest for this reinforces their respective need for one another.[21] The intra-Alliance controversy about SDI throws this long-held assumption into serious doubt and thus makes a contribution to the literature on alliances. The unique circumstances created by an alliance under conditions of nuclear parity may well have altered if not invalidated the proposition that an increased external threat leads to greater cohesion within alliances.

Because the penalties for the failure of deterrence in the nuclear age are so enormous and because the credibility of the threat to risk nuclear war in behalf of allies is suspect, the amelioration of tensions with adversaries as a means of preventing war has been deemed essential to security. Accordingly, actions that are seen to hinder such improvement or to increase the external threat to the alliance have centrifugal rather than centripetal influences on the alliance. Investigating how, in the transatlantic SDI controversy, this detente requirement was reconciled with the need to maintain adequate deterrent capabilities could provide valuable insight into the future of alliances as nuclear weapons proliferate.

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[21] See for instance Holsti, Hopmann, and Sullivan (eds.) Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973).

Above all, this study will determine the underlying cause of the transatlantic SDI controversy and thus enable us to better understand why the participants decided to go about managing the dispute in the way in which they did. It is expected that the results of this study will reveal that it is not specific weapons systems that create difficulties within the Alliance but rather the differing conceptions about nuclear strategy and arms control that different members of the Alliance harbour.

IV. PROCEDURE

This is a case study of the transatlantic controversy about SDI from March 23, 1983 when Ronald Reagan delivered the speech that launched the Strategic Defense Initiative until December 1987 when the United States and the Soviet Union signed the INF treaty, thereby eclipsing SDI an issue of major contention with the Alliance. In utilizing the case study method, both the strengths and weakness of this approach have been taken into account.[22] The strengths of the individual case study are, of course, that it allows for a far more detailed and varied examination of a specific historical event than would a comparison of many different cases. Indeed, it is hoped that in addition to demonstrating the validity of the propositions being forwarded this thesis will make an original contribution to the SDI literature by providing the first comprehensive account of European/American relations over the SDI that is based mainly on primary sources.

The weakness of the case study method are equally apparent. Because only one case has been selected, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions in the absence of corroborating cases. Yet such limitation are to be expected when studying the case of European/American relations over the SDI. First, there are no other similar Alliances with which to compare NATO. While the Warsaw Pact would be one obvious candidate for such a comparison, the structure of that Alliance was different in so many significant respects as to render it less than satisfactory as a basis for comparison. Second, the SDI debate constituted the first European/American debate about strategy in an era of unquestioned US-Soviet parity.[23] Despite these limitations, the case study method is employed in this thesis because it is the most appropriate way to investigate the questions being posed; it facilitates the collection of the detailed information required; and it provides a historical framework for analysis.

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[22] See Alexander L. George, "Case Study and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison," in Lauren, Diplomacy: New Approaches in Theory, History, and Policy, ed. Paul Gordon Lauren (New York, 1979), pp. 61-62.

In order to investigate the cogency of the arguments being forwarded in this thesis, the following procedure will be followed.

First, in order to provide a framework or context for this study, I will analyze relevant past transatlantic disputes about strategy in order to identify the underlying and persistent sources of disagreement within the Alliance as well as determine the manner in which these disagreements were resolved.

Second, I will investigate the origins and purposes of SDI, giving special attention to determining to what extent SDI was similar to and different from initiatives that have occupied NATO's attention in the past.

Third, I will undertake a detailed examination of the initial British, West German, and French reactions to the American initiative. This will entail examining and interpreting primary source documents to determine the issues that were of underlying concern in London, Bonn, and Paris. After the respective positions of Britain, West Germany and France are delineated, I proceed to analyze why each country held the positions that it did and then juxtapose these reasons against those that the United States forwarded in arguing that SDI was necessary. It is expected that in comparing and analyzing the positions of the four countries in this way, we will be able to determine the underlying nature of the SDI controversy within the Alliance.

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[23] As mentioned previously, while the INF controversy was every bit as threatening to the unity of the Alliance, it was not a debate about strategy.

Fourth, after establishing the underlying cause of the disagreement on SDI, I will seek to determine how the intra-Alliance disagreements were managed and how the positions of each country changed over time. This will entail analyzing the British, West German, French, and US positions on the three main events pertaining to SDI that arose after Reagan's March 23, 1983 speech:

- the debate about West European participation in SDI research.
- the question of whether to build an Anti-tactical ballistic missile (ATBM).
- the Reykjavik summit and its aftermath.

Hypotheses

In order provide a framework for analy the SDI dispute three main hypotheses related to the thesis will be examined throughout the schema presented above. One pertains to the underlying cause of the disagreement and the other two pertain to manner in which the controversy was managed or resolved.

The first hypothesis is that differing European and American conceptions of the proper nuclear strategy for the Alliance was the primary cause of the SDI controversy during the 1983-87 period. The antithesis of this proposition or argument is that the primary cause of the SDI controversy was that differing American and West European strategic interests, including the manner in which deployment would affect West European and American security, was the primary cause of the transatlantic dispute over SDI.

The second hypothesis is that in managing the SDI dispute the Alliance papered over the fundamental doctrinal disagreements that SDI highlighted and heightened. In so doing attention was focused on the issue of research and the implications of deployment, rather than different conceptions of a credible strategy.

In the third hypothesis, it is argued that Alliance cohesion did not increase in response to the perception of a greater external threat. This thesis will argue that, in fact, the opposite was more nearly the case, namely, that as the external threat to the Alliance increased Alliance cohesion decreased. Moreover, it will be argued that the degree of external threat was not the primary determinant of Alliance cohesion; rather, it was internal factors that played the most important role in determining Alliance cohesion. Determining the relationship between internal and external threats in determining Alliance cohesion will be an ancillary result of investigating the effect of external threat on Alliance cohesion.

Sources

This thesis is based mainly on primary sources. For US sources I relied heavily on Congressional testimony, official texts of speeches published by the United States Information Agency (USIA), Defense Department posture statements, and Presidential directives on SDI. In addition, I conducted interviews at the State Department in April 1986 and interviews at the Strategic Defense Initiative Office (SDIO) at the Pentagon in the Fall of 1986 and the Spring of 1987. Not surprisingly, given the emphasis which the Reagan Administration gave to SDI, the amount of material from US sources was enormous.

For obtaining information on the Federal Republic of Germany I relied heavily on German language sources. The proceedings of the Deutsche Bundestag, which I obtained at the Bundestag Library in Bonn, proved most valuable as they allowed me to obtain material both on official governmental views of SDI as well as the views of the opposition parties. Moreover, speeches by the German Defence Minister, Manfred Wörner, that were not given before the Bundestag proved extremely useful in untangling the complexity of the West German position on SDI. I am indebted to the German Information Center in New York as well as the German Embassy in London for supplying me with copies of these speeches as well as other publication of the West German Ministry of Defence. In addition, I made use of other speeches provided by the German Information Service through their Speeches and Statements service.

I relied heavily on translated speeches in investigating the French government's position toward SDI. Fortunately, the French Embassy in London and, to a lesser extent, the French Embassy in Washington provided voluminous and comprehensive translations of speeches on foreign policy and defence issues. In addition, I relied on press accounts to a greater extent when studying the position of the French government than I did with the other countries in the intra-Alliance controversy about SDI.

For British sources, I utilized Parliamentary Reports which, like their German counterparts, provided valuable information both on governmental and opposition viewpoints on SDI. I also relied heavily on other official publications such as Defence Estimates, inquiries by Parliamentary Committees such as the Defence committee, as well as speeches by the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Defence Secretaries. These sources were gathered primarily at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). In examining the positions of the WEU and NATO, I relied on official communiques of their meetings as well as press accounts of these meetings.

The primary limitation encountered in conducting this study involved the fact that many primary source documents that could have been useful were unavailable because their declassification must await the passage of time. In order to compensate for this handicap, I conducted interviews with government officials.

While these interviews were in many respects helpful, I did not find government officials particularly forthcoming. Instead, these interviews were useful in confirming the validity of information available in the open literature.[24]

The Major Countries

In analy the SDI controversy within the Alliance, I have chosen to focus on four main countries: the United States, Britain, West Germany and France. As the leader of the Alliance and the initiator of the SDI programme, the inclusion of the United States is not difficult to justify. In addition to the United States, I examine the policies of Britain, West Germany and France. I have done so primarily because these three European countries alone possess the combination of economic, military and political power which confers upon them a status, influence and prestige not enjoyed by other European members of NATO. Simply put, London, Bonn and Paris have played a more important role in Alliance deliberations, especially with respect to nuclear weapons, than have other European countries. Moreover, the focus on these four countries was justified in light of the fact that the SDI debate was conducted primarily bilaterally between these countries (usually between the US and Britain, West Germany, and France, respectively). While there was some multilateral debate and diplomacy both within NATO and the WEU, the most frequent and important interactions occurred bilaterally and therefore the main focus of this study will be on the individual countries rather than on either NATO or the WEU, although the roles of these institutions will, of course, be discussed when appropriate. Within the context of their positions as the most important European countries within NATO, Britain, West Germany and France played a distinctive role within the Alliance.[25] (In general, I will discuss the West European countries in the following order: Britain, West Germany, and France. I have chosen to do so because Britain was most frequently the first West European country to respond in a substantive way to SDI and this reaction often affected the way that West Germany and France reacted. Similarly, I have placed West Germany ahead of France because it usually reacted before France.)

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[24] A list of the interviews conducted is included in the bibliography.

Britain's role in the Alliance has been dominated by its desire to maintain the so-called "special relationship" with the United States. Despite growing evidence that Britain's interests lay increasingly on the European continent, the lure of the "special relationship" proved difficult for British governments to resist, and none more so than Mrs. Thatcher's. British governments have seen the special relationship not only as a means of vicariously maintaining its global role, but as a relationship that places Britain in a position to mediate disputes between Washington and continental European capitals. While this role made Britain's European credentials suspect on the continent, it did facilitate the resolution of many transatlantic disputes.

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[25] The practice of concentrating on Britain, France, and West Germany is widely followed in other NATO studies. See for example: Schwartz, NATO's Nuclear Dilemmas, op. cit., Daalder, The SDI Challenge to Europe, op. cit., Stromseth The Origins of Flexible Response, op. cit.

Germany's role in the Alliance was perhaps the most complex of the major European countries. German officials had to shape their policy around the often conflicting objectives of ensuring the territorial integrity of their country against possible attack and the imperative of overcoming the artificial division of their country by improving relations with the Soviet Union. As the only one of the "big three" without nuclear weapons and given its geographical position on the front line of the NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation, the Federal Republic was particularly dependent on the United States and hence eager to ensure the credibility of the American commitment to her defence. At the same time, German officials sought to reassure their Western partners of the Federal Republic's steadfastness, which it expressed in the form of fielding the largest Western conventional force on the continent. Yet this process of ensuring continued Western commitment to her defence tended to conflict with the objective of seeking closer ties with the Soviet Union, which viewed German support for NATO strategy and objectives as inimical to Soviet interests and as a possible harbinger of a revival of German militarism. Consequently, German officials were particularly sensitive to developments that could complicate arms control agreements and the improvement of East- West relations. The Federal Republic, therefore, had to balance its desire for the continued credibility of NATO strategy with the need to ensure the continuation of arms control and the possibility of improved East-West relations.

France also had to balance a set of distinctive interests within the Alliance. First and foremost, France had predicated her security policy on the twin pillars of deterrence and independence as manifested by its strong commitment to an independent nuclear deterrent. Traumatized by its defeat in 1940 and subsequent dependence on foreign powers to restore its sovereignty, France, particularly under de Gaulle, has sought to ensure that it would never again be defeated or become dependent on another power for its survival. France has thus historically played the role of maverick in the Alliance, trying to challenge the United States for leadership and pursuing independent defence strategies, a policy that culminated in France's withdrawal from NATO's integrated military structure in 1966. At the same time, French officials had been careful not to undermine the American presence in Europe which they regarded as indispensable to their security. What they sought was a more prominent European voice in Alliance affairs, if necessary through a distinctively European defence identity within the NATO structure. For this reason France placed great emphasis on its special relationship with Germany seeing this as a possible foundation which could form the basis for a European defence identity.[26] Thus, France has sought a delicate balance of trying to simultaneously build a greater European identity without undermining the United States's continued commitment to European security.

V. ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

In Chapter two, I examine past transatlantic controversies about NATO strategy in order to analyze the underlying causes of past disputes as well as the manner in which these disputes were managed. In Chapter three the origins of the Strategic Defense Initiative are considered. Analysis is directed towards the reasons underlying the Reagan Administration's defence policy prior to SDI. This delineation includes consideration of the difficulties and obstacles encountered by the administration as it attempted to implement its offensive modernization programme and, finally, why it decided to launch the Strategic Defense Initiative when it did.

In Chapter four, the initial European reaction to SDI is analyzed. This chapter focuses on why Britain, West Germany and France initially reacted the way that they did to SDI. In Chapter five, the Reagan Administration's effort to enlist European support for SDI is analyzed. Accordingly, the US effort to assuage European anxieties about the strategic implications of SDI is studied as well as the Reagan Administration's invitation to West European countries to participate in SDI research. The European response to the Reagan Administration's invitation to participate in SDI research is examined as is the opposition which the British and West German governments experienced when they decided to accept the American invitation. In Chapter six, the basic issues and controversies surrounding the possibility of introducing ballistic missile defences into the European theatre are studied.

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[26] Developing close ties with West Germany also served another French objective, namely, to counteract what Paris perceived as a Drang nach Osten that they believed still tempted German policymakers and also to ensure that Germany would never fell sufficiently isolated that it might try to strike out on its own.

In Chapter seven, I analyze the European reaction to the Reykjavik summit and the refusal of the United States to trade away SDI. Included in this chapter is consideration of the reasons which the tabling of the Reykjavik proposals engendered in Europe, the role that the INF Treaty played in this debate and the forces leading to eventual eclipse of the transatlantic debate over SDI. In chapter eight, I examine to what extent the evidence presented in this study confirms the thesis that was forwarded in the beginning, what lessons can be drawn from this transatlantic controversy, and the contributions that this thesis can make to the literature on NATO and Alliances in general.

II. HISTORY OF PAST TRANSATLANTIC DISPUTES ABOUT MILITARY DOCTRINE

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the framework within which to analyze the transatlantic controversy over the Strategic Defense Initiative. This entails examining why past disputes arose within the Alliance as well as how these disputes were managed. Moreover, it involves examining the underlying causes of intra-Alliance controversy and the extent to which these controversies had been managed or resolved. Investigating these factors should provide valuable insight into the reasons why SDI was launched, why it was presented the way that it was, why it evoked such strong reaction, and why it was managed the way that it was. Accordingly, in this chapter past disputes are analyzed in order to answer such questions as: Why NATO came to rely so heavily on the US strategic nuclear guarantee? Why was the credibility or this guarantee doubted? And how did NATO respond to these doubts?

The answers to these questions will be sought by examining four major past disputes within the Alliance: the establishment of massive retaliation in the 1950's, the flexible response debate of the 1960's, the 1967-1972 ABM dispute (which, while far less contentious than the SDI dispute, foreshadowed many of the concerns that were later broached in the SDI debate), and the INF controversy, which was the last major transatlantic dispute before the launching of SDI and as such provided the immediate context within which the SDI dispute should be understood. While different in many respects the controversies that will be analy in this chapter were chosen in order to highlight the key doctrinal issue that has occupied a central place within NATO since its inception, namely, the credibility of extended deterrence.

Throughout our examination and analysis of these events, we will seek to determine what major issues persisted over time and why, what issues became more and less important, what distinctive roles Britain, West Germany and France played in these disputes, and what trends were discernable with respect to the manner in which disputes were handled or managed. It is hoped that in answering these question we will be able to determine, among other things, to what extent SDI was similar to as well as different from the controversies that preceded it.

II. MASSIVE RETALIATION

The Origins of NATO's Nuclear Reliance

When NATO promulgated its first military plan in 1949, the Alliance partners agreed to a Strategic Concept for the Integrated Defense of the North Atlantic Area which called for the United States to respond to a Soviet attack against Western Europe with "strategic bombing promptly by all means possible with all types of weapons without exception."[1] Yet almost immediately following NATO's decision to base its defence on the deterrent value of US strategic nuclear weapons, doubts emerged as to the advisability of this reliance. Even before the Military Committee had formally adopted NATO's Strategic Concept, the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic weapon, an event which immediately raised questions about the credibility of the newly formed strategy. Shortly before the NATO treaty was ratified, Dean Acheson gave voice to these concerns in a remarkably prescient secret memorandum:

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[1] "Memorandum by The Secretary of State [Acheson]," 20 December 1949, quoted in Albert Wohlstetter, "The Political and Military Aims of Offense and Defense Innovation," in Swords and Shields, eds. F.S. Hoffman, A. Wohlstetter, and D.S. Yost (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1987), p. 29.

> Is it true that within 5-10 years the U.S.S.R. may by expected to have a stockpile of atomic weapons of sufficient size effectively to neutralize the present advantage which we possess and might this time be shortened if the U.S.S.R. developed a thermonuclear reaction? ... If this is so, would we be better off addressing ourselves now to finding substitutes for the defensive shield our atomic weapons are now giving our allies?[2]

Acheson argued that unless this pressing issue were immediately addressed "reliance upon the atomic defensive shield" would probably "prevent progress toward the substitutes."[3] These words proved prophetic.

The problems associated with the near exclusive reliance on strategic nuclear threats were reinforced by the outbreak of the Korean War as well as by evidence that the Soviet Union was developing a hydrogen bomb. Accordingly, the Truman Administration began augmenting NATO's conventional forces, and, in February 1952, together with its European Allies, adopted the Lisbon conventional forces goals which called for NATO to field 96 NATO divisions by 1954. The rationale underlying this decision was provided by U.S. Army Chief of Staff General J. Lawton Collins who argued in Senate hearings in February 1951 that: "Without adequate army forces on the ground, backed up by tactical air forces, it would be impossible to prevent the overrunning of Europe by the tremendous land forces of the police states no matter what air and sea power we could bring against them.... it takes army troops on the ground to repel an invasion on the ground."[4]

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[2] Ibid., p. 30.

[3] Ibid.

The Lisbon goals for the build up of conventional forces were never achieved. Three major factors explain this. First, none of the parties to the Lisbon decision was willing to spend the considerable sums which they believed would be needed to meet the Lisbon goals. Second, there was great doubt that even if the established goals could be affordably procured, NATO would still confront a superior Soviet ground force. And third, there was the belief that any conflict would quickly escalate to the use of nuclear weapons in which case the conventional forces would be irrelevant. It is important to emphasize these reasons behind the failure to build up conventional forces because they set the pattern for subsequent failures to augment conventional forces and thus contributed to NATO's initial propensity to rely so heavily on nuclear weapons, a reliance from which the Alliance found it difficult to free itself. What is perhaps most important to realize about the early years of the Alliance was how quickly reliance on nuclear weapons was established, how doubts immediately arose as to the wisdom of this reliance, and how despite these serious doubts NATO found it difficult to free itself from its dependence on nuclear weapons.

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[4] Assignment of Ground Forces of the United States to Duty in the European Theater, Senate Hearings, p.154 as quoted in David N. Schwartz, NATO's Nuclear Dilemmas, (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1983), p. 19.

Massive Retaliation and the Eisenhower Administration

Given the political and economic realities confronting it when it entered office as well as its political inclinations, the Eisenhower Administration advocated that NATO base its strategy on the use of nuclear weapons to offset Soviet conventional advantages, arguing that they provided a cheaper and ultimately more effective means of deterrence. This new policy direction became known as the "New Look" and was characterized by American reliance "primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of our own choosing"[5] in response to most military contingencies. Many interpreted this policy as sanctioning indiscriminate and immediate attacks against the Soviet Union itself in the event of conflict. In fact, while it indeed envisaged extensive nuclear responses, there was nothing to suggest that such strikes need lead to a general nuclear war. Indeed, it was "[t]he assumption that the tactical use of nuclear weapons could compensate for deficiencies in conventional ground forces [that] underlay much of the thinking about defence issues in the Eisenhower Administration."[6]

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[5] John Foster Dulles, "Proposed 'Talking Paper' for Use in Clarifying United States Position Regarding Atomic and Hydrogen Weapons During Course of NATO Meeting in Paris on 23 April 1954," quoted in Jane E. Stromseth, The Origins of Flexible Response: NATO's Debate over Strategy in the 1960's, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1988, p. 13.

In October 1953, the Eisenhower Administration's preference for reliance on nuclear weapons was translated into official US policy through the promulgation of NSC 162/2, which "authorised the American Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to base their planning on the use of nuclear weapons in the event of general or local war."[7] The specific operational plans which arose from this directive instructed the United States military to extend "tactical atomic support for US or allied military forces in general war or in local aggression whenever the employment of atomic weapons would be militarily advantageous."[8] The guidelines further stated that "the tactical atomic support which can be provided to our Allies will become increasingly important in offsetting present deficiencies in conventional requirements."[9]

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[6] Ibid., p. 17.

[7] See David Alan Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill: Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945-1960," International Security, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Spring 1983), pp. 3-71.

[8] "Military Strategy to Support the National Security Policy Set forth in NSC 162/2," JCS2101/113, 9 December 1953, quoted in Stromseth, op. cit., p. 13.

On April 23, 1954, the American Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, explained to a restricted session of the North Atlantic Council the implications of this new strategy for the NATO Alliance. Dulles argued that effective deterrence of Soviet attack could be secured "only if based on the integration of effective atomic means within our overall capability."[10] Explaining the decision to forgo a major conventional build up, Dulles stated that:

> In reaching the decision to level off force build-ups, and to concentrate on qualitative improvements, we and our Allies have placed great reliance upon new weapons to compensate in part for the numerical disparity between NATO and Soviet forces... The United States considers that the ability to use atomic weapons as conventional weapons is essential for the defense of the NATO area in the face of the present threat. In short, such weapons must now be treated as having in fact become 'conventional'.[11]

The United States preference for a strategy of heavy dependence on nuclear weapons became official NATO policy in December 1956, when the Military Committee approved MC 14/2; this policy became known as "massive retaliation".

Given the United States' unquestioned role as the leader of the Alliance and as the ultimate source of European protection,

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., p. 14.

[11] Ibid.

NATO strategy in the early years was essentially dictated by Washington. This is not to say that London, Bonn and Paris did not hold strong opinions about what direction Alliance policy should take or that they had no influence. Examining what role they did play, what positions they adopted and why helps to understand later positions that they took. Indeed, one of the striking feature of the positions taken by Britain, West Germany and France in the early years of the Alliance is how little they changed over the ensuing years and how durable their specific concerns and objectives were. It is thus instructive to examine the positions of the British, West German and French governments toward the policy of massive retaliation.

The British Reaction to Massive Retaliation

The British government, having no interest in procuring large conventional forces, supported the Eisenhower Administration's policy of massive retaliation. More importantly, however, British officials concentrated during this period, on acquiring both atomic and thermonuclear bombs of its own, capabilities which it achieved in 1952 and 1957 respectively. Britain was keen to acquire nuclear weapons for two reasons. First, both the Labour and Conservative governments believed that possessing nuclear weapons was essential to maintaining the United Kingdom's great power status. Second, there was a suspicion that the United States could revert to the isolationism of the inter-war years thus leaving Europe exposed to Soviet conventional forces. This view was strengthened by the Suez crisis and the Sputnik launch which pointed out U.S. unreliability and growing Soviet capabilities, respectively. Thus while there was agreement on the emphasis on nuclear weapons, the British government was becoming increasingly concerned about the credibility of the US nuclear deterrent.

The West German Reaction to Massive Retaliation

The West German government was less concerned about the credibility of the US nuclear guarantee than were the British and French governments. West Germany's reaction to the policy of massive retaliation was heavily influenced by its almost total reliance on the United States for its security, its stated commitment to abjure possessing its own nuclear weapons capability, its desire to be seen as a dependable member of NATO, and, finally, by a surprising initial inability to grasp the implications of the Eisenhower Administration's policy.

The West German government did not at first grasp the implications of the U.S. policy of massive retaliation.[12] The most logical explanation for this state of affairs was that Adenhauer and his Defence Minister Theodore Blank were at that time concentrating on the goal of fulfilling the Lisbon goals as a means of demonstrating West Germany's commitment to NATO and integrating West Germany into the western Alliance. To have faced squarely the implications of the New Look would have meant devaluing the contribution that West Germany could make to the Alliance and thus render it less important to its Western partners, something that West German officials were reluctant to do. Perhaps most importantly, Adenhauer had won a bitterly fought battle within the German Bundestag on the question of German rearmament in which he argued that a strong conventional defence was necessary if Germany were to survive a conflict between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. To have accepted the implication of the New Look with its heavy nuclear emphasis would have vitiated the very arguments that Adenhauer had recently used to justify the basis for his entire defence policy.

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[12] This is particularly strange in light of the news reports and controversy created by the Carte Blanch exercise in which a simulated tactical nuclear exchange caused an estimated 1.7 million German deaths and over 3.5 million injuries.

In July 1956, one week after the Adenhauer government won its final victory in this debate and secured Bundestag approval for conscription, news of U.S. Admiral Radford's plan to reduce substantially the American conventional forces in Europe leaked to the press, causing wide-spread consternation within the West German government.[13] Adenhauer, however, continued to stress the paramount importance of conventional forces. It was not until pressure from his military and the appointment of Franz Josef Strauss as new Defence Minister (who understood the implication of the New Look and was an enthusiastic supporter of arming the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons) that West Germany began to grasp the implications of the New Look for West German defence policy. Accordingly, in December 1956, Adenhauer requested that the United States arm West German forces with nuclear weapons that would be under the ultimate control of NATO commanders. Although Adenhauer was clearly bitter about the inconsistency of American policy, he was careful to avoid articulating his displeasure.[14]

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[13] Schwartz, NATO's Nuclear Dilemmas, op. cit., p. 53.

The French Reaction to Massive Retaliation

The French government, like the British, was also interested in obtaining a nuclear deterrent of its own. French officials, like the British counterparts, believed that nuclear weapons were a necessary component of great power status, and would ensure a more prominent voice within Alliance councils.[15] The French government also wanted to possess nuclear weapons as a hedge against the possible resurgence of German militarism. Most importantly, however, French officials, led by General Pierre Gallios believed that if not in the 1950's then certainly thereafter the US strategic nuclear guarantee would no longer be credible in the face of the growing capabilities of the Soviet Union.

The American Shift

In response to criticism both within the United States and in Western Europe, the Eisenhower Administration began to revise it defence policy. While operational planning had never contemplated immediate resort to all-out nuclear attacks in response to a Soviet conventional attack, many American officials, particularly Dulles, intentionally created the impression that the United States was indeed basing its policy on the threat of strategic nuclear strikes against the Soviet Union from the very outset of hostilities. Yet by 1957, even Dulles had abandoned this pretence. He declared that it was necessary to "convince US allies that local attacks can be countered without necessarily inviting all-out nuclear war" and to "decrease the danger of local conflicts which might 'escalate' into general war."[16] In October 1957, Dulles attempted to elaborate his rationale for these declarations in a Foreign Affairs article:

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[14] Ibid., p. 144.

[15] French Prime Minister, Guy Mollet, authorized the building of an atomic bomb in 1956.

> The United States has not been content to rely upon a peace which could be preserved only by a capacity to destroy vast segments of the human race. Such a concept is acceptable only as a last alternative. In recent years there has been no other... Recent tests point to the possibility of possessing nuclear weapons the destructiveness and radiation effects of which can be confined substantially to predetermined targets.
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> ... It may be possible to defend countries by nuclear weapons so mobile, or so placed, as to make military invasion with conventional forces a hazardous attempt... Thus the tables may be turned in the sense that instead of those who are non-aggressive having to rely upon all-out nuclear retaliatory power for their protection, would-be aggressors will be unable to count on a successful conventional aggression, but must themselves weigh the

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[16] Ibid., p. 19.

consequences of invoking nuclear war.[17]

As David Schwartz has written, "Dulles seemed to be implying that the threat of massive retaliation had never presented much of a deterrent to an aggressor intent on conventional success; by implication, he argued that only the recent development of small-yield battlefield nuclear weapons would deter such an aggressor."[18] As such, his statements were interpreted as a major shift in US policy. In fact, Dulles was in many respects merely bringing US "declaratory" policy into line with "action" policy, since the reliance on tactical nuclear weapons began long before 1957 and actually predated the Eisenhower Administration. Nevertheless, these changes caused considerable consternation in Europe capitals, where the change in US declaratory policy was viewed as evidence of a declining willingness to extend the nuclear guarantee to Europe.

Yet, in the United States, even reliance on tactical nuclear weapons had become controversial. Maxwell Taylor, the Army Chief of Staff, "questioned the advisability of planning for the use of nuclear weapons in local wars."[19] Not only was he concerned about the high levels of destruction attending such use, but he also argued that the use of tactical nuclear weapons could too easily escalate to a general nuclear exchange. Despite the launch of Sputnik and the Soviet expansion of tactical nuclear weapons - which strengthened Taylor's arguments for improved conventional forces - Eisenhower refused to authorise a fundamental shift away from the United States' heavy reliance on nuclear weapons. Although he shared Taylor's concern about the dangers of escalation inherent in the use of tactical nuclear weapons, Eisenhower continued to resist calls for increased conventional force expenditures, contending that to do so would endanger the economic health of the United States.[20] Yet the explicit statement that the US would now rely on tactical nuclear weapons as well as Dulles' admission that reliance on massive retaliation through the employment of strategic nuclear weapons was not credible, did constitute a significant shift from the strategy that was articulated in the early years of the Eisenhower Administration.

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[17] John Foster Dulles, "Challenges and Response in United States Policy," p. 31, quoted in D.N. Schwartz, NATO's Nuclear Dilemmas (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1983), p. 51.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Stromseth, op. cit., p. 16.

These American changes, designed to lend greater credibility to a strategy that many, including quarters in Europe, believed was waning in credibility, only served to produce even greater concern about US reliability. The American changes confirmed West European doubts about the credibility of US strategy. In some senses one could expect that this would have evoked a sense of vindication among West European governments, but it did not. While denigrating the credibility of the American nuclear guarantee may have been logically compelling and thus conducive to garnering support for independent nuclear forces, for the United States itself to question the credibility of its deterrent was profoundly unsettling for West Europeans because it was, after all, a deterrent that they relied upon for their security.

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[20] Ibid., p. 21.

III. THE FLEXIBLE RESPONSE DEBATE

The credibility of the American nuclear guarantee was very much on the mind of John F. Kennedy. As a Presidential candidate and Senator, Kennedy was an outspoken critic of the Eisenhower Administrations's policy of massive retaliation. He contended that resort to strategic nuclear strikes in response to a Soviet conventional attack in Europe lacked credibility because of the United States' vulnerability to Soviet retaliatory strikes. Reliance on tactical nuclear weapons elicited scarcely less support from Kennedy; he maintained that their use in the European theatre entailed unacceptable risks of escalation to wider nuclear conflict:

> If it is applied locally, it can't necessarily be confined locally. [The] Russians would think it a prelude to strategic bombing of their industrial centers. They would retaliate - and a local use would become a world war.[21]

Kennedy's opposition to what he considered the United States' dangerous reliance on nuclear weapons to confront most major military contingencies led him to recommend a new strategy for NATO, a strategy which later came to be known as flexible response.

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[21] Ibid., p. 27.

The controversy engendered by the Kennedy Administration's effort to substantially alter Alliance strategy is of particular interest for our purposes, as it constitutes the last major doctrinal dispute within NATO before the Reagan Administration launched SDI. Thus, particularly with reference to the doctrinal dimensions of the SDI dispute, the flexible response controversy sheds light on the nature and extent of the strategic differences which existed within the Alliance. Moreover, there are striking similarities between the way in which flexible response and SDI were formulated and presented to the Alliance. Yet because East-West relations did not yet play the prominent role that they were to play in future controversies, examining the flexible response debate allows us to analyze each countries doctrinal position relatively independent of East-West relations.

The central feature of Kennedy's new policy was to recommend augmenting conventional forces so as to enable NATO to respond to a Soviet conventional attack without having to employ nuclear weapons. The task of formulating the specific manner in which this was to be accomplished and of implementing this preference was entrusted to Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, who shared Kennedy's deep scepticism regarding the credibility of massive retaliation. McNamara did not believe that the 6000-7000 nuclear weapons which NATO possessed in the early sixties provided "usable military power."[22] This view was reinforced as a result of the Berlin crisis of 1961 which, as he later explained, confronted the United States with the task of conceiving precisely how its vast nuclear arsenal might be used to influence events:

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[22] Robert McNamara, interview by Michael Charlton in The Star Wars History, (London: BBC Publications, 1986), p. 19.

> Beginning then, and extending months into the future, we studied intensively how, if at all, NATO might initiate the use of nuclear weapons with advantage to NATO. I did not find then, and I've never seen since, any indication that anyone in the world knows how to initiate the use of nuclear weapons with advantage to NATO. At that point we came to the conclusion that nuclear warheads are not weapons; they have no military value whatsoever, excepting only to serve as a deterrent to one's opponent's use of such weapons.[23]

He therefore argued that improving the West's ability to deter a conventional attack entailed "recognizing that we needed to increase conventional forces, and that we could not use, militarily, this tremendous nuclear force."[24]

At the same time, realizing that a certain reliance on nuclear weapons would still be necessary if for no other reason than to deter or, if necessary, respond to Soviet nuclear use, McNamara instituted changes in US nuclear targeting strategy. He moved to implement more flexible and limited means of employing US nuclear weapons should the need arise, recommending that "to the extent that nuclear weapons were to be used, to use them late and in limited quantity, and against military as opposed to population targets, in order to limit the Soviet nuclear response and thereby limit the damage to NATO."[25]

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[23] Ibid., 18. While some have doubted whether McNamara was quite so unequivocal about his opposition to nuclear use while Secretary of Defense as his statements during the 1980's suggest, the declassified documents of the period essentially corroborate his strong opposition to NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons. See especially Stromseth, op. cit., pp. 42-68.

[24] Ibid., p. 19. Emphasis in original.

McNamara did not, however, view this counterforce strategy for the use of nuclear weapons as providing compensation for the inadequacies in NATO's conventional posture. This point he made clear in his landmark Athens address to the North Atlantic council:

> we believe that the combination of our nuclear superiority and a strategy of controlled response gives us some hope of minimizing damage in the event that we have to fulfil our [nuclear] pledge. But I would be less than candid if I pretended to you that the United States regards this as a desirable prospect or believes that the Alliance should depend solely on our nuclear power to deter the Soviet Union from actions not involving a massive commitment of Soviet force. Surely an Alliance with the wealth, talent, and experience that we possess can find a better way than this to meet our common threat.[26]

Thus for McNamara the counterforce strategy fulfilled a specific yet limited purpose in the US nuclear guarantee to Europe. As he recalled many years later, "We recommended 'flexible response', which has an element of extended deterrence in it. But we considered that the extended deterrent element-that is, using nuclear weapons in response to Soviet conventional attack-was a last resort action. We urged that NATO reduce substantially the likelihood that it would ever be required, by increasing _conventional_ forces."[27]

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[25] Ibid., p. 17.

[26] Robert McNamara, "Remarks by Secretary McNamara, NATO Ministerial Meeting, 5 May 1962, Restricted Session," as quoted in Schwartz, op. cit., p. 160.

In the course of attempting to implement these changes in NATO policy, the United States encountered strong and often bitter resistance from Britain, West Germany and France. They objected to the US emphasis on increased conventional forces as this was interpreted as signalling a reduction in the US nuclear commitment to NATO. British, West Germany and French officials were concerned that flexible response would decouple US and European security by allowing the Soviet Union to entertain the possibility of a conventional assault on Western Europe unaccompanied by the fear that such an action would result in the destruction of the Soviet Union at the hands of the US strategic nuclear arsenal. Within the context of these general concerns, Britain, West Germany and France had specific reservations about flexible response.

The British Response to Flexible Response

The British government was opposed to the flexible response policy that McNamara articulated in Athens and Ann Arbor, Michigan. They resented the US Secretary of Defence's attack on the viability of "independent" nuclear deterrents of Britain and France; they contended that a conventional defence of Europe was not viable, and they feared that the American proposals would undermine its efforts to gain entry into the EEC. When the Labour Party entered power in 1964, the Kennedy Administration found a British government that was far more sympathetic to flexible response than Macmillan had been, though this change in the British disposition did not lead to full Anglo-American agreement. Irrespective of which party was in power, the reaction of the British government was characterized by a keen desire not to allow disagreements over strategy to undermine the "special relationship."

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[27] McNamara, in Charlton, _op_. _cit_., p. 17. Emphasis in original.

British officials did not believe that a full conventional defence of Europe was either feasible or desirable. Given Britain's difficult economic condition and the large size of Soviet conventional forces, Macmillan did not believe that the American proposals were feasible. Moreover, he contended that such a strategy rested on the dubious premise that any initial attack by the Soviet Union would not begin with nuclear weapons. The British Prime Minister, therefore, decided to retain his governments policy of reliance on nuclear weapons and opposed the strategy of flexible response.

Predictably, then, McNamara's statement, in Ann Arbor, that the United States opposed "weak nuclear capabilities, operating independently, which are expensive, prone to obsolescence, and lacking and credibility as a deterrent,"[28] was resented in London. Although the American Secretary of Defense issued a statement immediately following these remarks which stated that they did not apply to Britain, British sensibilities were definitely aroused by McNamara's remarks. The British government considered it essential for the United Kingdom to maintain its own deterrent and resented American intimation to the contrary. MacMillan considered the British deterrent essential to maintaining Britain's great power status and influence within NATO as well as a prudent hedge against the possibility that the United States may fail to come to Europe's defence. Yet he expressed opposition in a way that was calculated to maintain the exceptionally close relationship that he had forged with Kennedy.

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[28] See McNamara, "Address to the Ministerial meeting in Athens," op. cit. p. 46.

This decision payed off handsomely for Macmillan as it enabled Britain to remain a nuclear power at an acceptable cost. When the United States unilaterally cancelled the Skybolt missile that it intended to sell to Britain (which was to base its nuclear deterrent on this system), it created a minor domestic crisis in Britain. This decision highlighted Britain's technological dependence on the United States and reinforced perceptions of American unreliability. During an Anglo-American summit meeting in December 1962, shortly following the Skybolt decision, Kennedy agreed to provide Britain with the Polaris missile as a replacement. In order to portray this decision as being in accordance with the policy of opposing independent nuclear forces, the Nassau agreement stipulated that the British force would be integrated into a NATO nuclear force, thought one paragraph of the agreement stated that the British nuclear force could be withdrawn if "supreme national interests were at stake." The practical effect of this agreement was to ensure Britain's status as an independent nuclear power for at least another generation.

The Labour Party's victory in the 1964 General Election brought to power a government that was far more favourably disposed toward the strategy of flexible response than was its predecessor. The Labour Party had long been critical of Britain's and the Alliance's excessive reliance on nuclear weapons. As Labour defence spokesman Patrick Gordon Walker argued in the House of Commons:

> The United States has been engaged on a really very courageous recasting of its whole strategic thought in order to find an alternative to the repellent doctrine of massive retaliation. President Kennedy has himself led and initiated this. As he says, he wants another choice other than between humiliation and a holocaust. He must have a means of meeting at any appropriate level attacks which might come from Russia on any scale, including non-nuclear attacks met by non-nuclear forces.[29]

But when in power the Labour Party found it difficult to translate its agreement about the goals of flexible response into a concrete contribution toward its realization. Like the Conservatives they opposed the reintroduction of conscription, and economic realities did not allow for the substantial increases in spending that would have been required to build enough conventional forces to endow NATO with the force structure necessary to support the strategy of flexible response.

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[29] House of Commons Debates, 5 March 1962, cols. 63-64.

With respect to Britain's nuclear deterrent, the Labour Party had vowed to renegotiate the Nassau agreement which Kennedy and Macmillan had signed. It did this in form only. Defence Minister Denis Healy suggested that the MLF proposal, which constituted the vehicle through which Polaris would be utilized, be reshaped into an Atlantic Nuclear Force. This initiative essentially died aborning, yet the Labour Party carried through with previous plans to acquire the Polaris missile, thereby allowing Britain to retain the independent nuclear force which the Labour Party had previously criticized.[30]

The Labour Party's primary contribution during the flexible response controversy was to promote the creation of the Nuclear Planning Group. Denis Healy developed a particularly close relationship with McNamara and used this to push for greater European participation in nuclear planning. Healy argued that European members of NATO should have a far greater say in determining how, when, and in what numbers tactical nuclear weapons should be employed in the event of conflict. He believed that constructing arrangements to ensure such close cooperation would allow European governments to exercise far greater control over their destiny than "hardware" solutions such as the MLF. Healey was instrumental, along with the West German Defence Minister Schroder, in developing a plan for the employment of tactical nuclear weapons that emphasized greater flexibility with regard to the number and timing of targeting packages. These proposals were eventually adopted by NATO in 1969.

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[30] Stromseth, The Origins of Flexible Response, op. cit., p. 163.

The British reaction to flexible response, like the German and French, was characterized by certain fundamental factors that were to play a prominent role in the SDI dispute. First, throughout the flexible response controversy, despite harbouring serious doubts about the effects of American proposals, British officials were careful to object in a manner calculated to maintain the strength of the special relationship. The British government believed that ultimately European security rested on the strength of the Atlantic Alliance and not on the precise nature of its military doctrine, however important that may be. Moreover, both Macmillan and Wilson believed that the ultimate influence of Britain would be far greater if it refrained from outright opposition and attempted to change American policy in private. The fruits of this policy were proven during the flexible response controversy when Kennedy agreed to Macmillan's request for the Polaris missile almost solely on the basis of the British Prime Minister's appeal to the traditions of the special relationship.[31]

Second, British governments, whether under the Conservatives or Labour, found the lure of reliance on nuclear weapons difficult to resist. While the Conservatives were certainly more enamoured by nuclear weapons and in particular by the benefits that an independent forces accorded in terms of prestige and influence, the Labour government did not, as it could have, cancel the Polaris missile. Nor, despite their support for greater conventional efforts, did they abandon their ultimate faith in the efficacy of nuclear deterrence. As Denis Healy, the Defence Minister at the time, later remarked:

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[31] See Schwartz, NATO's Nuclear Dilemmas, op. cit., p. 82.

> I basically agreed in principle with McNamara, but the difficulty of the McNamara theory was first, that it required the Europeans to spend more; and second, nuclear deterrence was perfectly effective in stopping war. No-first-use would have been McNamara's objective, whereas the Europeans believed that nuclear deterrence gave deterrence on the cheap.[32]

In other words, Healy did not really agree with McNamara's theory which was, as we have seen, that nuclear deterrence was no longer credible. While he saw merit in proposals for a more flexible force, ultimately he remained convinced that the threat of nuclear retaliation would deter conflict. This was a view that the Labour Party was eventually to abandon, but it remained a significant article of faith of every post-war British government, whether Conservative or Labour.

The West German Reaction to Flexible Response

The West German government reacted negatively to McNamara's flexible response proposals. While West German officials were more restrained in their reactions than their French counterparts, there can be little doubt that the American proposals evoked considerable consternation in Bonn. They feared that his emphasis on conventional defence would create domestic difficulties, undermine the credibility of the American nuclear guarantee to Europe, weaken the concept of forward defence which was a prime tenet of their defence policy, and complicate Franco-German relations.

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[32] Interview with Denis Healy 13 September 1983, as quoted by Stromseth, The Origins of Flexible Response, op. cit., p. 164.

The Kennedy Administration's desire to reduce NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons was viewed by the West German government as yet another American reversal in defence policy. As previously mentioned, in the mid-1950's the Adenhauer government had staked its political prestige on a conventional build-up and had won a bitter battle in the Bundestag over West German rearmament. Soon after this battle had been won, however, the United States undermined his government by indicating that conventional forces would not after all play such an important role and that henceforth nuclear weapons would constitute the essential element of NATO strategy. Adenhauer overcame this set back and eventually won approval for arming the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons, thus bringing West German policy in line with declared American preferences. Given this background, it was understandable that West German officials reacted with consternation to McNamara's call for a build up of conventional forces and a concomitant down grading of the formerly touted nuclear emphasis.[33]

To compound matters still further, the American proposals dovetailed with arguments that the opposition Social Democrats had been making for years thus creating acute embarrassment for Adenhauer and his Cabinet. SPD defence experts such a Helmut Schmidt and Fritz Ehler praised McNamara's proposals, arguing that they conformed to West German interest far better than a strategy based on nuclear weapons. In his widely noted book, Defence or Retaliation,[34], Schmidt argued that in the absence of a credible conventional defence, Europe and especially Germany would become a nuclear battlefield in the event of war. He did not believe that the prospect of nuclear strikes and the threat of escalation would make an attack unlikely. Instead, he contended that as Soviet nuclear capabilities grew, these threats would become increasingly incredible and thus unlikely to provide a reliable deterrent. Adenhauer resented the fact that the Kennedy Administration adopted policies that were favoured by his opposition. He contended that it was he who expended great political capital in order to push through policies in the Bundestag that the United States favoured. Now the United States was undermining the very party that had been the most loyal supporter of American policy within West Germany. This was a sentiment that would be voiced by Adenhauer's political heir,

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[33] See Stromseth, The Origins of Flexible Response, op. cit., p. 76.

[34] Helmut Schmidt, Defence or Retaliation: A German View, (New York: Praeger, 1962).

Helmut Kohl, when the Reagan Administration presented SDI.

The West German government was also distressed by the manner in which the American proposals were presented. At the NATO ministerial meeting in Athens, McNamara essentially confronted the other members of the Alliance with an American fait accompli. Subsequent presentations about the new American policy were hardly more favourably received. American officials made little effort to solicit contrary opinions and left the impression with participants that the United States had decided on the course which NATO policy would follow and that the rest of the Alliance would have to adjust itself to these new realities. As one noted historian of this period relates:

> For the Germans these sessions seemed to provide further evidence of the Americans' determination to impose, not to discuss, changes in the common strategy, changes that would benefit the United States. The decision already had been made and publicized; German counterarguments were obstacles to be overcome, not legitimate points worthy of further consideration.[35]

It would be a mistake, however, to attribute German opposition to flexible response primarily to Bonn's displeasure with the way flexible response was presented or to the difficulties which this initiative created domestically.

Substantive concerns regarding the effect a flexible response on German defence and foreign policy were what most occupied West German decision makers. In particular, they were concerned that emphasizing the conventional build up would undermine the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons. Unlike their French colleagues West German officials were not interested in questioning the credibility of the American nuclear guarantee. On the contrary, they viewed any indication from Washington that extended deterrence was weakening as undesirable because, after initial reluctance to embrace the nuclear emphasis of the Eisenhower years, West Germany embraced nuclear deterrence as the only viable means of defence.

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[35] Catherine Kelleher, Germany and the Politics of Nuclear Weapons, as quoted in Stromseth, The Origins of Flexible Response, op. cit., p. 128.

Because of its geographic location and non-nuclear status, West Germany was far more vulnerable in any type of war, whether conventional or nuclear, than other members of the Alliance. Even an effective conventional defence would not suffice to safeguard West Germany because it would necessarily entail making West Germany the battlefield for such an encounter, thus undermining the cherished and politically essential concept of forward defence.[36] Instead, Adenhauer and Strauss stressed the importance of preventing an attack by confronting the Soviet Union with the possibility that if they started a conflict it could end in their own destruction. This strategy they believed required an explicit American commitment to use nuclear weapons from the outset of any hostilities. The West German government, therefore, had little use for nuclear concepts such as pauses and nuclear thresholds which accorded conventional forces a greater role. They regarded the mere articulation of such concepts as deeply injurious to the credibility of NATO strategy. As Strauss argued in the Bundestag, "to meet a conventional attack, whether large or small, with conventional weapons alone was the ideal invitation to an aggressor to attempt such an attack, knowing that it would not be as dangerous."[37]

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[36] One of the conditions that West Germany demanded for its participation in NATO was the concept of forward defence which meant that they would countenance no strategy that envisaged trading space for territory, which given military realities would be the only viable means of mounting a credible conventional defence.

The Adenhauer government was also concerned that the flexible response proposals could endanger its relations with France. West German officials feared that were they to accept McNamara's proposals, Franco-German relations could be undermined at a time when Adenhauer was attempting to forge closer relations with Paris. West German officials were well aware of France's opposition to flexible response and feared that it would be forced to choose between Washington and Paris at precisely the time when it was attempting to forge closer Franco-German ties.

Despite the controversy that the flexible response proposals created West Germany and the United States were able to resolve their differences. Three factors greatly facilitated the eventual agreement of West Germany to the US policy of flexible response. The first was the US abandonment of the original goal of flexible response. By 1967, when it became clear that the United States would be unable to convince its Alliance partners to augment conventional forces sufficiently, it abandoned the goal of providing a fully conventional defence for Europe. West Germany could therefore endorse flexible response without abandoning its commitment to nuclear deterrence. Second, France's withdrawal from NATO enabled the West German government to endorse flexible response without damaging relations with France. Third, after the fall of the Adenhauer government in late 1963, a new CDU government led by Ludwig Erhard attempted to restore good relations with Washington. While for political as well as strategic reasons this could not entail accepting American proposals, it did lead to a change in emphasis in which they attempted to stress areas of agreement. For instance, Bonn conceded that massive retaliation was not a suitable strategy to meet all contingencies. Moreover, while refusing to endorse American attempts to build up a conventional force to match the Soviet Union, West Germany to an extent greater than any other member of the Alliance augmented its conventional forces. Thus while differences remained about strategy, the West German government under Erhard came closer to the position of the United States than its predecessor.[38]

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[37] The Times, 27 April 1961.

West Germany's reaction to flexible response highlighted some of the fundamental factors that determined Bonn's defence and foreign policy, factors that were to play a significant role in shaping the Federal Republic's response to SDI. First, the CDU/CSU showed itself to be firmly wedded to the policy of nuclear retaliation as the only credible means of deterring aggression, and consequently highly resistant to American attempts to undermine this strategy. Second, the flexible response debate showed how American initiatives often created significant domestic difficulties for German governments. Third, American attempts to change strategy placed Bonn in an awkward position *vis-a-vis* Paris. Finally, despite these great difficulties we see how the West German government, because of its ultimate dependence on the United States sought ways to maintain good relations with the United States by partially accommodating the wishes of the United States. This latter objective reflected the West German government's belief that because of its extreme dependence on the United States, avoiding an open rift with Washington was essential.

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[38] Stromseth, op. cit., p. 73.

The French Reaction to Flexible Response

The French government's reaction to the US government's flexible response strategy was overwhelmingly negative. De Gaulle was far more opposed to the American proposals than either his British or West German counterparts. He believed that flexible response conflicted with France's most basic political and military interests in Europe. De Gaulle was uninhibited in expressing his profound reservations.

The French government interpreted McNamara's proposal to augment NATO conventional forces and bring all nuclear weapons under American control as a direct challenge to France's right to possess its own nuclear weapons and thus a threat to French security. French officials found this particularly objectionable because they viewed the American nuclear guarantee as no longer credible. The French government also contended that the emphasis on tactical nuclear weapons implicit in flexible response was incompatible with European interests since they would lead to the destruction of the very territory they were meant to defend. As to the prospects of a defence based on conventional weapons, General Alliert, the chief of the staff of the French armed forces argued that this would "result in an unacceptable loss of territory."[39] The French government believed that the only credible means of deterring attack was to present the Soviet Union with the prospect that it would itself be subjected to devastating nuclear attacks if it attempted to attack Western Europe. Because they doubted the credibility of the American guarantee, French officials maintained that only the French nuclear deterrent could be relied on to protect France.

De Gaulle also had political as well as military reasons for opposing the American proposals. He believed that flexible response was designed to keep Europe in a subordinate position by making it dependent on the United States for its defence. This was incompatible with de Gaulle's vision of a united, independent Europe capable of defending itself. He argued that the strategy of flexible response would make Europeans the conventional foot soldiers for a strategy that was in the end controlled by the

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[39] Ibid., p. 101.

United States, a circumstance clearly incompatible with de Gaulle's vision of Europe. French officials also believed that U.S. policy toward Europe unfairly singled out the French nuclear deterrent. The French government took particular exception to the fact that while McNamara argued against the existence of independent nuclear forces, he had made an exception in the case of Britain. The US government's decision to exempt Britain from the McMahon Act in 1958 and to agree to provide Britain with the Polaris missile further confirmed de Gaulle's belief in the Anglo-American dominance of the Alliance and that Britain was merely a Trojan horse for the United States.[40]

Because de Gaulle was unable to reconcile his objectives with those of the United States or push through French ideas within the Alliance, he announced in March 1966 his intention to withdraw France from the Alliance's integrated military structure (while remaining a member of the Alliance). It would be a mistake, however, to attribute de Gaulle's decision to withdraw from NATO military structure solely to his disagreement with the United States about military strategy. In withdrawing from NATO de Gaulle was making a grand statement about his desire to chart an independent course for his country in which France would conduct an independent military and foreign policy.

As Pierre Messmer, who was France's defence minister at the time (and a strong opponent of flexible response) later recounted, "Flexible response was not the cause of de Gaulle's decision to leave NATO. It was the occasion or pretext. De Gaulle wanted an independent military policy in which we would have the chief military responsibility for our own nation."[41] This is of course not to suggest that flexible response did not arouse the ire of the French government; it is merely to point out that the disagreements about flexible response were part of a wider and far more fundamental disagreement between France and the United States.

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[40] This perception contributed of course to de Gaulle's vetoing of British entry to the Common Market in 1963.

Thus the 1960s saw an elaboration and culmination in French attitudes already prevalent in the 1950's. Yet it would be a mistake not to emphasize the key role that de Gaulle and his vision of Europe played in producing France's strong reaction to flexible response. De Gaulle's legacy left an impression and set a pattern for the future that even his Socialist opponents of the time were eventually to follow.

This legacy included two salient characteristics that were to have a profound effect on the European/American controversy about SDI. First, France emerged as the most critical and outspoken critic of American strategy. French strategic thinking and American thinking were predicated on fundamentally different premises, thus creating a wider doctrinal rift between Paris and Washington than between the United States and Britain. That French officials were less reluctant than their European counterparts in vocalizing these disagreement should not detract from the fact that the disagreement were of a fundamental doctrinal nature. The second legacy was the extent to which the French government seemed determined to use admittedly genuine doctrinal differences to pursue objectives and goals within NATO that were in many respects unrelated to the doctrinal dispute at hand. This was a propensity that was to play a significant role in the SDI dispute.

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[41] Stromseth, op. cit., p. 122.

Flexible Response: The Enduring Legacy

The flexible response controversy contained important lessons about the way in which controversies were managed within the Alliance, the nature and extent of disagreement within the Alliance about strategy, the role of the British and French nuclear forces, and the role of non-strategic factors in determining the reaction of each country. These factors played a key role in the SDI debate and it is thus important to evaluate their effect on the flexible response debate.

In drawing conclusions about the manner in which the flexible response controversy was managed within the Alliance it is noteworthy that, like SDI, flexible response was presented to the Alliance as a fait accompli. This was naturally resented by other Alliance members, particularly West Germany. This created the impression that the United States did not take its Allies interests into account before embarking on a major revision of NATO strategy.

Another major weakness of American efforts to convince its

Allies to accept flexible response was that the central thrust of the American flexible response proposals - conventional emphasis, opposition to independent nuclear forces - was seriously undermined by other American actions which contradicted the logic of flexible response. For instance the Multi-Lateral Force proposal which concentrated on Alliance nuclear arrangements diverted attention from efforts to improve conventional forces. And while the United States was trying to reduce NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons it made substantial increases in the nuclear weapons deployed in the European theatre. Thus American actions had the effect of undermining their arguments for augmenting conventional forces and this led to doubts about American reliability.

The management of the flexible response controversy was in the end however resolved by skilful compromise. The basis for the compromise rested on the American decision to retreat from its insistence that NATO rely on a full conventional defence and a willingness to accept ultimate reliance on nuclear weapons as the cornerstone of Alliance strategy. The compromise was also facilitated by the France's withdrawal from NATO integrated military structure, and Britain and West Germany's willingness to countenance greater reliance on conventional forces and a revision in the nuclear strategy that emphasized immediate and massive nuclear responses to any significant Soviet conventional attack. Thus, despite its role as the leader of the Alliance, it was the United States that was forced to abandon the essence of the flexible response strategy. In part, this was attributable to the fact that a key component of the strategy required considerable European contribution and that in its absence the strategy of flexible response could not be implemented. Among other things this indicated that changing the status quo was difficult. Perhaps more importantly, though, it reflected the American view that the unity of the Alliance was of greater importance than the agreement on strategy.

Thus, although the United States and its European Allies were unable to resolve their fundamental strategic differences over NATO strategy, they agreed to the adoption of flexible response as the official strategy for the Alliance in 1967. Not surprisingly, the doctrinal guidelines which finally emerged from NATO's military committee MC-14/3 were couched in deliberately ambiguous terms in order to accommodate the conflicting political and strategic sensitivities of the participating parties. The doctrine of flexible response called for NATO to respond to a conventional attack by the Warsaw Pact with conventional forces and then, if necessary, to escalate to the use of tactical nuclear weapons. Because NATO failed to institute the conventional force improvements that stood at the core of the American conception of flexible response, in the event of conflict the Alliance would still be forced to rely on the early resort to battlefield nuclear weapons as a prelude to more extensive nuclear strikes involving the strategic nuclear forces of the United States.

Thus in the end, NATO retained the very reliance on nuclear weapons McNamara had deemed of questionable utility and which had led him to advocate the changes in NATO strategy in the first place. As one prominent strategist remarked, "NATO's version of flexible response differed substantially from that of the early Kennedy Administration. Where the latter had primarily emphasized reducing reliance on nuclear weapons and especially on their massive, unrestrained use, the former reaffirmed NATO's primary reliance on the ultimate threat of a massive nuclear exchange and did only a little more than threaten to arrive at it gradually rather than immediately."[42] Thus, in many respects the strategy of flexible response was more notable for its resistance to, than incorporation of, the changes which McNamara deemed essential to maintain a credible capacity to defend the NATO Alliance.

As the flexible response controversy demonstrated, the strategic differences within the Alliance were serious and deep. Despite the compromise on flexible response there was little change in underlying differences on the proper strategy for the Alliance. This is an important fact to remember because the continuing existence of these underlying differences were to play a major role in both prompting future American efforts to revise NATO strategy and also in determining the British, French, and

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[42] Albert Wohlstetter and Richard I Brody, "Continuing Control as a Requirement for Deterring," in A.B. Carter, J.D. Steinbrenner, and C.A. Zracket (eds.) Managing Nuclear Operations, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1987), p. 179.

German responses to these initiatives.

Another significant feature of the flexible response controversy was the extent to which it demonstrated the importance which Britain and France attached to continued viability of their own nuclear forces. By recommending simultaneously a reduction in NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons through a conventional build up and his opposition to national nuclear forces not operating under NATO's central control, McNamara reinforced French and British beliefs in the importance of these forces. For if the United States no longer had confidence in its nuclear guarantee and therefore recommended increased reliance on conventional forces it was seen in London and Paris as all the more necessary to retain their own nuclear forces as a hedge against American abandonment.

One of the most significant outcomes of the flexible response debate was the establishment of the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG). The NPG emerged from McNamara's intention to involve the United States' Allies in the planning of nuclear employment strategy as well as planning the composition of the nuclear forces stationed in Europe. McNamara had originally conceived of the NPG as consisting of the Defence Ministers of the US, Britain, Germany, and if it was willing to participate, France.[43] Later he expanded this group to include Italy and three other NATO countries on a rotating basis. The establishment of the NPG marked a turning point for NATO. It constituted a recognition by the United States that decisions regarding nuclear weapons, which after all had a major impact on Europe, should be jointly discussed and decided upon. Moreover, the NPG provided a permanent forum for conduction these consultations. As we shall see, the NPG became an extremely important instrument through which the Alliance formulated decisions and mitigated the severity of disputes.[44]

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[43] Paul Buteux, The Politics of Nuclear Consultation in NATO 1965-1980, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 39.

Finally, it is noteworthy that Britain, West Germany and France utilized opportunities created by the flexible response controversy to promote other objectives. Britain continued to cultivate the special relationship in the expectation that this would not only enhance its influence within NATO but in other areas as well.[45] West Germany, because of its relatively dependent position, concentrated on maintaining good relations with both Paris and Washington, a balancing act which it would have to repeat when the SDI controversy arose. The French government asserted its desire to conduct an independent defence as well as foreign policy and to promote greater European unity and defence cooperation.

What was notably absent from the flexible response debate was concern about how potential changes in NATO strategy would affect relations with the Soviet Union. This was largely due to the fact that the United States and the Soviet Union were not conducting arms control negotiations during the 1960's that dealt with strategic or tactical nuclear weapons. This absence of concern about how Alliance initiatives affected arms control negotiations or East-West relations, did not, as we shall see, endure.

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[44] For an excellent description of the role of the NPG see Ibid., pp. 39-110.

[45] The cultivation of the special relationship with the United States also had the effect of complicating British efforts to gain entry into the EEC. De Gaulle saw Britain's close relationship with the United States as a potential threat to the European character of the EEC after British entry.

IV. THE FIRST TRANSATLANTIC DEBATE ABOUT BMDs (1967-1972)

As with the flexible response controversy, the Johnson Administration's proposal to build a limited ballistic missile defence system has similarities with the SDI debate. Like SDI, it was presented to NATO without prior consultation and it evoked a strongly negative reaction in Europe. The ABM debate was, however, important for other reasons as well. It was the first time that an American initiative evoked strong concerns in Europe about the implications that carrying out this initiative could have on East-West relations and arms control. While Europeans were sceptical of the strategic implications of ABMs, they were primarily concerned that if the United States pursued ABMs it would have a detrimental impact on arms control and East-West relations. Despite the similarities that existed between the ABM debate and the SDI controversy there were also important differences. Examining why the two debates were different illuminates the reasons why some American initiatives are more controversial than others and how the SDI controversy was both similar to and different from the prior Alliance debate about ballistic missiles defences.

Ballistic missile defences became a major issue of contention within the Alliance in September, 1967 when Robert McNamara delivered a speech in San Francisco outlining the Johnson Administration's intention to deploy a "light" ABM defence, ostensibly in response to the emerging Chinese ballistic missile capabilities. While the "anti-Chinese" orientation of the proposed ABM system was offered as the primary rationale for deciding upon deployment, the American Secretary of Defense also noted that a "Chinese-oriented ABM deployment would enable us to add - as a concurrent benefit - a further defense of our Minuteman sites against Soviet attack" as well as "protection of our population against the improbable but possible accidental launch of an intercontinental missile by any of the nuclear powers."[46] Europeans objected to the American decision both because they believed that it reflected an unwarranted American paranoia vis-a-vis China and because they suspected that the anti-Chinese rationale could be a cover for American plans to mount a more comprehensive system against the Soviet Union. And Europeans feared that any system designed to defend against

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[46] "Text of McNamara Speech on Anti-China Missile Defense and U.S. Nuclear Strategy," New York Times, 19 September 1967 as quoted in "BMD and East-West Relations," R.L. Garthoff, in Ballistic Missile Defense, eds. A.B. Carter and D.N. Schwartz (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1984), p. 281.

Soviet strategic ballistic missiles would needlessly endanger the prospects for arms control and improved East-West relations as well as threaten to undermine strategic stability and the credibility of US nuclear guarantees to Europe - not to mention the deterrent effectiveness of British and French nuclear forces.

Ironically, McNamara shared these European concerns, but for domestic political reasons was forced to advocate some level of ABM defence as a sop to those in Congress and within the Johnson Administration who advocated more extensive ABM deployments. Thus far from being a stalking horse for a more comprehensive system, advocacy of the Chinese system was a means by which McNamara hoped to prevent the emergence of a heavy defence against Soviet ICBMs.[47] Indeed, McNamara had publicly stated his opposition to ABMs on numerous occasions. In the very speech in which he announced the Johnson Administration's decision to deploy an ABM defence against China, McNamara argued that even in the absence of US-Soviet agreement on limiting offensive arms, it would be "foolish" to deploy ABMs. He described in detail his view of the pernicious implications of the "action-reaction" effect on offensive and defensive deployments and the "mad momentum" which drove each side to utilize new technologies to build ever more sophisticated weapons.[48] Accordingly, McNamara strongly urged the Soviet Union to join the United States in eschewing defensive deployments and limiting offensive arms through negotiated agreements.

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[47] Ibid., p. 284.

[48] Ibid., p. 280.

It was, in fact, McNamara who attempted - against the advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Walt Rostow (Johnson's National Security Advisor) - to convince President Johnson as early as November 1966 that the United States should not develop and deploy an anti-ballistic missile system in response to Soviet ABM preparations. He wanted to omit proposals for deploying ABMs from the defence budget the Johnson Administration was preparing to submit to Congress for fiscal year 1968. Realising, however, that Johnson could not so easily disregard the concerns of his military and national security advisors, particularly in the face of undisputed Soviet ABM activities, McNamara recommended holding the funds earmarked for ABM development in abeyance until efforts could be undertaken to "join with the Soviets to negotiate an agreement (a) to limit, and hopefully terminate, any anti-ballistic missile defence, and (b) with that as a foundation to move ahead on limiting future offensive weapons deployments."[49] Johnson agreed to this position, although he remained under considerable Congressional pressure to respond more forcefully to Soviet ABM activities. Thus McNamara had succeeded in his primary objective of preventing the immediate deployment of ABMs but was still subject to forces that compelled him, against his own preferences, to announce the decision to develop an anti-Chinese Sentinel system.

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[49] Robert McNamara, interview in Charlton, op. cit., p. 4. Emphasis in the original.

Despite private understanding of McNamara's difficulties, European officials objected to the substance of his remarks as well as his failure to inform or consult them prior to presentation. The San Francisco speech was given one week prior to the second meeting of the newly formed Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) which had been designed to give key European countries greater input into military decision-making on nuclear issues. Indeed, during the first NPG meeting McNamara "led a discussion on the question of the possible deployment of anti-ballistic missile (ABM) systems, raising the technical, strategic and financial aspects of the issue as well as reporting on the state of the Soviet Union's programme."[50] Moreover, it was agreed to begin a study on the issue on ABM deployments including the question of whether Europe should be included in such deployments.[51]

European displeasure was further exacerbated because the ABM issue had taken on added significance when President Johnson announced that Soviet officials had "confirmed the willingness of the Soviet government to discuss means of limiting the arms race in offensive and defensive nuclear missiles."[52] Given the importance which European governments attached to these negotiations and the integral role that ABM deployment decisions would play in determining their success, McNamara pledged "to keep the allies fully advised on future developments."[53] The United States' failure to consult its Allies prior to McNamara's San Francisco speech therefore came as an unwelcome surprise in European capitals as it seemed to belie assurances that Europeans would be consulted in advance of important strategic decision affecting their security.

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[50] Buteux, op. cit., p. 71.

[51] Garthoff, op. cit., p. 282.

[52] "The President's News Conference of March 2, 1967," Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, volume 3 (GPO, 1967) quoted in Garthoff, op. cit., p. 282.

Not surprisingly then, the deliberations at the second NPG meeting one week following McNamara's major policy statement on ABM's reflected European unhappiness with the manner in which the issue of ABM had been handled by the Johnson Administration as well as the potentially deleterious consequences which Europeans believed would follow deployment. McNamara attempted to assuage these European concerns by noting at a pre-meeting news conference that the Allies had indeed been previously consulted in various non-NPG NATO meetings and that, in any event, the proposed Sentinel ABM system against China "had no relationship to NATO."[54] Europeans were not, however, so easily appeased. They contended that the deployment of an ABM system in the United States would lead to "an arms race which, in turn, will increase tensions between the two superpowers and thus produce an environment in which there will be little movement on the whole issue of the future of Europe..."[55] In this respect their views mirrored those of American ABM critics, including of course the American Secretary of Defense, who was put in the embarrassing position of advocating a position with which he personally disagreed. McNamara's position was further complicated by Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin's refusal, despite earlier indications to the contrary, to consider limiting ABM deployments.[56] This position undermined McNamara's tactic of delay in proceeding with decisions on ABMs in the hope that an arms control solution could obviate their deployment. None of these difficulties, however, mitigated the fundamental European opposition to US anti-ballistic missiles deployments.

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[53] Buteux, op. cit., p. 72.

[54] Ibid., p. 78.

In addition to McNamara's San Francisco proposal, the NPG took up the issue of the desirability of deploying a ballistic missiles defence for Europe. British Defence Minister Denis Healey, who had been one of the most critical of McNamara's San Francisco speech, led the European opposition to the idea of deploying an ABM system in Europe, arguing that it "would not be particularly useful or viable, and that any attempt to develop such a system would have unfortunate consequences for the prospects for arms control and detente."[57] While the final status of European ABM's was not resolved at the September 1967 Ankara meeting, it was decided that the work on the study that had been commissioned at the first meeting, which would deal both with the issue of ABMs for Europe and the United States, should be accelerated and readied for final consideration at the next NPG meeting at the Hague.

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[55] Johan J. Holst, "Missile Defense: Implications for Europe," in Why ABM? Policy Issues in the Missile Defense Controversy, eds. J.J. Holst and W.J. Schneider, Jr. (New York: Pergamon Press, 1969), p. 190.

[56] Buteux, op. cit., p. 79.

[57] Ibid., p. 81.

In April 1968, the NPG adopted the findings of the ABM study prepared under its auspices; it stated that an ABM for Europe was not "politically, militarily or financially warranted."[58] In the study it was argued that no prospective ABM system for Europe could offer protection that would avoid "catastrophic damage"[59] in the event of a Soviet nuclear attack on Western Europe. It also confirmed previously expressed fears about the effects of such a system on the prospects for arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union.[60] Most importantly the study "recognized explicitly that European ABM deployment (by NATO or by European members of NATO) could have significant adverse political implications for East-West relations."[61] In short, the defence ministers concluded that "the deployment of a European ABM system was not justified."[62]

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[58] This account of the study is based on Garthoff, "BMD and East-West Relations," in Ballistic Missile Defense, eds. A.B. Carter and D.N. Schwartz, p. 283. Garthoff was a participant in the NPG staff group which prepared the ABM study.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Buteux, op. cit., p. 85.

[61] Garthoff, op. cit., p. 283.

In addition to addressing the question of ABMs for Europe the NPG study addressed the issue of ABM deployment in the United States. The study also determined that "the reasons leading the United States to deploy a 'light' ABM defense against China were not relevant to European defense."[63] Thus with respect to ABM deployments by the United States or the Soviet Union, the study argued that provided such systems remained "light" they "need not affect adversely either the military balance or political relations and arms control."[64] It was, however, suggested that should such a "light" defence be expanded to a "heavy" defence adverse consequences could follow. In fact, Europeans were far from enthusiastic about even "light" defences, believing that these could easily be expanded to more comprehensive systems.

Europeans feared that if the United States and the Soviet Union were to deploy more than token ABM systems, the validity of the US nuclear guarantee to Europe could be severely undermined. As a rule Europeans did "not differentiate between various alternative US BMD deployment configurations, particularly between large-scale defense of populations centers and point defense of strategic forces."[65] Both options were regarded as harmful to European strategic interests. Because the Alliance had just recently decided, after a contentious six year debate in which the question of the credibility of the US nuclear guarantee constituted the primary focus, to adopt a new strategy (flexible response), European governments were particularly sensitive to any developments that could be construed as damaging the credibility of extended deterrence.

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[62] Buteux, op. cit., p. 85.

[63] Garthoff, op. cit., p. 283.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Holst, op. cit., p. 190.

Thus while many Europeans were not unsympathetic to the argument that decreased American vulnerability to Soviet retaliation would render US leaders more likely to extend the nuclear guarantee to Europe, they believed that this advantage was more than offset by the consequences of a corresponding Soviet deployment. They feared that if both superpowers possessed ABM systems, the United States's ability to inflict retaliation on the Soviet Union would be diminished, thus weakening the ability of American strategic nuclear forces to deter attack on Western Europe. Moreover, they maintained that an ABM system, particularly one devoted to population defence, would make America far more invulnerable than its European Allies and perhaps encourage tendencies to retreat to a Fortress America in which the U.S. would be far less likely to perceive the need, or possess the inclination, to extend its strategic nuclear guarantee to Europe.

Although flexible response was designed to address precisely such fears regarding the credibility of the US nuclear guarantee to Europe, there remained lingering doubts about the extent to which flexible response reflected a growing American reluctance to engage its strategic nuclear forces in defence of Western Europe in favour of increased reliance on tactical nuclear weapons. As Johan Holst, a leading European strategist, and later Foreign Minister of Norway, wrote at the time:

> The deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe has, in the European view, to a significant degree contributed to the posture of deterrence by constituting a connecting link with the American strategic deterrent through a process of escalation. However, the introduction of controllable strategic nuclear forces and an associated doctrine of flexible and restrained use tended to decouple the tactical nuclear weapons from some of their deterrent value.[66]

A salient European fear in this regard was that the trend toward decoupling would be further exacerbated by the deployment of ballistic missile defences. It was thought that "area defense systems would introduce an added firebreak which would further decouple the tactical nuclear weapons from the strategic deterrent by largely denying the Soviet Union the option of a nuclear demonstration attack against U.S. territory, because such attacks would only be effective (associated with high confidence of penetration) if the attacks are large."[67]

It is worth examining this European decoupling fear because it reveals fundamental doctrinal disagreements which underlay much of the dispute between the United States and Western Europe with respect to ABMs. In expressing concern about the ability of the Soviet Union to engage in limited nuclear strikes on American territory, Europeans were stating their opposition to any development that inhibited the chance that a conflict could or would escalate to the strategic nuclear level. They reasoned that if the Soviet Union were unable to strike the United States in any but a limited fashion, it would refrain from doing so altogether, thus adversely affecting the likelihood that a war in Europe would escalate to the strategic nuclear level. And without a reasonable prospect of such escalation, Europeans saw little chance that a war could be adequately deterred. Implicit in this scenario is the assumption that on its own the United States would not have sufficient incentive to initiate nuclear strikes against the Soviet Union as well as the assumption that the Soviet Union would have some incentive to engage in escalation to the strategic level before the United States. These fears reflected, above all, a response to the deeply held suspicion that in the event of conflict the United States' inclination would be to eschew the use of strategic nuclear weapons. It was therefore necessary to construct, or leave in place, a strategic regime in which the chances that the United States could exercise this predilection would be severely circumscribed.

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[66] Ibid., p. 197.

[67] Ibid.

Related to the European concern that the deployment of ABMs would negatively affect the willingness and capacity of the United States to extend its nuclear guarantee to Europe was the fear that superpower defences would vitiate the credibility of the French and British nuclear deterrents. In fact, the fear that the United States would be reluctant to initiate the use of strategic nuclear forces lent even greater urgency to the task of preserving the effectiveness of British and French forces which many in Europe viewed as a trigger to the initiation of a US nuclear response. There were, therefore, considerable fears that the British and French nuclear forces would be unable to penetrate anything but a quite limited Soviet ABM system.

Given these and the other aforementioned concerns, one would have expected that the United States' announcement in March 1969, that it had dropped its plan to use ABMs to counter the emerging Chinese threat in favour of a "concentrated defense of ICBM forces (Safeguard)"[68], would have evoked considerable consternation in Europe. That it failed to do so was attributable to the fact that the United States, in contrast to its Sentinel announcement, had consulted with its European Allies prior to the decision, and that by March 1969 there was considerable hope that the problems associated with ABM deployments could be resolved through arms control negotiations. Moreover, the emerging diplomatic thaw and West Germany's pursuit of Ostpolitik engendered the perception that improved East-West relations would soon ensue, in which case the threat would recede and military questions would correspondingly decline in importance.

In many respects these optimistic prognostications proved accurate. The United States and the Soviet Union signed the ABM Treaty in 1972, which London and Paris believed guaranteed the future effectiveness of their deterrent forces. And the advent of detente, culminating in the Helsinki accords, led to considerable reduction in tensions in Europe and seemed to confirm the hope that military question would no longer occupy such an important place in European politics. Indeed, the issue of ABMs played a very secondary role in Alliance politics after the ABM Treaty was signed, a treaty that was regarded as not only a guardian of strategic stability but of the continued viability of the British and French deterrents.

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[68] Garthoff, op. cit., p. 285.

Significance of the ABM Debate

The significance of the first ABM debate extends well beyond the fact that the arguments employed, both for and against, were strikingly similar to those that were later used in the SDI controversy. What was perhaps most significant was that for the first time the Alliance became significantly concerned with how a military initiative affected the prospects for arms control and East-West relations. NATO and particularly the European members codified this concern in the Harmel Report which stated that the NATO Alliance had to become an instrument not only for defence but for detente as well.

The establishment of East-West detente and the arms control agreements - primarily the SALT I and ABM treaties - that constituted its centrepiece had great significance for the manner in which NATO managed its disputes. Following the signing of the 1972 SALT treaties, American strategic initiatives were judged within a different context. Whereas before - with the exception of the ABM initiative, which was rendered moot through the SALT treaties - doctrinal concerns were paramount, now each initiative had to be weighed carefully against its implications for arms control and East-West relations.

V. THE INF CONTROVERSY

On October 28, 1977, Helmut Schmidt delivered a speech to the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London in which he argued that the SALT agreements had codified strategic nuclear parity between the United States and Europe thus rendered the theatre nuclear balance more important. This speech sparked two years of intensive deliberations resulting in the double track decision of December 1979: NATO would prepare to deploy Cruise and Pershing II missiles while simultaneously pursuing arms control with the Soviet Union on Long Range Theatre Nuclear Forces (LRTNF).

The INF[69] controversy was the last major dispute in which the Alliance was embroiled prior to SDI. It therefore constitutes an important barometer of the state of the Alliance prior to March 23, 1983. It also provides an opportunity to examine how the Alliance had changed since it was formed in 1949, both with respect to the major concerns that occupied officials and, perhaps more importantly, how initiatives were formulated, presented and managed within the Alliance. Thus for the purposes of better understanding the Alliance's SDI debate, the INF episode was instructive for two reasons. First, it set a pattern of consultation and joint decision-making that Alliance members expected to be continued in the future.[70] Second, it highlighted both the changing and enduring nature of the problems confronting the Alliance.

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[69] The terms Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF), and Theatre Nuclear Forces (TNF), and Long Range Intermediate Range Forces will be used interchangeably.

NATO's December 1979 double track decision which authorized the deployment of Long Range Theater Nuclear Forces (LRTNF) and the initiation arms control talks on these weapons systems, differed in important and fundamental ways from past disputes within the Alliance. First, unlike prior initiatives, which were essentially unilateral American attempts to either introduce new weapons systems or doctrines on the Alliance, the double track decision was primarily European in origin. While the United States took its traditional leadership role once Chancellor Schmidt of West Germany placed the issue of LRINF at the forefront of the Alliance agenda, it is unlikely that without the strong impetus provided by the West German leader, the LRINF decision would have reached fruition.

The second way in which the INF issue episode differed from previous Alliance initiatives was the extent to which the final decision was the product of extensive and sustained consultations. Whereas in the past the consultative mechanisms were usually utilized for obtaining West European response or input into initiatives that were essentially American in origin, during the INF debate there was genuine joint decisionmaking in the formulation of the final proposals. This constituted a significant change in the Alliance and reflected the growing influence of European countries as well as a willingness on the part of the United States to take its Allies concerns more seriously.

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[70] Much of the following discussion draws on David Schwartz's excellent account of the INF episode, based on extensive interviews. Schwartz, NATO's Nuclear Dilemmas, op. cit., pp. 193-256.

The final, and perhaps, most significant feature of the INF debate was the extent to which arms control and East-West relations played a vital role in deliberations. While arms control and East-West relations were important concerns when the United States broached the possibility of deploying ABMs in the late 1960's the issue was of relatively fleeting concern as it soon became subsumed under the SALT I talks and did not remain a contentious issue on the Alliance agenda. The INF debate was thus the first major Alliance debate in which arms control and detente played a significant role.

Background to the Schmidt Speech

In order to understand why Chancellor Schmidt delivered his famous speech to the IISS in October 1977, it is essential to understand the circumstances that led to it. Strategically, the signing of the SALT I treaty had codified the relationship of nuclear parity between the United States and the Soviet Union. While US Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger had increased the targeting flexibility of the US strategic nuclear forces in order give them greater credibility for extending the American nuclear guarantee to Europe, the fact of nuclear parity and similar Soviet efforts to endow their forces with greater targeting credibility tended to negate any advantage that NATO hoped to accrue from these changes.[71] As a result the credibility of the US strategic nuclear guarantee became increasingly suspect in Western Europe, particularly in the Federal Republic of Germany.

These fears about the credibility of US strategic nuclear forces naturally led West European officials to focus greater attention on the weapons systems in the European theatre. When they did so they began to view with alarm Soviet deployment of a new generation of long-range nuclear missiles which were targeted directly at Western Europe. While the deployment of a weapons system for which NATO had no symmetrical system would have aroused anxiety under any circumstances, it was particularly disconcerting when viewed in conjunction with fears about the waning credibility of US strategic nuclear forces.

These fears were further heightened by what many European officials regarded as an American willingness to sacrifice European security interests in order to reach arms control agreements with the Soviet Union. Throughout the SALT I negotiations the Soviet Union argued that any American nuclear system that was capable of reaching Soviet territory should be considered "strategic." While the United States successfully resisted the inclusion of these Forward Based Systems (FBS) in the SALT I treaty, Soviet negotiators renewed their attempts to include these systems in the SALT II negotiations, contending that since the USSR had no comparable systems, the Soviet armed forces should be allowed to maintain a strategic force that equalled the sum of American long-range systems, FBS, as well as the nuclear delivery capability of the US Allies in Europe. The United States rejected these demands but agreed that it would not "circumvent" any agreed upon limits by augmenting its FBS systems.

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[71] Europe was officially unhappy with these changes, although some officials were encouraged that the United States was attempting to increase the credibility of its strategic nuclear guarantee.

This was not, of course, the first, nor would it be the last time - as we shall see later when we discuss the Reykjavik summit - when European governments worried that arms control improperly pursued would be harmful to their interests. What gave added salience to European annoyance with the United States was that American officials placed European governments in the uncomfortable position of seeming to oppose the direction of arms control negotiations that were viewed in a positive light by European publics. The arms control talks were viewed as essential to the continuation of the detente that been achieved in the early and late 1970's which, because it seemed to be foundering due to lingering distrust over the October 1973 Mid East War and the civil war in Angola, were taking on increased significance as a means of recovering some of the momentum that had been lost.

Indeed, one of the more important changes that was revealed by the INF episode was the extent to which arms control had become a central concern to Europeans and the extent to which the implications of new weapons systems would have on the prospects of arms control. This attachment to arms control reflected not only the belief that the arms control could further stabilize the military relationship between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, but perhaps most importantly was the belief that arms control had become the central feature of detente and that the success of these negotiations was essential for the continuation of good East-West relations. Understandably, West European governments were loath to be seen as blocking such agreements. At the same time, European officials were keen to ensure that any US-Soviet arms control agreements would not diminish their security. In theory, US and European objectives were similar but European officials feared, and given their historical experience not without reason, that the United States in its effort at reaching dramatic and domestically popular agreement would sacrifice European interests.

At a 1974 summit meeting between Leonid Brezhnev and Gerald Ford in Vladivostock, the Soviet dropped its insistence that all Forward Based systems be included in any SALT II agreements but forwarded a proposal "not to transfer strategic offensive arms to other states, and not to assist in their development, in particular, by transferring components, technical descriptions or blueprints for these arms."[72] The Carter Administration rejected this proposal, interpreting it as an attempt to prevent the United States from helping its Allies by transferring military technology applicable to long-range theatre systems to its Allies in Western Europe. Despite the US rejection of the Soviet proposals, many European governments feared that eventually American officials would sacrifice European security in the interest of a SALT II treaty. But what gave these concerns even greater salience was the growing belief in the European and American strategic communities that advances in cruise missile technology offered an effective and relatively inexpensive means of countering what they perceived to be the growing theatre nuclear imbalance.

The US Response

European interest in cruise missiles, no doubt spurred by the extent to which they had become embroiled in the SALT II negotiations, was mounting by the summer of 1977. Unable to ignore this issue, the United States prepared a briefing for the North Atlantic Council on the LRINF issue. The American delegation was led by Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs, Leslie Gelb, who gave an unconvincing presentation that merely served to heighten European concerns that the United States was prepared to sacrifice the cruise missiles in order to achieve agreement with the Soviet Union.

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[72] Schwartz, NATO's Nuclear Dilemmas, op. cit., p. 204.

The issue of non-circumvention and non-transfer continued to be issues of great concerns and, despite the fact that the Administration cleared its positions with its Allies at a North Atlantic council meeting before submitting them to Moscow, suspicions lingered in European capitals that the Carter Administration would in the end sacrifice European security concerns in order to achieve the SALT II agreements, an agreement which Europeans knew was of utmost domestic political importance to the American President.

The United States' NATO Allies considerable concerns were dramatically heightened in August 1977 when The Washington Post leaked what it described as the contents of a Presidential Review Memorandum 10. The newspaper account contended that in this document that reviewed US defence policy, it was recommended that the US "accept the Weser-Lech line as its main line of defence."[73] If true this would have constituted a retreat from the Alliance's policy of forward defence which was the sine quo non of West German defence policy. While the Carter Administration vehemently denied The Washington Post article, privately West European officials were not convinced. Indeed this incident seemed to confirm that the United States was willing to sacrifice European security interests and that it was incapable of seeing how American actions created domestic difficulties for the European governments.

Thus by the fall of 1977, West European governments were greatly concerned about the commitment of the United States to their security. They believed that parity codified in SALT I had rendered US strategic nuclear guarantees less credible thus increasing the importance of the theatre balance; that the theatre balance, because of Soviet SS-20 and backfire deployment, was rapidly evolving in a direction inimical to European interests; that the American Administration was insufficiently cognizant of these concerns; and, that the United States government was unwilling to prevent a counter to these circumstances by allowing the Soviet Union to block the introduction of cruise technology into Europe. All of these factors were leading to a crisis of sorts in US-West German relations. The German Chancellor was known to have a relatively low opinion of the American President[74] and his new Administration, regarding them as neophytes who could not grasp the complexity of the geopolitical realities they were confronting.

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[73] Ibid., p. 213.

The Schmidt Speech

On October 28, 1977, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt delivered the prestigious Alastair Buchan Memorial lecture and used this occasion to publicly air many of his concerns. This speech was regarded as having a seminal influence on NATO's INF double-track decision. He stated that the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT)

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[74] Helmut Schmidt, in his characteristically frank manner, makes no secret of his attitude toward Jimmy Carter in his Memoirs. See Helmut Schmidt, Men and Powers, (New York: Random House, 1989), pp. 181-183.

> codifies the nuclear strategic balance between the Soviet Union and the United States. To put it another way: SALT neutralizes their strategic nuclear capacities. In Europe this magnifies the significance of the disparities between East and West in nuclear tactical and conventional weapons... No one can deny that the principle of parity is a sensible one. However its fulfilment must be the aim of all arms-limitation and arms-control negotiations and it must apply to all categories of weapons. Neither side can agree to diminish its security unilaterally.
>
> ....we in Europe must be particularly careful to ensure that these negotiations do not neglect the components of NATO's deterrence strategy....strategic arms limitations confined to the United States and the Soviet Union will inevitably impair the security of the West European members of the Alliance vis-a-vis Soviet military superiority in Europe if we do not succeed in removing the disparities of military power in Europe parallel to the SALT negotiations.[75]

While Schmidt later regretted some of the more sweeping statements he made in the speech, its meaning was difficult to ignore. In essence, Schmidt was raising the same objections about the credibility of the American nuclear guarantee that the United States had implicitly employed in justifying greater conventional emphasis in the 1960's flexible response debate, namely, that the advent of parity has drastically reduced the credibility of threatening the use of US strategic nuclear weapons to deter conflict in Europe. In this sense the Schmidt speech constituted a milestone in European-American relations and indicated a degree of strategic convergence within the Alliance that had not existed before. The implications that Schmidt drew from these changes was that with the strategic nuclear capability of the United States neutralized, greater attention needed to be directed toward what he regarded as the "Eurostrategic" balance. And he regarded the trends in this area as hardly less alarming than those on the strategic level. The clear implication drawn from the speech was that NATO would have to match Soviet theatre capabilities through corresponding deployments of its own.

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[75] Helmut Schmidt, "The 1977 Alastair Buchan Memorial Lecture," as quoted in Schwartz, op. cit., p. 1.

Schmidt's speech was important for other reasons as well. While he did, indeed, call attention to perceived military shortcomings, he also suggested a means of countering this threat through arms control. While this part of his speech did not attract as much attention as the rather stark portrayal of the military situation, it reflected an important reality of the emerging security environment, namely, the need to pursue effective deterrence and arms control simultaneously. This reality was to dominate the two years of deliberations that followed Schmidt's IISS speech and eventually led to the Brussels double-track decision.

The Aftermath of the Schmidt Speech

There is little doubt that by outlining and highlighting the inadequacies in the theatre nuclear balance, Schmidt caused the Carter Administration to take these European concerns far more seriously than it had theretofore done. Indeed, the Administration implicitly accepted the criticism by not attempting a public response to Schmidt's analysis. Moreover, whereas before the United States government had developed a preference for dealing with the problems posed by the SS-20 through the NPG and without proposing a counter deployment, the attention that was directed at the issue following the Schmidt speech rendered such strategies obsolete. The Carter Adminstration realized that it would have to develop plans for counter deployment.

This realization was reflected in the first meeting of the High Level Group(HLG) in December of 1977. Although the HLG was formed prior to the Schmidt speech in order to study ways of improving NATO's defence posture, the HLG became identified with the LRINF issue that was brought to the fore by Schmidt and indeed its primary, if not sole, function became to handle the LRTNF issue. The primary result of this meeting was an American perception that "a consensus could be reached on what needed to be done about the theatre nuclear force modernization."[76]

This calculation was borne out at the subsequent HLG meeting in February 1978. At this meeting, the participants agreed that "LRTNF modernization was necessary; it should be an evolutionary upward adjustment; and it should endow NATO with an enhanced capability to strike targets in the Soviet Union."[77] Much to the surprise of US officials the West German government indicated its opposition to any arrangements that would entail dual key arrangements. This position could hardly have dovetailed more closely with American preferences since members of the Carter Administration with memory of the MLF controversy were keen to avoid a repeat of the internecine struggle over control that plagued those deliberations.[78] Thus barely six months after the Schmidt speech, the NPG had reached a consensus on how to proceed with the question of LRTNF modernization.

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[76] Schwartz, NATO's Nuclear Dilemmas, op. cit., p. 113.

[77] Ibid.

The Debate within the Carter Administration

While Department of Defence officials were working on the LRINF issue through the NPG, a consensus was emerging within the Carter Administration as well.[79] Officials believed that unless the US responded forcefully to the growing perception of an imbalance the perception would arise that NATO lacked the will to respond to perceived threats to its security. They also contended that unless the Carter Administration was perceived as responding, US leadership could be damaged. Finally, they believed the LRINF deployments would plug gaps in the escalation ladder and thus enhance the credibility of flexible response.[80] Ironically, whatever doubts remained about the wisdom of proceeding with LRINF modernization were overcome after the Carter Administration's unhappy experience with the neutron bomb controversy. After convincing a reluctant Helmut Schmidt to endure considerable political risks and ask the United States to deploy the neutron bomb, the Carter Administration suddenly and inexplicably cancelled the weapons programme, humiliating a bitterly disappointed German Chancellor. Following this debacle, the Carter Adminstration was widely perceived in Western Europe and inept and vacillating. In order to restore its image and the US leadership role within the Alliance, the Carter Administration was now determined to demonstrate through the LRINF modernization issue that it was competent and purposeful.

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[78] Britain also opposed dual-key arrangements for any weapons that might be stationed on its territory but for different reasons than those offered by the West German government. In the British case it was primarily financial concerns that dictated opposition; the British governments simply did not want to share the cost of maintaining the cruise deployments.

[79] The NPG deliberations were not officially binding.

Accordingly, in June 1978 Carter issued Presidential Review Memorandum 38 which mandated a specific response to the LRINF modernization issue. As a result the U.S. government agreed that LRINF was necessary in order to demonstrate that the Alliance was responding to the threat; to enhance the military potential of the Alliance; and to proved the Alliance with bargaining leverage in any arms negotiations. The US also developed a range of specific options that it presented to the High Level Group in October 1978. Subsequent meeting in November 1978 and February 1979 led to further discussions and in April 1979 the HLG presented its parent body, the NPG, with five specific recommendations: (a) LRINF modernization was necessary, (b) the deployment should include the GLCM and an upgraded Pershing Missile[81], (c) the number of missiles deployed should be between 200 and 600, (d) missiles should be deployed in as many appropriate countries as possible in order to prevent the perception that West Germany was being singled out, (e) a final decision on these recommendations should be made by December 1979 so as to avoid having the LRINF interfere unduly with upcoming elections in member countries.

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[80] Other officials in the State Department were less enthusiastic, although they were clearly in the minority. They argued that the Soviet Union would be unlikely to distinguish between LRINF and central strategic systems thereby increasing the dangers of escalation; that in any event the Soviet Union might be incapable of determining whether a weapons came from Europe or say a submarine nearby thus vitiating distinction between theatre and strategic weapons; and finally that the LRINF was redundant given the fact that any target that could be reached with LRINF could be hit more accurately and with greater command and control confidence with strategic weapons.

Once this consensus had been reached within the NPG, the Carter Administration, eager to prevent a repeat of the neutron bomb disaster, conducted high level diplomatic activity in order to coordinate the Alliance response at the highest levels and to ensure that the consensus reached at the NPG accurately reflected the views of the member countries. At a summit meeting at Guadeloupe, Carter sounded out his British, West German and

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[81] The Alliance hoped that it could present the Pershing II as an improvement on the Pershing I and thereby prevent the provocation that would have been involved in deploying the Longbow which was a plan for a full-fledged mobile longer range missile that some in the US Air Force favoured.

French colleagues on the issue of LRINF modernization. While it is unclear exactly what transpired at these meetings, the LRINF was a top item on the agenda.

In a follow-up to the Guadeloupe meeting the deputy national security advisor, David Aaron, went to Europe to determine the precise nature of the positions of the highest level officials in Europe. In London and Paris, officials indicated their support for LRINF modernization, although French officials did not make public their endorsement[82]. In West Germany, however, Aaron "found some political ambivalence about the program."[83] Influential members of Chancellor Schmidt's party began to argue that if NATO proceeded with LRINF modernization, arms control negotiations and detente could suffer irreparable harm and that the fruits of Ostpolitik could be endangered. While Schmidt did not share this assessment, he was under considerable pressure to accommodate the concerns of this increasingly vocal opposition with the SPD. Schmidt, in turn, communicated these concerns to the Carter Administration.

The Alliance's Decision

In response to these West German (and Dutch) concerns, the NPG created a Special Group (SG) to study the arms control implications of the LRINF modernization. The SG was composed primarily of foreign ministry officials who were of the same seniority as their defence ministry counterparts on the HLG. The SG agreed that the arms control negotiations on LRINF would "take place within the framework of the projected SALT III negotiations between the Untied States and the Soviet Union." In doing so, however, they were careful to recommend that the framework allow for a way to keep British and French forces outside of any agreement. They also agreed that the European members of NATO should be closely consulted about the progress of any prospective negotiations on the LRINF issue, probably through the SG itself.

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[82] In the Fall of 1983 when the issue was far more controversial than it was in January 1979, French President Mitterrand, fearing that the West German governments was wavering, addressed the Bundestag and strongly urged deployment.

[83] See Schwartz, op. cit., p. 213.

At the end of September 1978, less than one year after Schmidt had delivered his speech to the IISS, both the HLG and SG had presented their final reports to the NPG on the LRINF issue. The HLG report, as previously mentioned, recommended the deployment of GLCM and Pershing II deployment, while the SG delineated specific arms control proposals for the LRINF deployment.

During most of 1979, the Carter Adminstration was preoccupied with the conclusion of the SALT II negotiations. After the SALT II treaty was initialled in September 1979 attention was focused on the LRINF issue. In order to coordinate the recommendations of the HLG and the SG, the Carter Administration developed an Integrated Decision Document that was to be formally presented at a scheduled December 1979 NATO meeting. The final form of this document reflected extensive consultations with the United States' European Allies and it thus came as no surprise that at an extraordinary meeting of NATO foreign and defence ministers[84] agreed to commit their respective governments to both the deployment of LRINF missiles and the initiation of arms control talks on these weapons systems.

Almost immediately following the December 1979 double-track decision the context in which the decision had been taken was radically altered. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan led to a dramatic deterioration in East-West relations. Moreover, the ascension to office of Ronald Reagan brought to the American Presidency a man who was openly hostile toward detente and arms control, leading to a further deterioration in US-Soviet relations. The dawn of the new Cold War led to heightened fears of conflict. Moreover, during its first year in office the Reagan Administration engaged in some infelicitous rhetoric about limited nuclear war in Europe and the possibility of firing nuclear warning shots in the event of conflict between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. These circumstances led to heightened awareness of the possibility and the consequences of conflict in Western Europe.

Given these circumstances it was hardly surprising that the prospect of INF deployments became the focus of far greater controversy than before, particularly in Western Europe where the rhetoric and behaviour of the Reagan Adminstration, particularly concerning nuclear weapons, were seen as equally if not more a threat to peace than the poor state of East-West relations. After initially delaying consideration of arms control talks about INF, in October of 1981, the Reagan Administration, under the prodding of the West German government, suggested the so called "zero option" which called for the elimination of all Soviet LRINF in return for a pledge by NATO not deploy its Pershing II and Cruise missiles. While this announcement succeeded in dampening the protests against the double-track decision, experts in both Europe and the United States regarded the offer as designed to win propaganda points; they, as well as the US Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, regarded it as non-negotiable since the Soviet Union would never accept it[85]. Despite the positive effect that this offer had on European-American relations, doubts and suspicions lingered about the seriousness with which the Reagan Administration would pursue arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union.

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[84] France, not being a member of the Integrated Military Command, was not included.

These fears were given renewed impetus when it was revealed through a newspaper leak that the US negotiator, Paul Nitze, and the Soviet negotiator, Yuily Kvitsinsky, had tentatively agreed to a formula whereby the United States would agree to forgo deployment of Pershing IIs altogether and deploy a limited number of cruise missiles in return for a substantial reduction in

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[85] See Alexander M. Haig, Caveat (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1984), p. 292.

Soviet SS-20, SS-4, and SS-5 deployments. This unathourized offer was rejected by the White House, and apparently by the Kremlin as well. In any event, this incident rekindled latent suspicions about the Reagan Administration's commitment to arms control agreements. In addition, the American offer was not discussed beforehand in the NPG nor was the text made known afterwards to the NPG, consequently breaking the agreement about keeping European Allies informed about the negotiations.

Thus the Reagan Administration's approach to INF already indicated a not insignificant departure from the Carter Administration's approach. First, they were noticeably more hostile to arms control agreements, and second they were far less concerned about keeping its Allies informed about negotiating positions.

Implications of the INF Debate

The INF double-track decision differed in important ways from past NATO initiatives. It did so in two fundamental ways, one procedural, the other substantive. The first major difference related to the way in which this initiative was formulated. Whereas most past NATO initiatives were conceived in Washington and then hoisted on the United States' European partners in the expectation that they could be convinced or forced to acquiesce to American wishes, the double track decision was the first major NATO initiative that was genuinely jointly formulated. To some extent this reflected the fact that the impetus for the double track decision came from Europe, primarily West Germany. But it also reflected an evolution in the consultative procedures. The NPG expanded its functions by developing sub-structures that dealt with specific issues such as LRINF and arms control. This pattern of consultation was important not only insofar as it enabled the Alliance to deal with the LRINF modernization issue so well, but also because it created a precedent and set a pattern that European Alliance members in particular expected to see continued.

The major substantive difference between INF and prior Alliance initiatives was the extent to which arms control and East-West relations played such a vital role in calculations concerning this initiative. This reflected the profound changes that had occurred in the international environment since the flexible response debate in the early and mid-sixties. In the ten years that elapsed from the end of the flexible response debate to the beginning of the INF controversy a fundamental change occurred in the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. With the signing of the SALT I treaty not only was strategic parity codified but a recognition that security could not be achieved solely through unilateral defence deployments. But SALT I was also important for what it signified. It was the capstone of detente. The enormous benefits that Europeans had gained through improved East-West relations created what Josef Joffe aptly called the "detente imperative."[86]

The reasons that it became an imperative are important because they illuminate the complex relationship between East-West relations and NATO doctrine that began to emerge during the INF debate and which were revealed in its full complexity during the SDI debate. The rationale for the "detente imperative" had been recognized and set forth in the Harmel Report of 1967. This report stated that the Alliance had two main functions. The first was to provide for the common defence. The second was to become an instrument to promote detente. The report stated emphatically that "military security and detente are not contradictory but complementary."[87] The Report argued that "the relaxation of tension is not the final goal but is part of a long-term process to promote better relations and foster a European settlement."[88]

But another unstated reason underlay the perceived need to improve East-West relations and this was the nature of Alliance doctrine and the realities of nuclear parity. Given the relationship of parity between the superpowers deterrence became far more precarious as West European officials became increasingly unsure of the credibility of US strategic nuclear guarantees. Thus they, as well as many US officials, regarded it as imperative to mitigate the political tensions that could make war likely. In this sense, detente not only became a vehicle through which to achieve a political settlement in Europe but also a tool of self-preservation. For it was the unique aspect of nuclear weapons that they were simultaneously the guarantor of one's security and a mortal threat to one's survival. It was this strategic reality that lay behind the policy recommendations articulated so eloquently in the Harmel Report.

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[86] See Josef Joffe, The Limited Partnership, (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Co., 1987), pp. 1-42.

[87] The Future Tasks of the Alliance (The Harmel Report), Report of the Council, Annex to the Final Communique of the Ministerial Meeting, December 1967, reprinted in Lawrence Kaplan, NATO and the United States: The Enduring Alliance, (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1988), p. 223.

[88] Ibid.

But the implications of nuclear parity also had profound implications for the double track decision. While the INF decision was ostensibly a response to the decreasing utility of strategic nuclear weapons (because this type of warfare was neutralized by the ability of the Soviet Union to respond in kind), the particular weapons chosen in many ways mimicked the capabilities of strategic weapons. Both the Pershing II and GLCMs were capable of striking Soviet territory and could thus be considered strategic (as indeed they were by the Soviet Union). Thus in many respects the plan to deploy LRINF would seem to indicate an intention to rely on the very threats which had been determined to be of decreasing utility and which had led to calls for the deployment in the first place.

At the same time, the INF deployment, however dubious their strategic rationale, served an important political purpose. Because they were seen as weapons that coupled the United States to Europe, they were seen as reinforcing the doctrine of flexible response. Thus, in many ways, despite later fears that deployment would lead to a greater probability of limiting nuclear war to Europe, they increased the likelihood that a war could not be contained to Europe. In this sense, despite the fears about extended deterrence that existed in West European governments, LRTNF deployments were viewed positively because they were seen as reinforcing the doctrine of flexible response.

In the end, then, the Alliance's double track decision was more an indication of its political will than a serious attempt to address the strategic conundrums that were articulated in Schmidt's speech. While the willingness to modernize was in many respects an indication of the political strength of the Alliance, it also was significant because it indicated the seemingly intractable nature of the strategic dilemmas with which NATO was confronted. Just how intractable would become evident in the transatlantic debate about SDI.

Another extremely important feature of the INF controversy was the extent to which it revealed the complexity of factors influencing Alliance cohesion. As the first major NATO initiative that occurred during the era of detente, it provided valuable insight into the triangular and complex relationship between Alliance doctrine, East-West relations, and European-American relations. While West European governments believed that it was essential for the United States to engage the Soviet Union in serious arms control negotiations, there was a concomitant and somewhat contradictory concern of American abandonment through an arms control agreement that would undermine the foundation of NATO strategy.

In sum, the INF decision indicated that while the Alliance had evolved in important ways since its inception, it still confronted many of the same strategic dilemmas that had occupied decision makers since its early days. Moreover, NATO's INF experience also pointed out the complex role that East-West relations and arms control played in European-American relations. While West European officials were often concerned that the United States played insufficient attention to arms control, there was the simultaneous concern that American Administrations would go too far in arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union and thereby endanger the doctrinal coherence of NATO strategy. The precise nature of this complex relationship will be illuminated when the transatlantic debate about SDI is delineated and analyzed.

VI. CONCLUSION

By tracing the development of the Alliance from its inception, we were able to discern not only the major issues that have occupied Alliance deliberations, but more importantly, which issues have become more important over time. In doing so, we were able to identify significant trends within NATO, both with respect to major areas of contention and the evolution of the procedures that were designed to manage these issues. Three major trends stand out. First is the persistent nature of the doctrinal differences between the United States and its Western European Allies. Irrespective of the nature of the particular initiative, whether it increased or decreased reliance on nuclear weapons, the credibility of the American nuclear guarantee was questioned in Europe. The second discernable trend in Alliance disputes was the growing significance, beginning in the late 1960s, of East-West relations in NATO deliberations. And the third trend concerned the manner in which NATO handled differences within the Alliance. This last trend was most discernable when one compares the way in which both flexible response and the ABM decisions were handled as contrasted with the INF decision. Whereas flexible response and the ABM decision were unilateral American initiatives presented to NATO as a *fait accompli*, the double track decision received its impetus from West Germany and was jointly formulated through extensive consultations. Before proceeding to discuss the origins of SDI, it is instructive to analyze in greater detail the first trend enumerated - doctrinal disagreement between the United States and Western Europe.

The European View of Strategy

It is of course a simplification to speak of a West "European" or "American" view of strategy because different nations and administrations are involved. With these caveats in mind, however, it is possible to discern certain views that more or less define the doctrinal positions on the respective sides of the Atlantic. In general, Britain, West Germany and France preferred to rely on a strategy that stressed the importance of threatening strategic nuclear strikes against the Soviet Union should they decide to attack Western Europe. While the immediate resort to such strikes was not openly advocated because they had long since been deemed incredible, West Europeans believed that it was possible to create circumstances in which the Soviet Union would be uncertain as to whether an attack against NATO would lead to an all out nuclear war. West European leaders argued that the mere existence of tactical nuclear weapons on the potential battlefield led to the possibility that nuclear weapons would be used. And once any nuclear weapons were employed, it was not unlikely that exchanges would escalate to far more destructive and wide-ranging strikes that would engulf both the United States and the Soviet Union. Thus West Europeans, in general, relied on a doctrine that could be called escalation uncertainty.

West Europeans preferred to rely on such a strategy because they viewed it as most likely to prevent conventional war. As we have seen, West European governments were reluctant to incur the cost of deploying substantial conventional forces. The reluctance of British, West German and French governments to countenance a large conventional build-up was not merely attributable to a belief that it would be difficult to obtain domestic support; it was also due to the belief that even a large

NATO conventional force would not suffice to prevent war in Europe. First, they believed that even if such a defence were militarily feasible, the level of destruction that conventional conflict would cause was apt to be so horrific as to defeat the purpose of any possible defence. This view was particularly prevalent in West Germany on whose territory the brunt of the conventional engagements were likely to occur.

Second, most European officials contended that it was nearly inconceivable for two nuclear-armed powers to engage in a large scale conflict without one side resorting to nuclear weapons. And it was believed that once nuclear weapons were used the chances of escalation were so high that to build up conventional forces when the eventual outcome would be determined by the wide-scale use of nuclear weapons was expensive and unnecessary.

The American View of Strategy

Whereas Europeans considered the aforementioned strategy the only viable one, American officials argued that the strategy of reliance on strategic nuclear strikes against the Soviet Union would progressively lose credibility as Soviet capabilities improved. American officials argued that while the credibility of the nuclear guarantee under conditions of superiority was one thing, when conditions changed it was necessary to adopt strategy to these evolving circumstances. Indeed even before flexible response was officially approved by the Alliance in 1967, the counterforce strategy elaborated at the beginning of the Kennedy

Administration - which endowed US nuclear forces with a more credible capacity to extend nuclear guarantees to Europe - was abandoned (on the declaratory level) because the substantial increase in Soviet nuclear capabilities undermined the assumptions upon which it was based. As McNamara later explained, "the counterforce strategy was a function of a very limited Soviet nuclear capability. It was appropriate for 1962. By 1964-66, it was no longer appropriate, as they [the Soviet Union] had multiplied their strategic nuclear capability several-fold."[89] These circumstances led McNamara to change declaratory strategy toward "assured destruction"[90], a posture which stressed the virtues of mutual vulnerability as a condition which ensured that neither the Soviet Union nor the United States would resort to nuclear use against the other.

Yet NATO strategy still rested on the willingness of the United States to initiate the use of nuclear weapons. In other words, Alliance strategy ultimately rested on the willingness of the United States to respond to aggression in a way that US leaders believed would lead to their own destruction. Thus the strategy suffered from a certain inherent lack of credibility. This point was made with devastating clarity by Henry Kissinger in his widely noted Brussels speech in 1979:

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[89] Robert McNamara, interview by Charlton, _op_. _cit_., p. 18.

[90] _Ibid_., p. 19. SIOP-62, which provided the operational underpinning for the counterforce strategy was not, however, changed.

> our European allies should not keep asking us to multiply strategic assurances that we cannot possible mean or if we do mean, we should not want to execute because if we execute, we risk the destruction of civilization.[91]

In short, from the beginning, the NATO Alliance had to contend with the vexing dilemmas created by the dangerous combination of intense geopolitical and ideological conflict between two blocs each armed with nuclear weapons. This entailed above all attempting to reconcile two impulses that were rendered contradictory by virtue of the nature of the nuclear world. The first was the desire to protect oneself from aggression and the second was the desire to survive the act of defending oneself. These contradictory impulses led to a state of affairs in which the Alliance came to rely on a nuclear threat that was variously considered as the principal protection and one highly dubious in credibility. While the existence of vast nuclear arsenals seemed to create a strategic environment in which escaping the nuclear dilemmas was impossible, the desire to do so on the part of the United States was evident.

Examining the history of NATO's past disputes provides a means of determining the deep and long-standing nature of the strategic, as well as political, differences that have dominated intra-Alliance deliberations from NATO's beginning. Significantly, it was found that the differing conceptions of strategy harboured by the United States and its key West European

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[91] Henry A. Kissinger, For the Record, (Boston, MA: Little and Brown, 1979) p. 240.

Allies were the root cause of disputes that arose in response to the presentation of new American initiatives, whether these initiatives were new weapons systems or proposals for changing NATO strategy. Keeping the salience of these underlying strategic differences in mind is central to a proper understanding of the fundamental dynamics of European/American relations over the SDI.

III. THE ORIGINS AND PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE

I. INTRODUCTION

On March 23, 1983 Ronald Reagan delivered a nationally televised speech to the American public that was to prove one of the most controversial and significant speeches of his tenure. In this historic address, Reagan laid out his vision of a world in which nuclear weapons could be "rendered impotent and obsolete" through the development of a ballistic missile defence system. While he stated that he was merely proposing a research project and cautioned that the realisation of such a system could take 20 years or even longer, Reagan's clear preference for a non-nuclear world created the impression that, if feasible, the United States government planned to proceed with the deployment of a comprehensive ballistic missile defence system.

The reaction to the March 23rd speech - soon dubbed the Star Wars speech[1] -was decidedly mixed. Most commentators interpreted Reagan's proposals as an ill-advised attempt to open the pandora's box of BMDs after they believed that this destabilizing weapon had been safely buried in the 1972 ABM treaty which created the conditions for strategic stability and represented the touchstone of detente. Others welcomed the decision, arguing that the strategic nuclear equation had come to favour the Soviet Union and that SDI promised a way to rectify dangerous imbalances. Still others saw SDI as a means of moving

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[1] It is interesting to note that although Reagan mentioned nothing in his address about space-based defences, the comprehensive nature of the defence he was proposing led commentators to assume - correctly - that his proposal envisaged stationing defence systems in space.

US defence policy away from reliance on nuclear weapons; they contended that the advent of nuclear parity had decisively diminished the utility of nuclear weapons and that SDI held out the promise of basing US strategy on a more realistic and safer foundation. The disagreements regarding the implications of Reagan's proposal did not, however, rest solely on differing views on the implications of BMD deployment; divergent perceptions concerning the objectives of SDI were a major source of controversy as well.

This chapter addresses fundamental issues about the origin, rationale and development of the Strategic Defense Initiative. Four major questions are addressed:

1. What was President Reagan's role in the development of SDI?
2. How was SDI related to perceived U.S. military inadequacies in the 1970s?
3. Why was SDI launched by Reagan on March 23, 1983 as a unilateral American programme. Why wasn't Europe consulted?
4. What was the rationale advanced to support SDI? To what extent was this rationale new? To what extent a culmination of past strategic concerns of U.S.?

Answering these questions is crucial to understanding the intra-Alliance controversy over SDI. For investigating these questions sheds light on why SDI was developed by the Reagan Administration and why it was presented to NATO as a *fait accompli*? Also, why, despite constituting only a research programme, SDI aroused such strong reactions in Britain, West Germany and France? And why the controversy over SDI was characterized by such enduring intensity?

Throughout this chapter, I will attempt to demonstrate that the significance of SDI for transatlantic politics can be found not so much in the fact that it held out the prospect of comprehensive BMD deployments, but rather in the rationale that the Reagan Administration forwarded to substantiate its claim of SDI's necessity. In explaining why he believed that SDI was necessary, Reagan argued that the disappearance of US nuclear superiority had greatly circumscribed the ability of the United States to employ the threat of nuclear retaliation to deter Soviet military actions - a theme that, as we saw in the previous chapter, had formed the basis for past changes in NATO doctrine.

The SDI, or more precisely the rationale employed to justify SDI, can, therefore, be seen as a continuation of a trend in US strategic thinking that goes back to the earliest days of the Alliance. And given the fact that it was this trend in US strategic thinking that drove past transatlantic disputes (as discussed in Chapter two), SDI, as the latest manifestation of US strategic thinking, should be seen as the vehicle through which long-standing differences in strategy were debated within the Alliance. This explains, to a large extent, why SDI, while only a research programme, aroused such pronounced controversy within the Alliance.

This chapter is divided into five major sections: Reagan's early views on BMDs; the Reagan Administration's initial military programme; the precipitating factors which led to SDI; the March

23, 1983 "Star Wars" speech; and the objectives of SDI. The West European reaction to SDI is analyzed in the next chapter.

II. REAGAN'S EARLY VIEWS ON BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENCES

Examining the views about ballistic missile defences that Ronald Reagan brought to office is essential to understanding the origins of SDI, because more than perhaps any initiative of his Administration, SDI bore his imprimatur. Reagan entered the White House with a clear and rather long-standing interest in BMDs, an interest that far exceeded that of any of the senior officials within his Administration. Thus in many respects, as this chapter will demonstrate, Reagan was himself the driving force behind SDI. These issues are particularly relevant to the manner in which the transatlantic debate unfolded because it explains both the objectives that Reagan wanted SDI to serve as well as the intensity of his commitment to these objectives.

Reagan's interest in ballistic missile defences long pre-dated his ascension to the Presidency. Shortly after becoming Governor of California in 1967, Reagan was tendered and accepted an invitation from Edward Teller, a founder of the Lawrence Livermore Weapons Laboratory, to visit the laboratory. Reagan was shown "all the complex projects"[2] and Teller relates that:

> He listened carefully; not to a highly technical presentation, but to one that must have contained a host of completely novel ideas. He asked maybe ten or twelve questions which clearly showed that he followed - that he

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[2] William A. Broad, "Reagan's 'Star Wars' Bid: Many Ideas Converging," The New York Times, 4 March 1985, p. A-8.

> comprehended. Indeed, he was the only Governor who ever visited our laboratory.[3]

Teller believed that following this visit, "it must have been clear" to Reagan "that to emphasize defence was my [Teller's] desire."[4] Reagan's initial contact with Teller, seemingly insignificant at the time, later had far-reaching consequences.

When he ran for the Republican nomination for President in 1976, Reagan spoke often about his abhorrence of nuclear weapons. When he addressed the convention after having lost the nomination to Gerald R. Ford, Reagan, in what many considered a speech that was crucial to the launching of his successful bid for the Presidency in 1980, stated that he believed that eliminating nuclear weapons was essential to the survival of civilization.[5]

During his 1980 Presidential campaign, Reagan had an experience that reinforced his aversion to nuclear weapons. On July 31, 1979, he visited the North American Defense Command (NORAD) in Colorado where the future President experienced a "personal epiphany."[6] General James Hill, the NORAD commander, briefed Reagan and his policy advisor, Martin Anderson, on the

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[3] Edward Teller, interview by Michael Charlton, in Michael Charlton, The Star Wars History, (London: BBC Publications, 1986), p. 95.

[4] Ibid.

[5] See Martin Anderson, Revolution, (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1990), pp. 63-79.

[6] Hedrick Smith, The Power Game: (New York: Random House, 1988), p. 604.

United States's detection and tracking capabilities.[7] Reagan was clearly impressed with what he saw and later recounted: "They actually are tracking several thousand objects in space, meaning satellites of ours and everyone else's, even down to the point that they are tracking a glove lost by an astronaut."[8] At the same time, he was deeply disturbed by what he learned during his tour. Anderson had asked General Hill what would happen if the Soviet Union were to launch an SS-18 missile at the United States. Hill explained that:

> we would pick it up right after it was launched, and the officials of the city would be alerted that their city would be hit by a nuclear bomb in ten or fifteen minutes. That's all we can do. We can't stop it.[9]

According to one account, upon hearing this, "disbelief spread over Reagan's face."[10] Contemplating the implications of Hill's answer for an American President who could be confronted with such a scenario, Reagan turned to Anderson and said: "The policy options he would have would be to press the button or do nothing." Reagan remarked that, "They're both bad. We should have something in the way of defending ourselves against nuclear missiles."[11] And later Reagan recalled: "I think the thing that struck me was the irony that here, with this great technology of ours, we can do all this [tracking objects in space], yet we cannot stop any of the weapons that are coming at us."[12]

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[7] Ibid.

[8] The New York Times, 4 March 1985, p. A-8. See also Anderson, op. cit., pp. 80-85.

[9] Smith, op. cit., p. 604.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

Following Reagan's visit to NORAD, Anderson prepared a memorandum suggesting that Reagan include a proposal for "a protective missile defense system" in his campaign platform.[13] Despite Reagan's enthusiasm for this proposal, senior Reagan campaign officials Michael Deaver and John Sears vetoed it. They feared that if Reagan were to advocate the development of ballistic missile defences, it would merely supply ammunition to his political opponents who had already begun to brand him as a warmonger. As Deaver admonished Anderson, "Ronald Reagan does not go out and talk about nuclear weapons."[14]

The issue of ballistic missile defences did not, however, disappear completely from view in the 1980 campaign. While it primarily emphasized the need to increase spending on strategic nuclear weapons and conventional forces, the Republican Party platform, in a little noticed section, also included a call for "vigorous research and development of an effective anti-ballistic missile system, such as is already at hand in the Soviet Union, as well as more modern ABM technologies."[15] Moreover, the platform stated that the United States should achieve "overall military and technological superiority over the Soviet Union."[16]

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[12] The New York Times, 4 March 1985, p. A-8.

[13] Smith, op. cit., p. 605.

[14] Ibid.

[15] The New York Times, 4 March 1985, p. A-8.

From this brief examination of Reagan's views on SDI before entering office it is clear that he harboured a clear and passionate interest in BMD that was rooted in his opposition to a US-Soviet relationship based on mutual terror. Reagan contended that given the consequences of a failure of deterrence, it was unwise to rely on Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) in perpetuity. Moreover, he believed that this relationship based as it was on threats of annihilation constituted a hinderance to improved relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Thus, Reagan's opposition to MAD and his interest in changing the strategic situation that defined this doctrine was firmly entrenched, and as we shall see, was waiting primarily for the proper opportunity and circumstances to transform an inclination into a policy.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF THE REAGAN ADMINSTRATION'S MILITARY PROGRAMME

Despite Reagan's long-standing interest in BMD's, when his Administration entered office it concentrated on a substantial build up of U.S. offensive nuclear forces. The new American President believed that his predecessor, Jimmy Carter, had neglected to procure sufficient offensive nuclear forces to match those of the Soviet Union. Reagan maintained, and indeed campaigned on the platform that this neglect had left the United States in a perilous strategic situation. During the 1980 Presidential campaign Reagan asserted that the United States faced a "window of vulnerability" arising from the ability of the Soviet Union to destroy a large portion of US ICBM silo's in a preemptive nuclear strike, and the corresponding inability of US strategic nuclear forces to inflict the similar damage on the Soviet ICBM force. While many experts claimed that this window was vastly exaggerated and in many respects irrelevant given the unquestioned ability of US nuclear forces stationed aboard submarines to retaliate with devastating effect should the Soviet attempt to preempt US land based ballistic missiles, Reagan was determined to "close the window of vulnerability." He proposed to do so by deploying MX missiles (which carried warheads of sufficient accuracy and destructive power to destroy Soviet ICBM's in their silos) in a basing mode that would render them relatively invulnerable to Soviet attack.[17]

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[16] Ibid.

Reagan viewed the closing of this window of vulnerability as one the most urgent challenges confronting the United States. He contended that if the Soviet Union were allowed to enjoy an advantage in this crucial aspect of military power it would not only place the United States in an untenable military situation but could have wider political and diplomatic repercussions as well. Reagan believed that if the United States were seen as lacking the will to match the Soviet Union in ICBM's, which he viewed as the most important indication of military power, the American government would be perceived as weak. Accordingly, when he came to office Reagan accorded the highest priority to closing this window of vulnerability. As we shall see the Reagan Administration found it extremely difficult to close the window of vulnerability both for technical and political reasons. Keeping in mind the importance that the Reagan Administration attached to closing the window of vulnerability and the difficultly they encountered in doing so is essential to understanding the precipitating factors that led to the March 23, 1983 speech. Shortly after the Republican election victory, senior intelligence officials briefed Reagan and his top advisors on the state of US defences. The new administration received a picture of the military balance that they interpreted as even more alarming than the one they had portrayed in the election campaign. As Caspar Weinberger later testified, the Reagan Administration believed that it was "confronted with a serious deterioration in our strategic nuclear capabilities"[18] and a concomitant and dangerous decline in the credibility of the US nuclear deterrent. The Joint Chiefs of Staff provided the following sobering assessment of the strategic situation at the beginning of the Reagan Administration:

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[17] Reagan never revealed how he proposed to base the MX so that it would indeed be invulnerable.

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[18] Testimony of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, Commitments, Consensus and U.S. Foreign Policy, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, October 31, 1985, p. 413.

> The steady modernization of Soviet strategic offensive and defensive capabilities has continued for more than two decades. This trend, coupled with the failure of US modernization efforts to keep pace, has resulted in the loss of US strategic nuclear superiority and increased uncertainty in US capabilities to deter both nuclear and non-nuclear conflict. The relative decline in US strategic and theater nuclear capabilities has reduced the ability of the US to deter or control lower level conflicts by the threat of nuclear escalation.[19]

Thus while public attention was focused primarily on the increased dangers of strategic nuclear war due to ICBM vulnerability and the growing US-Soviet disparities in counterforce capability, defence officials were deeply concerned about the potential effect of weaknesses in the strategic nuclear posture on US extended deterrent duties.

Reagan regarded his election victory as a mandate to reverse the decline in US strategic nuclear capabilities. The Reagan Administration believed that in order "to enhance the deterrence of both non-nuclear and nuclear conflict, the US must modernize the strategic TRIAD and associated C3 (command, control, and communications) systems and upgrade homeland defense capabilities. A sustained commitment is required to correct asymmetries in the strategic balance and create a more stable and secure deterrent."[20] While American defence officials did "not regard nuclear strength as a substitute for conventional strength," Weinberger stressed that the Administration must

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[19] The Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, United States Military Posture for FY 1983, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 26.

[20] Ibid.

"place the highest priority on the long overdo [sic] modernization of our strategic forces."[21]

While the Reagan Administration intended the strategic modernization programme to set the course of the defence agenda "well into the next century" it regarded "the mid-1980s when major and critical components of our present strategic deterrent forces could be destroyed by an enemy surprise attack," "as our most vulnerable period."[22] Therefore, portions of the strategic modernization programme were, in Weinberger's words, "specially designed to secure additional strength for the near term, while at the same time we build the long-term strategic forces we need but cannot deploy until the end of the 1980s."[23] Thus in addition to plans to build 100 B-1B bombers, to deploy 100 MX missiles in survivable basing modes, and to accelerate the production of Trident submarines and its Trident II missile, the Reagan Administration recommended a number of near-term measures to provide rapid improvements in the US strategic nuclear force posture while more fundamental changes were being implemented:

1. Modernization of "a selected portion" of the B-52 bomber fleet "to carry cruise missiles," leading to the deployment of 3800 cruise missiles at the beginning of 1983. In addition, KC-135 aerial tankers were to be "retrofitted with new engines to increase our airborne

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[21] Caspar W. Weinberger, Annual Report to the Congress, Fiscal Year 1983, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1982), p. I-17.

[22] Ibid., p. I-39.

[23] Ibid.

refuelling capabilities."[24]

2. The deployment of "several hundred nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missiles on our general purpose submarines beginning in 1984."[25]

3. The deployment of at least 40 MX missiles in existing silos, a step that would provide more immediate hard-target kill capability.[26]

More importantly, the administration proposed a number of measures designed to provide long-term solutions to the inadequacies confronting the US strategic nuclear posture. In their Military Posture statement for Fiscal Year 1983, the Joint Chiefs of Staff explained the nature of these deficiencies:

> Our primary concerns with the US TRIAD of strategic offensive forces are ICBM vulnerability and declining effectiveness against increasingly hard Soviet targets, SLBM limitations against hard targets, and decreasing ability of US manned bombers to penetrate Soviet defenses. A fourth concern, which affects all elements of the TRIAD, is the problem of assured C3 connectivity between the NCA and the strategic nuclear forces.[27]

To overcome these deficiencies the United States proposed a modernization programme encompassing "five segments, three of which directly concern elements of the TRIAD. The remaining segments concern C3 connectivity and strategic defense..."[28]

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[24] Ibid., p. I-41.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid., p. I-42.

[27] The Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, op. cit., p. 21.

[28] Ibid.

The Reagan Administration contended that when it entered office the US "strategic command, control and communications network had become highly vulnerable to Soviet nuclear attack."[29] They characterized C3 improvements as "perhaps the most urgently needed element of our entire strategic program."[30] They argued that the United States "must have survivable systems that would, under all circumstances detect, identify and report a nuclear attack" as well as "communicate with our strategic forces before and after such an attack, so as to control and coordinate our response."[31] The proposed improvements included "numerous measures for improving the timeliness and clarity of assured tactical warning and attack assessment, and for enhancing communications connectivity from the NCA to the strategic forces."[32] These changes were considered particularly important for the submarine leg of the strategic triad; as SLBMs became increasingly useful as counterforce weapons, the requirements for secure and prompt communication increased and specific improvements in the command and control of SSBN's was authorized.[33] The administration regarded improvements in C3 as the sine quo non for the success of the entire modernization effort, for without the ability to control nuclear forces their modernization would be of little practical significance.

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[29] Weinberger, Commitments, Consensus and U.S. Foreign Policy, op. cit., p. 413.

[30] Weinberger, FY 1983 Annual Report, op. cit., p. I-39.

[31] Ibid.

[32] The Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, op. cit., p. 25.

[33] Ibid.

The Administration also proposed that the United States reverse the Carter Administration's cancellation and build 100 B-1B bombers; it was recommended that the first planes come into operation in 1986. The Pentagon stated that the B-1B would have the capacity to penetrate Soviet air defences well into the 1990's and would provide "a more survivable and enduring cruise missile platform,"[34] as well an increased capacity for conventional missions. In addition the Defense Department declared that it intended "to deploy the ATB [Stealth bomber] as soon as possible."[35]

The Reagan Administration also declared its intention to accelerate the procurement of Trident missile submarines and the D-5 warhead. The Administration planned to acquire one new Trident boat for each fiscal year and begin deployment of the Trident II missile in 1989. The Defense Department attached particular importance to the development of the Trident II missile and its D-5 warhead as they were regarded as a survivable and highly accurate force that would enable American strategic planners to enhance substantially US hard-target kill capability.

With respect to the land-based deterrent, the Joint Chiefs of Staff declared in January 1982 that "the increasing vulnerability of the ICBM force to a Soviet first strike is the most serious problem facing US strategic nuclear forces."[36] Caspar Weinberger testified that the Soviet Union "had built a force of SS-18's and SS-19's, with sufficient numbers of highly accurate warheads to pose, at the very least, a major threat against our ICBM force."[37] The Reagan Administration did not believe that this problem could be easily solved: "The quest for a satisfactory solution to the increasing vulnerability of our existing land-based ICBMs has been a particularly vexing one."[38] The multiple protective shelter (MPS) basing scheme inherited from the Carter Administration was rejected on the grounds that "an MPS system would not be adequately survivable over the long term, since the Soviets could deploy additional warheads as fast as we could build shelters."[39] Instead, they declared their intention to postpone an immediate decision and "pursue research and development on three promising programs"[40] that would enable the MX missile to achieve survivability on a long-term basis. The first two were deep basing and continuous patrol aircraft (CPA)[41]. As a final option, the Reagan Administration proposed investigating "ballistic missile defense to protect our land-based missiles from incoming Soviet missiles and thus improve the survivability of our missiles."[42]

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[34] Weinberger, FY 1983 Annual Report, op. cit., p. I-41.

[35] Ibid.

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[36] The Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, op. cit., p. 71.

[37] Weinberger, Commitments, Consensus and U.S. Foreign Policy, op. cit., p. 413.

[38] Weinberger, FY 1983 Annual Report, op. cit., p. I-41.

[39] Ibid., p. III-57. Also this scheme encountered opposition from powerful, conservative senators whose states were sites for the MPS basing.

[40] Ibid., p. I-42.

"The fifth aspect of the US strategic modernization addresses the major deficiencies in strategic defense."[43] In its Annual Report to the Congress for Fiscal Year 1983, the Defense Department stated: "We have virtually ignored our strategic defensive systems for more than a decade. As a result, we have large gaps in the North American air defense warning network; our strategic air defense interceptors are obsolete; and our anti-satellite and ballistic missile defense programs have lagged behind the Soviets'. Our program ends these years of neglect."[44] The Administration recommended improving North American strategic air defences, procuring "an operational anti-satellite system[45], and conducting "a vigorous R&D program for ballistic missile defense."[46] Weinberger stated that "the Low Altitude Defense (LoAD) program will be restructured to accelerate development of an advanced terminal defense for ICBMs."[47] In addition the Reagan Administration indicated its intent to "continue on the exoatmospheric overlay program to provide a 1990s response to unconstrained growth in Soviet reentry vehicles."[48] And the Defense Department stated that the BMD programme also emphasized the "advancement of the BMD technology base to support future system concepts"[49] and that they were "assessing the technical feasibility of space-based laser weapons."[50]

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[41] Later the Reagan Administration proposed "dense pack" which did not receive adequate support from Congress and was subsequently shelved.

[42] Ibid., p. I-42.

[43] Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, op. cit., p. 26.

[44] Weinberger, FY 1983 Annual Report, op. cit., p. III-63.

[45] Ibid., p. III-63.

[46] Ibid.

While the administration believed that "strategic defense capabilities contribute to deterrence in ways frequently overlooked,"[51] by helping to "deter nuclear attack, and to degrade its effectiveness if it is attempted,"[52] their attitude was far from one of unalloyed enthusiasm:

> Although ground-based deployment of MX ultimately may require a BMD for survivability, today's BMD technology is not adequate to defend against Soviet missiles. For the future, we are not yet sure how well ballistic missile defenses will work; what they will cost; whether they would require changes to the ABM Treaty; and how additional Soviet ballistic missile defenses - which would almost certainly be

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[47] Ibid., It was specifically stated that LoAD development would be conducted within the confines of the ABM Treaty.

[48] Ibid.

[49] The Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, op. cit., p. 77.

[50] Weinberger, FY 1983 Annual Report, op. cit., p. I-40.

[51] The Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, op. cit., p. 25.

[52] Weinberger, FY 1983 Annual Report, op. cit., p. I-40.

> deployed in response to any U.S. BMD system - would affect U.S. and allied offensive capabilities.[53]

Thus while the Reagan Administration's Defense Department demonstrated an early interest in BMDs, it was not prepared, initially, to effect a fundamental change in the policies pursued by its predecessors with respect to BMDs. In short, at the beginning of the Reagan Administration, strategic defences were accelerated along with other facets of the strategic modernization programme, and increased attention was given to the possibility of using ballistic missile defences to solve the problem of ICBM vulnerability; but there was little to suggest that it would soon depart radically from the United States's traditional evolutionary approach to BMD research. Why the Reagan Administration eventually abandoned this approach and opted for a new policy with respect to BMDs can be explained by examining the purposes behind the Reagan Administration's defence build-up and how, by late 1982, they believed it to be faltering.

The Reagan Administration proposed the strategic modernization programme in the expectation that it would effect a substantial reduction in ICBM vulnerability and augment US counterforce capabilities. These objectives were deemed of salient importance to the success of the modernization effort because it was perceived inadequacies in these categories to which the Reagan Administration attributed the instability in the strategic nuclear balance. Specifically, the United States feared that the combination of highly accurate Soviet ICBM's and the vulnerability of the US land-based forces created dangerous first-strike incentives during a crisis. The Reagan Administration thus indicated its commitment to rebuilding US forces in order to ensure that they "will be capable under all conditions of war initiation to survive a Soviet first strike and retaliate in a way that permits the United States to achieve its objectives."[54] Moreover, American defence officials deemed it essential to ensure adequate time urgent hard-target kill capability. The Joint Chiefs of Staff pointed out that in the early 1980's, the United States would lose its advantage in hard-target kill capability, "but that the trend would move back toward parity as the US deploys ALCM, MX, and the TRIDENT D-5 SLBM."[55] Moreover, "during the same period, the Soviets will continue to enjoy a significant advantage in time-urgent hard-target kill potential, chiefly a result of the increasing accuracy of their modern ICBMs."[56] The Joint Chiefs of Staff, however, expected this trend to "reverse sharply by the late 1980s as the US deploys the highly accurate MX and TRIDENT D-5 missiles."[57] Thus while the Reagan Administration saw the

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[53] Ibid., p. III-65.

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[54] Ibid., p. I-17.

[55] Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, op. cit. p. 22.

[56] Ibid., p. 22.

[57] Ibid.

United States at a distinct disadvantage vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, it was confident that the successful completion of its strategic modernization programme would restore the strategic nuclear balance.

More broadly, the Reagan Administration believed that these changes would allow the United States to "eliminate some dangerous contradictions between the capabilities of our nuclear forces and the objectives of our policy."[58] The objectives of US nuclear strategy were, according to the Defense Department:

> (1) to deter nuclear attack on the United States or its allies: (2) to help deter major conventional attack against U.S. forces and our allies, especially in NATO: (3) to impose termination of a major war - on terms favorable to the United States and our allies - even if nuclear weapons have been used - and in particular to deter escalation in the level of hostilities; and (4) to negate possible Soviet nuclear blackmail against the United States or our allies.[59]

In a further effort to give concrete expression to these objectives, the Reagan Administration took steps to revise American nuclear strategy. In early 1982, defence planners produced a five-year defence plan that provided "the first complete defense guidance" of the Reagan Administration.[60] The salient feature of this "guidance" was the belief that the United States needed to plan for a nuclear war of a potentially extended duration. Caspar Weinberger began the process of endowing this assessment with operational significance in July 1982 when he signed Nuclear Weapons Employment Plan (NUWEP) 82 which directed military planners to design a new (Single Integrated Operational Plan) SIOP, "in which increased attention was accorded the requirements of nuclear weapons employment in a situation of prolonged or protracted nuclear conflict."[61]

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[58] Weinberger, FY 1983 Annual Report, op. cit., p. I-18.

[59] Ibid., p. I-18.

[60] Richard Halloran, "Pentagon Draws Up First Strategy For Fighting a Long Nuclear War," The New York Times, 30 May 1982, p. 1.

In accordance with its emphasis on protracted conflict, the "defense guidance" document also stated that the "development of ballistic missile defence systems to defend the United States against Soviet nuclear attack would be accelerated."[62] Furthermore, it recommended that the United States should consider revising the 1972 ABM Treaty if MX survivability could not be otherwise achieved. The document also proposed the "prototype development of space-based weapons systems"[63] as part of a strategy of engaging the Soviet Union in new areas of military competition.

The document also recommended that the United States exploit its economic and technological advantages vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. It stated that the United States should procure weapons systems that "are difficult for the Soviets to counter, impose disproportionate costs, open up new areas of major military competition and obsolesce previous Soviet investment."[64] Furthermore the "defense guidance" recommends that the United States impose "costs on the Soviets by raising uncertainty regarding their ability to accomplish some of their high-priority missions."[65]

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[61] Desmond Ball, "The Development of the SIOP, 1960-1983," in Desmond Ball and Jeffrey Richelson (eds.), Strategic Nuclear Targeting (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 80.

[62] Halloran, op. cit., p. 12.

[63] Ibid.

Thus some of the ideas that later became prominently associated with SDI existed in inchoate form in earlier initiatives, though it would be incorrect to trace the genesis of SDI to the Reagan Administration's early enthusiasm for accelerated research in ballistic missile defences and other high technology weapons. These early efforts were part of an overall strategic modernization programme, while Reagan's idea to render nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete" was developed outside of the channels that were guiding US defence policy on ballistic missile defences. On the other hand, the doctrinal changes effected in the early Reagan years were a response to the difficulties which the Reagan Administration believed Soviet strategic nuclear capabilities posed for the continued ability of United States nuclear forces to extend the nuclear guarantee to Western Europe.

The Effect of Soviet Nuclear Capabilities on Extended Deterrence

While many in the Reagan Administration believed that Soviet counterforce capabilities eroded the ability of US strategic nuclear forces to deter conventional attacks against NATO, it is difficult to see how this was really the case. For as we have seen in the previous chapter it was the vulnerability of the United States to strategic nuclear attack, not the disparities in counterforce capability, which created doubts both in the United States and Western Europe about the credibility of the US nuclear guarantee to Europe. Thus even when the United States possessed overwhelming superiority in counterforce capabilities during the 1960's, the Kennedy and Johnson Adminstration concentrated their primary efforts on augmenting conventional forces because they concluded that US nuclear superiority conferred few if any concrete military advantages.

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

It follows that even if one accepts the Reagan Adminstration's view that the Soviet Union possessed substantial counterforce capability advantages, it is difficult to see how these would provide the Soviet Union with greater or lesser ability to deter the US from using its nuclear weapons to stop an attack on Western Europe. For, it was the Soviet Union's ability to deliver thousands of nuclear warheads against the United States in retaliation and not the accuracy with which they could be delivered that made the United States leery about initiating nuclear use against the Soviet Union, a point that was borne out by the fact that during the sixties the United States felt deterred even in the absence of substantial Soviet counterforce capabilities.

The concern that US officials showed about the effect of US-

Soviet differences in counterforce capability, while generally misplaced, did point to the significant role that thinking about counterforce weapons had played in US nuclear strategy. Since it became apparent that the Soviet Union possessed the ability to retaliate against the US should the US attack the Soviet Union in response to a Soviet conventional attack on Western Europe, American planners have been driven to find a means of extracting some advantage from the use of nuclear weapons both at the tactical and strategic level. The need to do so stemmed from the fact that NATO had to have a credible means of threatening nuclear use in order to compensate for what it saw as its conventional inferiority. It was this dynamic that was the primary impetus for counterforce capabilities in the US arsenal. As American nuclear superiority gave way to US-Soviet parity in the early 1970's, the ability of the United States to derive even theoretical benefit from counterforce vanished. Still, the mission of extending deterrence to Western Europe remained and the drive to acquire counterforce capability (or superiority) outlived the circumstances that made it credible.

IV. PRECIPITATING FACTORS LEADING TO THE MARCH 23, 1983 SPEECH

Throughout his first two years in office, Reagan was lobbied by proponents of strategic defence. In January 1982, Reagan and Dr. Edward Teller met in what was the first of four meetings before the March 23, 1983 speech. Teller informed Reagan that recent technological advances in ballistic missile defence technology meant that an effective defence against nuclear missiles was now a distinct possibility. Reagan was also lobbied by members of his "Kitchen Cabinet" such as Karl R. Bendetsen, a former undersecretary of the Army and the chairman of the Champion International Corporation. Bendetsen and other members of the Kitchen Cabinet, with the approval of National Security Advisor William Clark and Presidential Counsellor Edwin Meese, met twice with Reagan in 1982 and advocated that the US pursue comprehensive ballistic missile defences. Although Reagan asked various questions concerning the programme, "he was noncommittal."[66]

Reagan's interest in ballistic missile defence increased dramatically as support for his strategic modernization programme began to erode. By the end of 1982 the Reagan Administration faced burgeoning public opposition to continued expenditure on nuclear arms, pressure from the Catholic Bishops who were preparing to present a document condemning the entire doctrine of deterrence as immoral, and, most importantly, growing Congressional reluctance to continue supporting nuclear modernization. Reagan regarded his increasing difficulty in garnering Congressional support for a new ICBM as a serious matter, for while he continued to receive support for modernization of the other two legs of the TRIAD, he attached greatest importance to matching the Soviet Union in land-based missiles which he considered the most important index of strategic nuclear capability.

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[66] Smith, op. cit., p. 605.

The House of Representatives' vote in December 1982 to block funding for the MX missile was thus a decisive event in the road toward Reagan's March 23, 1983 speech. The vote emphasized how difficult it would be for the Reagan Administration, in the face of Congressional opposition, to compete with the Soviet Union in the production of offensive nuclear arms: for in addition to failing to receive adequate funding for the MX, the Reagan Administration still faced the vexing problem of deploying it in a survivable basing mode. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union was not only continuing to produce heavy ICBMs at a rapid pace, but was also beginning mobile deployments of such heavy missiles, thus rendering them relatively invulnerable to US counterforce strikes. Reagan therefore concluded that unless these trends were reversed, he would be unable to achieve his objective of arresting the dangerous trends in the strategic nuclear balance. As George Keyworth, Reagan's science adviser, stated:

> I think there is no question what was the stimulus [for SDI]. It was the fact that the President had just completed two years immersed in the complexities of modernizing our own strategic forces and realizing the limitations which his successors would confront on a curve of simply eroding nuclear stability. It is quite logical, I think, that the SDI proposal came at the conclusion of our two-year-long debate on strategic modernization.[67]

In essence, Reagan feared "his successors not possessing sufficient tools with which to manage their challenges in the future" and consequently "saw the need to restore a stable balance..."[68] While these factors impressed upon Reagan the need for change, it was his growing conviction that emerging technology could provide alternative means of deterrence that led ultimately to his decision to pursue strategic defences. As Keyworth explained: "What made him decide that 'now' was the time to begin this initiative was the state of technology and the rate of progress, in the last few years, underlying those technologies."[69] Thus it was the confluence of the perceived consequences of a sputtering strategic modernization programme, advances in key technologies, and Reagan's long-standing interest in ballistic missile defences that created the conditions which eventually led to the March 23 speech.

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[67] George Keyworth, interview with Michael Charlton, in Charlton, op. cit., p. 102.

Once Reagan decided to pursue seriously the option of placing greater reliance on BMDs, he entrusted the formulation of his new policy to his National Security Adviser, William Clark, and his deputy, Robert McFarlane. McFarlane, who, as deputy to the inexperienced Clark, wielded unusual authority, believed that "the traditional concept of offensive deterrence was becoming less stable" and that "defense was conceptually an answer."[70] With the help of Admiral John Poindexter, then the third most important person on the National Security Council Staff, McFarlane, working through unofficial channels, sought support from the military. This was considered vital, for while it was possible to launch such an initiative without garnering support from, let alone informing, other relevant bureaucracies, without at least the acquiescence of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it would have been difficult to proceed with the idea of strategic defences. McFarlane "found a willing ally"[71] in the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral James Watkins. Watkins, had for some time believed "that the nation was near a dead end in the offensive arms race."[72] And on January 20, 1983 Watkins met with Dr. Teller, whose optimism about new technologies and his description of Soviet efforts in strategic defence convinced the Admiral that there were viable alternatives. Poindexter and McFarlane urged Watkins to "push his views with the other Chiefs."[73]

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[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., pp. 102-103.

[70] Smith, op. cit., p. 606.

The Joint Chiefs were scheduled to meet with Reagan on February 11, and Watkins used the Joint Chiefs' February 5 dress rehearsal to promote increased US efforts in the field of strategic defence. He was careful, however, to emphasize that he was not advocating an abandonment of offensive nuclear weapons; he merely wanted greater attention given to investigating "how defenses could be combined with offensive deterrence."[74] Watkins also employed a moral argument to support his ideas, asserting that "we should protect the American people, not avenge them."[75]

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[71] Ibid., p. 607.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

During the February 11 meeting between the President and the Joint Chiefs, Clark and Poindexter were eager to get the nation's top military officers on record as supporting the President's desire to proceed with strategic defences. The meeting began with the customary military briefing on strategic trends. Then the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General John Vessey, began to explain Watkins ideas, "telling Reagan the Chiefs felt the time had come to take another look at defense."[76] Reagan turned to the other Chiefs and asked, "Do you all feel that way?"[77] The room fell silent as Reagan looked at each Service Chief individually. The Army Chief of Staff, General Meyer, averred that "the historic balance between offense and defense had gotten 'out of kilter' - whether you're talking about defense against tanks, defense against aircraft, or defense against missiles."[78] Watkins remarked that new technologies offered great promise for the defensive options. McFarlane replied, "Are you saying that you think it is possible, not probable but possible, that we might be able to develop an effective defense against ballistics missiles?"[79] Watkins affirmed the thrust of

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid., p. 608.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

McFarlane's question, stating, "Yes, that's exactly what I am saying."[80] McFarlane, seeing in Watkins' statement the endorsement of strategic defences that the President needed, turned to Reagan and said that "the implications of this are very, very far-reaching. If it were feasible to find an alternative basis for maintaining our security against nuclear ballistic missile weapons, that would be a substantial change, obviously." Reagan responded, "I understand that."[81]

Both Reagan and McFarlane saw in Watkins' statement an opportunity to claim endorsement by the Joint Chiefs in order to later fend off criticism that they had not solicited military advice. What the Chiefs had in fact endorsed, however, was little more than the idea that the United States should "check possibilities for combining strategic defense with the existing strategy of deterrence through offensive nuclear weapons."[82] Nevertheless, "Reagan was exhilarated by his meeting with the Joint Chiefs and eager to declare a brand new national strategy."[83] He indicated to his staff his "desire to proclaim a radical shift of doctrine away from nuclear deterrence"[84] toward a defensive strategy. Clark was particularly enthusiastic about the idea of such a bold stroke, seeing in strategic defences an opportunity for Reagan to leave a lasting legacy. Clark, however, needed the assistance of McFarlane who possessed the foreign and defence policy knowledge that he lacked. While McFarlane supported a greater emphasis on BMDs, he became somewhat uncomfortable with the more sweeping formulation which Reagan favoured. He therefore tried to convince Reagan to wait for the Scowcroft Commission Report on Strategic Forces and then proceed on a bipartisan basis with Speaker of the House, Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill. Reagan rejected this approach, preferring instead to have his initiative developed secretly with only a small number of NSC aides even aware of his intentions. Accordingly, Clark directed the NSC to keep their planning on a "close-hold" basis, which precluded informing even the relevant Cabinet members.[85] The staff work was entrusted to McFarlane, Poindexter, Air Force Colonel Robert Linhard, and Ray Pollock, a civilian arms specialist on the NSC staff. Thus, the concept proceeded with practically the entire US national security apparatus unaware that the President was interested in initiating a fundamental shift in US defence policy.

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid., p. 609.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

By mid-March however, McFarlane felt that he needed to widen the circle of those involved in the deliberations. He went to the President's science adviser George Keyworth to seek his counsel and enlist his support. Keyworth, after some initial hesitations, agreed to support Reagan's initiative. Subsequently, both Keyworth and McFarlane attempted to explain to Reagan some the complications that would attend such a radial proposal. And privately McFarlane attempted to get Reagan to abandon his "utopian view"[86] of rendering nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete, as well as to consult with America's European Allies. The NSC's Col. Linhard also cautioned that it could be dangerous to announce the intention to increase reliance on defensive weapons before the weapons were themselves on hand, as this would undermine the credibility of NATO's flexible response doctrine, which, after all, depended on the offensive nuclear potential of the United States. Despite these warnings, Reagan clung tenaciously to his proposal and told his advisors to proceed in the strictest secrecy. Accordingly, McFarlane began drafting a secret "annex" to a long-planned speech designed to garner support for the Reagan Administration's stalled defence build-up.[87]

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[85] Ibid., p. 610. Weinberger, however, because of his close personal relationship with Clark was kept abreast of these developments.

A mere forty-eight hours before the speech was to be given, the White House distributed copies of Reagan's proposed speech to the State and Defense Departments. Shock waves moved through the bureaucracy. Shultz opposed Reagan's far-reaching proposals. The Joint Chiefs who thought that Reagan had far exceeded what they had envisaged in terms of increased emphasis on defensive technology, also expressed reservations about the advisability of proceeding with the speech. Secretary of State Shultz was reportedly enraged that he had not been informed earlier and tried desperately to convince Reagan to abandon his proposal. In an uncharacteristic agreement with the State Department, Weinberger directed Richard Perle and Fred Ikle to do what they could to stop Reagan from giving the speech.

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[86] Ibid., p. 612.

[87] Ibid., p. 610.

Pentagon officials argued that the ideas contained in Reagan's proposed speech required more detailed study. Admiral Watkins, who was the strongest supporter among the Joint Chiefs, opposed giving the speech because "the necessary political groundwork had not been laid."[88] General Vessey, who was as surprised as any upon seeing the speech, believed that while the concept of strategic defence showed promise, "more study had to be done."[89] General Meyer, the Army Chief of Staff, would have preferred at least "six or seven months to study it internally."[90] He contended that this would have allowed the idea of strategic defences to be "started out in a more organized way. We could have outlined the technologies we wanted to go after and the benchmarks five and ten years out."[91]

Civilian officials in both the State and Defense departments were primarily concerned about the impact that Reagan's speech would have on relations with the Soviet Union and Western Europe. Fred Ikle and Richard Perle argued that the speech would evoke apprehension in Europe: Reagan's proposals would inevitably be seen as an American attempt to retreat behind a Fortress America and disengage itself from European affairs.[92] They maintained that Reagan's proposal would engender great anxiety in Europe, for it would be interpreted as an attempt to jettison the offensive nuclear guarantee that had ensured European security since World War II. McFarlane shared these reservations and urged Reagan to consult with European Allies before giving the speech, but Reagan refused.[93]

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[88] Ibid., p. 613.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

The US Failure to Consult NATO About the March 23, 1983 Speech

The question naturally arises as to why Reagan decided against informing or consulting West European governments before delivering a speech that he knew would have the profoundest implications for West European security. Reagan was deeply committed to pursuing his ideas about BMDs and realized that neither in his own government or abroad did others share this commitment.[94] Given these basic realities, to have consulted with the United States' NATO Allies would merely have invited strong criticism about a programme that Reagan was committed to pursuing with or without their support.

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[92] See D. Hoffman and L. Cannon, "President Overruled Advisers on Announcing Defense Plan," The Washington Post, 26 March 1983, p. 1.

[93] Weinberger, who was attending a meeting of NATO defence ministers at the time, was expressly forbidden to forewarn, let alone consult them, and reportedly delayed his departure following the speech in order to apologize to his colleagues for not being allowed to inform them in advance of Reagan's speech. See Smith, op. cit., p. 614.

In many respects the very nature of the initiative precluded prior consultation. NATO's consultative mechanisms were designed to achieve consensus within an existing strategic framework, yet Reagan had conceived SDI as revolutionary proposal that sought, in many ways, to overthrow the old consensus. Under these circumstances, consultation would have merely led to rejection, while at the same time endangering the secrecy surrounding the speech.[95]

Thus while much was made of the fact that SDI was presented unilaterally,[96] the manner in which SDI was presented has been accorded far more importance than it deserves. To be sure, in presenting SDI as a fait accompli the Reagan Administration disregarded the established procedures by which important strategic initiatives were supposed to be presented to NATO. But even had the Reagan Adminstration informed West European Allies well in advance and solicited their opinions before delivering the speech, it is difficult to see how this would have affected the West European disposition toward SDI or Reagan's determination to proceed with SDI. For, what Reagan's insistence on pursuing SDI demonstrated was that Western Europe and the United States harboured substantially different visions of what constituted a credible nuclear strategy and a stable nuclear regime. Prior consultations would not have changed that reality. Despite his refusal to authorize prior consultation with West European Allies, Reagan, at the behest of the State Department, did allow McFarlane to insert passages into the speech designed to reassure West European government's about the central place they occupied in American defence strategy.[97]

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[94] See Martin Anderson, Revolution, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

[95] Reportedly Margaret Thatcher was informed about the contents of the speech a few hours before its delivery. It is unclear, however, how detailed a briefing she was given or whether the most dramatic aspects of the speech were divulged to the British Prime Minister. See The Guardian, March 30, 1983.

[96] See for instance Ivo H. Daalder, The SDI Challenge to Europe, (Cambridge MA: Ballinger Publishing Co., 1987), p. 7.

State Department Concerns About the Effect of Reagan's Speech on East-West Relations

Concerns about the impact of Reagan's proposed speech on NATO were matched by the State Department's fear that it could exacerbate US-Soviet relations by further complicating arms control negotiations. Shultz contended that the Soviet Union would view Reagan's proposals as a provocation designed to allow the United States to develop a first-strike capability: if the United States could develop a reasonably effective defence, it would then be in a position to launch an attack on Soviet offensive forces while using the defensive shield to ward off the a reduced Soviet retaliatory response. In order to alleviate these concerns, Shultz convinced Reagan to broach this potential problem and state that this was not the United States's objective.

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[97] Smith, op. cit., p. 614.

While these arguments failed to dissuade Reagan from going forward with his speech, he was persuaded to delay its presentation for a day to allow for revision of the text. Administration officials also convinced Reagan to scale down the scope of his project. Originally, Reagan had planned to include in his speech a proposal to protect the United States against Soviet nuclear-armed bombers and cruise missiles as well as ballistic missiles, but he was persuaded to confine his plan to defending against "strategic ballistic missiles". What Reagan refused to do, however, was to change the basic and revolutionary thrust of his speech.

V. THE 23 MARCH 1983 SPEECH

In his March 23, 1983 speech Reagan declared "the necessity to break out of a future that relies solely on offensive retaliation for our security,"[98] and advocated creating a strategic regime "that did not rest upon the threat of instant U.S. retaliation to deter a Soviet attack,"[99] but one that was predicated on the ability to "intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our own soil or that of our allies?"[100] If implemented, this concept would effect a strategic revolution by breaking sharply with prior doctrinal revisions: While past Presidents had also underlined the need to adapt US doctrine to changing strategic circumstances, they had done so by effecting modifications within the prior conceptual framework of offensive retaliation - in essence, refining the manner and timing in which it was to be applied while avoiding fundamental doctrinal changes. But Reagan argued that it was precisely these fundamental changes that were most required and that strategic defences would provide the means by which to effect the required changes.

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[98] Reagan, op., cit., p. 218.

[99] Ibid., p. 219.

Reagan also argued that it was imperative to "take steps to reduce the risk of a conventional military conflict escalating to nuclear war by improving our non-nuclear capabilities."[101] While statements of this nature had constituted a veritable staple in NATO declarations, its juxtaposition with proposals advocating eliminating the United States's reliance on retaliation was seen as further evidence that the United States intended to withdraw its nuclear guarantee to Europe. For this reason Europeans were only moderately appeased by Reagan's assurance that:

> As we pursue our goal of defensive technologies, we recognize that our allies rely upon our strategic offensive power to deter attacks against them. Their vital interests

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

> and ours are inextricably linked. Their safety and ours are one. And no change in technology can or will alter that reality. We must and shall continue to honor our commitments.[102]

While these assurances were not unwelcome, Europeans argued that regardless of Reagan's intentions, the weapons systems he was proposing would eliminate the objective conditions that allowed the United States to endow these assurances with operational significance.

At the same time, Reagan maintained that a shift to a new strategy would take time and be technically demanding:

> I know this is a formidable, technical task, one that may not be accomplished before the end of the century. Yet, current technology has attained a level of sophistication where it is reasonable for us to begin this effort. It will take years, probably decades of effort on many fronts. There will be failures and setbacks, just as there will be successes and breakthroughs.[103]

Precisely because these capabilities would take so long to build, Reagan emphasized that "as we proceed, we must remain constant in preserving the nuclear deterrent and maintaining a solid capability for flexible response."[104] Thus Reagan was not advocating an immediate shift in strategy. In fact he stressed that his goal would probably not be achieved before the end of the century and could take "decades."[105]

Reagan realized that his proposals could easily be interpreted as dangerous or provocative and thus he attempted to anticipate and defuse prospective criticism. He stressed that in pursuing this programme the United States would proceed in a manner "consistent with our obligations of the ABM Treaty"[106] and emphasized that "we seek neither military superiority nor political advantage."[107] In an effort to preempt anticipated criticism and demonstrate that he understood how his proposals might be misconstrued, Reagan stated:

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[102] Ibid., p. 220.

[103] Ibid., p. 219.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

> I clearly recognize that defensive systems have limitations and raise certain problems and ambiguities. If paired with offensive systems, they can be viewed as fostering an aggressive policy; and no one wants that.[108]

"But with these considerations firmly in mind," said Reagan, "I call upon the scientific community in our country, those who gave us nuclear weapons, to turn their great talents now to the cause of mankind and world peace, to give us the means of rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete."[109]

Reagan's Offer to Share SDI With the Soviet Union

In his March 23 speech, Reagan outlined approaches that his Administration was to pursue later with respect to strategic defences. For instance, Reagan stated that his proposals "could pave the way for arms control measures to eliminate the [nuclear] weapons themselves."[110] In a press conference shortly after his speech, Reagan elaborated on this idea and presented his conception of how, in the future, if robust defensive technologies were developed, they could facilitate disarmament:

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[106] Ibid., p. 220.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid.

> In my opinion, if a defensive weapon could be found and developed that would reduce the utility of these or maybe even make them obsolete, then whenever that time came, a President of the United States would be able to say, "Now, we have both the deterrent, the missiles - as we have had in the past, but now this other thing that has altered this -" And he could follow any one of a number of courses. He could offer to give that same defensive weapon to them to prove to them that there was no longer any need for keeping these missiles. Or with that defense, he could then say to them, "I am willing to do away with all my missiles. You do away with yours."[111]

It is difficult to assess the seriousness of Reagan's offer to share the fruits of SDI research with the Soviet Union. On the face of it, it seemed absurd to imagine that the United States would hand over to the Soviet Union its most highly guarded secrets, especially since doing so would help Soviet scientists not only develop their own SDI (the putative purpose of Reagan's offer), but also to defeat any proposed US SDI system. Yet, it is possible that Reagan, blissfully unaware of these practical restraints, genuinely believed that such an offer made sense. In any event, the Reagan Administration could hardly have been surprised that the Soviet Union reacted with incredulity upon being presented with such an offer. Nor could they have been unaware of the fact that in offering to share SDI technology, the US could defuse at least some of the negative perceptions surrounding SDI. In the end, however, whether or not Reagan's offer was sincere or not was largely irrelevant since by the time such sharing would occur he would no longer be President and his successor was unlikely to be either as enthusiastic about SDI or about sharing some of the United States' most closely guarded secrets.

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[110] Reagan, op. cit., p. 220.

[111] New York Times, 30 March 1983, p. A-14.

VI. THE OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE OF SDI

While attention was primarily focused on the radical proposals articulated in the speech and the potentially far-reaching implications of their implementation, the most striking and lastingly significant aspect of the President's speech pertained to the rationale he employed to justify his proposals. Reagan believed that the United States confronted a strategic balance that had been steadily changing to the detriment of the West and that this necessitated a fundamental change in American military doctrine. While conceding that the strategy of deterrence based on retaliation had "succeeded in preventing nuclear war for more than three decades,"[112] Reagan declared candidly that:

> what it takes to maintain deterrence has changed. It took one kind of military force to deter an attack when we had far more nuclear weapons than any other power; it takes another kind now that the Soviets, for example, have enough accurate and powerful nuclear weapons to destroy virtually

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[112] Reagan, op. cit., p. 218.

> all of our missiles on the ground.[113]

The implications of this assertion were profound. Reagan's remarks constituted a scarcely veiled admission by a sitting US President that the growth in Soviet nuclear capabilities and the subsequent disappearance of US nuclear superiority had eliminated the conceptual and strategic foundation upon which Western deterrence strategy had been predicated. In Reagan's eyes these circumstances dictated a fundamental reappraisal of American strategy. Implying that US nuclear strategy, conceived during an era of US superiority and near invulnerability, had failed to adjust to the reality of radically different strategic circumstances, Reagan declared that in the future American strategy "must be based on recognition and awareness of the weaponry possessed by other nations in the nuclear age."[114]

The Reagan Administration contended that SDI was a necessary response to the deterioration in the strategic nuclear balance since the signing of the SALT I and ABM treaties. The United States had entered these agreements in the expectation that they would provide the conceptual and legal foundation for a stable strategic regime based on mutual vulnerability. The key component of this assumption was the belief that in the absence of defences "the nuclear relationship would be stable if each side had survivable retaliatory offensive forces roughly equal in capability to those of the other side and was, at the same time, virtually defenseless against ballistic missile attack - and, therefore, open to the other's retaliatory blow. In such a situation, neither side would have an incentive to strike first, even in the most dire circumstances."[115] Furthermore it was assumed that the absence of defences would eliminate the need for further offensive deployments and lay the foundation for offensive reductions. Reagan Administration officials eagerly emphasized that these goals were the sine quo non upon which the success of the regime was predicated at the time it was conceived and that a failure to fulfil these objectives was viewed by the Nixon Administration as grounds for reassessing the absence of defences. Reagan Administration officials therefore often cited Ambassador Gerard Smith's Unilateral Statement in 1972, which was made in order to assuage the anxieties of US Senators who were dubious of the potential efficacy of a regime without defences:

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[113] Ibid., p. 211.

[114] Ibid.

> The U.S. Delegation has stressed the importance the U.S. Government attaches to achieving agreement on more complete limitations on strategic offensive arms, following agreement on an ABM Treaty and on an Interim Agreement on certain measures with respect to the limitation of strategic offensive arms. The U.S. Delegation believes that an objective of the follow-on negotiations should be to constrain and reduce on a long-term basis threats to the survivability of our respective retaliatory forces. The USSR Delegation has also indicated that the objectives of SALT would remain unfulfilled without the achievement of an agreement providing for more complete limitations on strategic offensive arms. Both sides recognize that the initial agreements would be steps toward the achievement of more complete limitations on strategic arms. If an agreement providing for more complete strategic offensive arms limitations were not achieved within five years, U.S.

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[115] Paul Nitze, "SDI: Its Nature and Rationale," Current Policy No. 751 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985), p. 1.

> supreme interests could be jeopardized. Should that occur, it would constitute a basis for withdrawal from the ABM Treaty.[116]

While the Reagan Administration did not call for the immediate withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, it clearly believed that the worst fears of the opponents of the ABM and SALT I Treaties had been realized. It argued that the "the Soviet Union has failed to show the type of restraint, in both strategic offensive and defensive forces, that was hoped for when the SALT process began."[117] Paul Nitze emphasized that since 1972 the Soviet Union has "showed little genuine readiness to discuss meaningful limits on or cuts in offensive arms. Instead, strategic offensive arsenals have expanded greatly since 1972."[118] Specifically, Nitze cited the alarming combination of highly accurate MIRV's situated atop large Soviet missiles which gave the Soviet Union "a ballistic missile force capable of threatening virtually the entire range of targets in the United States that comprise the fixed land-based portion of our retaliatory forces."[119] And Nitze stated that:

> The number of warheads on Soviet strategic ballistic missiles today is four times the number when SALT I was

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[116] Gerard Smith, "Agreed Statements," 26 May 1972, in Steven E. Miller and Stephen Van Evera (eds.), The Star Wars Controversy (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 267.

[117] U.S. Department of State, The Strategic Defense Initiative, Special Report No. 129, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, June 1985), p. 2.

[118] Nitze, "SDI: Its Nature and Rationale," op. cit., p. 1.

[119] Ibid.

> concluded. Furthermore, the Soviet capability to destroy hard targets quickly has increased by a factor of more than ten. This growth in offensive capabilities is contrary to what we had in mind in 1972.[120]

The Reagan Administration was also concerned about the substantial Soviet programme in ballistic missile defences. They cited the major investments that the Soviet Union had made in both traditional and advanced ABM technology. Moreover, the Soviet Union continued its substantial investment in air defences, upgraded its ballistic missile defences around Moscow, and undertook major efforts to harden command centres against the effects of nuclear blasts. In short, the Reagan Administration believed that the Soviet Union's military activity since 1972 posed a grave danger to America security. As a key policy document stated, "In fact, should these trends be permitted to continue and the Soviet investment in both offensive and defensive capability proceed unrestrained and unanswered, the resultant condition could destroy the theoretical and empirical foundation on which deterrence has rested for a generation."[121] More importantly still, the Reagan Administration interpreted the Soviet actions as "persuasive evidence that they did not accept the concept of stable mutual deterrence on which we believed the ABM Treaty to be premised."[122] Accordingly, the Reagan

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[120] Ibid.

[121] U.S. Department of State, op. cit., p. 3.

[122] Nitze, "SDI: Its Nature and Rationale," op. cit., p. 2.

Administration believed that a change in American defence policy was necessary:

> over the long run, the trends set in motion by the pattern of Soviet activity, and the Soviets' persistence in that pattern of activity, suggest that continued long-term dependence on offensive forces may not provide a stable basis for deterrence... Therefore, we must now also take steps to provide future options for ensuring deterrence and stability over the long term, and we must do so in a way that allows us both to negate the destabilizing growth of Soviet offensive forces and to channel longstanding Soviet propensities for defenses toward more stabilizing and mutually beneficial ends. The Strategic Defense Initiative is specifically aimed toward these goals.[123]

More fundamentally, however, SDI was the logical result of the Reagan Administration's conviction that the doctrinal underpinnings of US nuclear strategy required reexamination. The key policy makers in the Reagan Administration maintained that the strategic regime that US negotiators attempted to construct on the edifice of the SALT I and ABM treaties was incompatible with the specifically American requirements for strategic stability because it neglected the implications of mutual vulnerability for US extended deterrent duties. For the United States, strategic stability was historically associated with virtual invulnerability to nuclear attack, a condition which allowed the extension of nuclear guarantees to theatres in which American and allied conventional forces confronted Soviet preponderance. Thus, even if the absence of defences led to the type of regime envisaged in 1972 - in which each side accepted mutual vulnerability and eschewed efforts to render retaliatory forces vulnerable - the resultant regime would still have been incompatible with strategic stability. What was required, according to Fred Ikle, was:

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[123] The U.S. Department of State, op. cit., p. 3.

> a long-term transformation of our nuclear strategy, the armaments serving it, and our arms control policy. To begin with, we must disenthral ourselves of the dogma of consensual vulnerability - the notion that unrelieved vulnerability of the United States and the Soviet Union to each other's nuclear forces is essential for halting the competition in offensive arms, and is the best guarantee against the outbreak of nuclear war.[124]

The Reagan Administration viewed SDI as an integral part of an overall policy designed "to address the most important changes in the strategic environment that have occurred since the 1960s."[125] As Caspar Weinberger stated, "strategic defense represents a change of strategy, but it is motivated by the search for a more secure deterrent." Indeed, "strategic defence represents a natural extension, the capstone of an array of changes in our strategic nuclear forces, motivated by the search for a more secure deterrent."[126] At the same time, he asserted that: "The President's SDI is not only a natural extension of the search for alternative ways to ensure deterrence; it is the logical culmination of that search."[127]

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[124] Fred Ikle, "Nuclear Strategy," Foreign Affairs Vol. 63, No. 4 (Spring 1985), p. 824.

[125] Caspar Weinberger, "U.S. Defense Strategy," Foreign Affairs Vol. 64, No. 4 (Spring 1986), p. 679.

[126] Report of the Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger to the Congress on the FY 1987 Defense Budget (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986), p. 74.

Thus, while the Reagan Administration, upon entering office "moved decisively to restore military parity with the Soviet Union, [it] also began to reassess those strategic concepts inherited from past policy makers."[128] The most important conceptual change that emerged was the "recognition that the reality of nuclear parity means reduced reliance on nuclear weapons" and that prior modifications in US nuclear strategy had failed to grasp fully the doctrinal implications, first of US vulnerability to Soviet nuclear retaliation and later the loss of US nuclear superiority. As a result, past policy changes merely refined rather than fundamentally altered US nuclear strategy. Weinberger ascribed this failure to an inadequate appreciation of the premises upon which US nuclear strategy was originally predicated and the degree to which they had been vitiated over time:

> Most of the conceptual apparatus that shapes our thinking about what forces we need and how they would be used was formulated in the 1950s and early 1960s. Consider the list: nuclear deterrence, extended deterrence, escalation control, strategic stability, offense dominance, flexible response, counterinsurgency, limited war, and escalation ladders. These concepts have not only shaped the main lines of forces, doctrines and plans we manage today, but they continue to shape our thinking about the uses of these forces and about what forces we need for the future.[129]

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[127] _Ibid_., p. 40.

[128] _Ibid_., p. 13.

[129] _Ibid_., p. 73.

Weinberger stressed that it was important to remember that the strategic circumstance that existed when these doctrines and strategies were formulated differed from those which obtained by the early 1980's:

> The dominant features of the 1950s, when most of these ideas were first formulated and applied, can be summarized in two phrases: American nuclear preeminence and American military superiority. In the nuclear arena we had a decisive advantage. Across the board in military forces we invested more than the Soviets and had a margin of superiority in most military dimensions.
>
> That era has vanished. The Soviet Union has become a military superpower through an effort that has consumed more than twice as large a percentage of its gross national product as U.S. defense spending does.[130]

Accordingly, Weinberger asked: "What does this transformation of the military balance between the United States and the Soviet Union imply for the relevance of our basic strategic concepts? Should ideas formulated in an era of American military predominance apply with equal validity in an era of parity?"[131] Weinberger clearly did not think so:

> Now that Soviet nuclear forces are at least equal to our own, and in many dimensions superior, some earlier ideas are outmoded. The Reagan Administration has therefore given highest priority to reducing the threat of nuclear war, reducing reliance upon nuclear weapons, and continuing the development of options that provide the President a range of choices other than surrender in response to a Soviet attack.
>
> The President's SDI is not only a natural extension of the search for alternative ways to ensure deterrence; it is the logical culmination of that search. This research program is going well enough now to make it seem unlikely that our security in the 21st century will depend on benign

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[130] Weinberger, "U.S. Defense Strategy," op. cit., p. 676.

[131] Ibid.

> acceptance of mutual vulnerability.[132]

In short, the Reagan Administration believed that while prior attempts to ensure the credibility of US nuclear strategy through increased targeting flexibility was necessary so long as no better way existed, it was profoundly unsatisfying and ultimately required abandonment; for although "limited options pose a more credible threat to meet any level of Soviet attack and increase the likelihood that escalation could be controlled," it is not "possible to be certain that our efforts to limit escalation and terminate a conflict once begun would succeed."[133] Therefore,

> the knowledge that any conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union might escalate to nuclear catastrophe is certainly part of deterrence today. But that knowledge also impels us to ask whether there is not a better way to provide for the defense of the West. Because nuclear deterrence is necessary today, we must seek to make it secure, yet because it poses dangers, we must seek better alternatives for the future. The President and I believe that the answer lies in the Strategic Defence Initiative.[134]

Weinberger's analysis had particularly profound implication for NATO strategy, which depended critically upon the concepts which the United States believed were no longer valid. Indeed, as Weinberger opined, while NATO doctrine holds "that it might indeed be necessary to escalate to battlefield nuclear weapons or other kinds of nuclear weapons,"[135] the United States did not deem this "a very satisfactory way to keep the peace."[136] In Congressional testimony Weinberger explained why the Reagan Administration no longer felt confident that it could rely on official NATO policy:

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[132] Weinberger, FY 1987 Annual Report, p. 40.

[133] Ibid., p. 75.

[134] Ibid.

> We have always planned to use nuclear weapons because during the time the plans were formulated , we had a very clear advantage in tactical battlefield as well as other types of nuclear weapons. And the idea was that you would have this conventional exchange and then we would we have to escalate it to nuclear and we would prevail and that would end things... But I think that you cannot say that you have at this point an ability to rely on a strategy that in effect says we will escalate to nuclear weapons and that will end the matter.
>
> The Soviets have an enormous capability here, and they have built it up during a long period of time when we did not.[137]

Fred Ikle, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, echoed these sentiments and elaborated in greater detail how the Untied States came to rely on nuclear weapons, how this advantage was originally exploited, and finally why, in light of the disappearance of US strategic nuclear superiority, these nuclear threats were of dubious credibility. He explained that originally the United States depended on its nuclear monopoly to threaten the Soviet Union with devastating retaliation in the event of a conventional conflict. When the Soviet Union acquired the capacity to strike the United States with nuclear weapons, the United States shifted to a strategy of defence with tactical nuclear weapons in the European theatre, which allowed US military forces to capitalize on the nuclear superiority that the United States still enjoyed even after its monopoly had disappeared. As Ikle explained:

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[135] Caspar Weinberger, The MX Missile and The Strategic Defense Initiative - Their Implications on Arms Control Negotiations, Hearings before the Defense Policy Panel of the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, February 27, 28, March 12, 13, 14 and 20, 1985, p. 205.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid., p. 207.

> As long as the United States enjoyed an effective advantage in nuclear forces, these two concepts [defence and retaliation] could lend coherence to the overall strategy. In the jargon of the nuclear theorists, we enjoyed "escalation dominance": we thought we had more, or more effective, tactical nuclear weapons, so we could expect to deter, or if necessary defeat, a Soviet invasion by using tactical nuclear weapons; and we had superior global nuclear forces, so we could expect to deter the Soviet Union from using its intercontinental nuclear forces against us.
>
> Today, this "escalation dominance" has been overtaken by the massive changes in the nuclear arsenals. Indeed, on both sides of the Atlantic, it is no longer judged to be a solution. The United States patently has no plans to regain its former advantage in global nuclear arms, or to restore the West's superiority in tactical nuclear arms.[138]

These statements constituted a rejection of the proposition that NATO defence strategy could remain credible in the absence of nuclear superiority. This analysis implied that NATO would have to rely increasingly on conventional rather than nuclear weapons to protect Europe, a fact confirmed in Congressional testimony by Weinberger.[139]

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[138] Ikle, "Nuclear Strategy," op. cit., pp. 819-820. Ikle's disquiet with NATO strategy long predated his appointment in the Pentagon. In 1980 he wrote an article questioning the continued wisdom of NATO's reliance on a doctrine of first-use. See Fred Charles Ikle, "NATO's 'First Nuclear Use': A Deepening Trap?" Strategic Review, Vol. 8 (Winter 1980), pp. 18-23.

These conclusions had enormous implications for European security. Interestingly, however, these frank admissions of the incredibility of official NATO strategy evoked little transatlantic disagreement, primarily because by then the SDI debate was fixated on the potential effect that prospective deployment of BMDs would have on NATO strategy, while oblivious to the fact that it was the Reagan Administration's belief in the incredibility of these very concepts that was a major contributing factor in leading it to propose SDI in the first place. Thus, what many failed to understand was that the significance of SDI lay not in the ability of BMD deployments to alter radically nuclear strategy, but the fact that SDI's presentation reflected the US belief that the strategy which West European officials believed SDI would vitiate had long ago been rendered incredible by the disappearance of US nuclear superiority.

In calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons, Reagan was implicitly rejecting the belief that nuclear weapons could remain the ultima ratio of Western security. SDI also represented, at least in its intermediate stages, an attempt to endow current US nuclear strategy with far greater credibility by providing a physical capability to enhance the US's capacity to enforce such concepts as damage limitation and escalation control. These latter improvements would allow the United States to rectify the often remarked mismatch between US operational policy. Thus SDI embraced two trends that have dominated US strategy. First, given the fact of nuclear reliance, to limit the risks associated with such reliance by possessing survivable forces that are endowed with sufficient accuracy and flexibility to enable the United States to limit damage and thereby hold out the prospect of ending a conflict short of an all out nuclear exchange. Second, SDI also reflected an American desire, given the inherent dangers of nuclear guarantees, to reduce substantially and eventually eliminate the US reliance on nuclear weapons as a means of deterring aggression.

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[139] Weinberger, The MX Missile and the Strategic Defense Initiative, op., cit., p. 208.

VII. CONCLUSION

SDI contained both elements of continuity and change in American thinking. Doctrinally, it can be seen as a logical conclusion to long-standing American efforts to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons. In terms of implementing this desire, SDI represented a change, insofar as the American initiative held out the prospect of physically preventing nuclear use. Yet, it must be stressed that Reagan repeatedly emphasized that the actual implementation of a comprehensive system of defence could not be immediately realized as it would take many years of sustained effort to determine if it were indeed feasible. But the mere prospect of such comprehensive deployment and, even more importantly, the rationale provided to justify SDI exercised a profound impact on NATO because it demonstrated in stark terms just how far the strategic thinking of the United States and its Allies had diverged. But it also demonstrated how Reagan could change official policy so quickly.

Upon assuming office the Reagan Administration regarded as its primary military priority the task of closing what it regarded as the "window of vulnerability." This "window of vulnerability" was thought to stem from the ability of Soviet ICBM's to destroy the vast majority of US ICBM's and the corresponding inability of the United States to hold Soviet ICBM's at risk. The primary means by which the Reagan Administration proposed "closing" the "window of vulnerability" was to build the MX missile and deploy it in a survivable basing mode. This would give the United States the ability to place Soviet ICBM's at risk, since the MX would possess both the accuracy and yield for such a mission, while at the same time preventing the Soviet Union from being able to destroy the MX since Reagan officials assumed that they would be able to design a survivable basing mode for the new missile.[140] This, however, proved difficult.

By the end of 1982 the Reagan Adminstration, therefore, found itself stymied in an effort to which it attached the highest importance: reversing what it regarded as dangerous erosion in US strategic nuclear capabilities. As we have seen, this inability to gain Congressional or public support for MX deployment proved the catalyst for reconsidering the policy of giving primary importance to offensive modernization - the course that the Reagan Administration had followed during its first two years in office. Moreover, Reagan began to believe that the burgeoning opposition to building ever larger stockpiles of nuclear weapons when the US public was convinced that both sides already possessed vastly excessive arsenals, would prevent the United States from being able to garner support for substantial offensive build-ups in the future.

The realisation that he would be unable to garner sufficient support for offensive modernization proved to be the catalyst for deepening Reagan's interest in ballistic missile defences. As we have seen, Reagan had a long-standing interest in this area, an interest that had been heightened by advisors such as Edward Teller who had been telling Reagan since early 1982 that technological breakthroughs had increased the effectiveness of BMDs. Thus the convergence of the failure of nuclear modernization and what Reagan believed were the growing possibilities in BMD research set the stage for a substantial shift in the Reagan Administration's defence programme.

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[140] US officials never made it clear why, if it was undesirable for the United States to be in a position in which its ICBMs were vulnerable to attack, the Soviet Union - which depended far more on land-based missiles than did the United States- would find it acceptable to be placed in a position that the United States found unacceptable for itself. The Soviet Union, of course, had no intention of allowing this to happen and was by the early 1980's already developing mobile ICBMs to ensure the survivability of Soviet land-based missiles against both the MX and the Trident II missiles. See, for instance, Report of the Secretary of the Defense Caspar Weinberger to the Congress on the FY 1983, op. cit.

Despite the substantial changes that a shift to emphasizing BMDs represented, there were elements of continuity as well as change in shifting from a policy of attempting to close the window of vulnerability to a policy advocating SDI. In attempting to close the window of vulnerability one, if not the primary, mission was to reduce the vulnerability of the United States' retaliatory forces to nuclear attack. While Reagan presented SDI's mission as far more ambitious, it was clear that SDI addressed this task, for while there was vehement disagreement about whether SDI could succeed in providing comprehensive defences, few doubted that it could defend isolated military targets such as ICBM missile silos.[141]

Indeed, Reagan's military advisors, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Security Advisor, Robert McFarlane (a former military officer), at first viewed BMD as a means of protecting US ICBM forces and thus creating a more stable regime, but one still based on nuclear deterrence. It was Reagan who insisted that any proposed BMD system not only protect military targets but the US population as well. Thus while the failure to close the window of vulnerability provided the catalyst for the serious consideration of BMD's, it was Reagan's own long-standing interest not only in BMDs but also in eliminating nuclear weapons entirely that led to such a dramatic change in policy.[142]

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[141] See for instance Harold Brown, "Is SDI Technically Feasible," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 64, No. 3, pp. 435-454.

Yet, while in many respects unique, SDI was in many ways the culmination of a long-standing trend in US doctrine toward the reduction in reliance on nuclear weapons. As such SDI constituted the most recent in a long line of US initiatives that proved controversial within NATO. Where SDI differed from past changes was that in articulating the reasons why it believed change was necessary, the Reagan Administration was far more forthright in indicating its reluctance to rely on nuclear weapons. Moreover, SDI combined the attributes of both a new weapons system and a change in doctrine, thereby indicating not only the intention to change but the weapons system with which to effect such change.

Thus, the significance of the Reagan Administration's desire to deploy BMD was only one part of the overall import of SDI. It was the strategic ideas that underpinned SDI that ultimately exercised the most significant, if least appreciated, influence on the SDI debate. For, deployment was even by the most optimistic forecasts of the Reagan Administration decades away; thus it was the rationale employed to justify SDI that exercised a decisive influence on NATO, explaining why although only a research programme SDI caused such controversy within the Alliance.

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[142] See Ronald Reagan, An American Life, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990).

The other significant feature of SDI was the manner in which it was presented to the Alliance. Unlike the INF initiative which was jointly formulated within NATO's consultative mechanisms - primarily the NPG - SDI was presented to the Alliance as a fait accompli. While it was scant consolation to the United States' West European Allies, the American Departments of State and Defense received hardly more warning than they did. The reason that SDI was launched in the manner that it was reflected SDI to the Alliance before the March 23, 1983 speech, every effort would have been made to strangle the initiative in its cradle. Finally, while Reagan recognized the dramatic impact that SDI would have on the Alliance, he believed that the United States could, if it so chose, embark on SDI without the approval of its Allies. Yet as we shall see, the Reagan Administration soon realized that securing at least the acquiesence of its European partners would be essential to enabling it to achieve its SDI objectives.

IV. THE BRITISH, WEST GERMAN AND FRENCH REACTION TO SDI AND THE U.S. EFFORT TO PERSUADE

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the British, West German and French governments' reactions to the Strategic Defense Initiative as well as the US governments attempt to respond to these reactions. This will entail analyzing the specific positions of the British, West German and French governments concerning the effect of SDI on flexible response, strategic stability, arms control and East-West relations. Most importantly, however, I will seek to determine why the Western European countries under study reacted to SDI in the manner that they did and through this analysis ascertain the underlying nature of the controversy between the United States and its key West European allies over SDI. Comparing the rationale underlying the British, West German and French positions toward SDI with the reasons that the Reagan Administration forwarded in the previous chapter to justify SDI should enable us to determine the underlying cause of the intra-Alliance disagreement over SDI. Moreover, in analyzing the Reagan Administration's attempt to mitigate West European concerns about SDI, we will examine the beginnings of attempts to manage the SDI dispute - a process that will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.

This chapter is crucial to determining the validity of a central thesis being forwarded in this study. For it is the contention of this analysis that the United States and its European Allies harboured substantially different views on the implications of BMD deployment not because deployment would necessarily affect Western Europe and the United States differently but because each side harboured substantially different views about what constituted a credible nuclear strategy and a stable strategic nuclear regime. Therefore, the primary proposition investigated in this chapter is to what extent the differences between the United States and Western Europe over SDI were attributable to the prospect of deployment and to what extent they were attributable to respective differences in what constituted a credible and stable strategic regime.

II. THE BRITISH REACTION TO SDI

Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative placed the British government in a vexing position, for it made it far more difficult to simultaneously continue pursuit of the twin pillars of Thatcher's defence policy - reliance on nuclear deterrence and close partnership with the United States. Accordingly, the Thatcher government attempted to combine support for the SDI research programme with reservations about the implications of deployment. Two factors facilitated the pursuit of this seemingly contradictory British approach. First, the Reagan Administration, fully cognizant of British, West German and French reservations concerning the objectives of SDI, sought to play down the rationale and ultimate goals of SDI, focusing instead on the fact that until such time that decisions regarding deployment were made, SDI would remain strictly a research programme. This American approach dovetailed with, and complemented, the British government's policy toward SDI which was to emphasize, that while it harboured reservations about deployment, a decision on deployment was not imminent as any decision on deployment would have to await the outcome of the research phase. Nevertheless, the British government did make its scepticism about SDI known though, significantly, it was done in a manner deliberately designed to prevent differences from becoming central to the US-British dialogue on SDI.

While this approach was of course highly conducive to avoiding direct and open conflict on SDI, it prevented resolving what was after all one of the most important issues which SDI's launching engendered, namely, the strategic rationale for deployment and thus the desirability of deploying BMDs. This effort to avoid any attempt to resolve, as opposed to merely state, the full nature of US-British disagreements had important consequences. By discouraging a more extensive and searching discussion of why they disagreed, it obscured the underlying cause of the disagreement, leading to the misleading assumption both in Washington and London that their differences derived primarily from disagreements over the implications of deployment and not on what would be required to maintain the credibility of flexible response and strategic stability. Yet, the significance of SDI extended far beyond the issue of deployment, because the very factors that led the Reagan Administration to advocate SDI (with its implicit support for eventual deployment) would exercise a decisive influence over NATO strategy, strategic stability and the other issues irrespective of whether the deployment occurred or not.

Analyzing the British government's position toward SDI will entail, first, examining the reasons why the British government adopted the positions it did. And, second, these reasons will be juxtaposed against those that the US advanced in support of SDI. The two respective positions are then compared in order to obtain a more thorough understanding of the underlying cause of the US-British disagreement. It is hoped that in doing so it will be possible to determine the extent to which these disagreements are attributable to the prospect of deployment and to what extent they are attributable to differing conception of strategy.

Margaret Thatcher's government had determined through extensive internal debates during 1984 that SDI was an issue that did not constitute a passing whim of Reagan. They concluded that Reagan's commitment to the concept and subsequent creation of the SDIO meant that SDI would not remain at the periphery of international and transatlantic policies - as it had during 1983 and the beginning of 1984. The British Cabinet, determined to prevent SDI from becoming an issue that damaged British-American relations, wanted to prevent gratuitously antagonizing the United States.[1] Not only was open opposition regarded as unwise in view of the high value that Thatcher attached to the special relationship with Washington, but it was reasoned in Whitehall that opposing SDI directly would diminish British influence, was unlikely to have much effect, and would only benefit the Soviet Union which was, Thatcher believed, eager to exploit differences between the United States and its West European allies.[2] Moreover, Thatcher also envisaged Britain as a possible mediator between continental Europe and the United States (as well as between the United States and the Soviet Union).

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[1] For example the Defence White Paper on Defence, published in the Spring of 1984 made no mention of SDI. See Statement on the Defence Estimates 1984, Vol. 1 (London:HMSO, 1984), Cmnd. 9227-1, paragraphs 117-124.

These considerations help explain why, with rare exceptions, Britain, when broaching the subject of SDI in public, continually reiterated its support for SDI research, and when articulating its reservations did so in a manner that made clear its desire to minimize rather than highlight its differences with the United States. This general reluctance to criticize SDI publicly should not, however, be construed as indicative of the British government's support for the strategic philosophy animating SDI. Indeed, in one of the rare public statements about SDI prior to December 1984, Thatcher provided a glimpse of British thinking on SDI to the European Atlantic group when she urged that we "address ourselves to the new and urgent challenge of arms control in outer space. Otherwise we may see our own peaceful use of space endangered. We may see space turned into a new and terrible theatre of war."[3] She was careful, however, to insert this statement in a speech that was primarily devoted to extolling the virtues of close relations with the United States, thus perhaps unwittingly providing a metaphor for Britain's stance in the SDI debate: muted opposition within the context of emphasis on Britain's general support for US policy, a position that differed more in form than substance from the West German and French positions. These differences were, however, to have a major impact in the ability of Europe to speak with a single voice on SDI and consequently constituted a reason which diminished the influence of Europe on the SDI debate.

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[2] Trevor Taylor, "Britain's Response to the Strategic Defence Initiative," International Affairs, (Spring 1986), Vol. 62, No. 2, p. 218.

The Reagan-Thatcher Camp David Meeting

The first detailed articulation of the British position on SDI occurred in December 1984 at a meeting between Thatcher and Reagan at Camp David, Maryland. In an effort to establish some mutually agreed upon parameters for the SDI programme, the United States agreed to four conditions forwarded by Britain[4]:

1. The U.S. and Western aim is not to achieve superiority, but to maintain balance, taking

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[3] Margaret Thatcher, "The Transatlantic Partnership," Speech to the European Atlantic Group at Guildhall, London, 11 July 1984; New York: British Information Service, Policy Statement 42/84, p. 4.

[4] Officially, of course, it was a joint communique meant to convey mutually agreement but it was widely, and in the opinion of this author, correctly interpreted as a list of British conditions that it convinced the United States to accept.

account of Soviet developments.

2. SDI-related deployments would, in view of treaty obligations, have to be a matter for negotiations.
3. The overall aim is to enhance, not undercut, deterrence.
4. East-West negotiations should aim to achieve security with reduced levels of offensive systems on both sides.[5]

These Camp David criteria, as they were to be known, were important with respect to what they revealed about the nature of the disagreement between Britain and the United States, but also with respect to the manner in which the two governments decided to go about handling their differences. Significantly, this first joint statement of the United States and a West European country arose from a bilateral meeting between the United States and Britain. Although the Camp David statement had wide-ranging implications for other European countries, especially West Germany and France, there was no concerted effort to coordinate a joint West European position vis-a-vis the Strategic Defense Initiative. Consequently, the Camp David meeting set a precedent for managing the SDI issue on a bilateral basis, leading to a pattern that was to dominate transatlantic deliberations on SDI.

This proclivity to deal with SDI on a bilateral basis outside of the mechanisms of the NATO Alliance, and in the absence of formal joint European positions, reflected both US and British priorities. The United States was only too pleased to deal bilaterally with its major West European allies, reasoning that such arrangements would prove far more conducive to preventing a joint, and therefore more formidable, opposition to SDI; furthermore, a joint European position would dilute the technological and economic enticements that the Reagan Administration would later offer to render the SDI research programme more attractive to West European countries (this subject will be dealt with in the next chapter). The British government, and particularly Margaret Thatcher, were equally eager to prevent a united West European position on SDI, even if it would coincide with British views of SDI, for the British Prime Minster was eager to prevent the creation of defence entities within Europe outside of NATO. Moreover, maintaining the special relationship was deemed of far greater importance than effecting greater European cooperation on foreign policy.

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[5] John Goschko, "Thatcher, Reagan Agree on 'Star Wars' Talks," Washington Post, 23 December 1985.

The special relationship was also considered important for the successful management of the SDI issue within the Alliance. Thatcher believed that Reagan was firmly committed to SDI and that strong West European opposition to his programme would not only be counterproductive but ineffective as well because, unlike INF, the development of SDI did not require West European approval. The British government believed that it could influence the direction and scope of Reagan's initiative far more effectively by adopting a positive attitude, working bilaterally, and attempting to attach conditions that steered the programme in directions more compatible with British and West European interests.[6]

By working bilaterally with the United States in an atmosphere of cooperation, Thatcher believed that she could not only more effectively bridge the differences between the United States and Western Europe but also between the Reagan Administration and the Soviet Union. Thatcher contended that this latter consideration was of particular concern given the then imminent resumption of the Geneva arms talks where the topic of space weapons was to become a major issue. In short, British policymakers sought to prevent SDI from becoming an issue that would cause serious and open disagreement between the United States and its key West European allies and become an instrument through which the Soviet Union could attempt to divide Western Europe and the United States.

Equally, if not more, important than what the Camp David meeting revealed about the manner in which SDI was being handled was what it revealed about Britain's strategic reservations about SDI. Despite the deliberate ambiguity with which these concerns were phrased, the accord revealed that the British government was primarily concerned with the implications of SDI for strategic stability. Thatcher was determined above all to prevent SDI from undermining the condition of mutual vulnerability that she believed had maintained the validity of nuclear deterrence. The British government clearly hoped that the need for deployment could be obviated through arms control.

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[6] Taylor, op. cit., p. 218.

The issue of the desirability of deployment, despite forming the crux of the SDI issue, was not addressed in the Camp David statement. Instead, this issue was obscured behind the agreement that SDI's objective was to enhance rather than undercut deterrence. But the respective and widely divergent positions of the two governments regarding the meaning of "deterrence" became immediately apparent following the meeting. Reagan stated that, "Today the only defensive weapons we have is to threaten that if they [the Soviet Union] kill millions of our people, we'll kill millions of theirs. I don't think that there's any morality in that at all, and we're trying to look for something that will make those weapons obsolete and they can be eliminated once and for all."[7] On the same day, a senior advisor speaking for the Prime Minister reiterated the British position which could not be more different from that expounded by the American President: "It could be argued that the existing basis of deterrence has indeed been brilliantly successful not merely in preventing nuclear war but in preventing conventional war. Therefore, we would argue that the current balance of terror is extremely successful in keeping the peace for 40 years."[8] While this fundamental disagreement concerning the need to change Western doctrine remained a ubiquitous feature of the US-British (and US-West European) disagreement, little systematic attempt was made to determine why each side harboured such radically different notions regarding the requirements of deterrence.

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[7] As quoted by Norman Sandler, United Press International News Service, Dialogue Information Services Inc., December 22, 1984.

[8] Ibid.

Howe's Speech of March 15, 1985

While the Camp David four points provided some insight into the nature of British concerns, it was not until March 15, 1985 that the British government presented a detailed exposition of its views on SDI. The occasion for this presentation was a speech by the British Foreign Minister, Sir Geoffry Howe[9]. This speech was significant for a number of reasons. First, it constituted the first public and explicit articulation of British concerns about SDI. Second, it was a rare departure from British general practice of avoiding public criticism of SDI. Third, despite its critical tone, Howe made efforts to praise SDI in some manner and addressed his concerns in the form of questions. Finally, the fact that it was Howe, rather than Thatcher, who voiced these concerns reflected both Howe's greater reservations as well as the fact that Thatcher wanted to distance herself personally from any criticism of SDI. Apart from Reagan's March 23, 1983 speech, Howe's speech to the Royal United Services Institute in London became the most widely quoted speech of the SDI controversy.

Sir Geoffry was concerned that SDI could have a profoundly destabilizing impact on Western security and international stability. Howe was particularly concerned that, given the considerable funds devoted to ballistic missile defence research and the evident enthusiasm with which the White House regarded the programme, that "research may acquire an unstoppable momentum of its own,"[10] leading to deployment decisions before the wider implications could be considered.

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[9] Sir Geoffrey Howe, "Defense and Security in the Nuclear Age," Journal of the Royal United Services Institute For Defense Studies (RUSI), vol. 130, No. 2, June 1985, pp. 3-8. Text of lecture given at the RUSI on 15 March 1985.

In any event, Howe gave voice to British scepticism concerning the technological feasibility of achieving the objectives which Reagan had articulated in his March 23, 1983 speech. Furthermore, he was uncertain whether even limited deployments could meet the exacting criteria concerning survivability and cost effective vis-a-vis the inevitable Soviet countermeasures. Even if these considerable impediments could be satisfactorily mastered, would not, queried Howe, the West be in danger of "creating a new Maginot Line of the twenty-first century, liable to be outflanked by relatively simpler and demonstrably cheaper counter-measures"[11] How, for instance, demanded the Foreign Secretary, would SDI propose to cope with the myriad of alternate nuclear delivery vehicles such as aircraft or Cruise missiles, or battlefield nuclear weapons? "Finally," asked Howe, "could we be certain that the new systems would permit adequate political control over both nuclear weapons and defensive systems, or might we find ourselves in a situation where the peace of the world rested solely upon computers and automatic decision-making?"[12]

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[10] _Ibid_., p. 6.

[11] _Ibid_.

Howe was particularly concerned that even if these daunting technological difficulties could be resolved, the transition to a regime in which defences would play a prominent role could itself create destabilizing consequences. Sir Geoffrey argued that the deployment of limited defences and the retention of offensive forces could be seen by the Soviet Union as "fostering an aggressive policy."[13] Such a configuration of offensive and defensive deployments could be viewed as an attempt to obtain a first strike capacity that would allow the United States to use its offensive forces to destroy the majority of Soviet ballistic nuclear missiles while using its own defensive deployment to intercept the drastically reduced Soviet retaliatory response. Moreover, was it not likely, wondered Howe, that limited deployments could, because of their greater susceptibility to Soviet countermeasures, coupled with the perception of their potentially aggressive use, "produce holes in the nuclear dike that would encourage a nuclear flood?" But even if these dangers could be avoided, would not limited deployments and their ability to protect military assets, asked Howe, engender "a return to the targeting policies of the 1950s?"[14] when populations were the main targets of nuclear strikes.[15]

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid. Howe quotes from Reagan's 1983 speech when he refers to "fostering an aggressive policy."

[14] Ibid.

Howe expressed the fear that a transition to a regime of strategic defences would produce not only an arms race in space but a radical increase in offensive deployments, leading to dangerous instabilities. "Would the prospect of new defences being deployed inexorably crank up the levels of offensive nuclear systems designed to overwhelm them?"[16] Sir Geoffrey allowed that this prospect was not one that "History and the present state of technology" suggest that this risk cannot be ignored."[17] Nor was it a prospect that the British government entertained with alacrity: "Many years of insecurity and instability cannot be our objective," Howe asserted.[18] Britain implored the United States "to consider what might be the offsetting developments on the Soviet side, if unconstrained competition in ballistic missile defences beyond the ABM Treaty limits were to be provoked."[19]

Howe stated that the British government believed that such potential instabilities could be avoided if SDI were embedded firmly within an arms control structure. This necessitated, according to London, establishing a "linkage between offensive and defensive systems," that would facilitate "controlling both the offensive and defensive developments and deployments on both sides."[20] Ideally, the British government hoped to obviate deployment altogether, as the following juxtaposition suggests:

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[15] This was a particularly interesting criticism of SDI given the fact that Britain favoured targeting counter value, i.e. civilian targets and indeed itself enshrined the Moscow criteria as its official policy for British nuclear targeting.

[16] Howe, Speech to the Royal United Services Institute, op. cit., p. 7.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

> If defensive systems are to be deployed, they will be directed against the then levels of offensive forces. If the latter can be lowered dramatically, then the case for active defences may be correspondingly strengthened. Conversely, radical cuts in offensive missiles might make the need for active defences superfluous.[21]

Britain's preference for avoiding the deployment of BMDs dovetailed with what it considered the primary objective of the Geneva negotiations, namely "to achieve security with reduced levels of offensive systems on both sides."[22] Pursuant to this objective, British officials considered it vital that the United States continue to recognize the "integral relationship between measures to control offensive forces and any decisions to move to the development of active defences."[23]

British Concerns About Strategic Stability

If the United States nevertheless opted for the deployment of strategic defences, Britain insisted that such a move not only be a matter for negotiation with the Soviet Union but consultation with the allies as well:

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[20] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[21] Ibid., p. 8.

[22] Ibid., p. 4.

[23] Ibid., p. 8.

> President Reagan has made it clear that in such circumstances he would see any actual deployment of new systems as a matter for negotiation with the Soviet Union. And that, if deployment were found good and the necessary conditions were met, it should be a cooperative endeavour between the two great powers. These commitments and aims are of crucial importance.[24]

Britain considered these criteria important for she believed that they would not only make deployment less likely, but would ensure that if deployment were to occur, it would be less destabilizing. Despite British satisfaction with these assurances, the eventuality of deployment, even given the US willingness to make it cooperative, was clearly less desirable than the status quo, not least because of British doubts concerning the willingness of the Soviet Union to participate in a cooperative transition. Accordingly, "One of the keys to progress at Geneva," stated Howe, "could be actively to strengthen the effectiveness of the ABM Treaty. Confidence as to the nature of the relationship between offence and defence might help to encourage the big cuts in offensive missiles which we all want the super powers to make."[25] It would be difficult to overstate the importance which Britain attached to the ABM Treaty; for her it "represents a political and military keystone in the still shaky arch of security we have constructed with the East over the past decade and a half."[26]

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[24] George Younger, Parliamentary Debates, Sixth Series, 19 February 1986. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, p. 336.

In expressing its fear that SDI would lead to the demise of the ABM treaty, the British government revealed the extent to which it disagreed with the United States concerning what constituted strategic stability. While British officials maintained that the ABM treaty ensured "strategic stability," the Reagan Administration contended that it was precisely the failure of the ABM treaty to maintain stability that made it necessary to propose the SDI. American officials maintained that in the absence of BMD deployments the Soviet Union was able to deploy ICBM's that threatened the survivability of US ICBM's, contrary to the intent of the ABM treaty. British officials took a more sanguine view of developments, maintaining that while the ABM treaty did not lead to the type of offensive reduction originally envisaged it had enabled the Soviet Union and the United States to limit offensive deployments and prevent a destabilizing arms race. This disagreement existed independent of the question about the implications of deployment. Indeed, the reasons for the disagreement were those that led to differing conceptions of the implications of BMD deployment.

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[25] Sir Geoffrey Howe, "Defence, Deterrence, and Arms Control," Speech by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Foreign Press Association, 17 March 1986, p. 6.

[26] Howe, Speech to the Royal United Services Institute, op. cit., p. 7.

SDI and the Threat to Flexible Response

Furthermore, Britain was concerned that an American decision to deploy strategic defences could vitiate the credibility of the US nuclear guarantee to Europe- a guarantee that constituted the essence of flexible response. Sir Geoffrey therefore cautioned that in considering the desirability of SDI "we must be sure that the US nuclear guarantee to Europe would indeed be enhanced as a result of defensive deployments."[27] Before proceeding with deployment, Britain admonished the United States to contemplate the effects of a long transition period on the credibility of extended deterrence. For while it was conceivable, though in the opinion of the British government unlikely, that the perfect defences envisaged by the United States could enhance the credibility of extended deterrence, during the long transition period - when NATO would still be dependent on US nuclear protection - the United States would still be vulnerable to Soviet retaliation.[28] The West would also have to consider, intoned the Foreign Secretary, "the offsetting developments on the Soviet side, if unconstrained competition in ballistic missile defences beyond the ABM Treaty limits were to be provoked."[29] Britain feared that Soviet BMD counter deployments would severely attenuate the ability of Western nuclear missiles to penetrate their targets -a capability that constituted the sine qua non of Western deterrence credibility. Thus with respect to "NATO's policy of forward defence and flexible response," asked Howe, "would we lose on the swings whatever might be gained on the roundabouts?"[30]

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[27] Ibid.

[28] By the United States' own admission, the day when the Alliance would be able to eliminate its reliance on nuclear weapons was decades away and during this interim period nuclear deterrence would play and steadily diminishing though still crucial role.

Britain therefore demanded that if ballistic missile defences were to be deployed that the US nuclear guarantee be, "Not only enhanced at the end of the process, but from its very inception."[31] Leaving little doubt that he questioned that this could be done, Howe warned that "many years of insecurity and instability cannot be our objective."[32] Thus Sir Geoffrey considered it imperative that "All the allies must continue at every stage to share the same sense that the security of NATO territory is indivisible. Otherwise the twin pillars of the Alliance might begin to fall apart."[33]

The British government was forthright in explaining why it feared that SDI would undermine flexible response. Unlike the

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[29] Howe, Speech to the Royal United Services Institute, op. cit., p. 7.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

United States, Britain did not perceive a need to alter the nuclear orientation of flexible response. Defence Minister George Younger, speaking before the House Committee on Defence, testified that Her Majesty's Government retained full confidence in the validity of NATO's established doctrine, pointing out that flexible response had, since its adoption in 1967, "provided a sound basis for Alliance policy" and "will continue to do so for many years to come."[34] Britain thus remained "a convinced supporter of flexible response" and saw no need "for a radical change in NATO's strategy."[35] In short, British officials were keen to see NATO retain its reliance on the US strategic nuclear guarantee that constituted the essence of the Alliance's flexible response doctrine.

Britain therefore opposed US efforts to shift deterrence doctrine from the emphasis on retaliation to one of denial- the objective of SDI- for she viewed such a posture as incompatible with European security. Britain believed that:

> deterrence, if it is to be effective, requires a second essential element. A potential aggressor must calculate that he would run real risk of himself suffering unacceptable damage to his own territory, to his own people, if he attacks. Deterrence in not just dissuasion.... The threat of retaliation, to punish aggression, is essential. The would-be aggressor must be as conscious of the prospect of punishment as of the risk of failure. In the face of the geographical handicap and the present imbalance in conventional military strength, a purely conventional defence of Western Europe cannot achieve this. That is why, for the foreseeable future, the nuclear contribution to our

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[34] Younger, op. cit., p. 335.

[35] Howe, Speech to IFRI, Paris, 21 March 1985, p. 8.

> defence is essential to effective deterrence of the threat of war.[36]

A more candid or emphatic rejection of the idea of abandoning reliance on nuclear retaliation as the primary means of deterrence could hardly be set forth. The British government believed that the US strategic nuclear guarantee was irreplaceable, and deemed it essential that nuclear weapons be used for the purpose of inflicting unacceptable damage on Soviet society. London did not believe that using nuclear weapons to deny the Soviet Union certain military objectives would suffice to deter Soviet leaders from contemplating an attack. Thus while the United States was attempting to use SDI to reduce the West's reliance on nuclear weapons, Britain considered it just as vital that they be maintained. Underlying these opposing positions that the United States and Britain held with respect to the advisability of deploying strategic defences, there lay a fundamental difference in strategic philosophy.

SDI and the British Nuclear Deterrent

Concern about the impact of BMD deployments on the credibility of the British nuclear deterrent did not fit prominently in the British government's reaction to SDI.[37] Given the importance that Thatcher attached to ensuring the credibility of the British nuclear deterrent, this neglect was somewhat striking. Yet, the fact that British officials did not publicly articulate their concerns on this question to the same degree that they did about other implications of SDI did not mean that they were not troubled. It reflected, instead, the political sensitivity of this issue and the potential domestic difficulties that it could cause.

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[36] Howe, "Defence, Deterrence and Arms Control," op. cit., paragraph 15. Contrast this to the Reagan Administration's desire to abandon retaliation as the driving force of the policy.

British officials were concerned that should the issue of SDI's impact on the credibility of the British deterrent be accorded a high profile, it could undermine support for her government's decision to purchase the Trident submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLMB) from the United States and to construct four new submarines for carrying these missiles. For this reason British officials usually refrained from publicly stressing the potential effects of an American decision to begin BMD deployment (which would provoke Soviet counterdeployments), lest this undermine support for Trident.

Despite the Government's attempt to play down the potential effect of BMD deployments, it was clear that British defence officials were indeed concerned about the potential impact of Soviet BMD deployments on the credibility of the British nuclear deterrent. In questioning Defence Minister Michael Heseltine about the effect of Soviet BMD deployments on the credibility of the planned Trident missile force, Conservative MP Winston Churchill remarked that "we are about to invest very substantial resources in a new generation ballistic missile system. In the event that both super powers were to proceed down this road of defensive space-based systems, this not only could be destabilising as between the super powers but, if effective, it could negate what we have in mind to do."[38] Heseltine did not rebut this statement nor did he disagree when Churchill argued that "it is of vital importance to Britain, surely, [to] secure an agreement that would forestall deployment by both sides."[39] Thus, British officials, although reluctant to emphasize their concern publicly, clearly preferred a strategic regime without significant BMD deployments.[40]

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[37] For instance Geoffrey Howe does not allude to the possible implications for the British deterrent in his landmark RUSI address of March 15, 1985. See Howe, Speech to the Royal United Services Institute, op. cit., pp. 3-8.

In short, Britain rejected the Reagan Administration's claim that Western security could be enhanced by pursuing SDI. In contrast to the United States, the British government believed that continued reliance on nuclear weapons within the context of mutual vulnerability constituted the sine qua non for Western security. Conversely, it was clear that the United States considered continued reliance on nuclear deterrence increasingly undesirable. Britain attributed the long peace following World War II to nuclear deterrence and was extremely reluctant to give it up. Britain feared that the United States, in its desire to escape the dangers inherent in NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons, was looking for a new strategy without giving full consideration to whether it was also a better strategy. In the peroration to his oft cited RUSI Speech, Sir Geoffrey encapsulated the British government's position on SDI by invoking the words of Winston Churchill: "Be careful above all things not to let go of the atomic weapon until you are sure, and more than sure, that other means of preserving peace are in your hands."[41]

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[38] First Report from the Defence Committee, Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1984, House of Commons, Session 1983-1984 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 22 May 1984), p. ix.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Unlike their French counterparts, the British government gave no indication that they were planning to accelerate research on penetration aids technology as a precaution should it need to overcome significant Soviet defences.

III. THE WEST GERMAN RESPONSE TO SDI

The initial inclination of the West German government was to minimize the significance of Reagan's March 23, 1983 speech. Government spokesman Juergen Sudhoff stated that Reagan's plans were "dreams for the future" and that they would not affect Alliance strategy for 10 to 15 years.[42] And Defence Minister Manfred Wörner stressed that what Reagan was talking about was "a very long-term matter. It is a program for the next century and not for the security problems of tomorrow or the day after tomorrow."[43]

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[41] Howe, Speech to the Royal United Services Institute, op. cit., p. 7.

[42] See Hamburg DPA dispatch, 25 March, 1983, in FBIS-WE, Daily Report, 25 March 1983, p. J5.

At the same time, West German officials resented both the lack of consultation surrounding Reagan's announcement as well as its timing. The West German government, like its European counterparts, had not been informed or consulted prior to the March 23, 1983 speech. This was regarded as an egregious breach of the long-established procedures governing the manner in which major strategic changes were presented. Perhaps of more immediate concerns to West German officials, however, was the extent to which the ideas articulated in Reagan's speech could undermine the rational for the deployment of the Cruise and Pershing II missiles. For, in his speech, Reagan criticized nuclear deterrence, the very concept which INF deployment was ostensibly indispensable in upholding. Nonetheless, in the end, the West German government's fears about the effect of Reagan's speech on the ability of NATO to deploy the Cruise and Pershing II missiles were not realized and the deployments proceeded on schedule in December 1983.

West German officials had hoped that SDI would not become a central issue in international politics. The West German polity had been placed under considerable strain as a result of the contentious and often violent nature of the internal debate over the INF deployments. The West German government was therefore understandably reluctant to see West Germany embroiled in another controversy concerning the controversial issues of nuclear weapons and East-West relations.

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[43] Manfred Wörner, ZDF Television Network, 24 March 1983, in FBIS-WE, 25 March 1983, p. J4.

Given the Federal Republic's geopolitical position, West German officials realized that SDI would be a particularly contentious issue in Bonn. As a non-nuclear power that directly abutted the major Warsaw Pact forces, West Germany was in a particularly vulnerable position and was therefore dependent on other countries, primarily the United States, for its security. This dependence meant that maintaining its relationship with the United States was one of the two overriding imperatives of West German foreign policy. The other imperative, which was frequently at odds with the first, was to foster improved relations with the Soviet Union. West German officials deemed this essential both to ameliorate the tensions that could lead to conflict as well the key to overcoming the division of Germany. Given the Reagan Administration's demonstrable enthusiasm for SDI and the Soviet Union's immediate and vehement opposition to the March 23, 1983 speech, it was clear in Bonn that should SDI become a central issue in international relations, it would create considerable difficulties for the Federal Republic of Germany.

West German hopes that SDI would not become an important issue within the Alliance were dashed in 1984. In January 1984, Reagan signed a directive establishing the SDIO, and directed

U.S. officials to brief U.S. allies on SDI. These briefings, while partially successful in compensating for the initial lack of consultation, did not leave West German officials enamoured of the SDI. Following the April 3-4, 1984, NPG meeting at which US Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger briefed his colleagues on SDI, the West German Defence Minister Manfred Wörner stated in unambiguous terms how he and his European colleagues felt about SDI: "My impression is the Europeans were broadly united in their critical questions. I can't see that [SDI] would provide greater protection or stability."[44] Wörner complained that the proposed system would fail to offer comprehensive protection; that partial defences were destabilizing because they created first strike incentives; that an arms race in space was certain to result; that Europe would always be afforded less protection than the Soviet Union and the United States; and that most worrying of all, SDI could decouple the United States and West European security and could "even lead to a splitting apart of the Western Alliance."[45]

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[44] Fred Hiatt, "U.S. Antisatellite Plan Draws Fire, NATO Ministers Reportedly Express Scepticism, Anxiety," Washington Post (4 April 1984), 18, cited in Hans Gunter Brauch, "SDI - The Political Debate in the Federal Republic of Germany, in H.G. Brauch (ed.), Star Wars and European Defence (London: Macmillan Ltd., 1987), p. 190.

[45] Walter Pincus, "Star Wars Defense Plan Broadened, with Protection for European Allies," Washington Post (25 April 1984), p. 1.

The Official West German Response: Qualified Support

Once it became apparent, however, that Reagan was almost certain to gain reelection and that he was unlikely to be persuaded to abandon SDI, the West German government decided that it would adopt a less negative stance toward SDI and attempt to gain influence through cooperation rather than confrontation. The first documented evidence of this shift in the West German position occurred in the late summer of 1984 when the West German Security Council convened to discuss SDI and "recommended, despite some misgivings, that the FRG should adopt an attitude of cooperation towards SDI."[46] The specific points they made were:

1. Since the Soviet Union was engaged in research in advanced BMD technology, the United States should continue with research.
2. The capabilities achieved thereby should be used to promote arms control.
3. BMD is no replacement for nuclear deterrence.
4. If BMD proves to be feasible, Europe should have equal protection. This means the need to develop defences against shorter-range systems (anti-tactical ballistic missiles-ATBMs). Furthermore, the development of BMD must not make Europe safe for conventional war.
5. Europe must be able to participate in SDI research.
6. The effect on the ABM Treaty must be considered.[47]

After Reagan was reelected to a second term, the West German government began to articulate its policy toward SDI more publicly. On March 27, 1985 the Federal Security Council issued an official statement on SDI which was followed on April 18 by statements before the Bundestag by both Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans Detriech Genscher which also addressed the American initiative. These three statements set forth the West German government's position and became the guideposts of Bonn's position toward SDI. In his statement Kohl maintained that "President Reagan's strategic defense initiative (SDI) will be the dominant security issue in the years ahead and greatly influence both East-West relations and the relationship between the United States and Europe."[48] While he stated that "the American research programme" is "justified, politically necessary, and in the interest of overall Western security,"[49] it was clear that the West German government harboured serious reservations about SDI. Indeed, the above formulation itself indicated the degree to which Kohl wished to distance himself from SDI itself, preferring to voice his support for "the American research programme" rather than "SDI". There can be little doubt that this locution was a deliberate effort to distinguish between support for SDI research and the possibility of deployment.

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[46] Christoph Bluth, "SDI: The Challenge to West Germany," International Affairs 62:2 (Spring 1986), p. 249.

[47] Ibid.

Yet in articulating his reservations about SDI, Kohl was careful to avoid antagonizing the United States and thereby create disunity within the Alliance. This intention to avoid division within the Alliance must be kept firmly in mind as we examine the West German government's position on SDI because it will help to explain why, despite harbouring such serious doubts about the implications of SDI, West German officials couched their opposition to SDI in rather mild terms.

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[48] Helmut Kohl, Policy Statement to the Bundestag in Bonn on the Strategic Defense Initiative, 18 April 1985, Statements & Speeches VII, 10 (19 April 1985), p. 1.

[49] Ibid., p. 2.

The West German government had three main and interrelated concerns about SDI. West German officials feared that the deployment of ballistic missiles defences would (a) vitiate flexible response, (b) undermine strategic stability arms control negotiations, and (c) damage East-West relations. While these concerns also occupied the British and French governments, West Germany, because of its geopolitical position, was affected more deeply by the prospect of SDI. Thus not only did West Germany express greater concern about the effects of SDI on flexible response but they were far more concerned than the British or French governments about the implications of SDI for East-West relations.

Analysing the West German government's position on SDI will entail first examining the concerns as well as the demands and recommendations that Kohl's centre-right coalition made concerning SDI, and second, the reasons why the Bonn government adopted the positions toward SDI that they did will be examined. By focusing on why Bonn objected to SDI, we will create a framework for explaining why the Reagan Administration and the

West German government harboured such different views about the implications of BMD deployment, and thus ascertain the underlying causes of the differences between the respective governments. Through this method of analysis we will attempt to determine to what extent these US-German differences were attributable to differing perceptions of what circumstances were necessary to ensure the credibility of flexible response and the stability of the strategic nuclear regime.

West German Concerns About the Strategic Implications of SDI

The West German Chancellor argued that SDI's "political and strategic implications inevitably have the greatest impact. They have a direct bearing on our vital political interests -- our external security."[50] Accordingly, Kohl stated that the West German government "must from the outset voice a number of strategic demands deriving not least from our geostrategic situation."[51] These demands were:

1. Europe's security must not be decoupled from that of the United States. There must be no zones of differing security within the NATO area.
2. NATO's strategy of flexible response must remain fully valid as along as no more promising alternative is found for preventing war.
3. Instability must be avoided during any transition from

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[50] Helmut Kohl, Policy Statement to the Bundestag in Bonn on the Strategic Defense Initiative, 18 April 1985, Statements & Speeches VII, 10 (19 April 1985), p. 1.

[51] Ibid.

a purely deterrent strategy to a new form of strategic stability that is more reliant on defensive systems.

4. Disparities must be eliminated, and the emergence of new threats below the nuclear level avoided.[52]

While it was not explicitly stated, one can assume from prior West German statements, including those of the West German Defence Minister cited above, that Chancellor Kohl believed that the deployment of ballistic missile defences would decouple US and European security, create zones of differing security, invalidate flexible response, lead to instability during the transition period, and accentuate disparities below the nuclear level. With respect to the first West German demand, while the possibility of US and European security becoming decoupled certainly existed, that danger did not derive from the "zones of differing security in the NATO area," for these already existed. Indeed, it is interesting to note that while the West German government believed that the deployment of BMDs would lead to the decoupling of European and American security, the United States believed that European and American security was already decoupled because the United States's vulnerability to Soviet nuclear retaliations rendered American nuclear threats on behalf of Europe incredible. This had enormous significance because it revealed that irrespective of whether SDI was deployed or not the United States and Western Europe harboured such differing conceptions of what was necessary to couple European and American security that these would themselves have enormous implications for the transatlantic debate about SDI. Indeed, the idea that separate zones of insecurity are themselves a threat to security reflects once again a differing conception of what conditions are necessary for a credible strategy. While Europeans believed that unequal zones of security fostered American isolationism and a reluctance to defend Europe, American officials contended that to the extent that the United States could become less vulnerable, irrespective of whether Europe was more vulnerable, deterrence of an attack on Europe would be increased because the US could use nuclear weapons with a reduced risk of itself suffering unacceptable damage from Soviet retaliation. Given these quite divergent conceptions of strategy, it becomes clear that on a more fundamental level SDI evoked and exacerbated long-standing disagreements about strategy that existed independent of considerations of BMD deployment.

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[52] Ibid.

The West German government was especially concerned that SDI would undermine the credibility of flexible response. They were satisfied with the current strategic doctrine, did not share the United States's assessment of its waning credibility, and, in any event, believed that any proffered alternative would suffer from greater problems than flexible response. These assessments derived from the implicit assumption that SDI, if implemented, would not merely change but invalidate flexible response.

German opposition to SDI was also rooted in a firmly held conviction that even if the strategic defences were accompanied by an improved conventional balance, "a conventional 'alternative' to nuclear deterrence in Europe cannot be taken into consideration."[53] Germans argued that nuclear weapons had given the European continent its longest period of peace in modern times; they placed little faith in the efficacy of a regime shorn of the spectre of nuclear annihilation. Thus for the West Germans, nuclear options (which a Soviet SDI would presumably vitiate) were irreplaceable. West Germany considered the ability of the Alliance to maintain the link between conventional conflict and the initiation of strategic nuclear strikes as essential to European security; anything that weakened that link was undesirable. Germany deemed it essential that the Alliance indicate its intention to bring a war to Soviet territory and threaten the aggressor with annihilation in the event of a European conflict. German officials argued that ballistic missile defence deployments would impede the employment of medium-range and long-range ballistic missiles and thereby vitiate the capacity of the Alliance to maintain the escalatory link between conventional conflict and general nuclear war. This capacity was deemed especially important in view of the generally recognized impossibility of erecting defences against the shortest range systems that would fall mainly on German territory. West Germany thus expressed its demand that "flexible response must remain fully valid for the Alliance as long as there is no more effective alternative for achieving the goal of preventing war."[54]

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[53] Rede des Bundesministers der Verteidigung, Dr. Manfred Wörner, 22nd Wehrkundetagung in Munich, Der Bundesminister der Verteidigung Informations - und Pressestab, Bonn, 7 Februar 1985, p. 13. Emphasis in the original.

What is striking about this demand is that it ignores the significance of the fact that the United States' regarded flexible response as already incredible. This had enormous implications, for it meant that even without the deployment of BMDs, the credibility of flexible response would not remain valid because the United States regarded the conditions necessary for its effectiveness to be absent. For the credibility of flexible response rested ultimately on the willingness of the United States to use nuclear weapons in the event of a conventional attack on Western Europe and if Reagan Administration officials believed that Soviet nuclear capabilities precluded taking such action then it did not matter whether BMD's were deployed or not because the United States would not be inclined to use nuclear weapons. Thus, West German officials were attributing to prospective BMD deployment what American officials believed already existed, demonstrating that what divided Washington and Bonn was not so much the prospect of deployment but radically different conceptions of the nature of a credible military strategy.

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[54] Comments by The Government of The Federal Republic of Germany on President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, Statements & Speeches VII, 8 (28 March 1985), p. 3.

The Special Importance of East-West Relations

The implications of SDI for arms control and East-West relations were of particular concern to the West German government. Genscher explained clearly the salience of these considerations in determining his governments stance toward SDI: "The political and strategic issues connected with the SDI and the corresponding Soviet endeavours must be seen in their context and be placed in the framework of East-West relations and our security and arms control policy."[55] Accordingly, Bonn attached great significance to the then recently resumed arms control negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Federal Republic believed that these negotiations would facilitate an improvement in the superpowers' "overall relationship and open up new vistas for East-West relations in general."[56] For West Germany, improved US-Soviet relations were "of decisive importance for fruitful developments in Europe."[57] Bonn thus attached great significance to the January 8, 1985 US-Soviet agreement which defined the objectives of the Geneva negotiations, stating that it was a document of "outstanding political importance." According to Genscher it meant that the negotiations were "not just new, but of a new kind," because the talks were not only concerned with specific types of weapons but they were designed to negotiate "a concept for lastingly safeguarding peace- this is the great opportunity afforded by the negotiations."[58]

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[55] Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Speech in Bundestag Debate on the Strategic Defense Initiative, 18 April 1985, Statements & Speeches VII, 12 (22 April 1985), p. 1.

[56] Comments by The Government of The Federal Republic of Germany, op. cit., p. 1.

[57] Ibid.

West Germany was therefore particularly sensitive to SDI's potential impact on the Geneva negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Chancellor Kohl stated in his April 18, 1985 Bundestag speech on SDI that "The arms control function of the Strategic Defense Initiative is of central importance to us. We shall steadfastly promote this view in our dealings with our American allies."[59] Through its desire to place SDI so clearly within the context of US-Soviet arms control negotiations, Kohl's centre-right coalition hoped both to legitimate the American research programme within the Federal Republic[60] and to promote a cooperative solution to SDI through arms control- an approach that would increase the chance that SDI deployment would be either governed by agreement or altogether avoided.

The Importance of Strategic Stability

Underlying the Federal Republic's desire to see SDI dealt with through arms control was its overriding interest in strategic stability. It is difficult to overestimate the importance that the FRG attached to the maintenance and strengthening of strategic stability as well as the contribution they hoped that the Geneva negotiations could make to the achievement of these objectives. As Foreign Minister Genscher remarked, "Strategic stability is the key term of the US-Soviet agreement of January 8, 1985."[61] The West Germans believed that an essential precondition to achieving greater strategic stability was a mutual renunciation of any claims to superiority as well as a recognition that security "must be jointly defined and specified."[62] Moreover, it entailed accepting that "reliable security in this nuclear age cannot rest solely on autonomous decisions. Cooperation in security matters is also needed."[63]

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[58] Genscher, op. cit., p. 2.

[59] Kohl, op. cit., p. 6.

[60] The Soviet agreement to discuss space weapons, while a coup for them, also constituted a de facto admission of the Soviet Union's own efforts in this area.

By emphasizing its emphatic preference for cooperative solutions to the questions raised by the introduction of SDI, the West German Government was expressing its opposition to unilateral US action with respect to strategic defences. In the view of the Federal Republic, this would lead both to an "arms race in outerspace" and a dramatic increase in offensive nuclear deployments by both the United States and the Soviet Union. Thus for Bonn, "the prime objective of the Geneva negotiations must be a major reduction in existing nuclear arsenals, i.e. to seek fewer intercontinental and fewer intermediate-range weapons."[64] Because this goal was viewed as incompatible with the unilateral deployment of strategic defences by the United States, the greatest importance was attached to "the substantive link between offensive and defensive weapons."[65] It was hoped that establishing the "definite shape" of this link would enable the United States and the Soviet Union to "guarantee the largest degree of stability at the lowest possible level of armaments."[66]

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[61] Genscher, op. cit., p. 2.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

The West German government ultimately hoped that the establishment of a mutually agreed upon link between defence and offence would lead to such deep reductions in offensive forces that actual deployment of SDI could be obviated. As Horst Teltschik, Chancellor Kohl's national security advisor, argued: "If the project can now contribute in Geneva towards deep cuts in the arsenals of strategic and intermediate - range systems , it might be possible to give effect to the option of completely dispensing with the deployment of defense systems in space."[67] Avoiding or sharply limiting deployment of strategic defences was deemed a preferable option because it enabled the West German government to achieve its primary goal of deep reductions in offensive forces of the superpowers while removing the necessity of having to endorse or reject an American decision to deploy ballistic missile defences. Still, as the German government realized, any such prospective agreement was far-off and the likelihood of its consummation was far from assured.

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., p. 3. Genscher makes clear, however, that INF should not be held hostage to agreement in the space or strategic nuclear talks.

[66] Kohl, op. cit., p. 3.

[67] Horst Teltschik, "Western Relations with the Soviet Union and Other Countries of Eastern Europe," speech delivered 29 March 1985, Statements & Speeches. VII, 9 (1 April 1985), p. 6.

In the interim, West Germany deemed continued US and Soviet adherence to the ABM Treaty as essential. Bonn stressed that "in the short and medium term, observance of the ABM Treaty has priority,"[68] and urged the United States "to reaffirm the ABM Treaty as long as no other bilateral agreements have been reached."[69] West Germany's desire to safeguard the integrity of the ABM Treaty was attributable both to its opposition to deployment of strategic defences and to its calculation that any erosion of the ABM Treaty during the research phase would provide a useful pretext for American withdrawal from the ABM treaty.

The United States' disagreement with the West German government was predicated on substantially different ideas about what constituted strategic stability. First, the Reagan Administration claimed that the Soviet Union rejected the concept of MAD. It maintained that the Soviet offensive nuclear build up since the signing of the 1972 ABM treaty had borne out this assumption.

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[68] Kohl, op. cit., p. 3.

[69] Comments by The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, op. cit., p. 2.

Second, American officials argued that given the requirements of extended deterrence, a condition of mutual vulnerability was essentially incompatible with US commitments to use nuclear weapons on behalf of Western Europe. If, as Europeans maintained, the willingness of the United States to escalate nuclear war to Soviet territory was essential to prevent war in Europe, how, argued the Reagan Administration, could this be plausibly done if the United States was itself open to devastating retaliation should they decide to do so. Indeed, American officials maintained that the deployment of strategic defences would enable the United States to extend its nuclear guarantee to Europe with far greater credibility than it would under conditions of mutual vulnerability. Moreover, the Reagan Administration rejected the desirability of mutual vulnerability because the consequences of failure would simply be too high.

What the disagreement about SDI revealed was not so much that the United States and West Germany were pursuing opposite objectives, but that they had starkly divergent beliefs in what constituted strategic stability and therefore what circumstances would be required to ensure it. What is significant about this aspect of the SDI controversy is not only that broaching the issue of deployment revealed the underlying nature of the differences and therefore the driving force of the controversy, but that the differences were so wide that whether deployment were to occur or not the United States was so clearly concerned about the strategic situation that its desire to change the strategic regime would exercise a decisive influence on the Alliance, irrespective of the issue of deployment.

IV. THE FRENCH REACTION TO SDI

While the French government placed far greater emphasis than others on the economic and technological implications of SDI, it was primarily the strategic ramifications of SDI that aroused concern in Paris. French officials were more forthright and unambiguous in expressing their reservation about SDI than their British or West German counterparts. Thus in reacting to SDI, French officials generally did not attempt to condition their reservations concerning the implications of SDI by stating their support for SDI research. Instead, the French government reacted by launching initiatives of its own designed to garner West European support for a joint position toward SDI. This included technological and economic initiatives that would spur West European countries toward greater economic cooperation and would enable Europe to become more independent from what Paris considered the military and technological domination of the United States. The Mitterrand government's reaction to SDI thus reflected the independent foreign and defence policy that had been the hallmark of French governments since the time of de Gaulle.

While it distinguished itself primarily with respect to the manner in which it reacted, the French government was also a leading voice in the debate about the strategic implications of SDI. France was firmly and unequivocally wedded to the policy of nuclear deterrence. Moreover, and for the purpose of this study perhaps even more importantly, the French government was particularly candid in explaining why it favoured continued reliance on nuclear deterrence. Thus as we follow the procedure of examining precisely what French officials feared about SDI, and why they held these objections, we can ascertain the rationale underpinning the French position. When the French rationale is then compared to the United States's reasons for pursuing SDI we should be able to gain insight into the underlying causes of the disagreement between France and the United States; this finding will, then, afford a means of determining whether this disagreement can be attributed to differences concerning the implications of prospective deployment or to what extent it can be attributed to different conceptions of deterrence and strategic stability.

Initial French Opposition to SDI

As early as September 1983, Mitterrand, addressing the U.N. General Assembly, left little doubt concerning his opinion of SDI. He argued against "the higher and higher bidding of anti-missile, anti-submarine, and anti-satellite weapons. Warning people of the dangers coming from space is another imperative. Will space become one more field where ancient terrestrial antagonisms can develop without limit? Space is in its very essence the common heritage of humanity."[70] In June 1984, at the Disarmament conference in Geneva, France set forth specific proposals designed to avoid the dangers it saw arising from the development of BMDs. The French Ambassador, Francios de la Gorce rejected the strategic philosophy underpinning SDI and urged that the ABM Treaty be upheld: "A situation in which each of the two main powers sought to render its territory completely invulnerable, that is, to escape all reprisals while at the same time being uncertain of success, would be full of dangers(...)"[71] He proposed:

1. anti-satellite weapon (ASAT) restrictions, especially concerning high orbit;
2. a ban on the testing and development of directed-energy weapons, for an initial period of five years...;
3. strengthening of the registration and verification provisions of the 14 June 1975 UN convention on outer-space objects;
4. extension of the bilateral United States-Soviet Union agreement on the inviolability of reconnaissance satellites to include other nations' satellites (the national technical means of Article XII, ABM Treaty).

French Counter-Proposals to SDI

At the same time, the French government, realizing that its efforts to prevent BMD deployment through arms control might not be successful, pursued a parallel path that entailed proposing a European alternative to SDI that would not only meet the technological challenge that the American initiative posed but also provide Europe with the option of pursuing its own space initiative. Mitterrand envisaged the EC as the logical base for such an initiative and unveiled his thinking at the Hague:

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[70] Le Monde, 30 September, 1983, p. 4, as quoted by John Fenske, "France and the Strategic Defence Initiative: speeding up or putting on the brakes?" International Affairs, Vol. 62, No. 2, p. 232.

[71] Politique Etrangere 49:2 (Summer 1984), 377-380 as quoted by Fenske, op. cit., p. 233.

> We must look beyond the nuclear realm if we wish not to fall behind with regard to a future closer than is generally believed. Europe should be capable of launching a manned space station, which will allow us to observe, to transmit, and thus to take action against any menace-then Europe will have taken a big step towards its own defence.(...) A European Space Community would be to my thinking the most appropriate response to the military realities of tomorrow.[72]

France was clearly concerned about the technological and economic challenge which it believed SDI posed. French officials believed that SDI would act as a catalyst to a great technological boost to American industry, leaving France and the rest of Europe further behind the United States and Japan. President Mitterrand regarded this as a direct threat to the creation of a united Europe. He contended that without a technological, scientific and economic structure that was fully competitive, Europe would be unable to achieve political unity and independence. In response, France attempted to create an exclusively European answer to SDI by proposing the creation of a

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[72] Le Monde (9 February 1984) as quoted in Fenske, op. cit., p. 233.

European technological consortium which they named Eureka (this will be discussed in detail in the following chapter). Mitterrand argued that unless Europe pooled its resources and undertook high technology research of its own, a brain drain would occur whereby the United States would lure away Europe's brightest scientific minds and widen its technological lead over France and other West European countries.

French Strategic Concerns: Conceptual Destabilization

The specificity and frequency with which the French government articulated its concerns increased once it became apparent in 1984 that Reagan was to serve four more years in office. French officials therefore began articulating their concerns about SDI in greater detail. The overriding strategic concern that SDI evoked was that SDI could undermine the efficacy of nuclear deterrence and thus the credibility of the French nuclear deterrent.

France did not believe that overturning a strategic regime predicated on nuclear deterrence was either technologically feasible or militarily desirable. The French government contended that not only would such efforts prove ultimately futile due to technological realities, but they would also lead to an arms race in space with incalculable ramifications for strategic stability. And in the end, such efforts would not fundamentally alter the vulnerability of the Soviet Union or the United States to nuclear attack. Despite her conviction that SDI would not succeed in changing the fundamental character of the strategic regime, France feared that in attempting to do so, the United States would create the illusion that nuclear deterrence could be transcended. This could lead to a situation in which the credibility and therefore the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence could be undermined without altering the strategic realities upon which the credibility of nuclear deterrence had previously rested.

Despite France's concerns about the technological spinoffs that would result from SDI research, French officials reposed little confidence in the technological feasibility of SDI itself. Upon returning from a trip to Washington in the spring of 1985, French Defence Minister Charles Hernu expressed his views that the SDI defence envisaged by the Reagan Administration could, in 15 to 20 years time, be, at best, only 90 percent reliable. "Therefore," he remarked, "the system is not reliable."[73] Hernu's successor as Defence Minister, Paul Quiles, noted that even if the many technological difficulties inherent in intercepting thousands of warheads could be successfully mastered, many means of circumventing or defeating a space based defence would present themselves. American planners would have to contend with the extreme vulnerability of the satellites which would form the core of the American defence system, a vulnerability already demonstrated by the ability of both the

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[73] Hernu Discusses SDI, French Deterrent in Interview, in FBIS-WE, Daily Report, 19 April 1985, p. K2.

United States and the Soviet Union to track and destroy existing satellites. Moreover, such a system would have to contend with advances in "penetration aids" for ballistic missile warheads, as well as attempts to circumvent space-based defences by shifting the means of delivery to air breathing carriers such as cruise missiles and "stealth" bombers.[74] Finally, the Soviet Union could merely overwhelm any system by deploying ever greater numbers of offensive systems. Indeed, the French foreign minister Roland Dumas noted that despite expressing considerable confidence in the eventual success of SDI, the United States continued and in fact had accelerated its offensive modernization programme.[75]

French officials therefore concluded that an attempt to deploy strategic defences would not only fail to provide comprehensive defences, but would lead to an arms race in which strategic stability would be severely undermined. As Dumas argued, "the prospect of the American project leads, albeit in the long-term, to a militarization of space and hence to an excessive arms build-up, and that, on this basis, we cannot endorse it as such."[76] France was also less than enamoured by proposals recommending that the United States and the Soviet Union agree to mutual levels of defence deployments. As Hernu argued:

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[74] "Defense Minister Quiles Doubts SDI," Interview with Defence Minister Paul Quiles in Le Monde, 18 December 1985, in FBIS-WE, Daily Report, 19 December 1985, p. K3.

[75] Excerpt From The Press Conference of M. Roland Dumas, Minister for External Relations, Helsinki, 22 March 1985, in Strategic Defence Initiative, Ambassade de France a Londres, Service de Presse et d'Information, 29 March 1985, p. 1.

> We cannot be certain that the balance achieved by deploying defensive systems and reducing offensive weapons would really be stable. Who can believe, indeed, that the two protagonists would not agree on at least a sufficient number of offensive weapons to saturate the enemy's defences? If such were the case, would the factors of stability really be any different, since, when all is said and done, each power would retain the ability to inflict unacceptable damage on the enemy?[77]

France was, in short, concerned that SDI could lead, in the words of Defence Minister, Paul Quiles, to a "conceptual destabilization, which may rapidly call into question the defense policies of the Western world, although there is not yet anything to replace them with."[78] In other words, French officials were concerned that while SDI would be unable to change the reality of mutual vulnerability, it would create the illusion that this was possible and thereby undermine the perception upon which the credibility of nuclear deterrence was predicated. Indeed, Fabius believed that the manipulations of perceptions was central to SDI:

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[76] Excerpt for the Statements of M. Roland Dumas During a Luncheon with the Diplomatic Press, 26 March 1985, in Strategic Defence Initiative, Ambassade De France a Londres, Service de Presse et d'Information, 29 March 1985, p. 2.

[77] Speech of M. Charles Hernu, Minister of Defence, at the International Wehrkundetagung, Munich, 9 February 1985, Ambassade de France a Londres, Service de Presse et d'Information, 14 February 1985, p. 4. Such a strategic regime while unable to alter the ultimate effectiveness of US and Soviet systems could, of course, have quite different effect on the nuclear deterrents of other countries such as France who do not possess arsenals of size that could easily overwhelm a limited defence.

[78] "Defense Minister Quiles Doubts Credibility of SDI," op. cit., p. K4.

> The two superpowers, who have reached a historically unprecedented level of arms and destructive capability, certainly confront each on the ideological front, but they do so above all in the desire for power. They are now directing all their energies into trying to achieve a credible advance in both their arsenals and scientific quality of their weapons and to occupy a dominant position in the dialectic of deterrence in which the perception of the threat the other party poses takes precedence over its reality.[79]

France viewed this strategy as particularly dangerous because SDI would be unable to provide what it promised, namely, comprehensive protection against ballistic missile attacks. Fabius thus stated with great candour that:

> The importance of technologies which, in some cases, don't yet exist, must not be a reason for a brutal change in strategic concept. There are no grounds for thinking that the offensive capabilities could disappear in the foreseeable future. We also think it questionable whether one should seed to base a current strategic concept on remote technological possibilities. It is above all dangerous to seek support for a problematical strategy by holding forth in terms that in effect devalue what constitutes, and will do so for a very long time to come, the very basis of our security: the nuclear deterrent.[80]

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[79] Speech of M. Laurent Fabius, Prime Minister, At the Institute of Higher Defence Studies (IHEDN), 13 September 1985, Speeches and Statements, 19 September 1985, Ambassade de France a Londres, Service de Presse et d'Information, p. 3.

[80] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

France therefore believed that "SDI must not lead us to believe that nuclear deterrent [sic] is obsolete."[81]

Above all, the French government did not believe that it was desirable, even if it were possible, to "render nuclear weapons impotent or obsolete." France was firmly of the belief that it was precisely the existence of nuclear weapons and the knowledge that war could lead to incalculable consequences which had secured peace since the second world war. Dumas maintained that "world security has rested on nuclear deterrence for forty years and therefore careful thought should be given to anything that might upset the balance of forces and thus put world security in jeopardy."[82]

French officials also pointed out that nuclear weapons enabled Europe to counterbalance Soviet advantages in conventional forces.[83] Therefore, should SDI devalue the effectiveness of nuclear weapons, Europe would once again be faced with a situation in which conventional war could become a serious possibility. Moreover, the deployment of strategic defences would lead to a perception that nuclear weapons could be employed without leading to uncontrolled destruction. Hernu expressed this in February 1985 when he argued that: "Were such systems to be deployed, there is every reason to think that the old dialectic of the cannon ball and the armour would then apply to nuclear weapons, which until now have been spared from it, precisely because any show of force involving them was unthinkable."[84]

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[81] Hernu Discusses SDI, French Deterrent in Interview, op. cit., p. K2.

[82] Excerpt from the Statements of M. Roland Dumas During a Luncheon with the Diplomatic Press, op. cit,. p. 2.

[83] Defense Minister Doubts Credibility of SDI, op. cit., p. K3.

Furthermore, France was concerned that a U.S. decision to deploy strategic defences would decouple European and American security. According to Quiles, this danger derived from the disparity in protection which SDI would provide the United States and Europe:

> The space shield envisaged in the SDI project is adapted to long-range and intermediate range missiles. This shield would therefore have to be capable of intercepting SS-20 missiles. On the other hand it is ineffectual against short-range ballistic missiles (the SS-21, SS-22, and SS-23 missiles), not to mention planes and cruise missiles which remain in the atmosphere throughout their trajectory. Consequently, even if a space shield corresponds perfectly to the need to protect the United States from intercontinental ballistic threat, its contribution to the protection of Europe will be very limited and entirely dependent on the political authority that controls it. In Europe's case, only defense on the ground can be envisaged. But an excessively large number of systems would be necessary to protect the population. In reality, a European system could only aim to defend military targets.[85]

Such disparities in protection would lead to "unequal zones of security" in which European "public opinion is likely to be divided between those who will put their fate in the superpowers' and those who will take refuge in neutralism and pacifism."[86]

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[84] Speech of M. Charles Hernu, Minister of Defence, at the Wehrekundetagung, op. cit., p. 4. This point contradicts the assertion that nuclear weapons are essential for deterring conventional conflict, for if indeed, the use of nuclear weapons were "unthinkable" this would vitiate their capacity to deter conventional conflict.

[85] Defense Minister Quiles Doubts the Credibility of SDI, op. cit., p. K5.

SDI and the French Nuclear Deterrent

Despite occasional expressions of concern that SDI "might break the nuclear consensus in France," French officials consistently maintained that "France will always have the means of ensuring deterrence of the strong against the weak." In order to ensure this, however, France implemented a number of weapons programmes designed to enable the French deterrent to remain credible in the face of possible Soviet ballistic missile defence deployments. Quiles revealed that the French government had decided to:

> considerably speed up our program to "aid the penetration" of missiles. The aim is to ensure that our deterrent remains credible even if the potential enemy improves its ABM defenses. Another important decision is the launching of a program to develop a new nuclear warhead which is "invisible" to radar, intended to equip the M4 missiles on submarines.[87]

Thus despite expressing its doubts about SDI's technical feasibility, France's concrete reaction indicated that she was not nearly so sanguine about the implications of US and Soviet ballistic missile defences for the French deterrent as statements by French officials indicated. Nevertheless, Quiles contended that the "sword would always triumph over the shield." Yet, for a country like France, ensuring the continued credibility of its deterrent would entail greater relative expenditure than it would for the superpowers whose arsenals were, of course, much larger.

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[86] Ibid., p. K4.

[87] Defense Minister Quiles Discusses SDI, Eureka, Interview with Defense Minister Paul Quiles, reprinted in FBIS-WE, Daily Report, 20 December 1985, p. K1.

In order to forestall ballistic missile defence deployments and thus the concerns that would attend such action, France recommended that the development of "space weapons" be prevented through arms control. Dumas implored the United States and the Soviet Union to reach agreement at the Geneva talks to prevent the militarization of space, in order to prevent "at all costs, when the time comes, the move from research to deployment."[88] This could best be accomplished by strictly adhering to the ABM treaty, which France regarded as the guarantor of strategic stability (as well as the credibility of the French deterrent, two concepts that were inseparable in French minds). France thus argued that the Geneva talks must lead to "stronger deterrence and preservation of the quantitative and qualitative balance of capabilities between the two superpowers,"[89] and on this basis strategic stability could be ensured.

In sum, what emerges from an analysis of the French government's position on SDI is the crucial point that underlying the differences that French and American officials harboured about deployment was a far more fundamental disagreement about what constituted a credible deterrent and what threatened the credibility of deterrence. As Fabius' statement demonstrates, the French government believed that deterrence was functioning effectively and that SDI could lead "us to believe that nuclear deterrent [sic] is obsolete." Yet it was precisely the Reagan Administration's belief that nuclear deterrence was already obsolete (see Chapter 3) that led it to propose SDI. What this Franco-American disagreement reveals is a profoundly different conception of what is necessary to ensure deterrence. While France, as did Britain and West Germany, believed that only by ensuring vulnerability could deterrence be assured Reagan contended that it was precisely this vulnerability that rendered deterrence incredible both because of the constraints that vulnerability placed on US extended deterrence commitments and because the dominance of offense created dangers of a first-strike in a crisis.

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[88] Excerpt From the Press Conference of M. Roland Dumas, Minister for External Relations, 22 March 1985, op. cit., p. 1.

[89] Statement of M. Roland Dumas, Minister for External Relations, at the WEU Ministerial meeting in Bonn, 23 April 1985, Ambassade de France a Londres, Service de Presse et d'Information, 24 April 1985, p. 1.

Through examining the French position, it becomes apparent that the underlying cause of the French and American disagreement about SDI is not the prospect of deployment, but the differing conceptions of what constitutes a credible nuclear strategy and what conditions are necessary for ensuring strategic stability. French officials were far more cognizant than their British and West German counterparts in recognizing that the dangers associated with SDI did not derive only from the prospect of deployment but also from the ideas that led the United States to launch SDI. Consequently, when French officials spoke about "conceptual destabilization" they indicated a recognition of the effect that SDI could have even in the absence of deployment. As we shall see in chapter six, the French government concluded toward the beginning of 1986 that the Reagan Administration's SDI policy had shifted away from overturning the doctrine of MAD and this had a significant impact on France's disposition toward SDI. French officials maintained that this shift in the American position (which turned out to be illusory) meant that deployment, if it were to occur, would not seek to create perfect defences and therefore would not undermine nuclear deterrence. But as the Reykjavik summit was to demonstrate (see chapter 7), tying the implication of SDI to the prospect of deployment placed far too much importance on actual deployment as the means by which the ideas animating SDI would be effected. As France was itself to argue after Reykjavik, it was the ideas that underpinned the American initiative that were decisive because they would make their influence felt irrespective of whether BMD were deployed or not.

In sum, France regarded SDI as both a conceptual challenge to the doctrine of deterrence as well as a technological and political challenge to the future of Europe. Both of these issues were intimately entwined with France's conception of her role in the world as an independent and largely autonomous power and her determination to maintain this status. SDI threatened to diminish France's independence both strategically and technologically and thus, ultimately, politically. For these reasons France was a consistent and unambiguous critic of the SDI.

V. THE US EFFORT TO ASSUAGE WEST EUROPEAN ANXIETIES

Throughout the first six months of 1985, the United States engaged in strenuous efforts to address and accommodate European concerns about the Strategic Defence Initiative. Through intensified consultations, public speeches and Congressional testimony, the Reagan Administration attempted to present SDI in a light that Europeans would find more palatable. The United States hoped that these efforts would ease the transatlantic tension that Reagan's initiative had engendered and produce a more positive European disposition toward SDI. European support was deemed essential to the Reagan Administration's efforts to prevent the Soviet Union from sowing disunity within NATO as well as to garner Congressional support for SDI.

The US attempt to mitigate West European opposition to SDI centred on the following main points: that the US does not seek superiority; that SDI constituted a prudent hedge against Soviet BMD efforts; that SDI is a research not a deployment programme; that strict criteria would have to be met before deployment would be considered; that should deployment be decided on the US would attempt to engage the Soviet Union in a cooperative transition; and that NATO's strategy of flexible response remained valid for the foreseeable future.

In response to European concerns that SDI could be seen by the Soviet Union as an attempt by the United States to regain strategic superiority, the Reagan Administration stressed the defensive nature of the programme. It characterized Soviet charges that the United States was seeking unilateral advantage through SDI as propaganda designed to obscure the substantial Soviet activity in ballistic missile defence research. The United States emphasized that in

> the near term, the SDI program also responds directly to the ongoing and extensive Soviet antiballistic missile effort, including the existing Soviet deployments permitted under the ABM Treaty. The SDI research program provides a necessary and powerful deterrent to any near-term Soviet decision to expand rapidly its antiballistic missile capability beyond that contemplated by the ABM Treaty. This, in itself, is a critical task.[90]

The United States stressed that this effort to investigate the possible contribution that defences could make to security would take many years to complete, during which time the ABM Treaty would be strictly observed.[91] The United States explained that it was "conducting a broad-based research program in full compliance with the ABM Treaty and with no decision made to proceed beyond research."[92] The United States rejected the proposition that SDI would take on a "technological momentum" that would "somehow automatically force the United States to deploy a strategic defence system."[93] General Abrahamson thus emphasized that "SDI is a research program geared to provide a future President and Congress the technical knowledge required to support a decision on whether to develop and later deploy advanced defensive systems."[94] He stressed that "as a research program, the SDI is not a weapons development program, nor is it a program with preconceived notions of what a potential defensive system against ballistic missiles should entail."[95] The Reagan Administration took great pains to emphasize that SDI was, in the words of George Bush, "purely and simply a research program, a research program designed to explore whether a more stable basis for deterrence exists."[96]

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[90] The Strategic Defense Initiative, June 1985, Special Report No. 129, US Department of State Bureau of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C., p. 3.

[91] Ibid., p. 4.

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[92] Ibid.

[93] Caspar Weinberger, "SDI Could Deter Warsaw Pact Attack on NATO," USIS, 12 April 1985, p. 2.

[94] Statement on the Strategic Defense Initiative by Lieutenant General James A. Abrahamson, Before the Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, 99th Congress, First Session, 23 April 1985 (Text From Department of Defense), p. 1.

[95] Ibid., p. 2.

[96] George Bush, Excerpts from Remarks Made to International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 3 July 1985. Press Release, The Vice President, Office of the Press Secretary, 3 July 1985, p. 3.

Strict Criteria For Deployment

The United States stated that it would decide to proceed with deployment only if defensive deployments could meet extremely strict criteria of survivability and cost effectiveness as well as offer the prospect of a strategic regime that had clear advantages over the one it proposed to replace. The Reagan Administration stressed that it did "not have any preconceived notions about the defensive options the research may generate. We will not proceed to development and deployment unless the research indicates that defenses meet strict criteria."[97] Paul Nitze articulated these criteria in great detail:

> technologies must produce defensive systems that are reasonably survivable. If not, the defenses would themselves be tempting targets for a first strike. This would decrease rather than enhance stability.
>
> Moreover, new defenses should be cost effective at the margin. That is, effective enough and cheap enough to add additional defensive capability so that the other side has no incentive to add additional offensive capability to overcome the defense.
>
> Instead of a redirection of effort from offense to defense.
>
> If the new technologies cannot meet these standards, we would not deploy them. We would then continue to base deterrence on the ultimate threat of nuclear retaliation.[98]

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[97] The Strategic Defence Initiative, June 1985, p. 4.

[98] Paul Nitze, Commitments, Consensus and US Foreign Policy, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, February 26, 1985, p. 368.

For Europeans, these were welcomed yardsticks which they believed created a substantial impediment to deployment (they regarded the criteria as almost impossible to fulfil). To Europeans these Nitze criteria lent greater credence to American assertion that SDI would only be deployed if it was determined that deterrence would be enhanced. Thus in articulating these criteria so precisely and openly, the United States attempted to convince its European allies that the Reagan Administration was prepared to think seriously about the potentially destabilizing consequences of strategic defence deployments, thereby strengthening the perception that deployment was by no means assured.

American officials stressed that if these strict criteria could be met, SDI, far from stimulating an arms race, would enhance the prospects of a successful outcome to US-Soviet arms talks. The Reagan Administration maintained that:

> To the extent that the SDI research proves successful and leads to the capability to defend against ballistic missiles, then those missiles could lose much of their offensive value. That, in turn, would increase incentives for both sides to reduce the numbers of ballistic missiles greatly.[99]

The American government placed great emphasis on the relationship between offence and defence and believed that it would enable SDI to be used as a tool of arms control. The United States thus argued that "Rather than stimulating a new arms race, the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative could complement our efforts to seek equitable and verifiable reduction in offensive nuclear arsenals."[100]

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[99] The President's Strategic Defense Initiative, op. cit., p. 10.

Implicit in this conception of the relationship between offensive and defensive reduction was the desire to engage the Soviet Union in a cooperative transition to a strategic regime in which ballistic missile defences would play an increasingly prominent and eventually dominant role. As part of the Geneva negotiations the United States attempted "to initiate a discussion of the offense-defense relationship and stability"[101] with the Soviet Union in order to prepare for eventual negotiations on a cooperative transition. If the deployment of strategic defences was deemed desirable, the United States would "consult and negotiate, as appropriate, with the Soviets pursuant to the terms of the ABM Treaty, which provide for such consultations, on how deterrence could be enhanced through a greater reliance by both sides on new defensive systems."[102] It was hoped that this approach would allow the United States "to proceed in a stable fashion with the Soviet Union".[103]

The United States was keen to stress that, before it would begin its effort to enlist the Soviet Union in a cooperative transition, it would consult its European allies. Washington pledged to "work with our European partners to ensure that the Alliance as a whole benefits."[104] In early 1985, Robert MacFarlane articulated the importance which the United States attached to ensuring that SDI address the security concerns of its European allies.

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[100] Ibid.

[101] The Strategic Defense Initiative, op. cit., p. 5.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid., p. 5.

> The U.S. is actively consulting our allies to respond to their concerns and questions regarding SDI. Since this is a research program, their thoughts are essential as we examine the capabilities and set performance criteria for the defensive technology.
>
> Further, no step away from an offensive deterrent structure which has so effectively kept the peace in Europe can or will ignore the voice of our allies. Our own national survival depends on our allies' security from attack and safety from all wars.[105]

The administration was careful, however, not to imply that these considerations of transatlantic fealty would enable Europe to exercise a veto over American deployment decisions.

The US rejected assertions by European and domestic critics that a transition to a more defensive strategic regime would be destabilizing. Weinberger consistently assailed the validity of this proposition:

> It has been said that even if a fully deployed and effective strategic defense might be a good thing, the transition to it would be destabilizing. This is not the case. On the contrary, the initial phases of a missile defense on the road to a more complete deployment would enhance stability, the stability of our present deterrent forces, because as a growing fraction of the Soviet missiles could no longer reach their targets, Soviet planners would face increasing

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[104] Bush, op. cit., p. 3.

[105] Robert McFarlane, Official Text, USIA, US Embassy, 55/56 Upper Brook St., p. 5.

> uncertainties and difficulties in designing a first strike.[106]

The Reagan Administration also asserted that a recognition by the Soviet Union of the diminishing utility of offensive forces would render the Politburo more amenable to the consideration of a cooperative transition with the United States. However, the decrease in the utility of offensive forces that SDI could engender, convinced the United States that SDI would exercise a stabilizing influence on the strategic regime irrespective of the Soviet disposition toward cooperative solution with the United States.

The Reagan Administration's SDI's policy was predicated upon the idea that the strategic regime would pass through three phases: first, the approximately ten year period during which research would be conducted to determine the feasibility of deployment; second, provided the determination is made that the concept of comprehensive defences is viable, a transition period of decades, preferably conducted in cooperation with the Soviet Union, during which defences would play an increasingly dominant role; and, finally, in the third phase, the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Only during the third phase would the threat of offensive nuclear retaliation be completely abandoned.[107]

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[106] Statement by Caspar Weinberger, Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1986, Hearings before Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, Ninety Ninth Congress, First Session on S.674, Part 7, Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces, February 21, 1985, p. 3438.

In response to West European concerns that the United States was hastily discarding established alliance doctrine before an adequate substitute had been developed, the Reagan Administration sought to reassure its European allies by stating that "NATO's existing strategy of flexible response must remain fully valid, and must be fully supported, as long as there is no more effective alternative for preventing war."[108] European anxieties regarding this point had been unwittingly exacerbated by some American officials whose enthusiasm for SDI often created the unwarranted impression that the promised benefits of comprehensive defences were far closer to realization than was actually the case. The United States did, however, assert from the beginning, through public speeches, Congressional testimony and frequent consultations with European allies that it had no intention of prematurely abandoning the Alliance's reliance on nuclear weapons to deter conflict in Western Europe.

Deterrence to be Maintained

At the beginning of 1985 the White House issued a report entitled, "The President's Strategic Defense Initiative" which articulated the administration's policy on how offensive nuclear forces fit into the administration's SDI policy. This report stated that, "Today, deterrence against Soviet aggression is grounded almost exclusively in the capabilities of our offensive retaliatory forces, and this is likely to remain true for some time."[109] The administration made clear that nuclear deterrence has kept the peace for over forty years by relying on the threat of retaliatory nuclear threats, and that it would continue to do so until a better way could be found to deter war. Furthermore, as Weinberger remarked, "not only are we not abandoning our offensive nuclear deterrence, but we are strengthening and modernizing it as we have to do."[110] Therefore,

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[107] Paul H. Nitze, Statement on The MX Missile and the Strategic Defense Initiative - Their Implications on Arms Control Negotiations, Hearings Before the Defense Policy Panel of the Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, March 13, 1985, p. 211.

[108] The Strategic Defense Initiative, op. cit., p. 5.

> the SDI program in no way signals a near-term shift away from the modernization of our strategic and intermediate-range nuclear system and our conventional military forces. Such modernization is essential to the maintenance of deterrence while we are pursuing the generation of technologically feasible defensive options.[111]

Thus during the initial phases of the SDI programme, US strategy would, according to Nitze, remain essentially unchanged:

During the period until the SDI research program has

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[109] The President's Strategic Defense Initiative, op. cit., p. 5.

[110] Caspar Weinberger, "SDI Offers New Avenues of Cooperation," Text: Remarks at NATO Roundtable, Bonn, United States Information Service, U.S. Embassy, 55/56 Upper Brooke Street, London W1A 2LH, p. 6.

[111] The President's Strategic Defense Initiative, op. cit., p. 5.

> demonstrated that it is possible to have cost-effective and survivable SDI, up until that time there is no way in which we can get way from the current method of deterrence, which is partially deterrence by denying the enemy, the potential enemy, any hope of being able to aspire to a successful military strategy, and in part a threat, an ultimate threat of devastating nuclear destruction, in the event he nevertheless were to try such a strategy.[112]

If at the end of the first phase, it was determined that the research had yielded sufficiently robust and cost-effective means of defeating Soviet offensive missiles, the United States would begin a transition to a regime in which defences would play an increasingly prominent role. This would involve negotiations with the Soviet Union "to increase the security of both sides through a combination of radical reductions of offensive systems combined with the introduction of effective defensive systems."[113] This period would last for at least twenty years and perhaps as long as half a century, during which time defensive weapons would play an ever more dominant role. Deterrence would thus progressively increase its reliance on deterrence by denial; but "still during this process of transition, one would still need to maintain a reliable devastating retaliatory capability."[114]

It would only be in the third phase of the transition, which envisaged the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, in which the United States would give up the threat of employing its "devastating retaliatory capability." Under these circumstances, the "opportunity for backing up security of Europe through the threat of nuclear devastation would not be present."[115] The United States believed, however, that by the time that this were to occur the problems associated with erecting a credible defensive posture would be vastly diminished. Moreover, rendering ballistic missiles obsolete would remove what the United States regarded as one of the most dangerous threats to European security.

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[112] Nitze, op. cit., p. 211.

[113] While a cooperative transition is clear the preference of the United States, it does not imply a Soviet veto over US deployments, Ibid., p. 212.

[114] Ibid.

The United States contended that SDI did not represent an attempt to create a fortress America in which only the United States would be protected. American officials emphasized that the SDI research programme was "charged with examining the feasibility of defenses against all ballistic missiles, no matter what their range or armament."[116] To give concrete expression to this intention the Reagan Administration set up a separate division of SDIO to investigate the special problems associated with intercepting ballistic missiles of intermediate and short range. Some members of the administration even contended that the development of BMD's for Europe would be easier than that for the United States because of the flatter trajectory and slower velocities of the missiles targeted at Western Europe.[117] Indeed, as early as October of 1983 President Reagan's Panel on the strategic implications of BMD's stated that the option of deploying ATBM's was one of the first that might be available.

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[115] Ibid.

[116] Supplemental Questions Submitted by the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East to the Department of State and Responses thereto, Developments in Europe, November 1985, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, November 12, 1985, p. 40.

The United States believed that Europe faced serious threats to its security as a result of Soviet ballistic missile capabilities. The Reagan Administration contended that "One of the central challenges to NATO's flexible response strategy is the Soviet Union's increasing intercontinental- and shorter-range ballistic missile capability."[118] This capability, according to the United States, "threatens NATO's ability to retaliate effectively to a potential Soviet first-strike attack."[119] The United states argued that "Soviet SS-20's and other shorter range ballistic missiles provided overlapping capabilities to initiate nuclear or conventional strikes throughout all of NATO Europe."[120] Of particular concern was the prospect that the Soviet Union would, in the event of conflict, employ highly accurate conventionally armed ballistic missiles against NATO's critical conventional and nuclear assets in an effort to cripple the alliance's military capacity before the main hostilities commenced. NATO would find itself, feared the United States, unable to hold the Soviet Union's initial conventional assault or bring in reinforcements from the United States. Moreover, the nuclear capabilities of the alliance would have been similarly diminished so that the option of a nuclear response to a deteriorating conventional situation would be of dubious validity. This would allow the Soviet Union to endow its long-standing desire to achieve a capacity for a quick victory over NATO with potentially decisive operational significance. The United States believed that the deployment of ballistic missile defences could rectify the grave instabilities arising from this emerging capability and thus "reduce or eliminate the destabilizing threat of first-strike attack."[121]

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[117] This of course would not apply to the variable range ICBM's that form a major if not decisive portion of the nuclear threat to Europe. This is particularly true after the INF agreement as many of the targeting duties that were assigned to the SS-20's have been replaced by the SS-24 and SS-25 as well as the SS-19's.

[118] Report to Congress on SDI, 1985, op. cit., p. A-6.

[119] Ibid., pp. A-6,7.

[120] Ibid., p. A-7.

The United States argued that far from undermining the integrity of extended deterrence, protecting the United States from ballistic missile attack would render the US nuclear guarantee to Europe more credible. The United States also believed that the deployment of strategic defences endow American extended deterrent commitments with greater credibility. Richard Burt, the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, explained in Congressional testimony how the Reagan Administration thought SDI could contribute to Europe's security: "if we can achieve a better capability to defend ourselves against Soviet nuclear blackmail, [then] the U.S. guaranty, the strategy of deterrence, will be strengthened."[122] The United States reasoned that if it were to deploy strategic defences, it would be more likely to use nuclear weapons in response to a Soviet attack upon Western Europe because it would have less to fear by way of a Soviet attempt to retaliate against American territory.

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[121] Ibid.

The Reagan Administration pointed out that the credibility of extended deterrence was highest during the 1950's and early 1960's "when the Soviet Union had very little capacity to strike the United States with nuclear weapons."[123] Even after America's invulnerability disappeared, it relied on its overwhelming nuclear superiority to retain a measure of escalation dominance over the Soviet Union. It was thought that possession of this capability deterred the Soviet Union from responding to US first use out of a fear that any subsequent use on their part would lead to a series of escalatory employments by the United States to a stage of nuclear conflict at which they would find themselves at a decided disadvantage and be forced to back down. Whatever the validity of this conception, the United States maintained that this capability was now lost and, if anything, it was the Soviet Union that now possessed such a capability thus confronting the United States with possibility that it would be subject to nuclear blackmail.

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[122] Richard Burt, Developments in Europe, May 1985, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session, May 22, 1985, p. 24.

[123] Ibid.

The United States argued that the Soviet Union's ability to exercise escalation control constituted a danger to the security of the NATO alliance. US officials deemed it essential that the Soviet Union be deprived of its ability to control the escalation process, lest it encourage Soviet leaders to engage in aggressive behaviour. For

> the willingness of the Soviets to embark on an adventure of some particular kind, one that might be the start of a series of escalation crises that build up more and more to a point where it becomes difficult to control, relies a great deal on their confidence that they in the end retreat to nuclear blackmail or using the offensive nuclear capability of the Soviet Union in a way that they could always control that escalation.[124]

This capability, thought the United States, would increase the likelihood that the Soviet Union would embark upon a conflict for it would possess the confidence that even if the conflict were to reach the nuclear level the United States would either refrain from nuclear use or desist from matching the Soviet Union in escalatory employments. The Reagan Administration contended that denying the Soviet Union the option of exercising escalatory coercion vis-a-vis the United States would deter the Soviet Union from engaging in action that may lead to the use of nuclear weapons.

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[124] Lt. General James A. Abrahamson, The MX Missile and the Strategic Defense Initiative - Their Implications on Arms Control Negotiations, op. cit., p. 26.

The Significance of the US Effort to Persuade

The US effort to assuage West European anxieties culminated with the promulgation of Presidential Directive 172, which codified many of the positions that senior Administration officials had articulated throughout the first half of 1985.[125] Although this document gave a presidential primateur to official statements that had been made throughout the first six months of 1985 and reflected an explicit effort to mitigate West European opposition to SDI, it is important to stress that PD-172 did not constitute a true convergence of opinion within the Alliance on SDI. To the extent that differences within the Alliance were reduced, it was primarily due to the fact that both the Reagan Adminstration and West European governments realised that, irrespective of one's views about the implications of deployment, a decision to begin deployment would not be reached - at the earliest - until the early 1990s. This meant that flexible response and reliance on nuclear deterrence would, for the foreseeable future, continue to be the mainstay of NATO's security. Given this reality, it made little sense for the Reagan Administration to undermine a strategy upon which it had no choice but to rely in the immediate future.

A related reason that the Alliance achieved a greater degree of consensus over SDI was agreement on the point that if BMD deployment were to occur, these deployments would not lead immediately to the end of nuclear deterrence since it would, in Reagan's own estimation, take decades to build a BMD system that would render nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete. While West European government's did not favour deployment of any kind, Nitze's statement that it would take at last 50 years until reliance on nuclear weapons was completely eliminated reassured West European governments. They believed that this scenario ensured that nuclear deterrence would remain at the centre of US defence policy for such a long time that the original goal of rendering nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete was for all intents and purposes being abandoned.

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[125] The declassified version of this Presidential Directive can be found in The Strategic Defense Initiative, June 1985, Special Report No. 129, US Department of State Bureau of Public Affairs, Washington D.C., p. 3.

It is important, however, to emphasize that while the Reagan Administration indeed agreed to support NATO's continued reliance on nuclear deterrence, it did so for significantly different reasons from those of West European governments. Reagan remained committed not only to his original goal of a comprehensive defence but also to eliminating nuclear weapons entirely. His acceptance of flexible response in the interim did not reflect a reduced commitment to achieving his objectives, but rather the realisation that time would be required to achieve them. West European officials, on the other hand, viewed flexible response as a strategy that should be maintained permanently, not as something to be retained until the technology existed to deploy comprehensive BMDs.

A similar difference existed between the US and West

European officials on the question of limited defences. West European governments interpreted the Reagan Adminstration's support for limited BMD deployments as indicative of a policy supporting the enhancement of nuclear deterrence by protecting retaliatory forces. While the Reagan Administration stated that limited BMD deployments would indeed have this effect, in US thinking this was not an end in itself but rather a stage through which the strategic regime would pass on the path toward comprehensive deployments. Thus, despite a public narrowing of differences, the Reagan Administration and West European Allies remained divided on SDI, specifically, and most importantly, with regard to the desirability of replacing nuclear deterrence.

In many respects the US effort to assuage West European anxieties obscured the fact that this salient difference remained. To a large extent differences within the Reagan Administration about what objectives SDI should serve were responsible for this misunderstanding. While the State Department and, in particular, Paul Nitze, who was Secretary of State Shultz's primary advisor on SDI, were sceptical about SDI, Reagan and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger remained committed to the objective of deploying comprehensive defences.

VI. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INTRA-ALLIANCE DIFFERENCES ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF BMD DEPLOYMENT

West European government's had three primary concerns about the implications of BMD deployment. First, that the deployment of BMDs would create unequal zones of security for the United States and Western Europe, thereby decoupling American and European security. Second, that if the United States were to deploy BMDs, the Soviet Union would deploy a BMD system of its own that would prevent Western nuclear forces from being able to strike specific targets. And third, that the deployment of BMDs would lead to an arms race. How valid were each of these concerns?

The concern that a United States that is protected from nuclear attack would be less likely to come to the defense of Western Europe is problematic. Indeed, it would seem that the less vulnerable the United States was to nuclear retaliation from the Soviet Union the more, not less, likely it was that US leaders would be willing to countenance the use of nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union in the event of a Warsaw Pact conventional attack against NATO. It was, after all, when the United States became vulnerable to Soviet nuclear attack that doubts about the credibility of extended deterrence arose, so to take steps to reduce that vulnerability would not decrease the likelihood of an American nuclear response. At the same time, assertions by the Reagan Adminstration about the beneficial effects that the deployment of BMDs would have on the credibility of extended deterrence are equally questionable. Even if one assumes that eventually it would be possible to deploy a BMD system that was 99% effective, this would still leave the United States vulnerable to scores of Soviet nuclear weapons capable of inflicting unimaginable harm on American society. When one adds to this the fact that the Soviet Union would augment its aircraft based and cruise missile delivery capability, it is virtually inconceivable how, even if SDI were able to achieve its maximum objectives, this would confer much added credibility to extended deterrence, since the Soviet Union would still be able to inflict damage on the United States that American political leaders would find unacceptable. In short, nothing short of an absolutely leak-proof defence (including defence against aircraft and cruise missiles) would seem able to increase in a meaningful way the willingness of the United States to use nuclear weapons in response to a Soviet conventional attack against Western Europe.

The validity of the second concern about the effect of BMD deployment on West European security - that US BMD deployments would prompt Soviet BMD deployments that would prevent Western limited nuclear strikes - is far more difficult to assess. If the Soviet Union were, in response to American BMD deployments, to deploy its own BMDs around specific military targets both in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union this would complicate the ability of NATO to destroy certain important military targets. Some West European officials argued that "The Soviets would be happy to have BMD at that level, because it would neutralize the limited strategic nuclear options of the United States and cut off extended deterrence."[126]

According to this line of reasoning the reduced ability of the US strategic nuclear forces to engage in limited nuclear attacks against Soviet territory made conventional war more likely because the United States would be less likely to use its strategic nuclear arsenal if it could not do so in a limited fashion (and thus in a manner that would be likely to elicit corresponding Soviet restraint). There are three main reasons to doubt the validity of the above mentioned assertion. First, it is far from clear that the United States would be more likely to use nuclear weapons against Soviet territory even if it could do so in a limited fashion. Since limited nuclear attacks against Soviet territory would lead to corresponding nuclear strikes against US territory, there was a high probability that US leaders would be reluctant to initiate such attacks. Not only would they fear the damage from "limited attacks"[127] but such an exchange of "limited" strikes could easily escalate to unrestrained nuclear attacks by both sides. Second, even if one assumes that limited nuclear strikes were essential to extended deterrence, it is unlikely that these options could be significantly vitiated by Soviet BMD deployments. And third, it is questionable whether the ability of Western nuclear forces to destroy specific military targets in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was an important element of the credibility of extended deterrence; it would seem far more important to the credibility of extended deterrence that the perception that nuclear weapons would be used at all, since once this was done it was uncertain (given the multiple dangers of escalation) that nuclear employment could be terminated before a general nuclear war were to occur.

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[126] As quoted by David S. Yost in "Policy Implications of West European Reactions to the March 1983 U.S. Proposals for Ballistic Missile Defense." (Prepared for Pan Heuristics, Marina del Rey, CA: August 1985).

[127] As will be discussed below it is not at all clear wether the Soviet Union would respond with a limited attack or a full scale attack.

While West European concerns about the effect of limited BMD deployments were somewhat exaggerated, so were the benefits that some US officials believed that mutual deployment of limited ballistic missile defences would confer. For instance, the assertion that limited US defences would render US nuclear guarantees more credible because the Soviet Union would have to engage in massive, rather than (ineffective) limited, nuclear strikes in response to US use of nuclear weapons[128] is hard to reconcile with what is known about Soviet military strategy. For, Soviet military strategy stresses that if NATO were to use tactical nuclear weapons against its forces in Eastern Europe this would lead to the theatre-wide employment of nuclear weapons in order to prevent further use of nuclear weapons against Soviet forces. If the United States were to employ nuclear weapons against Soviet territory, Soviet military doctrine stresses massive retaliation both to prevent the use of further nuclear weapons against it as well as using Soviet nuclear weapons before they could be preempted. Thus the Soviet decision to use nuclear weapons against the United States was far more dependent on the extent of NATO's possible use of nuclear weapons than on the scope of Western BMD deployments that Soviet nuclear missiles would have to overcome.[129]

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[128] See for instance Jan Lodal, "Deterrence and Nuclear Strategy," Daedalus vol. 109, no. 4, p. 167.

Consequently, the deployment of BMDs would not seem to effect -one way or the other- either the willingness or the ability of the United States to extend its nuclear guarantee to Western Europe. The protection of the United States through the deployment of BMDs would neither increase nor decrease the willingness of the United States to use nuclear weapons in response to a Soviet attack against Western Europe because it is not the degree of US vulnerability to retaliation but rather the fact of vulnerability at all that made US leaders hesitant about using nuclear weapons in response to Soviet conventional attacks. Similarly, Soviet BMD's would be unlikely to effect the ability of the US to retaliate since it is not the ability to hit specific targets in the Soviet Union that gives credence to extended deterrence threats but rather the Soviet belief that the US was willing to use nuclear weapons at all which in turn could lead to further escalation. In the end, then, the prospect of deployment did not seem to affect the credibility of deterrence one way or another. What it did do, however, was to expose the differences within the Alliance about nuclear strategy and the conditions that would affect credibility.

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[129] For an excellent discussion of the Soviet nuclear doctrine, strategy, and operational art, especially as they apply to contingencies arising from a war in Europe, see Stephen M. Meyer, "Soviet Theatre Nuclear Forces, Part II: Capabilities and Implications" Adelphi Papers, No. 188, 1984.

Yet it would be incorrect to conclude that because the deployment of BMD's would have little effect on the credibility of extended deterrence that the introduction of SDI did not have important consequences for extended deterrence, because SDI was about far more than the deployment of ballistic missile defences. In part, SDI aroused opposition in Western Europe because of what it indicated about the intentions of the Reagan Administration. While West European concerns focused primarily on the implications of deployment, in many respects the concerns that were attributed to the prospect of deployment were more properly ascribable to the intentions that were revealed through Reagan's advocacy of SDI. For it was the reasons that the Reagan Adminstration believed that SDI was necessary that were important, for ultimately the credibility of extended deterrence rested on the willingness of the US President to risk nuclear war on behalf of Western Europe. And by advocating the elimination of nuclear weapons in his March 23, 1983 Reagan undermined the perception that he was willing to do so and also gave an indication of where he wanted NATO strategy to go, irrespective of the ultimate fate of deployment.

In addition to concerns about how the deployment of BMDs (both US and Soviet) would affect the credibility of extended deterrence, West European officials were deeply troubled by the possible implications of BMD deployment for strategic stability. Specifically, they were concerned that the deployment of BMD's would lead not only to counter deployments but also to massive increases in offensive forces thus leading to an accelerated arms race. This was by far the most powerful argument that existed against SDI, especially by those who believed that SDI could not create perfect defences. As we have seen in this chapter, the Reagan Administration attempted to address this concern by insisting that it would not deploy BMD's unless it could determine that it would be more expensive for the Soviet Union to counter US BMD deployments than it would be for the United States to add additional defensive deployment.[130] Indeed, the Reagan Administration claimed that if such a relationship between the cost of offensive and defensive deployments could be established then not only would an arms race be avoided but that it could act as a spur to offensive reductions.

While the Reagan Administration's arguments had merit when viewed from a purely economic perspective - assuming, of course, that defensive weapons could be procured more cheaply than offensive weapons - it is far from clear that Soviet calculations would be driven by purely economic calculations.[131] If the Soviet Union believed that US BMD deployments threatened their most fundamental security concerns, they would, despite economic hardship, have attempted to overcome such a system or found alternate means of delivering nuclear weapons. Thus, unless the United States and the Soviet Union were to agree to a cooperative transition to a strategic regime that incorporated BMD deployments, it is difficult to see how the deployment of BMDs could enhance strategic stability. At the same time, it should be noted that in the absence of significant BMD deployments from the beginning of the nuclear era both the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in an enormous expansion of their strategic nuclear arsenals, despite the expectation at the time the ABM treaty was signed that the absence of BMD deployments would lead to a reduction in offensive deployments. Thus, it would appear that while the deployment of BMDs was unlikely to lead to a reduction in offensive arsenals, as the Reagan Administration claimed, neither would the absence of BMDs necessarily have led to a halt in the offensive arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. Therefore, while the deployment of ballistic missile defences would have been unlikely to have contributed to strategic stability, nor would it have been its bane either, given the tremendous arms race that was occurring in the absence of BMD deployments.

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[130] This became known as the "Nitze criteria".

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[131] It was also far from clear whether the Reagan Adminstration itself would be driven by such factors. US Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and the civilian leadership of the Pentagon rejected the "Nitze Criteria" because they were determined to deploy SDI irrespective of whether the Soviet Union could counter US defence deployments more cheaply or not.

VII. THE ROLE OF NATO

The Reagan Administration's attempt to assuage West European anxieties about the implications of SDI had an important impact on the extent to which it was possible to demonstrate Alliance unity on the question of SDI. While the role of NATO as an institution will be more fully addressed in the next chapter, it is worth noting briefly here that when the Reagan Administration, primarily in response to West European concerns, publicly stated that flexible response would remain valid until it could be replaced with something better that this marked a turning point in the SDI debate. By publicly and repeatedly articulating its adherence to official NATO strategy, the Reagan Administration alleviated West European concerns about their immediate security and led to far less acrimony with the Alliance. After all, the raison d'etre of NATO was to ensure the security of its members and unless their was a minimum of agreement on the strategy that undergirded that security, Alliance unity became questionable. Thus this shift in the US position on SDI enabled NATO to publicly reaffirm its commitment to flexible response.

The extent to which maintaining flexible response was central to the Alliance consensus was made clear at two major Alliance meetings. The first was a meeting of the Defence Planning Committee on May 22, 1985. At this meeting the participants issued a communique that stated that NATO members "are resolved to sustain the credibility of NATO's strategy of flexible response and forward defence. Nuclear weapons play an essential part in our objective of deterring war and... we are determined to maintain the effectiveness of NATO's nuclear forces."[132] A similar statement appeared after a meeting of the North Atlantic Council (of which France is a member) on 6-7 June 1985. Their final communique noted that "Our strategy of deterrence has proved its value in safeguarding peace; it remains fully valid. Its purpose is to prevent war and to enable us to resist intimidation. The security of the North American and European Allies is inseparable."[133]

What is perhaps most noteworthy about these statements affirming the continued validity of nuclear deterrence was the frequency with which they appeared in NATO communiques. At the October 29-30, 1985 NPG meeting the final communique stated that "NATO's strategic forces are the ultimate deterrent in preserving security, peace, and freedom."[134] And just a month later at the December 3, 1985 Defence Planning Committee meeting in Brussels, where the participants agreed that "The objective of the NATO strategy of flexible response and forward defence is the prevention of all war. Nuclear weapons play an essential part in achieving this objective."[135] That West European members of the Alliance felt compelled to include such explicit reiterations of NATO's commitment to nuclear deterrence despite the Reagan Adminstration's assurances indicated an underlying uneasiness about the Reagan Administration's commitment to the strategy of flexible response.

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[132] Final Communique, NATO Defence Planning Committee, Brussels, 22 May 1985, paragraph 1.

[133] Final communique, North Atlantic Council, Lisbon 7 June 1985, paragraphs 3-4.

[134] Final Communique, Nuclear Planning Group, 29-30 October 1985, paragraph 3.

VIII. CONCLUSION

While there were differences in the British, West German and French reactions to SDI, they were primarily differences in emphasis. These three major countries agreed that the deployment of BMD's would vitiate flexible response, damage strategic stability, and hinder the improvement in East-West relations. At the same time, the emphasis that they gave to each of these issues differed, as did the manner in which they expressed their concerns. The British government was most concerned about the effects of BMD deployment on flexible response and strategic stability, although these concerns were expressed in a manner designed to minimize tensions with Washington and thus set the stage for compromises that would prevent SDI from doing undue damage to Alliance unity.

The West German government was far more concerned than its British counterpart about the potential impact of SDI on East-

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[135] Final Communique, Defence Planning Committee, 3 December 1985, paragraph 6.

West relations, although it was equally as concerned as the British government about SDI's potential impact on flexible response, given the Federal Republic's geographical proximity to the Warsaw Pact conventional forces. While the government of Chancellor Kohl, and in particular his Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher, were somewhat more open in expressing their concerns about SDI than the British government, the general tenor of their policy was one designed to avoid the appearance of wide gulfs with Washington. The French government, while sharing the substantive evaluations of the British and West German governments, was far less reticent to portray their disagreements with Washington in ways that would avoid public differences with the Reagan Administration. Moreover, Mitterrand and his government were more concerned than either the British or West German government about the effect that SDI would have on the credibility of deterrence, irrespective of whether the BMD deployments were to occur or not. Despite the differing emphases in the British, West German and French governments' position on SDI, all three remained fundamentally opposed to SDI.

What a careful analysis of the US-West European disagreement about SDI demonstrates is that the issue of BMD deployment was a vehicle through which the underlying differences between the United States and Western Europe about what conditions were necessary to ensure the credibility of extended deterrence and a stable strategic nuclear regime were revealed. It was found, for instance, that any technologically feasible deployment of BMDs in the foreseeable future would have little fundamental impact on either flexible response or strategic stability. Therefore, what the reactions to SDI revealed was that, while West European governments believed that extended deterrence rested on the vulnerability of the United States and the Soviet Union to nuclear attack as a means of ensuring the political and strategic unity of the Alliance, the United States believed that the absence of such vulnerability would reestablish the credibility of extended deterrence. Similarly, with respect to strategic stability West European governments believed that the absence of BMD deployments ensured a stable regime that was conducive to arms control, while the United States government argued that in the absence of defences, the offensive arms race would continue unabated.

That the Reagan Administration and West European governments held such widely divergent views about what conditions were necessary to ensure the credibility of flexible response and strategic stability was significant because it meant that even in the absence of deployment SDI could have a profound effect on the Alliance. For if the Reagan Administration believed that the vulnerability of the United States to nuclear attack rendered the US nuclear guarantee to Europe no longer credible, then, irrespective of whether BMD deployment occurred or not, West European officials could be justifiably concerned about whether the United States under Reagan was prepared to honour its security commitments to its Allies. Understanding this critical dimension of the SDI dispute helps to explain why, despite the perception that BMD deployments were far off, SDI had such an immediate impact on the Alliance. It also explains why West European governments were so keen to elicit public declarations from the Reagan Administration reaffirming the US government's commitment to nuclear deterrence.

But the fact that the reasons that Reagan gave for wanting to remove NATO's reliance on nuclear deterrence were so strongly held meant that despite US assurances to the contrary, West European officials doubted the sincerity of these statements. If Reagan believed that the United States' reliance on nuclear deterrence was so dangerous, logically he would be less likely to initiate the use of nuclear weapons in defence of Western Europe. In other words, the very reasons that Reagan forwarded for wanting to change the strategic regime undermined the credibility of the (then) current regime.

At the same time, there was little that West European officials could do to change Reagan's beliefs about deterrence. Attention, therefore, gravitated toward the issue of deployment which, while not central to the dispute, was the most visible manifestation of the underlying disagreement. Moreover, the issue of deployment, because it was less abstract than competing conceptions of strategy, lent itself to solutions and compromise. Indeed, this explains why the issue of deployment occupied such a prominent place in the debate over SDI, while the underlying differences in strategy usually only manifested themselves against the backdrop of the controversy about the implications of deployment.

Although the Alliance did not attempt to resolve the underlying strategic differences that so clearly existed, it did, as we have seen, attempt to narrow the differences over SDI. This process was begun in earnest at Thatcher and Reagan's Camp David meeting where the US and British governments agreed to four main points about SDI. Beyond the substantive importance of these four points, the US-British agreement indicated a mutual desire to find some common position on SDI within the Alliance despite the clear differences in perspective that existed. This desire to find common ground extended to the West German government as well. Although highly sceptical of the implications of SDI deployment, in his Bundestag speech, Kohl indicated his political support for SDI, although, significantly, he predicated further West German support on a number of conditions. Thus, the British and West German governments pursued a policy of providing political support for SDI, while voicing strong reservations about the implications of moving from research to deployment.

Following the Reagan Adminstration's efforts to assuage West European anxieties about NATO strategy, a tenuous, yet discernable, consensus emerged within the Alliance about SDI. This consensus was reached primarily as a result of the Reagan Administration's statement that NATO's strategy of flexible response would remain valid and the British and West German governments' support for SDI research. The existence of this consensus was codified in official NATO communiques throughout the latter part of 1985 which constantly reiterated both the Alliance's support for flexible response and SDI research. While this consensus within NATO was conducive to reducing intra-Alliance tensions on SDI, it could not obscure the fact that the SDI debate had revealed significant disagreements about US and West European conceptions of strategy. Indeed the different reasons that the Reagan Administration and its West European Allies advanced reflected this disagreement.

The United States supported flexible response despite the fact that the rationale it employed to justify SDI revealed that flexible response was no longer credible. Conversely, the West Europeans supported SDI research despite the fact that they disagreed fundamentally with the rationale that lay behind the programme. Two factors, both of which will figure prominently in the next chapter, explain how this preliminary consensus on SDI was reached. First, the US, British and West German governments were intent upon preventing SDI from splitting the Alliance and thus desired an accommodation on SDI research. The second reason was that the US government did not envisage being in a position to decide on deployment until the early 1990's. This meant that the Reagan Administration could support the continuation of flexible response without prejudicing its ultimate objectives. And West Europeans despite holding distinctly negative views about the BMD deployment could support SDI research since it did not necessarily imply support for deployment.[136]

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[136] The next chapter will deal with the distinction between research and deployment in greater detail.

V. THE DEBATE ABOUT WEST EUROPEAN PARTICIPATION IN SDI RESEARCH

I. INTRODUCTION

While the previous chapter offered an analysis of British, West German and French positions on the implications of SDI and why they differed from those of the United States, the purpose of this chapter is to determine how these countries attempted to manage these disagreements. This will entail analyzing the debate that was sparked by the United States government's efforts to involve its NATO Allies in SDI research. This issue will dominate the chapter as participation in research was the primary means by which the United States attempted to mitigate European concerns about SDI and to create greater unity on this issue within the Alliance. In this connection, the domestic debates within Britain, West Germany, and France are considered in order to determine the context in which the government decisions about participation were made as well as the influence, if any, that the opposition parties had in the participation debates.

While the subsequent chapters also deal with the role of the opposition parties in the debate, they will be dealt with in greater detail in this chapter. The reason that the opposition parties views are analysed in detail in this chapter is that the debate about participation in SDI research provoked far greater parliamentary debate and comments about SDI than did other aspects of the debate. These debates also became the occasion not only for opinions about participation in SDI research but also for a more detailed articulation of their opinions about the implications of SDI in general.

Particular attention will be directed toward answering fundamental questions about the management of the transatlantic controversy over SDI: Why did the Reagan Administration make efforts to solicit European support for SDI by inviting its Allies to participate in the SDI research programme? What influence did the desire for allied unity have on the European response to the invitation? What influence did the desire to reap technological and economic benefits from participation in SDI research have on the European response? What was the significance of the Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) that Britain and West Germany signed with the United States? What was the relationship of Eureka to SDI? Why did European countries have such difficulty in fashioning a united response to SDI despite holding similar positions? What role did NATO as an institution play in managing the SDI controversy? What effect did the improvement in East-West relations, brought about as a result of the Reagan-Gorbachev Geneva summit, have on the debate about participation in SDI research? In seeking answers to these fundamental questions about the management of the intra-Alliance SDI dispute, issues relevant to the thesis being forwarded will be investigated.

In this chapter we will attempt to demonstrate that in managing the SDI the major participants in the SDI controversy purposely ignored the fundamental strategic issues that lay at the heart of this dispute. Instead of attempting to resolve these important strategic differences, Washington, London, Bonn and Paris made a conscious effort to avoid these issues and focused instead on issues that would minimize disagreement, establish common ground, and lead to a consensus on SDI research.

Although they welcomed the Reagan Administration's efforts to allay their concerns about SDI by agreeing to criteria governing research as well as any prospective deployment, West European governments[1] remained fundamentally opposed to the Strategic Defense Initiative and particularly the concepts that engendered its promulgation. Despite the British, West German and French governments' reluctance to embrace the strategic rationale undergirding the United States's position on SDI, political and, to a lesser extent, economic calculations eventually predominated and dictated a less overtly hostile stance toward the American research programme.

West European governments recognized that their ability to influence the ultimate course of SDI was limited. Because the deployment of strategic defences, unlike LRINF, did not require European approval, the United States could proceed with SDI even in the face of outright European opposition. West European officials were cognizant of their limited influence and realized that any leverage that they hoped to exercise would mainly be possible through participation in SDI research. Thus, while West European governments reacted negatively to Defense Secretary Weinberger's March 26, 1985 invitation to participate in SDI research, this was as much due to the preemptory manner in which he demanded a reply in 60 days as it did to the contents of his letter. West European officials realized that SDI research was going foreward in any event and that a refusal to participate would not alter this reality. They were, however, keen to avoid seeing SDI become an issue that would cause undue transatlantic friction or public controversy.

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[1] When I refer to "West European governments" I am, of course, refering to the British, West German, and French governments.

Indeed, one striking feature of the SDI controversy within the Alliance was the extent to which it aroused relatively little public interest or protest; the controversy, while certainly deep, was primarily one between governments. While reasons for the absence of a phenomenon are often difficult to ascertain, it would appear that the most important factor was that, unlike the INF controversy where the focus of attention was on weapons systems that were to be deployed on Western European territory, the public perception of SDI focused on space-based defences that would, of course, not be based on West European soil. Furthermore, the peace movement appeared to be both exhausted and discouraged after its battle against the INF deployments. Finally, what seemed to militate against a public reaction to SDI was the nature of the initiative itself.

Despite the opposition that SDI engendered within West European governments and the generally negative opinion that military experts in Europe held about SDI, the publics were less inclined to attack a system that, whatever the reality, was advertised as defensive. Indeed an opinion poll taken in France, whose government was the most critical of the major West European countries, indicated that the French public was evenly divided between those who opposed deployment (39%) and those who favoured deployment (39%), while a further 22% had no opinion.[2] Interestingly, the opinion of the French public differed little from that of the United States where 43% approved of deployment while 35% opposed[3] - a result that was statistically insignificant.[4] In Britain, SDI aroused relatively little public interest, especially when compared to the Cruise Missile controversy. Public opinion was therefore not a major concern of the government, although opinion polls suggested that had SDI become an issue of public concern, public reaction would have been generally negative.[5] In West Germany public opinion polls indicated that the electorate was strongly opposed deployment of BMDs. Fully 60 percent of the population opposed deployment, while only 13 percent supported it, and 23 percent remained undecided.[6] Despite the negative view of SDI in Federal Republic, SDI was far from the forfront of the concerns of the West German public. Indeed, the lack of a strong public reaction to SDI was a characteristic of all three West European countries under study.

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[2] Poll conducted for Le Monde by the French polling company SOFRES. See Le Monde, 19 November 1985, pp. 1,4., as reported in John Fenske, "France and the Strategic Defence Initiative," International Affairs, vol. 62, no. 2, p. 239.

[3] This poll was conduced by the Roper Institute and cited in Ibid.

[4] The polls had a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percent.

[5] See Trever Taylor, "SDI - The British Response," in Hans Gunther Brauch, Star Wars and European Defence, (London: Macmillan Press, 1987), p. 129.

In addition to the lack of public outcry over SDI, a number of stipulations to which the US government agreed alleviated some of the more salient concerns about the American research programme and enabled West Europeans to offer political support of SDI research. West European governments, in considering their stance toward SDI, were extremely concerned that research would automatically lead to development and deployment. Thus, assurances from the United States that SDI research would be conducted according to a strict interpretation of the ABM Treaty and that any deployment decisions would be subject to prior negotiations eased European concerns about SDI, for these conditions represented a clear commitment to a firebreak between research and deployment. This distinction between support for SDI research and advocacy of deployment enabled European governments to participate in SDI research without being subject to the charge that by participating in research they would in essence be contributing to an erosion of the ABM Treaty and the possible deployment of BMDs. West European governments' resistance to participation was weakened still further by an assessment that the prospects for actual deployment of strategic defences were receding.

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[6] "Mehrheit gogen SDI," Frankfurter Bundschau, 6 April 1985.

West European officials also realized the enormous leverage that the SDI research programme provided the United States in its negotiations with the Soviet Union. Europeans came to view SDI as the ultimate bargaining chip: in exchange for a US pledge to eschew strategic defence deployments, the Soviet Union would agree to deep reductions in offensive nuclear forces. Consequently, an active and robust research programme which would present the Soviet Union with the prospect of actual deployments would be advantages in these negotiations.

Economic and technological considerations, although not nearly as important as other considerations, also influenced West European governments' disposition toward SDI. While Europeans were dubious of both the feasibility and the strategic advisability of SDI, they were considerably less uncertain regarding the implications of such a large US investment in the cutting edge of high technology. Europeans feared that even if the SDI research programme did not result in a single deployment, the technological benefits that the United States could derive from the civilian exploitation of the technologies involved in SDI research could further exacerbate what they perceived as a widening technological gap between Europe and the United States. European governments were therefore eager for access to the technological advances that they believed SDI research would produce. At the same time, they were aware that the United

States was using the prospect of access to high technology to encourage its otherwise reluctant Allies to participate in SDI research and thereby appease its own domestic critics of SDI. While these technological considerations affected European calculations concerning the advisability of participation, it was the desire to maintain allied unity that ultimately led the British and West German government to sign MoUs and thus sanction their countries pariticaption in SDI research.[7]

Still, SDI remained a controversial issue both within the Alliance and within the United States, Britain, West Germany and France. Despite the establishment of criteria specifically designed to separate the issue of SDI research from that of deployment, the prospect of participation in SDI research remained a contentious issue. While technically participation in SDI research did not entail endorsement for the concepts that animated SDI, politically, such participation was seen as a tacit endorsement of an American initiative that most West European believed to be highly detrimental to European interests.

Consequently, as the British, West German and French governments were confronted with the decision as to whether or not to participate in SDI research, factors essentially unrelated to SDI itself came to dominate debate in these nations. A primary factor that influenced the position of each country was the desire to avoid seeing SDI become an issue that would split the Alliance. While this consideration was in itself important, it was deemed especially important in light of the arms control talks that had begun in Geneva on March 12, 1985. While there were clear differences in the American and West European governments on SDI, both sides had a common interest in ensuring that the Soviet Union could not exploit these differences.

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[7] The French government did not sign an MoU governing manner in which French firms could participate in SDI research, but they did allow French firms, including those that were government owned, to participate in SDI research.

Yet neither SDI's importance in the Geneva arms control negotiations or the potential technological benefits of participation addressed the strategic issues that remained at the heart of the dispute. As a consequence the management of the SDI dispute had little to do with resolving the differening conceptions of strategy and stability that lay at the heart of the SDI dipsute within the Alliance. Instead, the United States and its West European Allies papered over these disagreements in order to preserve Alliance unity and concentrated on stipulations that would govern the manner in which research would be conducted in order to prevent immediate BMD deployments and established strict criteria that would determine the basis on which deployment decisions would be made.

II. THE BRITISH REACTION TO THE US PARTICIPATION OFFER

Probably no British Prime Minister since Winston Churchill has attached greater importance to fostering close transatlantic ties than Margaret Thatcher. While Anglo-American relations were strained in the early seventies during the Heath government and many had denigrated the seriousness with which the United States regarded the "special relationship", Thatcher was a fervent proponent of close relations with Washington. The intimacy of the special relationship was enhanced when Reagan entered office. The American President and the British Prime Minister shared an ideological kinship and saw each other as fellow combatants in the effort to transform the Western political landscape. Thatcher believed that the special relationship accorded Britain a role in international decision-making that exceeded what she could achieve on her own. Moreover, it allowed London to mediate disputes between the United States and her continental European Allies. Thatcher was therefore eager both to maintain the special relationship and use it to moderate the Reagan Administration's stance on SDI.

Accordingly, the British government's response to the American invitation to participate in SDI research was influenced by Thatcher's determination to maintain Britain's special relationship with the United States. Britain became the first country to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the United States, a step that not only signified Britain determination to avoid SDI becoming an issue that could split the Alliance, but also one that facilitated the West German government's decision to participate in SDI research and ultimately precluded a joint West European response to SDI.

The reasons behind the British government's decision to accept the Reagan Administration's offer to participate were intimately connected with Thatcher's view of the type of relationship that she believed should exist between Britain and the United States. Thatcher was quite reluctant to be seen as opposing an initiative that the American Secretary of Defense characterized as central to the US defence effort and to which the American President was so deeply committed. A British stance of opposition would not only jeopardize the highly prized special relationship but it would diminish British influence over SDI - influence that, after all, supplied the primary rationale for the special relationship to begin with. Thatcher reasoned that adopting a public stance of support for SDI research while at the same time privately expressing her concerns would be more effective in influencing the American government than public displays of reservation.[8] Thus, while the British government harboured serious reservations about the strategic philosophy that animated Reagan's espousal of SDI, these concerns were superseded by political considerations.

Thatcher intended to use her close relationship with Reagan in order to prevent SDI from causing a serious and possibly irreparable split between the United States and Europe. She hoped to use her influence in Washington to modify the Reagan Administration's policy on SDI and render it more palatable to European governments. This process had begun as early as December 1984 when Thatcher and Reagan agreed to a four point agreement that would constitute the primary foundation upon which all future compromise was to be based.

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[8] The exception to this policy was, of course, Sir Geoffrey Howe's March 15, 1985 speech in which he voiced British concerns about SDI as a series of "questions".

Given Thatcher's policy of fostering close ties with the United States while offering to be a bridge between Washington and European capitals less favourably disposed toward SDI than London, eschewing participation in SDI did not present itself as a realistic option. Thatcher believed that her influence over the direction of US SDI policy and her ability to secure European acquiescence depended on British participation in SDI research. Moreover, she realised that a British decision to participate would make it much easier for other European countries to opt for participation without fearing singularization. Not surprisingly, Britain was the first European country to express an interest in participating in SDI research - an interest that predated the official US offer to participate.

It is important, however, not to construe the British government's generally favourable public position toward SDI as an endorsement of the strategic rationale that animated its promulgation. Britain's support for SDI was primarily political in nature. While Thatcher harboured serious misgivings about the implications of deploying ballistic missile defences, like her opposite numbers on the continent, she had few illusions about her ability to influence the ultimate direction of SDI. While European governments realized that the United States, too, was determined to avoid seeing SDI split the Alliance, and, furthermore, that Reagan saw the value of European participation in assuaging Congressional opposition, in the end European governments could do little to prevent the United States from deploying strategic defences.

Because the Defence Ministry was to conduct negotiations with the United States Department of Defense on the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Defence Minster Michael Heseltine and his successor George Younger[9] were the primarly spokesman for the British government and its stance toward participation in SDI research. In the course of defending the British governments decision to participate in SDI research Heseltine and Younger stressed the SDI was primarily justified as a respons to Soviet BMD effforts, that the ABM treaty had to be adhered to during the research phase of deployment, that Britain expected to derive technological benefits from partipation including acquiring means to ensure the credibility of the British nuclear deterrent, and that there was a clear distinction between research and deployment.

Britain and the Need for Alliance Unity

In examining the British government's position toward participation in SDI research, it is important to stress that its disposition was informed by an overwhelming desire to maintain Alliance unity. In his widely noted speech about SDI to the Royal United Services Institute, Sir Geoffrey Howe ended his address by stating that despite differences with the US government over SDI:

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[9] Heseltine resigned shortly after the MoU with the United States was signed on December 6, 1985.

> our efforts must not slacken in maintaining cohesion of the Alliance. The debate over the deployment of Cruise missiles in Europe proved one thing at least. Alliance unity can not only enhance our security. It can provide a new incentive to our adversaries to meet us around the negotiating table.[10]

Thus, despite the obvious differences between the Reagan Administration and the British government on SDI, Howe was concerned that these disagreements not obscure the overriding commonality of interest between the United States and Western Europe. "Certain differences of perception across the Atlantic," he argued, "are a fact of life. They do not negate the fundamental community of interest and belief between our continents."[11] Nor, remarked Howe, less than a week later, did these differences alter the fact that "The North Atlantic remains vital for Europe's defence."[12] Howe was not reticent to articulate the indispenisbility of the Alliance. He argured that NATO "is not just important. It is the only way of preserving Western freedoms in a divided Europe: of coping with the Soviet Union's nuclear strength and marked conventional dominance... without US backing, we might indeed find ourselves taking some short cut to some 'pan-European solution.' But I strongly doubt whether it would be one that respected Western European interests and values. Still less the hopes which those values have helped to keep alive among the Europeans of the East."[13] The British government's belief that NATO was indispensible to Europe's security explains why British officials were determined to avoid seeing SDI split the Alliance and why they regarded British pariticipation in SDI research as essential to demonstrating Alliance unity.

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[10] Sir Geoffrey Howe, "Defence and Security in the Nuclear Age," Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies (RUSI), Vol. 30, no. 2, June 1985, p. 8.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Sir Geoffrey Howe, Secretary of State's Speech to IFRI, Paris, 21 March 1985, paragraph 5.

The British government also contended that Alliance unity was essential if the arms control negotations were to succeed. Howe argued that:

> Geneva has shown that the Russians have realised when the self-imposed policy of isolation was self-deafting. But Allied cohesion must be sustained... It will be all the more important in the face of the concerted campaign we must expect from Moscow in the months to come... If they feel confident that they can attain their objectives without making the concessions necessary in any negotiations, they will not hesitate to see all the propaganda at their undoubted disposal... And if they can in the process split the Alliance, even if this means forfeiting an agreement, they may be tempted to rate this a greater prize. They tried on INF. And they failed. We can be sure they will try again. United as we have been so often in the past, the West must stand together. We cannot afford to fall divided.

The British government's belief in the overiding importance of Alliance unity - both for West European security and the prospects for success in arms control negotations - was the most important determinant in its stance toward participation in SDI research. This point is particularly important to keep in mind because a substantial portion of the debate about participation in research focused on the possible economic and technological benefits that could be enjoyed by British firms that could obtain SDI research contracts. The economic and technological arguments were not, however, central to the British government's decision to sign an MoU with the United States. The British government's decision to agree to participation was fundamentally a political one, a sign that whatever difference they had about SDI, these would not be allowed to divide the Alliance in a fundamental way.

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[13] Sir Geoffrey Howe, "Europe, East and West," Speech to the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, The Hague, 17 June 1985, paragraph 11.

In an interview with the German weekly Der Speigel, Thatcher stated bluntly the central reason why she had decided to accept the Reagan Administration's offer to participate in SDI research. In response to a question as to whether bilateral technological agreements with the United States had, in the past, failed to provide Western European with the expected benefits, the British Prime Minister brushed aside these concerns and stated emphatically what she believed to be the central rationale for participation in SDI research. "I do not think that we would help anybody," she averred, "by trying to seperate the United States from Europe, or by seperating one of our countries from the United States."[14] Thatcher was similarly blunt when the interviewer queried whether a civilian research under joint

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[14] "Thatcher Discusses SDI, Bonn Summit in Interview," Der Spiegel, 29 April 1985, reprinted in FBIS-WE, 10 May 1985, p. Q-6.

European auspicies might not be preferable to SDI. "There must be no nonsense here. We are not nonaligned, we are not neutral, we are part of the defense of the free world, and we are allies."[15] This sentiment became the leitmotif for the British government's reaction and explains why the British government, despite harbouring serious reservations about SDI, supported SDI research.

Although the West German, and to a far lesser extent the French, government also manifested a desire to maintain Alliance unity, the British government was most adamant about this point and it was for this reason that they were the first to indicate a willingness to sign an MoU with the US government. Thatcher's policy of placing Alliance unity above other considerations meant that the British government would prevent the establishiment of a united West European position and also, as we shall, see make it easier for advocates of West German participation in SDI research to prevail becasue they could argue that since Britain was not willing to forge a united West European position the West German government's decision to reach bilateral arrangments did not harm West European unity.

SDI Research as a Response to Soviet BMD Efforts

In justifying its support for SDI research, the British government portrayed the American research programme as primarily a response to substantial Soviet efforts in BMD research that long predated SDI. The British government consistently emphasized that, unlike the United States, the Soviet Union had taken full advantage of the provisions of the ABM Treaty "by deploying an ABM system around Moscow - a system which it is currently modernizing and expanding."[16] Furthermore, the government stressed that the Soviet Union had been conducting sustained and substantial ballistic missile defence research not only in the traditional realms of ballistic missile interception but in "lasers, particle beam and radio frequency weapons, kinetic energy weapons, surveillance and target detection and so on."[17] The government pointed out that these activities long predated SDI and therefore could not be seen as a response to the American programme. Younger argued that: "The key point is that this [high tech BMD research] is not a new Soviet programme: it is not a response to the SDI - far from it, it long pre-dates it - it is not something peripheral to the Soviet effort in defence research; it is a key component of it."[18]

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[15] Ibid.

The Thatcher government argued that these Soviet efforts in BMD research legitimated the American research programme and necessitated further SDI research lest the Soviet Union "gain a unilateral advantage in this essential area."[19] Moreover,

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[16] _Ibid_., col. 336.

[17] _Ibid_., col. 377.

[18] _Ibid_., col. 337.

[19] Geoffrey Howe, _Secretary of State's Speech to IISS_, 19 November 1986, p. 16.

Britain contended that Soviet BMD research reflected a long standing commitment to territorial defence that was firmly rooted in Soviet doctrinal preferences and procurement policies and that would continue regardless of the course of Western BMD research. Younger argued that:

> The Soviet Union wishes to explore the scope that new technologies might offer for an effective, active defence of the Soviet homeland against nuclear attack, defences against ballistic missiles which would complement the substantial effort which - unlike the West - the Soviet Union has already been putting into civil defence and defence against aircraft.[20]

While the Government did not maintain that these activities constituted evidence of a Soviet desire to deploy BMDs in the near future, they indicated that the Soviet Union "has not accepted for all time the existing relationship between offensive and defensive forces at the nuclear level."[21] Given these circumstances, Britain viewed SDI as "above all a prudent hedge against the substantial Soviet activity"[22] in ballistic missile defence research. "It is for that reason that the Government support the SDI research programme. It would be irresponsible to do otherwise."[23]

By predicating the British government's support for SDI on the existence of Soviet BMD research, Younger underlined the essential difference that underlay the rationale behind the British and American support for SDI research. While the Reagan Administration also stated that the Soviet Union's own research on BMD technology was a factor in justifying SDI research it was not, as in the case of the British government, the primary reason for the existence of SDI. Indeed, Reagan did not mention Soviet BMD research in his March 23, 1983 speech, and, much to the consternation of West European governments, only belatedely began emphasizing the substantial Soviet efforts in precisely the type of technologies being investigated under the auspicies of SDI.

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[20] Younger, op. cit., cols. 337-338.

[21] Ibid., col. 338.

[22] Ibid., col. 339.

[23] Ibid.

SDI Research Would Adhere to the ABM Treaty

Britain emphasised that SDI research would be conducted in full conformity with the ABM Treaty. The British Government attached great importance to the sanctity of this treaty, which it regarded as the guardian of strategic stability and the primary impediment to US ambitions to move beyond research to deployment. They believed that if the United States could be kept within the bounds of the ABM Treaty during the research phase, it would complicate future American attempts to deploy strategic defences, entailing as it would withdrawal from an existing treaty. Consequently, they believed that the ABM Treaty "should be strictly complied with"[24] and they "very much welcomed the US commitment to pursue its SDI research programme in accordance with a strict interpretation of the ABM treaty and not to undercut the unratified SALT II agreement as long as the Soviet Union exercised equal restraint."[25] These assurances allowed the government to express confidence that it would not be party to any activities that "would be in any breach of treaty obligations."[26]

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[24] Ibid., col. 336.

The importance that the British Government attached to the ABM Treaty could be seen in its unwillingness, unlike the United States, to characterize the Soviet phased array radar near Krasnoyarsk as a violation of the 1972 treaty; instead Britain claimed not to be in possession of sufficient information to render a reliable judgment on this matter. This explanation is, however, questionable. The well-known closeness of British and American intelligence communities meant that Whitehall almost certainly had access to the reconnaissance photography that Washington did, but refrained from proffering its view, lest a public admission of Soviet violations provide a pretext for the United States to stray from adherence to the treaty.

The Economic and Technological Factors Influencing British Policy

The British government held that participation in the SDI research programme was important for Britain, both economically and technologically. In explaining the British government's position on SDI, George Younger, the Secretary of State for Defence, stressed that:

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Heseltine, op. cit., paragraph 36.

> Neither the British Government, nor our high technology companies, could afford to stand apart from such research. Nor have they done so. Within our defence research establishments and within other research institutions outside the Government, work has been under way in areas relevant to the SDI because these are areas relevant to our own defence effort and to the civil economy in the future.[27]

The Thatcher government contended that through the US-UK Memorandum of Understanding, Britain would derive considerable economic and technological benefits. Mr. Oscar Roith, Chief Engineer and Scientist, at the Department of Trade and Industry asserted that "participation by the United Kingdom will undoubtedly have important implications and give rise to important opportunities to industry, both civil and defence."[28] Younger believed that it was essential for Britain to exploit these opportunities; he regarded Britain's technological competitiveness as vital to the future of the British economy and believed that SDI would help ensure that "this country has a research base capable of underpinning both its defence effort and the civil economy of the future."[29] Younger asserted that these were opportunities that Britain would be unable to exploit in the absences of participation in SDI research. His predecessor, Michael Heseltine, concurred, characterizing the American invitation as "a remarkable opportunity to pool British excellence and expertise with the most advanced technological country in the world."[30] Heseltine summarized the government's economic calculations concerning participation in SDI research most succinctly when he testified:

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[27] George Younger, Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) Vol. 92, No. 61 (19 February 1986), col. 341.

[28] Oscar Roith, "The Implications for the United Kingdom of Ballistic-Missile Defence," Report From the Defence Committee, 5 December 1985, paragraph 136.

[29] Younger, op. cit., col. 342.

> The opportunity having been given to us, we having been convinced that we can make a contribution commensurate with our smaller but nevertheless substantial industrial base, it would be pointless -indeed, I think culpable - not to grasp the very constructive opportunity the United States has given us.[31]

Heseltine also argued that SDI research was important for the British defence industry because, in the course of determining the feasibility of strategic defences, the SDI research programme would be creating innovations in technologies "that, in practice, will be the centre of the weapons systems of the future, whether there is a Strategic Defence Initiative or not."[32] Younger thus maintained that "neither the British government, nor our high technology companies could afford to stand apart from such research."[33] The Department of Trade and Industry concurred with this judgment asserting that participation in SDI research was "important to key industries." In the 1986 Defence estimates, the Government specified how SDI research would help British industry:

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[30] Heseltine, op. cit., p. 2, paragraph 8.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., p. 2.

[33] Younger, op. cit., col. 341.

> Participation in the SDI research programme will enhance the United Kingdom's ability to sustain an effective British research capability in areas of high technology relevant to both defence and civil programmes. It opens the way for research possibilities that we could not afford on our own, in technologies that will be at the forefront of tomorrow's world.[34]

Conversely, Britain believed that had the US offer to participate been rejected she "would have forgone the opportunity of an information exchange with the United States of immense potential benefit to our future defence programme."[35] Such a course, asserted Younger, would have meant rejecting the "approach of Anglo-American defence cooperation which, under succesive [sic] Governments, has served us so well."[36]

SDI Research and the Credibility of the British Nuclear Deterrent

The Thatcher government saw participation in SDI research as a means of maintaining credibility of the British nuclear deterrent. Ensuring the penetrability of the British deterrent had been a major concern in Whitehall at least since the early seventies. Indeed, the Soviet Union's deployment of a ballistic missile defence around Moscow in the early 1970's led Britain to develop - at considerable expense - the Chevaline programme of offensive countermeasures designed to overwhelm the Soviet defences. The Trident programme was also in no small part chosen for its ability to penetrate Soviet defences. By participating in SDI research, the British Government would be able to keep abreast of Soviet BMD activities so that they could be "countered in whatever way is necessary to maintain the credibility of the British deterrent."[37] In the words of the Defence Committee report:

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[34] Statement on the Defence Estimates 1986, op. cit., p. 5.

[35] Younger, op cit., col. 341.

[36] Ibid.

> This may be the more necessary given the distinct possibility that at some stage within the expected 30-year lifetime of Trident the superpowers may, for whatever reason, cease to consider themselves bound by the provisions of the ABM Treaty.[38]

The British Contribution to SDI Research

The Ministry of Defence had determined, soon after receiving the American invitation to participate, that Britain and all advanced industrial countries were already conducting research in these areas of high technology that would be essential to the success of SDI. For Heseltine these realizations

> led, first, to the very obvious conclusion that the research was inevitable, would go on and was permitted within the ABM Treaty; and secondly to the conclusion that Britain, commensurate with its industrial base, was already deeply involved and had many areas of excellence and expertise. This enabled us to draw up lists of areas where, on a technological basis, a degree of co-operation with the United States would be possible; and a longer list where, in rather more project-oriented way, our industrial capability

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[37] "The Implications for the United Kingdom of Ballistic-Missile Defence," Report From the Defence Committee, Session 1986-87, p. xvii.

[38] Ibid.

> would be able to meet some of the requirements of the United States in pursuing their research programme.[39]

Heseltine also asserted that in some areas of high technology British industries and research laboratories were ahead of their American counterparts. "Therefore," according to Heseltine, the United States "wish to involve us in their endeavour, which is in the joint defence interests of everybody involved."[40] Heseltine argued that this would ensure that there would be no one-sided technology transfer.

Indeed, the British Government argued it could not prevent British industry, universities or scientists from participating in such a way that maximized the benefits to both the relevant industries and the economy as a whole. The concern about regulating the participation was particularly acute in light of the fear of a brain drain to the United States, a problem that predated SDI and encompassed the wider issue of Britain's ability to remain technologically competitive. Younger contended that an MoU would help to stem this movement and that, in the absence of an agreement, participation of British industry in SDI research would have "inevitably" occurred "solely on United States' terms."[41] The defence ministry argued that these problems could be partially mitigated by the MoU which would "provide a substantial opportunity for British companies and institutions to compete on equal terms with their United States counterparts."[42] Moreover, it would afford British participants in SDI research

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[39] Heseltine, op cit., paragraph 3.

[40] Ibid., paragraph 13.

[41] Younger, op. cit., col. 341.

> the opportunity to compete on a clearly defined basis for the research contracts on offer from the US Government, as well as to participate in the information exchange programme on a fully reciprocal basis for the mutual benefit of the United Kingdom and the United States.[43]

Heseltine argued that participation in SDI research was also necessary as part of a wider requirement to ensure the technological competitiveness of Europe:

> If one hopes to play a role in maintaining and developing the technological base of this country, I have no doubt, as members of the Committee will know, that Europe had to get a much more coherent approach to its own technological harmonisation and that we have to try and do deals with the Americans across the Atlantic that allow for a scale of activity in Europe to ensure that the facilities and the technology are maintained here. That is a very powerful argument for doing the research partnership under the influence of the Strategic Defence Initiative Participation Office which is being set up in the Ministry of Defence.[44]

Despite the British Defence Ministy's arguments about the technological benefits that British industry could derive from participation in SDI research, economic and technological considerations did not play a dominant role in the determining the British government's stance toward SDI. Indeed, Heseltine's failure to ensure that British companies could be assured at least one billion dollars of SDI research contracts, while dissapointing, never placed in doubt the British government's willingness to sign an MoU with the US government because the decision to seek participation was a political not an economic decision. The British government saw its pariticpation in SDI research as a means of ensuring the SDI did not split the Alliance and as a means of imposing conditions on the conduct of research that would lessen the chance the SDI would move from research to deployment.

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Statement on the Defence Estimates 1986, op. cit., paragraph 13.

[44] Heseltine, op. cit., paragraph 11.

The Research/Deployment Distinction

British Government officials took great pains to emphasize that the US government's decision to engage in SDI research did not represent anything more than a commitment to investigate whether it was technologically feasible to consider deploying strategic defences, and that it did not constitute a decision to deploy ballistic missile defences. Younger stated that deployments "might or might not result from future research into that sort of technology."[45] Heseltine testified to the House Defence committee on December 5, 1985, one day before the MoU was signed, that SDI research would attempt "to establish if such a concept of strategic defence was feasible and what particular combination of technologies would be necessary in order to bring feasibility about."[46] The government stated that with respect to decisions regarding deployment: "It has been made clear that not only is that miles off in time, but that it may never happen."[47] Indeed, London claimed that it would be "premature" to render judgments on deployment because "We do not know, nor can we know, what sort of results will emerge, or what kind of conclusions might be reached."[48]

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[45] Younger, op. cit., col. 339.

Britain insisted that in reaching a conclusion about the technological feasibility of deploying ballistic missile defences, the United States would use exacting standards. The British government stressed that:

> The US Administration has no preconceived notions about the outcome of SDI research, although it has made clear that any defensive systems must meet strict criteria of survivability and cost - effectiveness before development and deployment could proceed.[49]

Furthermore, the British Government stated that even if these demanding criteria could be met, the United States had made no decision as to "what options they wish to pursue when they know what capabilities they have."[50]

Britain was particularly adamant in asserting that a successful outcome of the research phase would not lead automatically to deployment of strategic defences. The Thatcher government emphasized that the ultimate decision whether to proceed with deployment would not be made on the basis of technological considerations; strategic and arms control concerns would be paramount. Thus, Younger emphasized that: "it is not appropriate to make the assumption that because the research programme has finished and has proved it can do certain things, we can proceed with development and deployment".[51]

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[46] Heseltine, op. cit., paragraph 2. Emphasis in the original.

[47] Younger, op. cit., col. 338.

[48] Ibid., col. 339.

[49] Statement on the Defence Estimates 1986, op. cit., p. 5.

[50] Heseltine, op. cit.,paragraph 105.

In defending its decision to participate in SDI research the British Government repeatedly stressed that it viewed the American initiative as purely a research programme.[52] The Thatcher Government was anxious to portray SDI in this manner in order to underline that its support for SDI research did not constitute an endorsement of eventual deployment. Whitehall therefore attempted to dispel the notion that the strategic defence initiative represented an a priori decision to proceed beyond research to actual deployment of strategic defences: "The strategic defence initiative is not a strategy or an operational concept which is about to be implemented. It is a research programme looking at the feasibility of developing cost effective strategic defences".[53]

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[51] Younger, op. cit., col., 338.

[52] Michael Heseltine, "The Implications for the United Kingdom of Ballistic-Missile Defence," Report From the Defence Committee, 5 December 1985, paragraph 35.

[53] Younger, op. cit., col. 339.

This statement is extremely important because it demonstrates the strong tendency on the part of the British government and the US State Department to believe that SDI's signficance was primarily attributable to the prospects of deployment and that as long as deployment could be prevented the issue of SDI would remain relativly uncontroversial and of little threat to Alliance unity. This perception was assiduously fostered by the US State Department which correctly calculated that portraying SDI in this manner would be far more conducive to fostering intra-Alliance harmony on SDI. Yet, the US Defense Department, and more importantly Ronald Reagan, did not view SDI in this way. Weinberger stated that "strategic defense represents a change in strategy."[54] Thus the US and British governments had a fundamentally different perception about the objectives of SDI. This was significant because it indicated that managing the issue of deployment would not suffice to keep the SDI controversy under control. For if SDI represented a change in strategy it meant that the Reagan Administration had already come to conclusions about the credibility of flexible response that could have a signficant impact on the Alliance irrespective of whether deployment occured or not.

Perhaps even more important than the disagreement about the pursposes and significance of SDI was the disagreement about what constituted a credible or desirable strategic regime. In defending the government's decision to participate in SDI research before Parliament, George Younger stated that "the Government believe that the current structure of mutual deterrence provides a sound and effective basis for providing that degree of stability in international relations which is an essentail prerequisite to continuing peace and security."[55] In contrast a leading defence Departement official, Fred Ikle, stated that "we must disenthrall ourselves of the dogma of consensual vulnerability - the notion that unrelieved vulnerability of the United States and the Soviet Union to each other's nuclear forces is essential for halting the competition in offensive arms, and is the best guarantee against the outbreak of nuclear war."[56] Thus, the participation debate revealed once again the overiding importance of the differing conceptions of strategy in determining the disagreement between the United States and Western Europe on SDI, as well as both sides determination to paper over these differences for the sake of Alliance unity.

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[54] Caspar Weinberger, "US Defense Strategy," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 64, No. 4 (Spring 1986), p. 679.

The Labour Party and the Strategic Defense Initiative

While the Conservative Party possessed a substantial majority in the House of Commons, the British government was keen to prevent seeing SDI become an issue of public controversy, fearing a repeat of the dispute about the deployment of Cruise Missiles on British territory. Government spokesman, therefore, were keen to rebut the charges of the Labour Party, lest the Opposition succeed in making the Conservatives' policy toward SDI a political liability. The position of the Labour Party therefore warrants consideration because it provides us with an idea of the domestic political context in which the British government operated as it advocated participation in SDI research. Moreover, in analysing the Labour Party's policies, we are made aware of how different Britain's reaction to SDI would have been had the Labour Party been in power.

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[55] Younger, op. cit., col. 342.

[56] Fred Charles Ikle, "Nuclear Strategy," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 63, No. 4 (Spring 1985), p. 824.

The Labour Party was an early and consistent critic of the Strategic Defence Initiative. Denis Healey condemned the Thatcher Government for lending support to what he considered a dangerous and ill-advised venture that would destabilise the strategic balance, dash hopes for arms control, and strain even further East-West relations. He characterized the Reagan initiative as an attempt to effect "a fundamental change in the basic policy upon which Western security has been built since the second world war,"[57] and chastised the Reagan Administration for failing to consult its Allies in advance on a matter that so vitally effected European security. Healey was scathing in his condemnation of the British Government's SDI policy, proclaiming Thatcher's stance a sell-out to American foreign policy and commercial interests. Furthermore, he reposed little confidence in the MoU as a means of safeguarding British interest, remarking that it was "scarcely worth the paper on which it was written."[58]

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[57] Denis Healey, Parliamentary Debates, (House of Commons), Vol. 92, No. 61 (19 February 1986), col. 327.

The Labour Party rejected the Government's assertions that British support for SDI research would in no way hasten the eventual deployment of strategic defences. Denzil Davies argued that "tests, demonstrations and developments.... should be stopped before they gather an unstoppable momentum."[59] Denis Healey contended that British efforts in late 1984 at Camp David to ensure that there be no automatic succession of research, development and deployment, had been less than successful in tempering the Reagan Administration's enthusiasm for deploying strategic defences. He argued that the United States had largely ignored the points agreed to by Thatcher and Reagan at Camp David. Healey maintained that Weinberger's assertions that SDI would enable the US regain the advantages it enjoyed when the United States enjoyed a nuclear monopoly, contradicted US assurances that it was not seeking superiority. He stated that Reagan had personally indicated that the United States would proceed with deployment, even in the face of a Soviet refusal to sanction a cooperative solution, an intention that Healey believed contradicted the United States' assurances to Britain at

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[58] Ibid., col. 333.

[59] Denzil Davies, Parliamentary Debates, (House of Commons), Vol. 92, No. 61 (19 February 1986), col. 367.

Camp David. Finally, Healey pointed out that the administration's refusal to discuss limitations on SDI had made "nonsense of the fourth undertaking, that East-West negotiations should aim to achieve security with reduced levels of offensive systems on both sides."[60]

The Labour Party believed that if the United States were to deploy strategic defences, they could be used just as easily for aggressive as for defensive purposes. Healey contended that this was particularly so in light of the fact that the Reagan Administration's "aim for the next 30 years at least will be to protect not the peoples of the world, but American land-based missiles, which are one of the components in America's strategic nuclear triad."[61] Healey contended that the United States' commitment to continue its reliance on nuclear weapons, to expand its strategic nuclear arsenal and possibly deploy ballistic missile defences constituted a dangerous combination that could easily be construed by the Soviet Union, as Reagan himself admitted, as an attempt to secure a first strike capability.

Healey insisted that the Soviet Union could not be expected to accept these developments without mounting a serious response. He enumerated a number of likely Soviet countermeasures to SDI and argued that the Soviet Union would attempt to overwhelm ballistic missile defences by utilizing its superior capacity for missile production. Furthermore, he contended that it was probable that, in response to American efforts to attain the capacity to destroy Soviet missiles in their boost phase, Soviet planners would design fast boost rockets that would reduce flight times from five minutes to 50 seconds. Healey warned that the Soviet Union was unlikely to confine its countermeasures to offensive systems alone. Instead, they would design systems to destroy space-based defence, citing as the most likely option the deployment of space bombs "that would circle the world permanently."[62] Moreover, he stated that "the Russians have made it clear tha[sic] they would plan to develop their own space-based defensive systems."[63]

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[60] Healey, op. cit., col. 330.

[61] Ibid., col. 327.

Healey saw SDI as a driving force behind a new round in the arms race. He characterized the American initiative as the major impediment to arms control and stated that the combination of SDI and US offensive force improvements would contribute to "a stupendous acceleration of the arms race, greatly increasing the risk of nuclear war and making disarmament more difficult."[64] Healey argued that continued pursuit of SDI would not only dash hopes for arms reduction, it would also preclude an improvement in "political tensions that have been the cause of the arms race."[65] Healey maintained that continued adherence to the ABM

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[62] Ibid., col. 328.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., col. 327.

Treaty was the sine quo non for continued stability and implored the Government to see that the Reagan Administration strictly uphold the provisions of this treaty.

The Labour Party argued that the deployment of strategic defences would harm European security. Healey contended that the Reagan Administration's decision to initiate the strategic defence initiative represented "a new sense of America's vulnerability and a desire to reduce America's liabilities in extending nuclear deterrence to Western Europe."[66] Yet he argued that in espousing SDI, Reagan did not explain how "abolishing nuclear weapons would control conventional forces, which in all-out war could inflict horrific damage."[67] Healey insisted that it would be much wiser to use the enormous sums of money that were being diverted to SDI research to make improvements in NATO's conventional forces, which he believed could, with some minor improvements, be brought to a level where NATO would no longer have to rely on nuclear weapons for its defence.

Given what it saw as the dangerous consequences of proceeding with SDI, the Labour Party was critical of the Thatcher Government's decision to participate in SDI research. Healey remarked that instead of encouraging further progress of SDI, it should be doing everything in its power to arrest its progress lest it develop an unstoppable momentum. He rejected Government claims that to abjure research would be foolish; instead, he claimed that while research was indeed unverifiable, testing was not; hence, since testing was easily verifiable, breakthroughs would be possible without being easily detected. Healey thus recommended that the Government encourage the United States to accept the Soviet Union's offer to ban all testing for SDI related components.

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[66] Denis Healey, Foreword to Jane Stromseth, The Origins of Flexible Response, (St. Martin's Press: New York), 1988, page x.

[67] Healey, Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., col. 327.

The objections raised by the Labour Party did not have a significant impact on the government's disposition toward SDI participation in SDI research or the eventual form that the MoU took. These debates did, however, reveal an interesting aspect of SDI debate within Britain and by extension about what motivated Thatcher to seek the MoU's. The objections that the Labour Party voiced against SDI were similar to the earlier concerns that the government expressed about SDI (as delineated in the prior chapter). While the tone with which Labour Party spokesmen articulated their opinions varied from that employed by the government, their concerns were remarkably similar. The Labour Party argued that the deployment of BMDs would cause an arms race, vitiate the credibity of nuclear deterrence, and damage East-West relations. The government essentially shared this assessment of the implications of BMD deployment, even if these concerns were, as in the case of Howe's RUSI speech, posed in the form of questions. Yet, as we have seen, the government was a keen exponent of participation in SDI research, whereas the

Labour Party was opposed to such particiation with equal fervor.

Understanding why, despite sharing such similar positions on the implications of BMD deployment, the Labour Party and the Concervative Party reacted so differently to the issue of participation provides valuable insight into what drove the British government to sign an MoU with the US government. The government claimed that, given Soviet BMD research, it was only prudent for Britain to support - and participate in - US BMD research; and given the reality of the US reserach programme, Britain could gain some technolgical and economic benefits through particpation. Moreover, the government argued that given US assurances that the ABM treaty would be adhered to during the research phase, and that there would be no automatic succession from research to deployment, it could support SDI rearch without necessarily endorsing the goals of SDI or taking responsibility for the consequences of deployment.

While these reasons for supporting SDI research were logical, in themselves they did not consitute a sufficient rational for participation, especially in light of the failure of Heseltine to secure a predetermined share of SDI research contracts. What ultimately determined the British government's decision to participate in SDI research was the desire to forge a united position on an initiave that the Reagan Administration deemed central to its defence effort. This proclivity to accomade American concern, was in turn, rooted in Thatcher's firm conviction that the maintaining both the "special relationship" with Washingtion and the unity of the Alliance were of paramount importance.

III. THE WEST GERMAN REACTION TO THE US PARTICIPATION OFFER

The Federal Republic's response to the Reagan Administration's offer to participate in SDI research should be seen in the context of West Germany's dependence on the United States for its security. While Kohl's centre-right coalition had expressed severe misgivings about SDI, it realized that West Germany's ability to influence US policy was severely circumscribed. As Alfred Dregger, the floor leader of the CDU/CSU, reminded the Bundestag in explaining the coalition's stance toward participation in SDI research, "Whether it comes to deployment of ballistic missile defence systems in the East and West will not be decided here [in Bonn], but rather in Moscow or Washington."[68] It followed that the German government saw its role as largely reactive. Since it was unable to influence directly the ultimate direction of SDI, it opted for pursuing a pragmatic policy of attempting to maximize its influence by channelling SDI in directions most compatible with West Germany's interests.

West Germany and Alliance Unity

The West German government's position was also informed by its desire to maintain Alliance unity. In his April 18, 1985 speech in which he outlined his government's stance toward SDI, Chancellor Kohl stated that "The alliance's cohesion and solidarity must from the outset deny the Soviet Union any possibility of exploiting SDI to split the alliance and sow public mistrust in the West." Alliance solidarity was deemed important for two reasons. First, because the Federal Republic was dependent on the United States for its security. And second because Alliance unity was essential to the success of the Geneva arms control negotiations. As Horst Telschik, Kohl's national security advisor[69], stated "We must be prepared for a difficult and protracted negotiating process. Setbacks will occur in [the] future, too. We need to be patient and must not arouse expectations that we cannot fulfill. The prerequisite for success is alliance solidarity..."

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[68] Alfred Dregger, Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, 10. Wahlperiode, Plenarprotokoll 10/1985, 13 December 1985, p. 14092.

Kohl's government contended that a realistic decision on SDI participation was possible only if West Germany remained cognizant of the salient geopolitical realities that defined its security predicament. The Federal Republic was, according to Dregger, a "Middle power" that stood on "the border between East and West" in an "exposed position."[70] He maintained that this vulnerability was rendered even more acute because, unlike her main adversary, West Germany did not possess nuclear weapons and could therefore only be the victim, and not the initiator, of a nuclear war. The German government explained that the United States guaranteed German security by risking "its own national existence, with her states and her people."[71] Dregger argued that in doing so the United States exposed itself to at least as great a risk as that to which West Germany herself was subject: "our situation is by nature full of risks because of our geographical proximity to the centre of Europe,"[72] while the United States voluntarily exposes itself to destruction in order to protect West Germany.

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[69] His official title was Director for Security and International Relations, Office of the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

[70] Ibid.

Nevertheless, vulnerability, argued Dregger, was a condition with which the United States was far from comfortable. It was therefore necessary to see Reagan's interest in SDI in its wider historical context. He reminded the Bundestag that until the advent of nuclear weapons, the United States was itself immune to physical threats to its survival, and he pointed out that this risk of destruction was even greater because she "guarantees our security with her troops and her atomic weapons on German soil"[73] - a point, Dregger admonished, it would behoove his countrymen to consider occasionally. Under these circumstances Dregger saw it as only natural that the United States would pursue all available options to reestablish at least a modicum of its former invulnerability. In any event, he viewed SDI as a phenomenon over which the Federal Republic (and others) had little influence: "Neither we nor the Soviets can change it; it is a fact from which we must start."[74]

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[71] Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid., p. 14093.

While the West German government opposed BMD deployment, it welcomed the Reagan Administration's assurances that should BMD deployment nevertheless occur the United States would attempt to engage the Soviet Union in a cooperative transition to a nuclear regime in which strategic defences would play a prominent role. It believed that the American offer, if accepted by the Soviet Union, could eliminate some of the potential instabilities that would attend such a transition. Moreover, Bonn welcomed American proposals to open its laboratories to inspection, if the Soviet Union would agree to do likewise. It expressed disappointment with the Soviet Union's response to these proposals, but was pleased that the US had offered an arms control proposal that the Soviet Union had spurned.

Influence Through Involvement

Regardless of the Soviet Union's ultimate disposition toward a cooperative transition, the German government believed that the deployment of strategic defences "would fundamentally alter our strategic situation."[75] And in the event of deployment, it would, above all, be necessary to avoid a situation in which European territory would be left unprotected while the superpowers would enjoy reduced vulnerability. To forestall such an eventuality was "in the existential interest of Europe,"[76] and constituted a primary responsibility of the Federal Government. It was a responsibility that could not be exercised by merely standing on the sidelines of the SDI debate; it required obtaining "influence through involvement"[77] in order to prevent the decoupling of European and American security through the establishment of zones of unequal security. Thus, given the need for increased German influence, eschewing participation was not seen as a serious option, for as Chancellor Kohl remarked, "he who participates has influence."[78]

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

The West German government's stance toward participation was also influenced by what it deemed the growing vulnerability of Western Europe to ballistic missile attack. While Germany contended that this was a threat that required attention irrespective of the ultimate fate of SDI, it also allowed that it would be particularly important to counter theatre threats in the event of US and Soviet ballistic missile defence deployments. Through participation, West Germany believed that it would have access to technologies that would enable it to build an anti-tactical ballistic missile defence to counter the ballistic missile threat to Western Europe. The Federal government hoped that by spurring the development of such a system it could alleviate some of the decoupling effects that would attend the deployment of BMD's on US and Soviet territory.

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid. Emphasis in original.

[78] Helmut Kohl, Policy Statement to the Bundestag in Bonn, on the Strategic Defense Initiative, 18 April 1985, Statements & Speeches VII, 10 (19 April 1985), p. 4.

Most important, however, the West German government's believed that participating in SDI research would not unduly strain Soviet-German relations.[79] The West German government had been subjected to a veritable barrage of Soviet threats concerning the consequences of its involvement in the US research programme. They were initially effective, especially at the Foreign Ministry, in evoking considerable concern. But in the aftermath of the November 1985 Geneva summit and the subsequent improvement in East-West relations these concerns subsided. West German officials maintained that the Soviet Union required cooperation with West Germany because she confronted the challenge of enhancing the productivity of her economy in order to maintain her position as a superpower. If the Soviet Union wished to achieve these objectives, she would have no choice but to continue her relationship with the West.[80]

While the West German government continued to believe that the deployment of BMD's would cause increased offensive deployments and dash hopes for arms control agreements, they also contended that SDI was instrumental in bringing the Soviet Union back to the negotiating table[81] and eliciting Soviet agreement to the principle of deep reductions in offensive forces. Therefore it was reluctant to undermine the US negotiating position by making SDI a contentious transatlantic issue. West Germany was eager to express its support for the American research programme as a means of countering Soviet attempts to split the US and Europe. Thus, although the German government was far from sanguine about the implications of actual deployment, it was clearly eager for research to continue as it viewed this as essential to the success of a potential tradeoff between offensive and defensive weapons that could establish a more stable basis for mutual deterrence.[82] In this regard, German officials were reassured by the Reagan Administration's statements concerning its intention to conduct research within the confines of the ABM Treaty. Further, they were pleased by the American guarantee that research did not imply an automatic commitment to deploy ballistic missile defences.

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[79] Dregger, op cit., p. 14094.

[80] Ibid.

The West German government believed that whatever the ultimate fate of SDI, research into advanced ballistic missile defence concepts would produce potentially decisive technological innovations which it could ill afford to ignore. West Germany, whose economy was highly dependent on exports, was already fearful of falling behind the United States and Japan technologically; consequently, it was particularly eager to enhance its access to the results of SDI research -something which they thought only participation would enable them to do. Chancellor Kohl voiced his government's concerns as early as April 1985 when he stated that "we must ensure that the Federal Republic of Germany and Western Europe do not lose touch with technological developments and thereby become second-class powers."[83]

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[81] Manfred Wörner, Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, 10 Wahlperiode, Plenarprotokoll 10/1985, 13 December 1985, p. 14101.

[82] Ibid.

The West German decision to participate was facilitated by Britain's decision to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the United States, for this allayed concerns within the Federal Republic concerning singularization. The West German government was reluctant to expose itself to the charge that it was being made to shoulder burdens that no other West European country was being asked to bear. This was particularly important for Kohl who had often been pilloried by SPD for his alacrity in accomadating American wishes.

The SPD's Opposition to the Strategic Defense Initiative

The SPD was extremely critical of the Strategic Defense Initiative. As early as 1979, the SPD proposed that negotiations be joined on the question of space weapons, with a view to their eventual banishment. The SPD's position on space weapons remained negative in the ensuing four years. Not surprisingly, then, the SPD was critical of the Reagan Administration's initiative. They believed that SDI would destabilize the current strategic situation, render agreement at Geneva exceedingly difficult, damage European security, and jeopardize the ABM Treaty. The Party leadership naturally opposed German participation in the research programme. They argued that a decision to participate in research was indistinguishable from endorsement of deployment, that European research would be needlessly militarized, that technology transfer would favour the United States, that the US-German agreement would stifle trade with the East. And, finally, they held that Europe, rather than respond to the technological challenge posed by SDI by jointly improving the European technological base, was foreclosing this option by agreeing to cooperation with the United States.

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[83] Kohl, Policy Statement to the Bundestag on the SDI, 18 April 1985, op. cit., p. 5.

Initially, the SPD reacted favourably to the views about nuclear deterrence that Reagan articulated in his March 23, 1983 speech. They interpreted his statement as a rejection of the deterrence doctrine that they, too, had been opposing and saw many similarities between their and his views on nuclear weapons[84]:

> The remark made by President Reagan in March 1983 that the strategy of deterrence based on mutual assured destruction must be superseded was read with both the understanding and support of the SPD. What President Reagan said then and in subsequent speeches could be viewed as being directly connected with the demands of the peace movement: the need

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[84] This fact was not lost on the government. In fact one of the criticisms that Kohl's government had of SDI was that it tended to support the views of the peace movement.

> to replace the strategy of mutual destruction with a strategy of mutual assured security, the goal of making nuclear weapons superfluous with the aid of conventional weapons, the demand for offensive weapons to be superseded by defensive systems, and the need to elaborate joint security concepts with the Soviet Union;[85]

The SPD even claimed to see in Reagan's speech an endorsement for their proposal to develop a "security partnership between the East and the West" through which a "partnership for survival" would replace the "balance of nuclear terror."[86]

The SPD's approval of the goals articulated by the American President did not extend to the manner in which he proposed to realize them. While they agreed with Reagan's goal of transcending nuclear deterrence, "the solutions offered by President Reagan for attaining these goals are unsuitable, in the SPD's view."[87] They believed that instead of promoting the objectives stated in the American President's speech, SDI would lead to increased instability, an arms build-up, and an increase, not a decrease in offensive deployments. More broadly, the SPD argued that in attempting to address security problems through a weapons programme, the Reagan Administration was falling prey to the fundamental fallacy of attempting to solve political problems through technical means.[88] As the SPD Parliamentary group remarked:

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[85] SDI and Europe's Interests, Statement of the Parliamentary Group of the Social Democratic Party of Germany on President Reagan's "Strategic Defence Initiative," May 1985, Friederich Ebert Stiftung, pp. 1-2.

[86] Ibid., p. 2.

[87] Ibid.

> Unlike the Social Democrats, who want to achieve stability, security and a defensive capability not through weapons but primarily through dialogue, treaties and confidence building, i.e. through political solutions, the US President relies on solving a political problem by technical means. This approach has never worked in the past, nor will it in the future.[89]

The SPD insisted that in the face of "weapons of mass destruction," East and West could no longer achieve security "against one another, but only with one another."[90] This was particularly true, they argued, given the impossibility of erecting perfect or near perfect defences.

The SPD opposed what they regarded as the Reagan Administration's departure from the original goals of the SDI programme. The Social Democrats lamented what they perceived as the virtual abandonment of Reagan's "original philosophy" of transcending mutual assured destruction and its replacement with the idea of making the "old strategy of deterrence" simply "more effective."[91] Accordingly, the SPD was not enamoured by the notion that by denying the Soviet Union militarily plausible attack options, nuclear deterrence could be enhanced.

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[88] Die "Strategische Verteidigungsinitiative" (SDI) Prasident Reagans und die Interessen Europas, Aktuelle Informationen der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, May 1985, p. 7.

[89] SDI and Europe's interests, op. cit., p. 2.

[90] Die "Strategische Verteidigungsinitiative" (SDI) von Prasident Reagan, op. cit., p. 7.

[91] SDI and Europe's Interests, op. cit., p. 2.

The Social Democrats feared that rather than enhance deterrence, any American attempt to deploy strategic defences would upset the equilibrium of the strategic regime of mutual assured destruction. They stressed that:

> The precarious stability of a system of assured retaliatory response would be vitiated if one of the two sides were to unilaterally preside over a functional strategic defence system while simultaneously possessing offensive weapons with which they could threaten the existence of the other side. The precarious stability would no longer mean mutual stability, rather the superiority of one side over the other and thereby instability with unforeseeable political and military consequences.[92]

A one-sided American deployment was not, however, an eventuality that the Social Democrats deemed likely. They believed that the Soviet Union would never allow the United States to obtain superiority through unilateral deployments: "The Soviets will not await the outcome of the US programme, but step up their efforts to improve their offensive capacity once they feel that they are unable to keep abreast of the United States in space technology."[93]

In addition to the offensive countermeasures, the Soviet Union would deploy defensive systems of its own the resulting, not in the abolition of nuclear weapons but in an offensive and defensive arms race.[94] Indeed if strategic defences were deployed, the Social Democrats foresaw the gravest consequences: in addition to the "termination of the ABM Treaty" a decision to deploy strategic defences would probably mean the end of the Outer Space Treaty and the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, in which case the Soviet Union "would be at liberty" to deploy nuclear weapons against the American space defence system."[95]

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[92] SPD Presidium Zur Strategischen Verteidigungsinitiative von President Reagan, op. cit., p. 7.

[93] SDI and Europe's Interests, op. cit., p. 7.

Underlying the SPD's position on SDI was a fundamentally different approach to what the Germans refer to as security policy. The Social Democrats were convinced that SDI could not provide, especially in Europe, a perfect defence against nuclear weapons, and was therefore incapable of transcending the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. For the SPD this meant that, even if SDI were to succeed in enhancing deterrence, the outcome of a war between the United States and the Soviet Union would still be the nuclear destruction of West Germany. For this reason, the SPD opposed the entire concept of achieving security through nuclear deterrence and opted instead to "surmount the existing system of deterrence" by political means. This did not require that one love his political adversary, but he must at least try to understand his motives. The notion that the system of mutual deterrence can be rendered obsolete by introducing new weapons technologies is a technological fallacy. Reconciliation cannot be enforced by means of technology.[96] In short, the Social Democrats viewed the attainment of security as a "political and not military-technical task."[97]

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[94] SPD Presidium zur Strategischen Verteidigungsinitiative von President Reagan, op. cit., p. 7.

[95] SDI and Europe's Interests, op. cit., p. 4.

While the opposition of the SPD to the West German government's willingness to sign an MoU with the US government did not derail the government's plans, the opposition played a somewhat more significant role in the West German debate about participation in SDI research than it did in Britain. Kohl had to be particularly sensitive to the possibility that the SPD would succeed in arousing public opposition to his policy toward participation in SDI research. The government, therefore, made great efforts to refute the arguments of the SPD and ensure that they did not gain wide-spread public acceptance.

The SPD's stance toward participation in SDI research was important for another reason as well. Kohl had to consider the possibility that the FDP could form a coalition with the SPD. The possibility that the FDP would abandon its coalition with the CDU/CSU meant that Kohl had to pay particular attention to the views of his Foreign Minister Genscher who saw himself and his party as guardians of Ostpolitik and detente within the coalition. Indeed, because of the opposition of the FDP, negotiations with the United States were delayed, the Economics Minister rather than the Defence Minister conducted the negotiations, and the MoU prohibited any direct West German governmental participation in SDI research. Yet despite the reluctance of the FDP to enter into an MoU with the Reagan Administration, they believed that to fail to do so would not only split the coalition but also could damage Alliance unity.

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[96] SDI and Europe's Interests, op. cit., p. 12.

[97] Gansel, op. cit., p. 14102.

Opposition to Participation in SDI Research Within the Centre-Right Coalition

The German government's stance toward SDI participation was complicated by disagreements within the ruling Centre-Right coalition. While the Christian Social Union (CSU) and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) were eager to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) that would allow government participation in SDI research, the Free Democratic Party (FDP) led by Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher advocated a more cautious approach. The Federal Government's decision to pursue participation in SDI research was thus conditional and limited - a reflection in no small measure of the wishes of the FDP.

The divisions within Kohl's coalition were prominently on display when the Bundestag debated the question of the Federal Republic's stance toward participation in SDI research. While both the FDP and the CDU/CSU speakers claimed to speak for the Government, the rationale they offered, as well as the differing emphasis that each party accorded to commonly held positions, revealed the extent of disagreement within the centre-right government.

The FDP was above all concerned to dispel the impression that a decision to negotiate terms for SDI research indicated a deepening of German political support for SDI. The State Minister in the Foreign Ministry, Mollemann, therefore stated that the Federal Government's position, as articulated in March and April of 1985, had not changed, though he avoided repeating the staple formulation - "the SDI programme is politically necessary and in the security interests of the West as a whole."[98] Instead, he emphasized the non-political nature of any prospective negotiations with the United States:

> The question whether collaboration of German firms and research Institutes in the SDI research programme requires safeguarding through government arrangements is first and foremost a question of technical, economic and legal usefulness. This is what the decision that the Federal Government will reach is about; not about a political statement, which was already made on March 27 and April 18 of this year and, as I have already stated, remain valid.[99]

Thus for the FDP, the question of negotiations with the United States "solely concerned the decision whether the legal and technical fundamentals for the cooperation of German enterprises and Institutes" with their American counterparts "in the realm of technology and research are sufficient or whether they need to be improved (e.g.,actualized)."[100] Mischnik emphasized that under no circumstances would this entail government participation or funding for research efforts.

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[98] Helmut Kohl, Policy Statement to the Bundestag in Bonn on the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), 18 April 1985, op. cit., p. 2.

[99] Mollemann, op. cit., p. 14106. Emphasis in the original.

[100] Ibid.

Mollemann explained that the West German government supported SDI "especially in view of the Soviet research efforts and in view of the fact that the Soviet Union presides over, and is modernizing, the only functional ABM system."[101] Despite arguing that it would be irresponsible to neglect the possibilities offered by new technologies, Mollemann, unlike Wörner, did not evince any genuine enthusiasm for a change in strategy or elaborate what advantages could accrue to the West through SDI. Indeed, his comments concerning the possible benefits to be derived from SDI seemed perfunctory and were largely designed to deflect SPD criticism about the FDP's support for SDI. In short, Mollemann saw nothing to indicate that strategic defences would offer benefits over the existing strategic regime. Accordingly, Mollemann stressed that "SDI is at this time nothing less, but also nothing more than a research programme."[102] He maintained that it was impossible to determine whether the vision of a perfect defence that animated Reagan's initiative would succeed in its objective in rendering nuclear weapons useless and redundant, or whether a more limited defence would be a more likely eventuality. In any event, he maintained that irrespective of whether either vision became a reality, SDI had affected profoundly the strategic discussion within the Alliance.

The FDP insisted that the strategic and political unity of the Alliance was essential to West German security. They argued that the strategy of flexible response had successfully fulfilled these requirements by creating a joint deterrent strategy. Therefore in contemplating changes in this strategy the FDP considered it essential that deliberations occur "within the Alliance as a whole." Mollemann argued that in this connection it "becomes all the more significant that the specifically European position in the WEU be discussed and tabled."

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[101] Ibid.

[102] Mollemann, op. cit., p. 14106. Emphasis in the original.

The FDP regarded the question of whether SDI would lead to greater East- West strategic stability as central to their evaluation of the American initiative. Essential to ensuring that SDI would indeed contribute to this objective were the Geneva negotiations which they regarded as providing a glimmer of hope. Mollemann contended that only through establishing a joint definition of the relationship between offence and defence could the Geneva negotiations fulfil their promise of establishing a new basis for strategic stability, and he stated that the negotiations must lead to cooperative solutions.[103]

This preference for a cooperative solution reflected the FDP's belief that, in the nuclear age, attempts to achieve security through autonomous actions must be eschewed in favour of joint and mutually agreed upon solutions. The FDP saw in the Geneva negotiations the opportunity for not only achieving substantial agreements governing specific categories of weapons, but also for laying the foundation for a new security order. In essence, they viewed the approach being followed in the Geneva negotiations as the embodiment of the Harmel concept, which advocated simultaneously pursuing defence preparedness and improved East-West relations.[104] Primarily because of the importance that they accorded the Geneva talks, the FDP condemned the SPD's refusal to support SDI research on the grounds that it would weaken the Western negotiating position and reduce the possibilities for agreement. At the same time, however, the FDP viewed it as essential that SDI be regarded as negotiable at the Geneva talks.

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[103] Mollemann, op. cit., p. 14107. Emphasis added.

The FDP insisted that the "ABM Treaty must be strictly observed, as long as no better regime can replace it."[105] Mollemann also approvingly noted American statements that although a loose interpretation of the treaty was correct, the United States would abide by the strict interpretation. Mollemann reiterated that any move to go beyond the ABM Treaty should be a matter for "consultations between Alliance partners."[106]

The Decision to Negotiate About Participation in SDI Research

As a result of disagreements within the German government, a decision regarding whether, or to what extent, the Federal Republic would participate was not immediately agreed upon. In deference to the wishes of the junior, yet vastly influential, coalition partner, the West German government announced that it would not seek an immediate agreement with the United States on German participation in SDI research; instead it would send Economics Minister, Martin Bangemann, to Washington, D.C. to negotiate a possible agreement. The choice of the economics minister to negotiate for the German government was significant. It reflected the coalition's intention - under strong pressure from Genscher -to emphasize the economic rather than the strategic or political nature of its decision to seek participation. The primacy afforded economic and technological considerations was evident in the opening paragraph explaining the government's decision to negotiate with the United States.

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[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid.

> The Federal Government wants to reach an agreement with the United States on an improvement in the exchange of scientific research findings and technological discoveries. Private research should also be enhanced.[107]

The government's portrayal of the negotiations as primarily concerned with issues of technology transfer constituted a signal that the government was reluctant to associate itself too closely with SDI lest the decision to negotiate be misconstrued as an endorsement of the strategic concepts underlying the US initiative. The wording of the government's statement announcing its intention to enter into negotiations with the United States reflected the limited nature of the coalitions support for SDI: "The Federal government announces its political support for the American research programme that was brought into being by SDI."[108]

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[107] Erklarung der Bundesregierung zum Kabinetts beschluss uber eine Deutsche Beteilung an der SDI - Forschung, abgegeben in Bonn um 18 December 1985, reprinted in Europe Archive, No. 12, 25 June 1986, p. D-321.

The government's rather tortured attempt to distinguish between the SDI and the research programme itself underlined West Germany's desire to separate the issues of research and deployment. Moreover by qualifying the word "support" with "political" and indicating its support for research rather than for SDI itself, the Government managed to condemn the programme with faint praise. The importance that the German government attached to this distinction was emphasized again in a government statement in October: "The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany firmly rejects the idea of SDI research automatically leading to development and deployment of a strategic defence system."[109]

The German government emphasized that in entering into negotiations with the United States it was not contemplating any governmental participation in SDI research. Bonn would therefore not place any of its own assets at the disposal of the United

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[108] Ibid., p. D-320.

[109] Herr Friedhelm Ost, Government Spokesman, Statement on the American Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), issued in Bonn on October 14, 1985, Press Department Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, 23 Belgrave Square, London, p. 1.

States.[110] This represented another concession to the Free Democrats who, worried about the effect of German governmental participation on relations with the Soviet Union, pressed successfully its demands that the Federal Government not directly participate in the American research programme.

The German government reiterated the importance it attached to close consultation with the United States on all matters pertaining to the Strategic Defense Initiative. It regarded these consultations as "indispensable and emphasizes the significance that the United States attaches to agreement with its Allies. In this regard the strategic and arms control implications of SDI research are of the utmost importance." In this connection the Federal government reiterated its desire to see SDI research lead to cooperative solutions with the Soviet Union.[111] The German government also expressed its desire for a joint European position on SDI.

The Bavarian-based CSU was critical of the compromise to which Chancellor Kohl agreed. Franz-Josef Strauss, the minister-president of Bavaria, publicly voiced his disapproval at the limited degree of support inherent in the government's statement. He opposed the naming of the economics minister to lead the German negotiating team, contending that as the negotiations would be conducted with the US Department of Defense, these matters were the appropriate preserve of the Federal Ministry of Defence. Strauss's position was consistent with his long-standing criticism of Kohl's SDI policy. Strauss argued that the coalition's equivocation harmed German interests by creating an impression of unreliability that would undermine the significance of any prospective agreement on SDI participation.[112]

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[110] Erklärung der Bundesregierung zum Kabinettsbeschluss über eine Deutsche Beteilung an der SDI-Forschung _op_. _cit_., p. D-321.

[111] _Ibid_.

The West German-US MoU

The negotiations between the Federal Republic and the United States on the proposed Memorandum of Understanding were prolonged as a result of disagreements about the degree of technological sharing between the United States and Germany. The West German goverment demanded that, as a price for their participation, West German firms should have the right of access to any research findings to which their expertise contributed. The United States government was most concerned to prevent the results of SDI research from reaching the Soviet Union via German firms. Eventually, these issues were satisfactorily resolved. After the personal intervention of the German Chancellor and the American Secretary of Defense, outstanding issues in the negotiations were resolved. On March 27, the United States and the Federal Republic signed a MoU governing the manner in which German firms would participate in SDI research as well as a general agreement on technology transfer.[113] Although the terms of the agreement were to be kept secret, shortly following the signing, the contents of the agreement were leaked and published in a German newspaper.[114]

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[112] This is of course exactly what Strauss's rival, Genscher, hoped it would do.

In deference to German wishes, the MoU contained two separate agreements: one concerned an overall improvement in US-German technology exchange; the other pertained to specific stipulations governing the participation of German firms in SDI research. The Federal Republic insisted on the former so that it could more plausibly emphasize the civilian nature of the agreement, while the United States, which was eager to show allied support for SDI, emphasized the agreement governing the participation of Germany industry in SDI research.

When Bangemann delivered the government's official statement on the negotiations, he stressed the importance of the common basic agreement. He argued that it had fulfilled the mandate he was given by the Federal Cabinet in December to promote "a mutual exchange of scientific research results and cooperation of science and the economy in research, production, and marketing..."[115] He stated that "those goals" had "been fully accepted by the U.S. Government and integrated into the common basic agreement." Bangemann emphasized that the agreement

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[113] Signing of U.S.-German SDI Agreement and Joint Understanding of Principles News Release, March 27, 1986, Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), Washington, D.C., p. 1.

[114] See Kölner Express, April 18, 1986.

[115] Martin Bangemann, "Bangemann Briefs Bundestag on SDI Agreement," 17 April 1986, in FBIS-WE, 18 April 1986, p. J-4.

> does not - and I stress this expressly because it was the subject of discussion - envisage additional restrictions going beyond export limitations valid in the FRG. The Federal Government maintains that the foreign trade law, with its regulations, is the place where stipulations should be made that are necessary in the alliance's common security interests. That will remain as it is. The Federal Government will not stipulate foreign trade controls outside that legal framework.[116]

This provision was accorded particular importance by the German government because it had been subjected to the charge that in establishing rules for maximizing the benefits to German industry with respect to technology transfer, it was sacrificing too much in the coin of export restrictions, a longstanding point of contention between Washington and Bonn.

Bangemann stressed that the agreement regulating the participation of German firms in SDI research did not involve governmental participation. He emphasized that the German government would not provide financial assistance for the American research programme, but that "the Federal Government does, however, support German industry in establishing contacts with the U.S. administration."[117]

Bangemann emphasized that the MoU did not constitute an endorsement of moving beyond the research phase. "Decisions about developing and deploying strategic defence systems are not," he stated, "the subject of the agreement, nor does the U.S. side expect them before the beginning of the next decade. The agreement does not detail any advance decision in that respect."[118] In order to stress the importance which the Federal Government attached to the distinction between research and deployment, the economics minster stated emphatically that "the so-called firewall between research and application of research results - a phrase Lord Carrington coined - has been set up."[119]

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[116] Ibid., pp. J-4-5.

[117] Ibid., p. J-6.

The Federal Government went to great lengths to underline the conditional nature of its support for SDI research. Bangemann reiterated the government's aversion to any automatic movement from research to deployment. He remarked that SDI research while certainly being pursued with a military intention, was nevertheless for the time being concerned with the "theoretical exploration of such military intentions. It does not proceed to application," and as such does not "stipulate the option of applying its results."[120]

The Federal Government, therefore, accorded enormous significance to the MoU's explicit reference to the Reagan Administration's policy of conducting SDI research in accordance with the ABM Treaty.

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[118] Ibid., p. J-5.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid.

> This Agreement will be implemented in accordance with existing national and international laws and legal obligations of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Government of the United States of America as well as on the part of the United States in compliance with the American-Soviet ABM Treaty of 1972.[121]

The German government argued that this statement "expressly guaranteed" that SDI research would not necessarily "proceed to application."[122] This was deemed particularly important by the German government in its desire to see the research lead to cooperative solutions with the Soviet Union.

Above all, Bangemann attempted to dispel the impression that the Federal Government's decision to sign the MoU represented a shift in the government's policy toward SDI.

> In conclusion, I want to point out quite clearly that signing the accords on SDI research does not constitute a change in the policy consistently pursued by the Federal Government of actively contributing to East-West arms control and disarmament efforts. The statement by the Federal chancellor on 18 April 1985, that it is our goal to create peace with fewer and fewer weapons and to establish more stability in East-West relations still holds true. That is also the guideline of our policy regarding the U.S. SDI project.[123]

While ostensibly merely a reiteration of German SDI policy, this statement was a subtle attempt to indicate that considerations of arms control and East-West relations were paramount for the FDP and that "political support for SDI" would be jeopardized if SDI deployments would endanger the prospects of either. Accordingly,

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[121] This translation of the MoU appears in Ivo H. Daalder, The SDI Challenge to Europe, op. cit., p. 113.

[122] Bangemann, op. cit., p. J-5.

[123] Ibid., p. J-8.

Bangemann, echoing Kohl's statements of April 18, 1985, stated that

> the Federal Government believes it to be indispensable to find cooperative solutions, before decisions are made on matters other than research. Ladies and gentleman, we continue to hope for an implementation of the U.S.-Soviet joint statement in Geneva on 8 January, that both side [sic] strive for negotiations whose goal it is to draw up effective agreements to prevent the arms race in space and put an end to it on earth.[124]

Significantly, Bangemann, unlike CDU speakers, did not assert that SDI could contribute to the success of these negotiations, leaving the impression that only the abandonment of SDI could achieve the FDP's desired objectives. This view was fully in accordance with long standing FDP opposition to deployment.

In a further effort to dispel the impression that the Federal government's decision to sign an MoU represented a deepening German support for SDI, Bangemann emphasized that the MoU did not involve agreement about "strategic SDI issues". The FDP argued that these issues should not be discussed bilaterally but in the Western European Union (WEU) and NATO, in order to "preserve the Alliance context and promote European security interests." And, (in a sentence that was omitted from the English language version of the speech that the Federal Economics ministry issued), Bangemann stressed (to applause in the Bundestag) that "Anyone who would prevent such a discussion in the Alliance, or replace it with individual discussions between countries, would harm the interests of the Federal Republic."[125] This scarcely veiled reference to and criticism of the US SDI policy, reflected the FDP's opposition to American attempts to deal bilaterally on SDI issues and thus thwart European (and, specifically in Germany, Genscherite) efforts to forge a joint European positions. Under these circumstances the FDP was eager to see the MoU portrayed primarily as an agreement that would improve the conditions under which German firms would participate and not portrayed as an incipient US-German conceptual convergence on SDI itself, as this would interfere with efforts to forge a joint European position.

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[124] Ibid.

Kohl's Defence of the MoU

In defending the US-German MoU, Kohl placed greater emphasis on the political and strategic considerations that contributed to the Federal Republic's ultimate disposition vis-a-vis the American research programme. Kohl stressed the potentially profound impact of SDI. He pointed out that both the Soviet Union and the United States were pursuing strategic defence research, that it was a development that could not be stopped, that it would have profound implications for European security, and that it could have positive influences on the strategic balance. Under these circumstances the Chancellor characterized assertions that the Federal Republic should distance itself as far as possible from SDI, as irresponsible; instead he argued that participation would enhance German influence over the programme, allowing Germany to safeguard her security interests.

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[125] Bangemann, _op_. _cit_., p. J-5.

Kohl opposed making "strategic defense and especially the SDI program a focal point of East-West relations and to subordinate all other issues to this subject."[126] While he conceded that "in view of the tension in the world it has a special effect on East-West relations,"[127] Kohl stated that he had "always maintained that East-West relations cannot be limited to disarmament and arms control or even merely SDI."[128] Kohl believed that "it is most important to point out repeatedly that East-West relations are of a manifold nature and that these relations contain political, military, economic, scientific - technological, and cultural elements of great importance to us."[129] Kohl felt compelled to emphasize this point in order to refute assertions by his domestic critics that in signing the MoU with the United States, his government had badly damaged the prospects for improving German-Soviet relations. It also reflected a calculation that he would be able to effect an improvement in German Soviet relations even in the face of Soviet displeasure with the Federal Republic's stance toward SDI.

Kohl believed that a realistic policy for the Federal

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[126] Helmut Kohl, Speech to Bundestag in US-FRG MoU, 17 April 1986, in FBIS-WE, 18 April 1986, P. J-8.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid., p. J-9.

[129] Ibid.

Republic vis-a-vis SDI would have to begin by recognizing that no one could prevent the United States and the Soviet Union from conducting ballistic missile defence research. Furthermore, he held that the results of this research "will thoroughly change the strategic conditions which until now have preserved peace in freedom. German and European security interests are directly affected by it."[130] In this connection Kohl deemed it essential that SDI "not separate us Europeans from the United States -- not technologically, not strategically, not politically."[131] Kohl conceded that with the development of strategic defences "there are, of course, risks that must be overcome," and that "Europe's security, including Germany's security, must not be of secondary importance."[132] Under these circumstances, he argued that "political common sense makes it absolutely necessary to prepare now for such foreseeable developments."[133] Moreover, it requires not only a "cooperative attitude among the Alliance partners, but also ... making use of joint East-West interests."[134]

Accordingly, Kohl attached the greatest importance to enhancing Bonn's influence over the direction of SDI and saw German participation in SDI as the only realistic means by which to exercise this influence. He stated that "information, consultation, and participation in research are indispensable elements of the Federal Government's long term policy aimed at the cohesion of the Alliance and ensuring peace in Europe."[135] He criticized the SPD's opposition to SDI research on the grounds that their opposition to participation would leave West Germany without a voice in the "decisionmaking process" that is vital to the future security of the Federal Republic.[136]

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[130] Ibid., p. J-11.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid., p. J-10.

[133] Ibid., p. J-11.

[134] Ibid., p. J-13.

Kohl reiterated that his government's policy was still predicated on the contribution that SDI could make to "safeguard peace, reliably prevent wars, and drastically to reduce the armament level in general and in nuclear weapons in particular."[137] He thus restated his government's support for "the joint U.S.-Soviet statement of 8 January 1985 which forms the basis of the present efforts to prevent an arms race on earth and in space. In that respect the Strategic Defense Initiative may well be an important vehicle."[138]

Kohl argued that, if anything, SDI had spurred progress at Geneva. He stated that "we cannot but find today that the Soviet Union has submitted drastic reduction proposals only after the U.S. President promulgated his initiative in March 1983;"[139]

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[135] Ibid., p. J-12.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid., p. J-10.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid.

He voiced his conviction that "defense systems will provide the certainty that despite the remaining capability of building nuclear weapons, it would be nonsensical to do so."[140] This realization he believed could lay the foundation for an agreement that would allow the West to "pursue a reduction plan that would render offensive nuclear weapons increasingly more useless through defense systems,"[141] enabling each side to establish a new basis for strategic stability

> in which both sides come to terms on a drastic reduction of offensive nuclear systems, establish a limited number of strategic defense systems, maybe only ground-based, in a joint interpretation of strategic stability taking into account the overall military power ratio.[142]

Kohl viewed this eventuality as increasingly realistic. He argued that the United States and Soviet Union "have parallel interests" that "could...lead to understanding."[143] He stressed that both the United States and the Soviet Union had an interest in minimizing the "uncertainty about technological and strategic developments"[144] and declared himself encouraged by signs of flexibility in Moscow.

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[140] Ibid.

[141] Ibid.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid.

IV. THE FRENCH REACTION TO THE US PARTICIPATION OFFER

French Rejection of Participation in SDI Research

Unlike the British and German governments, the French government quickly rejected the Reagan Administration's offer to participate in SDI research, stating that "there was no question of France joining in the program as it is conceived at this point."[145] Also, unlike its British and West German Allies, French officials did not have to contend with an opposition which disagreed vehemently with its policy toward SDI. While Chirac and other opposition figures occasionally chided Mitterrand for his overly negative reaction to SDI, there was little substantive disagreement in France about SDI. Both the Left and the Right were opposed to the deployment of BMDs and official government participation in the SDI research programme.

Roland Dumas, French Minister of External Relations, elaborated on the rationale underlying France's refusal of the American participation offer when he asked the French Assembly during a foreign policy debate: "But how could we reply to the invitation to participate in carrying out something we don't know about, something whose importance we cannot judge, when nowhere is there any proposal for us to share in the decision-making, which in our eyes is crucial?"[146] Furthermore, Francois Mitterrand, President of the Republic, stated that France would not participate in a project that "would put France in a subordinate position. I refuse, that's all. That's the reason, it is as simple as that."[147] This emphatic and characteristically Gaullist rejection of the American offer reflected the French President's view that the United States was not prepared to accept Europeans as full partners in its initiative. For the French President, this perception was confirmed at the May summit where, Reagan, attempting to solicit European support for SDI, infelicitously described the role he envisaged for Europeans as "sub-contractor"[148] to American firms. As Mitterrand said later, this "confirmed what I suspected."[149] Clearly, for Mitterrand's government, participation on this basis was incompatible with its conception of France and its role in world affairs, for it would place France in a position in which she "would not be on an equal footing"[150] with the United States.

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[145] Roland Dumas, Speech on French Television, 5 May 1985. Documents from France, French Embassy Press and Information Service, Washington D.C., Volume 85/11, p. 2.

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[146] Roland Dumas, Speech during the foreign policy debate at the National Assembly (11 June 1985), Documents from France, French Embassy Press and Information Service, Washington D.C., Vol. 85/15, p. 5.

[147] Francois Mitterrand, Television Interview, 15 December 1985, Speeches and Statements, Service de Presse et d'Information, Ambassade de France a Londres, London, 24 December 1985, p. 2.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Ibid.

[150] "Mitterrand Discusses Bonn Summit, SDI, FRG Ties," FBIS-WE, 10 May 1985, p. K-1.

Moreover, France feared that such iniquitous arrangements would only exacerbate the existing problem of the "brain drain" from Europe to the United States.[151]

Eureka as a Counter to SDI

In order to forestall the various baleful effects that it believed would occur if other European nations decided to participate in SDI research, the French Government offered its European partners an alternative in the form of Eureka. While Mitterrand claimed that Eureka "is not a response to SDI,"[152] the French Minister of Research and Technology, Hurbert Curien conceded that SDI "induced us to submit our proposals more rapidly."[153] French officials also contended that while it involved research in many of the same areas that were being investigated by SDI, Eureka "is not comparable to SDI and is not meant to compete with it."[154] On the other hand, the French government allowed: "It is likely that a competition for the allocation of these resources will actually take place in those European countries that consider participating in the American program."[155] In any event, the French government contended that "With or without the SDI, the European technological community is vital to us."[156] As Dumas related:

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[151] Ibid.

[152] Francois Mitterrand, Interview published in the Japanese Daily "Yomiuri Shimbun," 27 April 1986, Statements and Speeches, Service de Presse et d'Information, London, 2 May 1986, p. 4.

[153] Hurbert Curien, Interview on Eureka, Frankfurter Rundschau, 12 June 1985, p. 2.

[154] Eureka, Documents from France, French Embassy Press and Information Service, Vol.21, September 1985, p. 1.

> the challenge represented by the greatly increased importance of the high technology around which the future of our industrial civilizations is being built. The Community's autonomy - and thus ours - will, between now and the end of the century, depend on the extent of its skills in these new areas.[157]

Thus, as Mitterrand argued, "if Europe wants a secure future in the nineties and beyond, it is right now that a great technological surge is needed."[158] Indeed, a major "challenge for Europe," according to France, was "to bring European technology up to the level of the know-how and technological capabilities that have been attained by the United States and Japan."[159] Mitterrand maintained that this was imperative:

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[155] Ibid.

[156] See The Observer, 2 June 85, p. 1, reprinted in FBIS-WE, 3 June 1985, Similarly Charles Hernu remarked: "A technologically advanced Europe is necessary, with or without the Strategic Defense Initiative." as quoted in International Defense Review June 1985, p. 858.

[157] Roland Dumas, Speech during the Foreign policy debate at National Assembly, op. cit., p. 5.

[158] Francois Mitterrand, Interview in Europeo, 13 June 1985, as reprinted in Eureka, Documents from France, French Embassy Press and Information Service, Vol. 21, September 1985. p. 4.

[159] Eureka, Documents from France, French Embassy Press and Information Service, Vol. 21, September 1985, p. 1.

"Otherwise we will simply lose control of our destiny."[160] While Eureka may have found its origins in the Versailles conference of 1982, it was the presentation of SDI that clarified the importance of technology and provided the impetus for Eureka's speedy and forceful articulation.

The French government saw Eureka as "a mechanism designed by the Europeans to pool their scientific knowledge to carry out high technology projects in civilian spheres."[161] More specifically, Mitterrand conceived his initiative as "a 'variable geometry' federation of projects decided on by the industrialists and researched in liaison with the Governments and the Commission, in sectors of key importance for the future"[162] with special emphasis given to "areas where European cooperation needs a boost."[163] Mitterrand wanted to avoid Eureka becoming a large bureaucracy and preferred that it be financed "preferentially by the private sector."[164] Accordingly, France insisted that "Each project will be carried out under the authority of industrial firms by research teams which will have sole responsibility for its completion." France hoped that this would promote "technological independence in vital sectors." and "facilitate the development of the latest technologies with economic or strategic significance."[165]

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[160] Francois Mitterrand, Interview by Giuliano Ferrieri, 22 June 1985, p. 4, reprinted in FBIS-WE, 23 June 1985, p. J-4.

[161] Paul Quiles, interview by Jean Guisnel, Liberation, 10 December 1985, pp. 5, 6, reprinted in FBIS-WE, 20 December 1985, p. K-3.

[162] Mitterrand, Interview in Europeo, op. cit., p. 4.

[163] Eureka, op. cit., p. 1.

[164] Jean-Bernard Raimond, Statements, 2 July 1986, Speeches and Statements, Ambassade de France a Londres, Service de Presse et d' Information, 8 July 1986, p. 9.

While Eureka was conceived as primarily a civilian project, French officials were not oblivious to the possible military ramifications of the programme. As Dumas remarked:

> The Eureka project is fundamentally directed to civil aims, but the results of advanced research in such areas as micro-computing, opto-electronics, robotics and high-energy physics will also help make Europe more capable of taking responsibility for its own security. It will be up to it to make its choices in accordance with its interests at the appropriate time, if that is what it wants.[166]

The French government considered the attainment of autonomous capabilities in the domain of space essential for its security. Mitterrand argued that rather than enmesh itself in SDI research France "must first of all turn toward Europe to try and establish a space strategy, for civil ends - if necessary for military ends, that remains to be seen."[167] French officials believed that it was only in the context of a joint position that Europe could react to SDI in a manner that could bring its full weight to bear; otherwise the United States would be in a position to divide and thereby dominate Europe.

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[165] Eureka, p. 1.

[166] Speech by Dumas, 11 June 1985, op. cit., p. 5.

[167] Mitterrand, 27 April 1986, op. cit., p.2.

More broadly, though, the French government viewed Eureka as a means to accelerate the process of European political integration. "The progress of a technological Europe will," stated the French President, "aid the progress of a political Europe and a commercial Europe."[168] This would enable Europe to "achieve the means of exercising a political influence measuring up to its past and its potential."[169] It is in the context of Mitterrand's conception of the unique role that he envisaged for France in a united Europe that his government's reaction to SDI and the presentation of Eureka must be viewed.

The French government's role as SDI's most vocal European critic did not, however, lead the French government to adopt a policy of gratuitous rejection of mutually beneficial cooperation with the SDIO. In fact, only days after France announced that it had rejected Weinberger's invitation to participate, LeMonde carried a story in which it was revealed that a state-owned French company would be the first European company to obtain a contract from the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization. Indeed, Mitterrand stated that he would not stand "like a bogeyman preventing French industry from working."[170] French officials even maintained that it was in no way disadvantaged by the fact that it had not signed an MoU, asserting that the British and German agreements were essentially political in nature. They were concerned, however, that the British and West German decision to participate in SDI research would prevent Europe from effectively pooling its own technological resources.

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[168] Mitterrand, Interview in Europeo, op. cit., p.4.

[169] Speech by Raimond, 27 May 1986, op. cit., p. 1.

[170] Mitterrand, 24 December 1985, op. cit., p. 2.

The French government believed that uncoordinated and bilateral cooperation between European countries and the United States would "have only minimal spin-offs for Europe"[171] and would involve little real sharing of technology. As Dumas argued, "lasting and fruitful cooperation is not possible when the partners are too unequal. The experience of the last few decades has shown what difficulties are encountered in establishing better balanced technological exchanges between the two sides of the Atlantic - for instance in the weapons sector."[172] Furthermore, Hernu maintained that unless cooperation could be established on a more equitable basis, SDI could lead to "a sort of economic super-NATO."[173]

In order to forestall such a prospect, Dumas contended that Europe must rely on its own resources and talent and build a specifically European response to SDI: "Rather than give an uncoordinated or negative answer to the American offer, we need a mobilization of the Europeans in order that such cooperation can be something more than surrender."[174] In addition, he stated that:

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[171] Statement of M. Roland Dumas, Minister for External Relations to the WEU Meeting in Bonn, 23 April 1985, in Hote D' Actualite, Ambassade de France a Londres, Service et d'Information, 24 April 1985, p. 2.

[172] Ibid.

[173] Hernu Discusses SDI, French Deterrent in Interview, in FBIS-WE, Daily Report, 19 April 1985, p. K1.

> In our view, therefore, it is vital to consider a coordinated response to the challenge created for us by this American offer, as well as by the natural development of technological capabilities. This action should be taken very quickly, for unless, we succeed in orchestrating our policies without delay, nothing will prevent our research workers, our capital and our industrialists form giving way to the temptation of ad hoc cooperation, even if it means reducing the Europeans to a sub-contracting role.[175]

The French government believed that if Europe could respond to the American technological challenge by energetically pursuing Eureka, it would be possible to build a fully competitive Europe in the 21st century.

Thus French officials argued that for technological, strategic and political reasons, it was unwise for West European countries to participate in SDI research. Strategically, it made little sense to contribute to a project, which threatened to overturn the strategy upon which French and West European security rested.[176] Technologically, participation in research would merely distract Europe from the important task of increasing its own technological prowess. And politically,

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[174] Statement of M. Roland Dumas, Minister for External Relations, at the WEU Ministerial Meeting in Bonn, _op. cit_., p.2.

[175] _Ibid_.

[176] Excerpt From the Press Conference of M. Roland Dumas, Minister of External Relations in Helsinki, 22 March 1985, in _Strategic Defence Initiative_, Ambassade de France a Londres, Service de Presse et d'Information, p. 1.

France regarded it as unacceptable to involve itself in a programme that would severely undermine French independence and autonomy, both of which were regarded as central to France's conception of itself as a great power.

V. FAILURE OF THE WEU TO FORGE A CONSENSUS ON SDI

The attempt to forge a united European position vis-a-vis SDI focused on the Western European Union (WEU). After languishing in dormancy for many years the WEU was "revitalized" on 27 October 1984 at an unprecedented meeting attended by the foreign and defence ministers of the seven member countries. It was agreed that the WEU council would hold bi-annual meetings and increase the coordination between the Council and the Assembly. Because the primary impetus for the renewed importance of the WEU's role was a growing divergence between the United States and Europe on security issues and the conduct of East-West relations, the communique issued at the close of the meeting stated explicitly that in addition to handling "defence questions," they would focus on "arms control and disarmament" and "the effects of East-West relations on the security of Europe."[177] The WEU therefore appeared to be the ideal forum for coordinating a joint European response to SDI. Indeed, SDI was expected to be at the forefront of the WEU's next ministerial meeting on April 22-23,

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[177] The Rome Declaration of the WEU meeting of 26-27 October 1984 held in Rome, reprinted in Alfred Cahen, The Western European Union and NATO, (London: Brassey's, 1989, p. 84.

1985 in Bonn.

The pressure for a joint European response to SDI came primarily from West Germany and France. West German foreign minister Hans Dietrich Genscher was highly sceptical of the US offer to participate in SDI research, believing that for West Germany to accept would lend unnecessary political support to a programme that the Soviet Union had made into a litmus test of the Federal Republic's commitment toward detente. Believing that a joint European response, whether negative or positive, would insulate the West German government from the charges of being an accomplice to the militarization of space, he constantly reiterated his desire for a joint European position.

The French government which was the most openly critical of SDI was also interested in forging a united European position toward SDI and thus Genscher found a willing ally in the French foreign minister Roland Dumas. Dumas was intent upon garnering Western European support for Eureka, which entailed a clear rejection of participation in SDI research.

The April 22-23, 1985 meeting of the WEU failed to produce a united position on SDI or Eureka (which had been announced a few days before the meeting), despite the strenuous efforts of Genscher and Dumas. British Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffry Howe, and Defence Minster Michael Heseltine were unwilling to endorse a communique that called for a joint European response to the Reagan Administration's offer to participate in SDI research, believing that this would fracture NATO unity. Accordingly, the communique could only state that the members of the WEU "agreed to continue their collective consideration in order to achieve as far as possible a co-ordinated reaction of their governments to the initiation of the United States to participate in the research programme and instructed the permanent Council accordingly."[178] Indeed, the British government seemed to take seriously the rather impertinent warning issued by US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs to avoid a separate position on security issues outside of the NATO framework. These American sentiments seemed to dovetail with those of Margaret Thatcher who stated:

> What I think we have to watch is that there do not grow up sub-structures within Europe which could have unwittingly, unintentionally, the effect of undermining the links across the Atlantic Alliance... I think that it is important that those arrangements do not take on a wholly bigger life than their own.[179]

Thus, despite holding rather similar views about the implications of SDI as the West German and French governments, the British government was reluctant to take actions that would split the Alliance over SDI. Thatcher believed that maintaining close relations with the United States was not only necessary for European security but also crucial for the success of the Geneva arms control negotiations.

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[178] Communique issued at the close of the ministerial meeting of teh Council of Western European Union, Bonn, 22nd-23rd April 1985, Document 1011, (Paris, Western European Union: 24 April 1985).

[179] Margaret Thatcher, quoted in Leon Brittan, "Defence and Arms Control in a Changing Era," PSI Discussion Paper 21 (London: Policy Studies Insitute, 1988), p. 14.

The failure of the WEU meeting to achieve a common European response to the question of participation in SDI research was not greeted with regret by all politicians in Bonn. Indeed, Chancellor Kohl was in fact quite relieved about the failure for he, unlike Genscher, believed that participation in SDI research was necessary in order to keep US-German relations on a firm footing and to prevent the Soviet Union from exploiting differences within the Alliance over SDI. Indeed, Kohl, much to the consternation of President Mitterrand, took the occasion of the May 2-4, 1985 Western summit to announce that he was leaning towards participation in SDI research. At the same summit Mitterrand hardened his position against participation citing Reagan's statement that he envisaged European companies playing the role of subcontractors. Mitterrand later told the press, with obvious irritation: "Subcontractors. That's the word I heard. The word was said in English. It confirmed my intuitions."[180]

The primary result of the May summit was therefore to create a crises of sorts in Franco-German relations. In the process it revealed the dilemma that had often plagued Bonn when Washington and Paris were pursuing divergent courses on security issues, namely, the desire to please both simultaneously, something which SDI was making it difficult for the West German government to do. In an effort to bridge the obvious gaps that arose as a result of the Bonn summit meeting, Kohl and Mitterrand met on 28 May 1985 in order to narrow their differences. While the meeting failed to produce agreement on SDI, Kohl partially mollified Mitterrand by warming to Eureka. And, indeed, at the June 28 1985 Milan summit all the EC governments gave their formal endorsement to Eureka.[181]

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[180] International Herald Tribune, 6 May 1985.

While the European unanimity on Eureka led to a marked improvement in Franco-German relation, it did not obscure the differences that remained on SDI within the Alliance. Indeed, the inability of Western European governments to forge a united position on SDI reflected some fundamental differences between the three key countries in Western Europe.

The British government was, for reasons mentioned above, far from enthusiastic about greater European defence cooperation. Thatcher had a clear preference for dealing bilaterally with the United States, believing that this afforded Britain far more influence than it could otherwise achieve. Moreover, British officials believed that, despite what they regarded as the negative strategic implications of SDI, it was unwise to oppose an initiative that the Reagan Administration deemed central to its defence policy. For, British officials maintained that West European security depended on the United States' political commitment to Europe; and if the United States saw West European nations opposing it on something it considered vital to its security this could lead to a creeping estrangement between the

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[181] Financial Times, June 29, 1985.

United States and Europe, leading eventually to the break up of the Alliance.

The West German government was even more dependent on the United States for its security and believed that it could not afford to jeopardize its relationship with the United States by opposing SDI. While this, of course, created difficulties for its relationship with the French government, West Germany maintained that while Franco-German ties were important, it was the United States's nuclear guarantee on which it depended for its security. Thus the West German government chose to stay on good terms with Washington but also to propitiate Paris by enthusiastically endorsing Eureka.

The French government was, as we have seen, far more openly critical than either Britain or West Germany of SDI. Thus rather than concentrate its efforts on reaching a common position about SDI research with the Reagan Administration, French officials concentrated on obtaining West European support for Eureka, hoping to prevent SDI from widening the technological gap between the United States and Japan on the one hand, and Western Europe on the other. While they were successful in garnering support for Eureka, neither Britain or West Germany were prepared to participate in it as an alternative to participation in SDI research. And, in the end, neither was the French government willing to forgo participation in SDI research, although its participation, of course, was not governed by an MoU as was the British and West German participation. Thus, in the end, the

West European attempt to fashion a common position on SDI was stymied by the unwillingness of the British and West German governments to openly oppose the United States, believing that their security required that they place Alliance unity above considerations of West European unity.

VI. THE ROLE OF NATO IN THE PARTICIPATION DEBATE

As we have seen in this chapter as well as the previous one, bilateral agreements, arangements and statements were the primary means by which the transatlantic controversy was managed. Despite the primary bilateral nature of SDI diplomacy, NATO institutions played a role in managing the SDI controversy, for their diliberations demonstrated not only the extent to which Alliance unity was considered important, but also the limits of this unity.

Following its initial failure to utilize the Nuclear Planing Group (NPG), the United States made strenuous efforts to consult with its Allies about SDI. While much of this occurred on a bilateral basis, SDI remained the central topic of deliberation within the NPG, the Defence Planning Committee and the North Atlantic Council throughout 1985 and 1986. These meetings were the occasion for extensive briefings by US defence and foreign policy officials about SDI as well as debate among Alliance members about the American initiative. Because these meetings occurred within the context of the Alliance and traditionally ended with the issuance of communiques, the focus was on attempting to demonstrate unity and agreement. Examining how the issue of SDI was handled within NATO forums is illuminating because it enables us to trace the development of the debate about SDI as well as the means by which agreement was sought. In analysing the role that NATO played attention will be directed at determining the extent of agreement as well as ascertaining the differences that remained behind the facade of unity.

The first NATO forum at which SDI became the dominant focus of discussion was the NPG meeting held in Luxembourg on 26-27 March 1985. At this meeting US Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger briefed his colleagues on SDI and also formally invited the countries represented as the meeting (as well as Japan, Australia, and Israel) to participate in SDI research. While the European members of the Alliance resented the 60 day deadline contained in the letter, the communique stated that "we [the Alliance members] welcome the United States invitation for Allies to consider participation in the research programme."[182] That they did so was significant because it indicated a desire to demonstrate unity on the question of SDI despite the obvious differences that existed within the Alliance on this topic.[183]

Demonstrating unity was considered particularly important in light of the resumption of arms control negotiations between the

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[182] Final communique, NATO Nuclear Planning Group, 27 March 1985, paragraph 4.

[183] It should be noted, however, that because France was not a member of NATO's integrated military structure, it did not participate in NPG meetings.

United States and the Soviet Union on March 12, 1985 in Geneva. Despite the reservations that Western European countries haboured about SDI, they were eager to avoid undermining the United States's negotiating position at Geneva. Not only would a lack of support for SDI perhaps prevent the success of the continuing negotiations (and hopefully the obviation of defensive deployments), but they did not want to encourage the Soviet Union to exploit the obvious differences that did exist within the Alliance over SDI.

While NATO was eager to demonstrate a united position on SDI, it is important to stress the limited extent of agreement in the Alliance about this issue. The final communique of the Luxembourg NPG meeting made clear that as an alliance NATO did not support SDI because it wished to see BMD's deployed. Rather Soviet BMD research was given as the justification for SDI research:

> We noted with concern the extensive and long-standing efforts in the strategic defence field by the Soviet Union which already deploys the world's only ABM and anti-satellite systems. The United States research programme is prudent in light of these Soviet activities and is also clearly influenced by the treaty violations reported by the President of the United States.[184]

While this statement did not explicitly reject deployment, it is clear that the United States was only able to achieve European acceptance for SDI research "in light" of Soviet activities. Yet, in his March 23, 1983 speech Reagan did not once mention the

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[184] Ibid., paragraph 5.

Soviet Union's own research on BMD as a reason for justifying SDI. It was only after it became clear to Reagan Administration officials that Western European countries would find it much easier to support SDI if it were portrayed as a response to Soviet BMD activity that this justification was articulated. While the United States and its West European Allies were able to agree that SDI research could be justified on these grounds, they could not mask the different importance that each accorded to this justification. While most West European governments believed that SDI research was justified only in light of Soviet activities, for the United States Soviet research was far from the central rationale for SDI.[185] To be sure, the United States saw SDI research as a prudent hedge against a Soviet break out of the ABM treaty, but it was clear that Ronald Reagan wanted to accomplish a thorough transformation of the strategic regime, something which was anathema to the United States' West European Allies.

In order to ensure that deployment did not occur and that SDI research would not damage arms control, the Alliance concentrated its efforts to ensure that SDI research was conducted within the confines of the ABM treaty. It took more than a passing interest in the dispute that raged within the Reagan Administration about whether the so called "strict" or "loose" interpretation of the ABM treaty was valid. The United

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[185] See Reagan's March 23, 1983 and "SDI Its Nature and Rationale," op. cit.

States' West European Allies believed that efforts by some within the Reagan Administration - primarily National Security Advisor McFarlane and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger - to endorse a "loose" interpretation was merely an effort to undermine the ABM treaty and make it easier eventually to abandon this treaty. This was deemed especially important in light of the planned summit meeting between Gorbachev and Reagan in Geneva, where it was hoped that SDI would not lead to acrimonious disagreement.

The Geneva summit meeting in November 1985 exercised a salutary influence on Alliance cohesion and lessened the strains over SDI. Gorbachev and Reagan were perceived to have had a successful summit meeting in which SDI did not block a positive joint communique. Perhaps more important than the substantive results of the summit was the fact that Reagan and Gorbachev agreed to a further two meetings, thus creating the perception that the unyielding hostility that had characterized US-Soviet relations since December 1979 was coming to an end. The outcome of the Geneva summit, therefore, allayed West European fears that the SDI would block the improvement of East-West relations. This perception was an important factor in enabling the West German government to justify its participation in SDI research as not necessary inimical to improved East-West relations.

The other important result of the US-Soviet summit at Geneva was that it reinforced the belief within the Alliance of the importance of cohesion in contributing to the success of arms control negotiations. Following the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting the

Defence Planning Committee issued a communique that stated:

> We especially welcome the commitment of both sides to making early progress in the negotiations in Geneva, in particular in areas where there is common ground, including the idea of an interim INF agreement and the principle of 50 percent reduction in nuclear arms of the United States and the Soviet Union, appropriately applied. In this context we expressed strong support for the United States stance concerning intermediate range, strategic, and defence and space systems. Alliance solidarity and cohesion have played an important role in bringing these developments about and will remain equally vital for future progress.[186]

To conclude, the Alliance's approach to SDI was characterized by four main and related efforts, all designed to encourage the perception of unity. The first was to support the US negotiating position (especially on space weapons) in order to prevent the Soviet Union from sowing disunity within NATO. The second was to condition support for SDI research on strict criteria governing its conduct, so as to ensure that the ABM treaty was not violated. The third was to emphasize that SDI research was primarily necessary in light of Soviet BMD research.

But NATO's emphasis on Soviet BMD research as a rationale for SDI research also indicated the limited extent of support for SDI within the Alliance. For it indicated that West European governments were only willing to support SDI research. They clearly wanted to distance themselves from endorsement for anything beyond research. The reason that they did not want to do so was evident in the fourth major aspect of the Alliance's response to SDI, namely, the insistence that nuclear deterrence and specifically flexible response remained vital to the Alliance's security.

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[186] Ibid.

The public unity that NATO displayed on the issue of SDI could not obscure the fact that SDI was after all a unilateral American initiative. The nature of the consultation over SDI did not, therefore, resemble those which occurred over the INF issue. While joint statements were issued, they reflected the least common denominator of the respective US and West European positions. At the same time, the Alliance did succeed in fostering sufficient unity on SDI to support the US negotiating position at Geneva and to secure agreement to maintain flexible response. Consequently, NATO succeeded in preventing SDI from splitting the Alliance. At the same time, it was evident that the agreement reached was predicated on the fact that while SDI research was being conducted, the issue of deployment could be conveniently finessed, or that fundamental differences about the nature of credibility and stability were extant.

VII. CONCLUSION

The debate about participation in SDI research was important because it revealed how the Alliance went about managing the SDI dispute. The fact that the management of the issue of SDI focused primarily on the question of participation in SDI research was signficant because it indicated that rather than confront the disagrements about strategy that laid at the heart of the SDI dispute, the major participants focused on the secondary concern of research. That they did so indicated both that there was a common desire to avoid seeing the issue of SDI split the Alliance and that the best way to accomplish this was to ignore the strategic difference that SDI revealed.

As the findings of this chapter have demonstrated, the British and West German government, in their more candid moments, admitted that demonstrating Alliance unity on the issue of SDI was the driving force behind their decisions to sign MoUs with the US government. Yet the rationale that they employed in order to justify these bilateral agreements - to their domestic political audience and Parliamentry opponents - demonstrated the limited extent of this unity. Both the reasons that they used to justify their support as well as the conditions they insisted upon as the price of their agreement to participate were all indicative a teneous and narrow consensus on SDI.

The British and West German governments cited the existence of Soviet BMD research as the primary reason for their support of SDI research and the willingness to sign MoUs. While the Reagan Administration also pointed to Soviet SDI research as a reason why SDI research was necessary, it was, as American officials made clear, far from the raison d'etre for the programme. Indeed, in his March 23, 1983 speech Reagan did not even mention Soviet BMD research as a reason for pursuing SDI. It was only later at West European prompting that the Reagan Adminstration began to justify its research on these grounds. West European officials on the other hand supported SDI research mainly on the basis of Soviet BMD research. While both the West European and American officials justified SDI research in light of Soviet BMD research efforts, the relative weight that they attached to this rationale varied greatly.

The differing importance that the Reagan Administration and its West European Allies accorded to Soviet research indicated the divergence of objectives that underlay West European and American support for SDI research. West European officials supported SDI research as a deterrent to Soviet deployment of BMD's because they preferred a strategic regime without BMD's. Conversely, the Reagan Adminstration supported SDI research because they believed that the current strategic regime based on mutual vulnerabilty must be altered and that the results of SDI research could provide the technologies with which to effect such a change. While these differing emphases coexisted, they could not obscure the underlying differences in US and West European objectives or the fact that ignoring these differences were essential to Alliance unity.

In order to make clear that their support for SDI extended only to support for research West German and British government's insisted that their support for, and participation in, SDI research was contingent on it being conducted within the confines of the ABM treaty. Moreover, both Thatcher and Kohl explicitly stated that their decision to participate did not consitute an endorsement of deployment, and that they did not envisage an automatic succession of research to deployment.

Because of their sensitivity to the charge that whatever they might say, their support for SDI research constituted a de facto endorsement of a programme that could lead to deployment, both the British and West German governments attempted to underline the economic and technological benefits that they hoped to derive throught participation. While there was indeed some concern that irrespective of the ultimate fate of the deployment question, SDI research would lead, in the words of Kohl to a "substantial push towards technological innovation,"[187] these considerations were clearly secondary to those of demonstrating Alliance unity. Another indication that technological and economic factors were not decisive was demonstrated in the British debate with Michael Heseltine's failure to secure guaranteed access to large SDI contracts[188] (which incidentally indicated that the Reagan Adminstration had no intention of making SDI research an economic bonanza for its Allies). Moreover, the failure of either the British or the West German governments to win significant SDI research contracts did not have a major impact on the SDI debate. This again demonstrated the relative unimportance that economic and technological factors played in the debate.

The relatively lukewarm response that Mitterrand's Eureka proposal (as well as the WEU's attempt to forge a united position vis-a-vis SDI) received attested to the secondary importance of technological and economic factors in the debate. Had the economic and technological competitiveness of West European industry been deemed of significant concern, then a more serious commitement to a joint European effort such as Eureka would have seemed a more effective response than helping the United States in its own research endevours. Yet, both the British and West German government, while agreeing to participate in Eureka, deemed the bilateral agreements with the United States to be of greater importance.

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[187] Kohl, Speech to Wehrkunde Conference, 14 February 1985, p. 6.

[188] Washington Post, 3 December 1985, p. 2.

That Britain and West Germany attached greater importance to these negotiations with the US, despite their obvious and well documented opposition to BMD deployment, attested to the overwhelmingly political nature of the support for SDI research and the manifest desire to demonstrate Alliance unity. The willingness of the British and West German governments to lend political support to SDI did not, however, come without its price.

The British and West German governments' decision to sign MoU's did create the impression that they were lending support to a programmer that, if it went beyond research, could seriously harm Western European interests. Even as Thatcher and Kohl succeeded in creating a plausible seperation between the research programme and the prospect of deployment and thereby brunting the charge that in participating in SDI research that they were supporting deployment, their support for SDI research did expose them to the charge that in doing so they were damaging the prospects for improved East-West relations since the Soviet Union had made clear its opposition to SDI research. These fears were allievated when Gorbachev and Reagan met at the Geneva summit in Novermber 1985. The fact that SDI had not led to an acrimous disagreement, that the meeting was perceived to have provided impetus to the arms control talks, and that Reagan and Gorbachev had agreed to a further two meetings, all led to the perception that while the United States and the Soviet Union remained divided on the issue of SDI, an improvement in East-West relations was not going to be held hostage to the issue of SDI.

The perception that SDI would not constitute an insurmountable obstacle to improved East-West relations made the British, and particularly the West German, decision to participate in SDI research much easier. It was far more difficult for opponents of the MoUs to claim that by participating in SDI research the governments were preventing the improvment of East-West relations. Thus the improvement in East-West relations in the aftermath of the Geneva summit meeting increased Alliance cohesion. This is significant because it indicates that contrary to what the alliance literature suggests the decreased threat increased and did not diminish Alliance cohesion.

Still, the primary reason that the Alliance was able to manage successfully the SDI dispute was that it ignored and papered over the underlying doctrinal issues and instead focused on the issue of research. The desire for unity provided the impetus to paper over these differences and the distinction between research and deployment supplied the means by which to do so in a plausible manner. While deployment was, of course, impossible without research and Reagan was clearly intent upon deployment should research prove successful, it was reasonable to assume that there was a clear "firebreak" between research and deployment. Three main reasons explain why it was reasonable to assume that a clear distinction between research and deployment existed.

First, a decision regarding deployment would be made by a future American president who was unlikely to have shared Reagan's enthusiasm for SDI. Second, unlike most military programmes, SDI was not foisted upon the political leadership of the United States by the scientific community and the military. Indeed, SDI was very much the opposite: Reagan was far more enthusiastic about SDI then either the scientific community or his own Department of Defense. Third, Congressional support would have been required and, given both the attachment to the ABM treaty and the extent to which most Democrates and not a few Republicans regarded the prospect of deployment, such approval would have been unlikely. Thus for these reasons the distinction between research and deployment, while perhaps somewhat artifical in the minds of SDI supporters, did allay West European concerns about participation in SDI research and led to a limited, yet important, consensus on SDI.

It is, however, important not to misconstrue the nature of this consensus. The consensus rested more on the desire to maintain and demonstrate unity than it did upon any genuine agreement about the important issues surrounding SDI. While the British and West German governments signed MoUs and the French government allowed state-owned countries to participate in SDI research, these were all means by which the transatlantic controversy over SDI was managed; they did not resolve the underlying issues of the dispute. The consequences, both positive and negative, of ignoring these differing conceptions of strategy that were hidden behind this consensus will be examined in the following chapters.

VI. THE ATBM DEBATE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SDI

I. INTRODUCTION

The issue of ballistic missile defences for Europe became the overriding issue in the SDI debate after the British and West German governments decided to sign MoUs with the United States. While the issue of providing BMD coverage for Western Europe had been broached from the beginning of the transatlantic debate, it was not until the beginning of 1986 that it became an issue of salient importance within the Alliance. While Alliance deliberations continued to focus on ensuring that SDI research remained within the confines of the ABM treaty as well as assessing the effect of SDI on arms control, it was ATBMs[1] that became the dominant issue of the SDI debate in early 1986. As such it occupied a central position in Alliance deliberations until the October 1986 Reykjavik summit, although it continued to be an issue of considerable concern during 1987 as well.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the ATBM debate in the broader context of the SDI controversy and thereby consider issues addressed in this thesis. Accordingly, answers to the following questions will be sought: Why did the ATBM issue become important? What relationship did the various proposals for ATBM systems for Europe have to the SDI research programme conducted under the auspices of SDIO? How did the objectives for ATBM being pursued by West European governments differ from those of United States government? And why did the ATBM issue play a more prominent role in Germany than in either Britain or France?

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[1] Throughout this chapter I will refer to ATBMs. These are ballistic missile defence systems designed to intercept short and medium range missiles.

But most importantly, the ATBM debate will be analysed in order to determine what it can reveal about the underlying cause of the SDI contoversy as well as how the SDI issue was managed within the Alliance. In analysing the ATBM issue, we will investigate the significance of different objectives that the United States and Western European nations were pursuing through ATBM deployment and what these differences reveal about - In particular we will seek to determine what these differences in objectives reveals about the relative importance of differing conceptions of strategy in driving the transatlantic controversy over SDI.

ATBMs Become a Prominent Issue in 1986

ATBM's became a prominent issue within the SDI debate largely as the result of the efforts of the West German Defence Minister, Manfred Wörner. During the latter part of 1985, Wörner began advocating that Western Europe develope a ballistic missile defence against the emerging conventional armed short-range ballistic missile threat from the Soviet Union. Wörner's widely quoted and extensively covered March 1986 Wehrkunde speech and his widely-read article in the Winter 1986 issue of Strategic Review were instrumental in placing the ATBM issue at the forefront of the transatlantic debate at the beginning of 1986.[2]

While ATBMs became prominent in early 1986, the issue of defending Western Europe against ballistic missiles had been a part of the SDI debate from its inception. In his March 23, 1983 speech Reagan explicitly stated that Europe would be included in any prospective system that would emerge from SDI research. Moreover, French President Mitterrand, as discussed in chapter 4, had recommended that West European nations create a "European comminity of space"[3] that would include the capability of space-based interception. Another proposal that received far more attention was the European Defence Initiative (EDI). This proposal was forwarded by a private organization (High Frontier Europe) that included various West Europeans, primarily former high defence officials as well as conservative politicians in West Germany, Holland, and France. It recommended that Western Europe develop in conjunction with the United States a comprehensive defence for Western Europe. This proposal was seen, and promoted as, an extension of the SDI system to Europe.[4] While there was some interest in this initiative inside the West German defence ministry, Wörner's initiative differed in important ways from EDI and he was therefore careful to ensure that his proposal was not confused with EDI.

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[2] Manfred Wörner, Strategie im Wandel, Grundrichten und Eckwerte der Strategie aus dem Blickwinkel der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, XXII. Internationale Wehrkundetagung 1. March 1986, Munich, Bundesminister der Verteidigung Information's Pressestab. And Manfred Wörner, "A Missile Defense for NATO Europe," Strategic Review, Volume 14, no. 1 (Winter 1986).

[3] Le Monde, 9 February 1984.

[4] The European Defence Initiative (EDI): Some Implications and Consequences (Rotterdam, Netherlands: High Frontier Europa, 1986).

Wörner recommended that Western Europe in conjunction with the United States, and working within NATO, develop a capability to intercept short and medium range Soviet ballistic missiles armed with conventional warheads.[5] He argued that this task could be accomplished by upgrading NATO's existing air defence network by improving anti aircraft missiles such as the Patriot so that they could also intercept short-range ballistic missiles. Accordingly, Wörner's proposal came to be known as an "extended air defence," although it was just as often refereed to as simply ATBM. He explicitly stated that his proposal was not designed to defend Western Europe against nuclear attack and was not an attempt to create a leak-proof defence for Europe. While Wörner enthusiastically supported ATBMs, it is important to stress that his objectives differed in important ways from the primary objectives being pursued by the Reagan Adminsistration.

II. THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION AND ATBMs

While the Reagan Administration welcomed European interest in ATBMs as part of an extended air defence concept[6], it must be stressed that American defence officials viewed the question of extended air defence as quite separate from SDI. As General Abrahamson, Director of the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization (SDIO), emphasized, the SDI programme remained dedicated to utilizing advanced technologies for the purpose of developing a layered defence that would provide comprehensive protection against ballistic missiles of all ranges. Extended air defence, on the other hand, was concerned with addressing solely the near term threat posed by conventionally armed Tactical Ballistic Missiles (TBMs), a threat that fell under the purview of the U.S. Army. As General Abrahamson explained,

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[5] Studies examining this threat had actually begun as early as 1982 within the West German defence ministry.

> The near-term is what the Army has already developed quite separate from the SDI program. We would like to answer that for the record.
>
> I think the important thing is that it is a self-defense and a terminal type of system. So, it defends a very small area. It is not a layered defense concept which is quite fundamental to the theory of the SDI and I think in the end will be fundamental to the theory of a short-range ballistic missile threat not only in Europe, but in other theaters as well.[7]

Thus, the Reagan Administration's ultimate and most fundamental objective with respect to ballistic missile defences in Europe was to provide the type of comprehensive defences that it envisaged for the United States. Accordingly, SDI's global architecture studies included assessments of the requirements for defending Europe "across the full geographic spectrum."[8] In the course of these studies, it was determined that while "the theater environment has unique requirements which must be addressed by specific theater defense architectures,"[9] many of the fundamental technologies that were being perused had strategic BMD research-wide applications for the defence of Europe as well."[10] Indeed, Abrahamson stressed that, not only could these advanced technologies be applied to the defence of Europe, but that their application was deemed essential to constructing a ballistic missile defence for Western Europe that would be sufficiently comprehensive to meet European security interests.

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[6] Testimony by Lt. General James A. Abrahamson, Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriation for Fiscal Year 1987, Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, 99th Congress, 2nd Session, 6 May 1986, p. 1738.

[7] Ibid., pp. 1771-1772.

Concurrently, the Reagan Administration believed that Europe confronted an emerging Soviet conventional TBM threat that required more immediate attention. American defence officials concurred with West German Defence Minister Wörner's analysis that the Alliance needed to respond to this threat; otherwise NATO would confront an environment in the 1990's in which the Soviet Union would possess the capability to use TBM's to destroy critical NATO targets and thereby hinder NATO's ability to mount a credible response to a Soviet conventional attack. The Reagan Administration agreed that this threat must either be removed through arms control or countered by the construction of an ATBM system, and that, furthermore, it should be done within the context of extended air defence. Above all, however, the Reagan Administration saw European interest in ATBMs as a means of gaining increased allied support for SDI, which was considered important for Allied unity and obtaining support within the US Congress for SDI funding.

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[8] Ibid., p. 1745.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., p. 1743.

It is, however, important to emphasize that while the Reagan Administration supported Wörner's extended air defence concept, they regarded it as peripheral to the main objectives of SDI. While Wörner was concerned with countering the threat posed by short and medium range conventionally armed ballistic missiles, the Reagan Adminstration was continuing to investigate technologies and design systems that would provide a comprehensive defence of the United States and Western Europe against missiles of all ranges irrespective of whether they were armed with nuclear, conventional or chemical weapons. It is important to keep these differences in mind in analysing the ATBM debate because they are indicative of the underlying differences in the objectives that Western Europe and the United States were pursuing throughout the SDI and ATBM debates.

III. WEST GERMAN SUPPORT FOR ATBMs

The West German government[11], and in particular Defence Minister Manfred Wörner, were the driving force behind the emergence of ATBMs as a major issue. While the rationale that Wörner most often gave for his extended air defence concept was the growing accuracy of the conventionally armed short and medium range missiles, the reasons that prompted him to recommend the development of ATBMs can ultimately be traced to his evaluation of the strategic implications of SDI. Therefore, in order to understand the origins of Wörner's ATBM proposals, it is necessary to examine his view of how SDI would affect West European security. This examination is particularly interesting because it indicates a signficant evolution in the West German government's position on SDI.

Before examining these views in detail, it is important to point out that Wörner's views on the implications of SDI were complex and seemingly contradictory.[12] Wörner was a serious student of military affairs who was exceptionally well informed about SDI. His statements on SDI's implications for West European security were some of the most comprehensive and sophisticated governmental analyses to appear on either side of the Atlantic.[13]

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[11] Because of the leading role that the West German government took in the ATBM dispute, the order in which each country is discussed has been altered in this chapter. The West German position will be discussed first. The French reaction to ATBMs, because it was far more detailed than that of the British government, is discussed second.

[12] In this sense at least his position had much in common with that of the Reagan Administration.

Three years after Reagan's March 23, 1983 speech, West German defence officials became convinced that the possibility of strategic defence deployments necessitated a more detailed analysis of the implication of BMD deployment than had theretofore been undertaken. This task took on added urgency in light of the West German government's belief that BMDs would eventually be deployed. Wörner stated in his Wehrkunde address that, "There can be no doubt: the tendency runs today clearly toward strategic defence and the probability is large that they will succeed in this rather than in the next try."[14] For Wörner this reality dictated that the Federal Republic analyze the probable implications of such developments and adjust the defence posture of the Federal Republic accordingly. Wörner assumed for the purpose of his analysis that both the United Stats and the Soviet Union would possess BMD systems.

Wörner's Changing View of SDI

Wörner contended that ballistic missile defences would reduce the likelihood of a nuclear first-strike and thus lead to greater strategic stability. The German defence minister argued that in the absence of incentives to strike first the dangers of preemptive or preventive attacks would be neutralized. The increase in strategic stability afforded would further reduce the likelihood of a global nuclear war as well as reduce the ability of the superpowers to exercise world wide influence by virtue of their possession of nuclear weapons.[15]

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[13] SDI: Fakten und Bewertungen, Fragen und Antworten, Dokumentation, Herausgeber: Der Bundesminister der Verteidigung, Informations- und Pressestab, 1986. And Wörner, Strategie im Wandel, op. cit.

[14] Manfred Wörner, Strategie im Wandel, Grundrichten und Eckwerte der Strategie aus dem Blickwinkel der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, XXII. Internationale Wehrkundetagung 1. March 1986, Munich, Bundesminister der Verteidigung Information's Pressestab, p. 17.

Wörner contended that Soviet strategic defence sytems would reduce the ability of US strategic nuclear forces as well as the Cruise and Pershing Missiles to carry out selective nuclear strikes on Soviet teritory. He maintained that this would diminish NATO capacity for controlled escalation and therefore weaken its ability to deter Soviet conventional attacks. If these circumstances were to obtain, Wörner argued, then NATO's conventional forces would have to assume a greater burden for defending Western Europe.[16]

Wörner also believed that if the credibilility of US strategic nucler threats were diminished then the ability of the United States to deter Soviet theater nuclear attacks against Western Europe would be reduced. He therefore maintained that if the Reagan Administration were to go beyond SDI research to developement and deployment, it would be essential for Western European territory to be included in such a system lest European and American security be decoupled from one another. Wörner warned that if any prospective defence shield did not include protection for Western Europe, superior Soviet capabilities in intermediate and short range missiles would take on a significance that they had theretofore lacked.

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[15] SDI: Fakten und Bewertungen, op. cit., p. 15.

[16] Ibid.

Wörner's ATBM Proposal

The danger to Europe would be further heightened, argued Wörner, if the Soviet Union were to build a ballistic missile defence system to counter NATO missiles stationed in Western Europe. Wörner feared that such an eventuality would not only leave NATO naked to Soviet missile attack but would enable the Soviet Union to execute a missile attack on western Europe without fearing a serious response. If the Soviet Union could strike first, drastically reduce NATO's missile force, and then use its ballistic missile defence system to intercept NATO's remaining nuclear missiles, the Soviet Union would be able to effectively neutralize NATO's nuclear response.

Wörner argued that irrespective of whether the Soviet Union and the United States decided to deploy ballistic missile defences, Western Europe would need to deploy an ATBM system. He maintained that US-Soviet nuclear parity had reduced the credibility of US strategic nuclear forces to deter conflict in Western Europe and that this dicated a greater reliance on theatre nuclear and conventional forces. At the same time that these NATO forces were becoming more important, they were also becoming more vulnerable, he argued.

He contended that the advent of highly accurate short range, conventionally-armed Soviet ballistic missiles (SS-21,22's, and to some extent SS-23's) constituted a new and dangerous threat to the Alliance. Wörner argued that this threat was all the more important to address in light of nuclear parity between the United States and the Soviet Union. Wörner pointed out that Soviet Marshal Orgarkov had clearly referred to this option in May of 1984 and that "already today most Soviet middle and short range missiles also possess conventional warheads.[17] This growing capacity for the use of conventionally-armed ballistic missiles to threaten NATO's air defence systems, air bases, and nuclear weapon depots would enable the Soviet Union, in the "foreseeable future, to preside over a conventional first strike capacity in Europe."[18] This would enable the Soviet Union to "cripple the defensive capacity of NATO with long range and precise fire strikes before the first tank rolled forward, and, above all, without having to cross over the threshold to nuclear war."[19]

Wörner believed that this new threat posed by conventionally armed ballistic missiles represented a political as well as a military threat to the Alliance. He warned that if the Soviet Union were allowed to secure "unilateral advantage" through asymmetrical ballistic missile defence deployments, the Soviet Union could "shatter the unity of the Alliance and undermine the resistance capacity of the West European states."[20] Wörner thus argued that the security of the Alliance required that this threat be neutralized; it was in "the vital interests of NATO, though especially its European members, to prevent this danger, lest it be used as a means of exercising political pressure and threat."[21] Consequently, he characterized "the requirement for a European defence system" as "irrefutable (unabweisbar)."[22]

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[17] Wörner, Strategie im Wandel, op. cit., p. 22.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

Wörner maintained that the threat posed by Soviet short and medium range conventionally armed ballistic missiles could be countered through an extended air defence system. He emphasized that such a defence would not have to be capable of intercepting all of the Soviet short-range missiles and that it was designed neither to protect against nuclear armed missiles nor to provide a comprehensive defence of populations centers. Because its role would be merely to intercept enough missiles to ensure that Soviet planners would be uncertain about their ability to damage a substantial portion of NATO's vital targets, a less than perfect defence is all that would be required.[23]

The reason that a comprehensive defence was not sought was important for it reveals a vital difference in US and West

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[20] _Ibid_., p. 21.

[21] _Ibid_., p. 22.

[22] Wörner, _Strategie im Wandel_, _op_. _cit_., p. 21.

[23] _Ibid_.

European ATBM policy and thereby the diverse objectives that they were pursuing with respect to SDI. Wörner viewed ATBMs as a means of ensuring the continued viability of flexible response. Significantly, he did not recommend a system that possessed the capability to intercept nuclear missiles, reasoning that these options were best dealt with by threatening nuclear counterstrikes. Rather, he was concerned that the emerging Soviet conventional TBM capability would endow the Soviet armed forces with the capacity of crippling NATO's conventional and nuclear forces at the very outset of a conflict. For Wörner this constituted an unacceptable scenario; he viewed the viability of NATO's conventional forces as essential to ensuring that the Alliance's nuclear threats remained credible. He contended that the Alliance's "conventional defence must be strong enough so that from the very beginning of a conflict it demands from an attacker an application of force and a attack dimension that would force him to consider the risk of a nuclear conflict that extended beyond Europe."[24] Wörner's analysis was significant for it revealed that far from reducing the Alliance's reliance on nuclear weapons to deter an attack, he envisaged ATBM deployments as a means of making the nuclear response more credible.

It was hardly surprising, then, that Wörner, despite his enthusiastic support for ATBMs, was equally insistent on the proposition that "a replacement of nuclear weapons with conventional weapons is under the present and foreseeable circumstances hardly possible."[25] Wörner feared that removing the nuclear threat would give greater significance to the "Warsaw Pact's superior conventional capabilities"[26] and thereby lead to "crisis instability, and even the danger of war."[27] He stated categorically therefore that "in the foreseeable future there will be no strategy without nuclear weapons, not globally and not in Europe."[28]

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[24] Wörner, Speech on 7 February 1985, op. cit., p. 19.

Thus we see contradictory strains in Wörner's thinking. On the one hand he maitains that the possibility of BMD deployments and the advent of nuclear parity means that NATO must place greater reliance on conventional forces in Europe; on the other hand he contends that nuclear weapons remain central to West European security. A partial explanaition for these seemingly inconsistent assertion can be found in Wörner's views on the effect of BMD deployments on the strategic nucler regime.

Wörner's view of the role of nuclear deterrence in an environment of strategic defences was complex. While he argued that the superpowers would no longer be able to rely upon the absolute effectiveness of nuclear deterrence and that nuclear strategy would therefore have to reorient itself more along the lines of "classical strategy," he stated that:

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[25] Wörner, Strategie im Wandel, op. cit., p. 14.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

> Since no defence system can be perfect, the risk of nuclear destruction remains, which though no longer threatening to the existence of a state, still encompasses considerable damages for the population and the economy. The expected damages would no longer be guaranteed to be unbearable, though nevertheless hardly bearable, that the nuclear stalemate would continue to be in effect.[29]

What Wörner seemed to be implying was that while the dangers of unintended nuclear conflict would be diminished through BMD deployments, the existential threat of nuclear annihilation would continue to cast its shadow over strategic calculations, allowing the Alliance to dispense with the less desirable aspects of its reliance on nuclear weapons without abandoning nuclear deterrence altogether.

Opposition to Wörner's Plan Within the Federal Republic of Germany

The SPD was opposed to Wörner's ATBM proposal. They argued that the deployment of ATBMs would lead to an offensive and defensive arms race in Western Europe. The SPD reiterated its position that the threat posed by ballistic missiles, irrespective of their range, was a political problem that could not be solved by technical means. They argued that the issue would best be resolved through an arms control treaty with the Soviet Union.

But most importantly, the SPD contended that the ATBM proposal would lend political suport to SDI. This, they believed, would place West Germany in a position of being party to a process that could lead to the demise of the ABM treaty. Moreover, it would create the impression of West German governmental support for the concept behind the SDI programme.[30]

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[29] Ibid., p. 19.

Unlike the issue of participation in SDI research, the ATBM debate did not create friction within the West German cabinet. While clearly not as enamoured of the ATBM proposal as the CDU, the FDP had no particular objection to it either. Genscher did not believe that Wörner's ATBM proposal threatened the ABM treaty and might create difficulities for West German relations with Moscow. Above all, he viewed the deployment of ATBMs as envisaged by Wörner, unlike the space-based comprehensive BMD deployment contemplated by the Reagan Administration, as fully compatible with NATO's doctrine of flexible response.[31]

While the SPD and FDP views had little effect on the West German government's position on ATBM's, they did illuminate two important features of the ATBM issue within the Federal Republic. First, as Wörner freely admitted, the ATBM proposal was not only a response to what the West German government regarded as a new threat from Soviet short-range missiles, but it also was a means of gaining influence on the direction of SDI and demonstrating unity with the United States on SDI. As we remarked to the Bundestag "Anyone joining the game has more influence than an outsider who merely launches criticism."[32]

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[30] Europäische Verteidigungs Initiative zur Abwehr Ballisticher Raketen, Antrag der Fraktion der SPD. Deutscher Bundestag, 10. Wahlperiode. Drucksache 10/4440, 4 December 1985.

[31] Hans Gunther Brauch, "SDI - The West German Debate," in Brauch (ed), Star Wars and European Defence, (London: Macmillan Press, 1987), p. 203.

Second, Wörner's ATBM proposal, while designed to provide political support for SDI, did not constitute an endorsement of the goals set forth in Reagan's March 23, 1983 speech. Rather, Wörner viewed ATBMs as a means of ensuring the continued credibility of NATO's strategy of flexible response and thus reliance on nuclear deterrence. This view of ATBMs dovetailed with the West German perception that the goal of SDI had changed considerably since March 1983. No longer, argued Wörner, was SDI designed to overturn deterrence but to establish it on a more stable basis by protecting retaitory forces from a first-strike. This perception of SDI rested not only on perceived shifts in the Reagan Administration's positions, but on the belief that the technical feasibility of creating a near perfect defence was many decades away.

Wörner's view that SDI was no longer an instrument designed to overturn deterrence was important because it was essential to the strategic validity of his ATBM proposal. For without continued reliance on nuclear deterrence, it would make little sense to advocate ATBMs as a means to ensure the continued credibility of flexible response.

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[32] "Wörner Discusses Government's SDI position," 13 December 1985, Bonn, in FBIS-WE, December 20, p. K-5.

Wörner's ATBM proposal therefore indicated that while the West German government was interested in certain forms of ATBM deployment and was eager to lend political support to SDI, it did not advocate using ATBM and BMD deployments as a means of eliminating the West's reliance on nuclear weapons. While Wörner and other West Europeans continued to believe that the United States was commited to maintaining nuclear deterrence and that BMD deployment could not achieve perfect defences, as we shall see in the next chapter, this was far from an accurate perception - either about the Reagan Administration's objectives or about how they would go about achieving them.

IV. THE FRENCH REACTION TO ATBMs

The emergence of the ATBM issue coincided with the change in government in France. In March 1986, Jacques Chirac became Prime Minister following the defeat of President Mitterrand's Socialist government in Parliamentary elections. When he became Prime Minister, Chirac adopted a more positive disposition toward SDI than his predecessors. His stance was consistent with his policy pronouncements prior to becoming prime minister. While in opposition, Chirac had criticized Mitterrand for his negative stance toward SDI, asserting that it had unnecessarily damaged relations with the United States. Accordingly, he came to office determined to make clear that SDI was an area in which he disagreed with the French President. In fact, however, the differences between Chirac and Mitterrand were more rhetorical than substantive. While Chirac spoke more approvingly than Mitterrand about SDI, there were few real differences in their positions. To the extent that French policy toward the issue of BMDs changed in 1986, it was attributable to a perception of a shift in American SDI policy.

Chirac argued that SDI "is irreversible and it is justified"[33] and therefore "France cannot afford not to be associated with this great research program."[34] Shortly after his appointment as Prime Minister, Chirac addressed the National Assembly and explained that while "the first task of our defence is to guarantee nuclear deterrence,"[35] American research efforts required France to consider adjusting its defence policy to new technological and strategic realities. At the same time, Chirac declined to endorse the strategic rationale underlying SDI, declaring that he shared Mitterrand's concerns that the deployment of strategic defences could lead to the militarization of outer space. Moreover, Chirac did not favour signing an MoU with the United States, contending that it would endanger France's prized national independence in defence matters.

Chirac thus maintained that although France needed to take cognizance of the potential changes that SDI could engender, it was important to realize that strategic defences "will not radically alter the basic factors of nuclear deterrence for many years yet; maybe it never will."[36] Nevertheless, the fact that the United States was actively perusing such technologies meant that "major changes may thus arise in the world balance, in the dialogue between the two great powers and in European defence."[37] Under these circumstances, he contended that the government must keep abreast of the relevant developments, lest France fall behind technologically or strategically.

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[33] International Herald Tribune, 23 May 1986.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Jacques Chirac, "Speech before the National Assembly," 9 April 1986, Speeches and Statements, Service de Presse et d'Information, Ambassade de France a Londres, London, p. 1.

France's more positive disposition toward SDI was further strengthened by the perception that the United States had abandoned its quest to transcend nuclear deterrence by deploying leak proof defences. Foreign Minister Raimond contended in May 1986 that: "The presentation of the American initiative has changed substantially over the last few months. There is no longer any talk of eliminating or replacing nuclear deterrence."[38] Given this new American policy, Defence Minister Giraud argued that "space defense and nuclear deterrence, which remains the cornerstone of our security system, now seem more complementary than competitive."[39] Given these changes in US policy, Raimond declared that "one of the fundamental divergences between France and the United States, which rested on the role of deterrence, has disappeared."[40]

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[36] Ibid., p. 2.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Jean-Bernard Raimond, Statements in The Senate, 27 May 1986, Speeches and Statements, Service de Presse et d'Information, Ambassade de France a Londres, London, pp. 2-3.

The Role of ATBMs in French Strategic Thinking

It would be a mistake to ascribe this shift in France's perception of SDI merely to the existence of a more conservative government. As Paul Quiles remarked shortly after Raimond's statement regarding the government's new assessment toward SDI, he saw little difference between Foreign Minister Raimond's statement and the position of the previous government. Indeed as early as December 1985, Quiles, who was Defence Minister before Chirac became Prime Minister, stated in an interview with Le Monde that in the medium term SDI goals "are essentially military. The aim is to propose solutions to the maintenance of the reprisal capability of American missiles in the framework of the present doctrine."[41] He regarded the long-term goals of SDI as political, designed primarily to influence US public opinion. In short, he doubted the Reagan Administration's commitment to its proclaimed vision of "rendering nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete." This perception that SDI was no longer incompatible with nuclear deterrence emerged gradually and was shared by both the Socialists and the Gaullists.

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[39] Andre Giraud, Statement to U.S. Senate, 29 May 1986, reported in "Space Defense and Nuclear Deterrence Are Complementary," Jacques Isnard (Le Monde, 31 May 1986), p. 10.

[40] Jean-Bernard Raimond, Statements at luncheon with Diplomatic Press, 2 July 1986, Speeches and Statements, Service de Presse et d'Information, Ambassade de France a Londres, London, p. 8.

[41] Paul Quiles, "Defense Minister Quiles Doubts Credibility of SDI," Le Monde, 18 December 1985, reported in FBIS-WE 20 December 1985, p. K-1.

France's more sanguine appraisal of SDI's potential impact on nuclear deterrence facilitated a more favourable consideration of ballistic missile defence options for the European theatre. As SDI was no longer associated with the goal of transcending nuclear deterrence, the prospective introduction of ATMs into the European theatre was not necessarily seen as incompatible with French military doctrine. Moreover, Wörner's advocacy of ATBMs on the grounds of preventing "Eurospecific" threat diminished the perception that ballistic missile defences for the European theatre merely constituted an extension of SDI, thus enabling Europeans and the French in particular to portray their efforts, if not independent of the United States, than at least supportable with a specifically European rationale.

France had previously expressed interest in studying the possibility of developing ballistic missile defence options for the European theatre. In April 1985, Defence Minister Charles Hernu suggested that in response to SDI, European countries should pool their resources "to see if there is a possibility... of a European strategic defense initiative."[42] This proposal did not materialize because civilian cooperation under Eureka superseded consideration of cooperation on a European ballistic missile defence system. In January 1986, however, France once again broached the idea of studying a ballistic missile defence system for Europe, only this time in the form of an extended air defence system along the lines advocated by Wörner.[43]

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[42] Charles Hernu, interview on Paris Television Service, transcription in "Hernu Discusses SDI, French Deterrent in Interview," FBIS-WE, 19 April 1985, p. K-1.

The most concrete expression of France's efforts in the area of ATMBs was a government backed study by Aerospatiale.[44] The French government provided funding for this study through the Direction des Engins section of the Delegation Generale pour l'Armement, though Aerospatiale contributed funds of its own as well. This study was designed to provide a preliminary examination of terminal defences for Western Europe against short-range Soviet missiles. Technologically, it was to build on advanced French air-to-surface missile designs, providing a capability for the interception of both short range ballistic missiles and cruise missiles. French officials viewed such a system as "complementing U.S. SDI designs that are being designed primarily to counter the longer-range strategic ballistic missile threat to the US..."[45]

Aerospatiale officials also stressed that they would be in close contact with the Pentagon in order to inform American defence officials of the "potential relationship" between their study and SDI and to examine areas where Aerospatiale could participate in SDI research. At the same time, Aerospatiale Director Matre stated that "European defense efforts" took precedence over the possibility of "a company role in the U.S. program."[46] But fundamentally Matre believed that "European defense efforts and the U.S. SDI program are to be complementary and I expect there will be coordination between the two..."[47]

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[43] See David S. Yost, "Western Europe and the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative," Journal of International Affairs Vol. 41, No. 2. (Summer 1988), p. 309.

[44] Abrahamson, op cit,. p. 1770.

[45] Ibid., p. 1770.

In keeping with its perception of ballistic missile defences as a means of strengthening deterrence, France envisaged any system arising from the Aerospatiale studies as complementing ongoing French efforts to ensure the continued credibility of the French strategic nuclear deterrent. French officials feared that the growing accuracy of Soviet conventionally armed missiles would pose a particularly dangerous threat to the relatively small land based French ballistic missile force. Jean-Charles Poggi, director of the Space and Ballistic Systems Division of Aerospatiale, argued that "An ATBM system would be one key element in enhancing the force's survivability."[48]

France also supported and participated in a NATO study conducted under the auspices of the Air Defence Committee (CAPADC) to examine the short range ballistic missile threat. France's decision to allow the Air Defence Committee to study this matter was significant for it indicated her desire to see the question of "extended air defence" dealt with in coordination with both its European Allies and the United States. This forum enabled France to participate in a manner that allowed a degree of allied coordination - without which integrated air defences would be technologically infeasible - and, at the same time, still retain its freedom of manoeuvre. In this latter regard, France insisted on retaining ultimate control of the use of any prospective ATM components under French jurisdiction.

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[46] Ibid., p. 1771.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., p. 1770.

Despite France's willingness to entertain the possibility of ATBM deployments, ultimately she regarded them as peripheral to France's defence strategy. Her interest in ATBMs derived primarily from concerns that SDI would fail to provide Europe with adequate protection; and if it did, that SDI would be under American control thus compromising France's independence. Still, France believed that given SDI's salience and the increased attention given to ATBMs in early 1986, it was necessary for France to involve itself in the debate in a significant manner. But what mattered most to France was the continued validity of its nuclear forces and the strategy of deterrence. And for this purpose, ATBMs were regarded as only of marginal significance to France's primary defence requirements. In an address to the Institute of Higher National Defence Studies (IHEDN) on 12 September 1986, Chirac stressed that while it was important for France to "take part in the great effort of technological research that is likely to have a rapid effect on the technologies used for our offensive and defensive weapons," it would be unwise "to imagine that there is for our country, and for a long time to come, an alternative to the nuclear deterrent."[49] Chirac thus contended that:

> Having regard to the efficacity of modern offensive weapons, the best chance of survival seems to have to be obtained through a variable deployment of major systems. That approach must be given precedence over that of developing a broader anti-aircraft defence, a path it seems reasonable to tread only with great caution, since ad hoc defensive systems, whose development and deployment cost would be very high, would in fact risk being saturated or neutralized by appropriate counter-measures.[50]

Thus, the French government, while generally supportive of efforts to investigate the neccisity of countering the threat posed by Soviet short-range missiles armed with conventional warheads, veiwed the question of ATBMs within the context of the main goal of its defence policy, namely, to maintain the credibility of its nuclear deterrent. In this connection, the French reaction to ATBMs was signficant because it indicated that French officials were far more sanguine about the objectives of SDI. Moreover, French officials countenanced the NATO air defence committee to study the ATBM issue, thereby indicating a desire for Alliance unity. At the same time, French officials also forwarded a number of proposals that called for a specifically European system. But the overiding aspect of the

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[49] Jacques Chirac, Speech at Institute of Higher National Defence Studies, 12 September 1986, Speeches and Statements, Service de Presse et d'Information, Ambassade de France a Londres, London, p. 3.

[50] Ibid.

French reaction to ATBMs was to ensure that they serve to enhance and not undermine nuclear deterrence.

V. THE BRITISH RESPONSE TO ATBMs

The British government, while supportive of SDI research, was far less enamoured of ATBMs than the West German government. While British defence officials believed that the threat posed by conventionally armed Soviet ballistic missiles warranted study, they did not believe that it was an issue that required the attention that Wörner was according it. As was the case in West Germany, the British government's willingness to consider ATBM defences was influenced by the growing perception that the objectives of SDI were now far less ambitious than they had been originally. Despite this perception, the British government remained fundamentally opposed to any deployment of ballistic missile defences. British officials were above all concerned that neither SDI or ATBMs do anything to undermine the validity of nuclear deterrence, which Thatcher and her government beieved remained essential to Western security.

The British government's perception of SDI evolved in the aftermath of the participation debate. SDI was no longer viewed as a programme necessarily dedicated to overthrowing the deterrent regime through the deployment of comprehensive space-based strategic defences. As Michael Heseltine testified to the House Defence Committee:

> I am not unaware of, and not uninfluenced by, the views of Mr. Nitze - and we have discussed this before - which talk

> of more balanced arrangements of offensive and defensive systems, not the elimination of one and the replacement of another, but of a better balance, and that would, of course, have a very different implication.[51]

Thus, at least for the foreseeable future, strategic calculations would not have to be made on the basis of the possibility that the United States would attempt to "render nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete" - an assessment that had important ramification for Britain. As the Chief Scientific Advisor to the Ministry of Defence stated:

> in terms of a practical deployable system within the next twenty years, American thoughts are, I think, moving towards a centrally land-based terminal defence system as something which could be achieved in the short term, and I suspect are regarding a space-based system to enhance the overall capability as something which may well be receding further into the future.[52]

It should be noted that while this perception led to a more positive disposition toward SDI, it was engendered not by any change in the desirability of strategic defence deployment; it reflected the perception that if deployments were nevertheless decided upon, they would be more consistent with existing deterrent arrangements. This more positive, although still guarded, assessment of SDI enabled Britain to consider ATBMs without necessarily subjecting itself to the criticism that in so doing it was jeopardizing the existing security regime. For while the British government strove to portray the question of Europe's requirement for an ATBM system as distinctly separate from SDI, the perception that they were indeed closely linked was held by many.

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[51] Testimony by Michael Heseltine before the House of Commons Defence Committee, 5 December 1985, in The Implications for the United Kingdom of Ballistic Missile Defence, Second Report from the Defence Committee, Session 1986-1987, London, 1987, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, p. 9.

[52] Testimony by Professor Norman before the House of Commons Defence Committee, 21 May 1986, in The Implications for the United Kingdom of Ballistic-Missile Defence, op., cit., p. 196.

The House of Commons Defence Committee gave voice to a rather widely held assumption that SDI provided the driving force behind the discussion of the question of ballistic missile defences for Europe: "We are concerned that the issue of ATBMs has recently come to the fore, less because of the its intrinsic urgency than because of the climate of opinion created by SDI and the need to respond to the sort of issues raised in the American debate."[53] Thus, while it was considered proper to examine the possibility that emerging Soviet conventional TBM options could threaten key NATO assets, the Defence Committee articulated a "worry that this threat is at present being somewhat exaggerated."[54] Moreover, they maintained that the fascination with ballistic missile defences engendered by SDI also prejudiced the manner in which these threats were addressed. It was argued that even if the threat of conventionally armed TBMs were to be deemed sufficiently large to warrant countermeasures, it was not clear that the introduction of active defences in the form of ATBMs was necessarily the most appropriate response. Instead, the Defence Committee maintained that responding to the emerging threat through a combination of passive measures, new counterforce options ("as part of NATO's general counter-air capability"[55]) may "lack the glamour and technological challenge of the active kind, but they will almost certainly prove more cost-effective."[56] What was considered even more desirable was to obviate additional military countermeasures altogether. Indeed, the Defence Committee regarded TBMs "to be an example of an area where a successful arms-control agreement could introduce a degree of predictability into force planning and prevent the premature commitment of substantial sums of money."[57]

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[53] The Implications for the United Kingdom of Ballistic-Missile Defence, op. cit., p. xxvi.

[54] Ibid.

While Thatcher's government conceded that there were levels of inevitable overlap, SDI and ATBMs were portrayed as separate issues whose respective rationale arose from similar yet fundamentally different threats. According to the Ministry of Defence,

> SDI and ATBM defence should be viewed as separate but overlapping issues; the former seeks to counter an established (nuclear) threat, the latter a postulated new threat. The question of how best to defend against the conventional threat from TBMs is therefore being addressed

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[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

in the context of Extended Air Defence.

> Although there could be a linkage in some of the technologies involved, we see a clear conceptual difference between ATBM defence and SDI. Subject to the outcome of the NATO Air Defence Committee studies, there might be a requirement to provide an ATBM system irrespective of any decisions made on SDI.[58]

At the same time, as Michael Heseltine testified, "it is inevitable that some of the sorts of technologies one is talking about in the Strategic Defence Initiative are very relevant to the capability to defend one-self against weapons that actually perhaps the Strategic Defence Initiative would not provide a capability against."[59] Moreover, the British government expected that through participation in SDI research projects under the terms of the MoU, British firms would glean information that would be applicable to constructing ballistic missile defences for Europe.[60]

British officials stressed however the inevitable overlap in technologies and ATBMs should not obsure then essential difference. The British government therefore emphasized that ATBMs were not merely an extension of SDI but should be considered in the light of threats specific to Western Europe. British officials contended though with notably less enthusiasm than their West German counterparts, that the consideration of ATBMs was justified on the grounds of the potential emergence of a conventional TBM threat to Europe. While they did not view this threat as imminent, British defence officials were concerned that the Soviet Union could acquire the capacity to employ conventionally armed TBMs against NATO air defence assets and thereby allow Soviet air forces to accomplish their mission with much greater ease. The British government was quick to stress, however, that the consideration of this threat should be kept separate from the type of missions which the Reagan Administration was investigating in its SDI programme. The rationale underlying the distinction between nuclear and conventional threats was provided by Brigadier T.P.J. Boyd-Carpenter, Director of Defence Policy in the Ministry of Defence:

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[58] Evidence provided to House of Commons Defence Committee by the MoD, 4 March 1987, in The Implications for the United Kingdom of Ballistic-Missile Defence, op. cit., p. 51.

[59] Heseltine, op. cit., p. 11.

[60] Ibid.

> The purpose of these studies [extended air defence] and the reason they are examining short-range missiles is the concern for the conventional threat which would be posed by them. The longer range systems do pose a nuclear threat to Europe, amongst other weapons, but they are currently deterred in the way all such missiles have been hitherto by the threat of NATO retaliation.[61]

The British government did not therefore view the potential development of ATBMs as changing the Alliance's fundamental reliance on nuclear retaliation to deter Soviet attacks against NATO.

In sum, the British government's stance toward ATBMs must be seen in light of its determination to see nuclear deterrence remain the centerpiece of NATO strategy. Thus despite their support for investigating the need for ATBMs and their participation in SDI research, British officials remained weary of SDI's potential impact on nuclear deterrence. This fear was exacerbated in early 1986 by Mikhail Gorbachev's speech before the United Nations in which he advocated the complete abolition of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. The British government feared that the confluence of Gorbachev's bold and explicit anti-nuclear proposals and the Reagan Administration's continued enthusiasm for SDI could contribute to the weakening of support for nuclear deterrence. Furthermore, the British officials believed that Gorbachev's proposals dovetailed with the Labour Party's defence policy, both of which the government regarded as dangerous, as they ignored the reality of a world in which nuclear weapons were necessary in order to deter aggression. As Geoffry Howe remarked, "Cheap slogans about weapons or welfare, Trident or treatment, cannot wish away that truth. No more can security be provided by a speciously attractive timetable for abolishing nuclear weapons by the end of the century. Security has to be worked for and it has to be paid for."[62] In light of these developments and the general trend toward denigrating the contribution of nuclear weapons to international security, Britain remained circumspectly weary of ATBMs, viewing them as a yet another development that tended to undermine the perception that only nuclear deterrence could provide Europe with security.

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[61] Testimony by Brigadier T P J Boyd-Carpenter, 4 March 1987, in The Implications for the United Kingdom of Ballistic-Missile Defence, op. cit., p. 63.

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[62] Speech by Sir Geoffrey Howe on 17 March 1986, op. cit., paragraph 1.

Thus, the British government's position on ATBMs reflected both the British government's continued desire to demonstrate unity on SDI-related questions such as ATBMs and the underlying differences in perceptions about strategy that seperated it from the Reagan Adminstration. For while the British government was willing to contemplate the deployment of ATBMs against Soviet conventionally armed short-range ballistic missiles, British officials made it clear that this question should be kept separate from SDI. Moreover, they emphasized that any envisaged ATBM deployment would not be designed to intercept nuclear armed missiles, since this would imply a desire to transcend the relationship of mutual vulnerability to nuclear attack upon which British officials believed that NATO's security rested. The Reagan Administration, as we have seen, while supporting defence against the conventionally armed short-range missiles saw as its ultimate objective the creation of comprehensive defence for Europe in order to transcend nuclear deterrence. Despite these clearly divergent objectives the British and American governments papered over these difference in order to present a face of unity on the question of ATBMs.

VI. CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most striking element of the ATBM debate was that unlike the other aspects of the SDI debate, it was an issue that did not become prominent because of American action. To be sure, the Reagan Administration had often stated that it would include Western Europe should BMD deployments occur, but the ascendence of ATBMS was due primarily to the efforts of the West German Defence Minister Manfred Wörner. Thus, whereas in the case of the March 23, 1983 announcement as well as the Reagan Administration's offer to participate in SDI research, the West German government's role was largely reactive, with regard to the ATBM issue it took a leading role.

The British and French governments also played different roles in the ATBM debate than they had before. In responding to the March 23 speech and the offer to participate, British officials were the first to react and generally set the tone and created the context in which the West German and French governments responded. But in the case of the ATBM debate the British government was largely reactive. The French government's role also differed from that which it had theretofore played in the SDI debate. Indeed, Mitterrand's decision to support a NATO study - conducted under the auspices of the Air Defence Committee - indicated that despite its desire to remain independent, the French government was not averse to forging a united position on ATBMs.

The role that NATO played in the ATBM dispute reflected the remarkable degree of consensus on the issue of ATBMs among the US, British, West German, and French governments. Thus, the reaction of NATO as an institution to the ATBM issue was far more positive than it had been to the issue of SDI research, let alone to moving from research to deployment. The degree of consensus on ATBMs within the Alliance was reflected in NATO communiques. Whereas NATO communiques on SDI were limited to indicating Alliance support for SDI research, on the issue of ATBMs Alliance comminques demonstrated greater consensus on the need to consider seriously deployment of ATBMs. In May 1986 NATO defence ministers agreed, for instance, that it was necessary to consider "ways of enhancing NATO's integrated air defence to enable it to deal with the full spectrum of the Warsaw Pact air threat, including tactical missiles."[63] And at the December Defence Planning Committee meeting they called for "continued work on assessing the threat and possible ways to deal with it."[64] NATO's reaction to ATBMs therefore stood in stark contrast to the Alliance's official position on the question SDI research or the question of moving beyond research to deployment. Alliance comminques on SDI confined themselves to supporting SDI research mainly in relation to similar Soviet research; they did not mention the threat posed by long-range Soviet ballistic missiles as a reason to support SDI research. But with respect to ATBMs, there was a consensus that a genuine threat existed that may require the deployment of ATBMs.[65]

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[63] Defence Planning Committee Comminique, Brussels, 22 May 1986, paragraph 5.

[64] Defence Planning Committee Communique, Brussels, 4-5 December 1986, paragraph 6.

The consensus on ATBMs as reflected in the position of NATO had a salutary effect on the overall debate about SDI within the Alliance. For despite the extent to which ATBMs were viewed by some as separate from SDI, Wörner stated from the outset that his proposal should be understood in the context of attempting to increase West European influence over the course of SDI. More importantly, however, the validity of his concept rested on a key assumption about SDI: that the Reagan Administration no longer envisaged SDI as an instrument for replacing nuclear deterrence, but rather of founding it on a more secure basis by eliminating the possibility of a first-strike. This implied an abandonment of the goal of comprehensive defences that informed Reagan's original vision and a greater emphasis on limited defences. This assumption about SDI's more limited objectives dovetailed with Wörner's idea of ATBMs because his proposal also hinged on the desirability of limited defences (for Western Europe) to which he assumed that the Reagan Administration subscribed.

A careful analysis reveals, however, that the assumptions about SDI upon which Wörner's ATBM concept was predicated and which in turn led to its acceptance within the Alliance were false. Despite US support for Wörner's ATBM proposals it should have been clear that the Reagan Administration was intent on a defence against not only conventionally armed TBMs but nuclear armed TBMs as well. While the perception that the Reagan Administration was no longer intent upon deploying comprehensive defences that would attempt to render nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete was often voiced by Reagan Administration officials, this perception did not reflect the thinking at the highest level of the US government. Indeed, Reagan himself sought to dispel the notion that SDI research was becoming geared toward the deployment of limited defences that would serve to enhance rather than transcend deterrence: "to deploy systems of limited effectiveness now would divert limited funds and delay our main research. It could well erode support for the program before it's permitted to reach its potential."[66]

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[65] Despite this consensus, because the INF Treaty (see chapter 7) led to the elimination of many short and medium range Soviet missiles targeted at Western Europe, the various proposals described in this chapter, particularly those forwarded by the French government did not lead to the deployment of an ATBM system. However, the U.S. did upgrade the patriot air defence missile to enable it to intercept short-range ballistic missiles.

Yet it was in large measure the perception that Reagan was no longer intent upon the maximal aims of SDI that laid the foundation for the consensus on ATBMs. Therefore, the ATBM debate demonstrated that underlying the apparent agreement on ATBMs, there was still a fundamental difference within the Alliance about the objectives of SDI and the requirements for a credible nuclear strategy. While ignoring these basic disagreements was conducive to fostering a united position on ATBMs and therefore increasing the overall unity within the

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[66] "Reagan Rejects Calls to Deploy Partial SDI," The Boston Globe, 7 August 1986, p. 10.

Alliance on SDI, in the next chapter the pitfalls of ignoring these differences will be investigated. In the process of examining the Reykjavik summit we will see that not only did Reagan not abandon his original maximal objectives but that BMD deployment was not necessary to pursuing these objectives.

VII. REYKJAVIK, DETENTE, THE INF TREATY AND THE DEMISE OF THE TRANSATLANTIC SDI DEBATE

I. INTRODUCTION

The October 1986 summit meeting between Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, in Reykjavik Iceland, constituted a watershed in the transatlantic politics of SDI. By tabling proposals for the elimination of ballistic missiles and discussing the possibility of complete nuclear disarmament, the Soviet and American Presidents raised hopes as well as fears about the future. Although the US-Soviet meeting ended in acrimonious disagreement about SDI, the proposals that were tabled in Iceland had a far-reaching impact on the future course of US-Soviet arms control negotiations. They also had a profound effect on US relations with its West European Allies.

Because the US had contemplated proposals that would have essentially overturned the strategic regime upon which European security had rested in the post-war era without so much as informing its closest Allies, the Reykjavik summit came as a profound and unwelcome shock to most Europeans. Europeans believed that at Reykjavik the Reagan Administration had demonstrated utter disregard for the interests and views of its Allies and had gambled recklessly with Western security interests.

While in the end, SDI was responsible for blocking what, for West European governments, were unwanted agreements, Europe's disposition toward SDI did not change. In fact, many believed that it was the negotiating context created by SDI which led to both the Soviet offer of radical reductions in strategic ballistic missiles as well as the American counterproposals for their complete elimination. Moreover, at Reykjavik, West European governments realized that contrary to their earlier perceptions, the strategic concepts which Reagan had articulated when he launched SDI in 1983 had not been modified in the intervening three years. Indeed, Reagan's evident enthusiasm for "rendering nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete" was manifest at Reykjavik. It was the opportunity that he believed his meeting with Gorbachev offered to accomplish his long-cherished goals that led to Reagan's radical proposals at Reykjavik.

While these plans came to nought, Reykjavik provided a spur to progress on the INF negotiations and the implementation of NATO's long-standing zero-option proposal. However, this also created difficulties for West European governments. While they had initially welcomed the zero option[1], it looked less attractive when considered within the context of the American strategic designs revealed at Reykjavik because many Europeans saw an INF agreement based on the zero option as the first step toward the denuclearization of Western strategy. Ironically, the fears generated by the implementation of the zero option - decoupling, denuclearization, and increased danger of conventional conflict - were precisely the fears which had been raised in connection with SDI. Yet, it was in the absence of strategic defence deployments that these fears were realised.

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[1] The elimination of all Soviet S-20, SS-4 and SS-5 in return for removing American, Pershing II and Cruise Missiles.

Thus the circumstances under which SDI was eclipsed demonstrated that the strategic concerns that were often associated with SDI were in fact manifestations of fundamental differences in American and European strategic thinking.

But concerns about the credibility of NATO's military strategy were soon eclipsed by the rapid improvement in East-West relations that preceded and followed the signing of the INF treaty in December 1987. Moreover, improved relations between the United States and the Soviet Union further undermined Congressional support for SDI and convinced the Reagan Administration that the circumstances which had originally made SDI seem so imperative were changing radically.

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the impact of the Reykjavik summit and its aftermath on the transatlantic debate about SDI. Accordingly, we will seek to answer the following questions. Why the British, West German, and French governments reacted to the Reykjavik proposals the way in which they did? What role did the WEU and NATO play in the aftermath of Reykjavik? In answering these questions, we also analyze the West European reaction to the INF treaty (to which the Reykjavik summit gave impetus) and how Reykjavik influenced their perception of that agreement. The reaction of the opposition parties to the Reykjavik summit will not be afforded the same attention that they were in the chapter on the debate about West European participation in SDI research. The primary reason for this is that there was no sustained internal dispute about the

Reykjavik summit in either Britain, West Germany, or France. Moreover, because the governments were themselves so critical of the Reykjavik summit the opposition and the governments found themselves on the same side of the issue, although, as we shall see, for somewhat different reasons.

Analyzing the Reykjavik summit and its aftermath is important because it enables us to examine the validity of the propositions that have been forwarded in this thesis. The proposals tabled at Reykjavik and the agreement reached in its aftermath (the INF treaty) engendered strong West European reactions because they threatened to alter the basis of Western security. By comparing the British, West German, and French reactions to Reykjavik (and the INF treaty) to their positions on SDI should enable us to gain greater insight into the underlying cause of the transatlantic controversy about SDI. If the reaction to the Reykjavik proposals and INF were similar to the reactions to the prospect of BMD deployment, this would tend to confirm the hypothesis that the issue of deployment was not the primary cause of the SDI controversy. For if similar arguments were employed in both cases it would indicate that certain underlying differences manifested themselves irrespective of the nature of the proposals. On the other hand, if the reactions were substantially different, this would indicate that deployment was indeed the main issue separating the United States and Western Europe on SDI. Therefore, in this chapter we should be able to obtain further findings as to whether the SDI controversy was attributable primarily to the prospect of deployment or to differing conceptions of what constituted a credible and stable strategic regime.

Examining the Reykjavik summit and its aftermath also provides a means of analy the manner in which the Alliance managed the SDI dispute. Once again, the Reagan Administration presented a proposal as a fait accompli and then attempted to mitigate the severity of both the content of the proposals as well as the manner in which it was presented. Analy why this pattern repeated itself can provide valuable insight into why the compromises and agreed upon procedures that had been established within the Alliance with respect to SDI from late 1984 through 1986 were suddenly jettisoned at the Reykjavik summit.

Finally, the Reykjavik summit and its aftermath enables us to determine the impact of East-West relations on the SDI debate. The dramatic improvement in US-Soviet relations that followed the initial acrimony surrounding the summit affords an opportunity to investigate the impact of the state of East-West relations on Alliance unity.

II. THE BRITISH REACTION TO REYKJAVIK AND ITS AFTERMATH

The proposals discussed at the Reykjavik summit came as a profound shock to the British government. While Thatcher's government was weary of SDI and the anti-nuclear trend that it had initiated, the scope and rapidity of change discussed at Reykjavik stunned the British government and generated wide-spread doubts about the competence and steadiness of the Reagan Administration. Thatcher took immediate - and largely successful- steps to minimize the impact of the Reykjavik revelations by travelling to Washington shortly following the US-Soviet summit and pressing Reagan to reaffirm publicly the fundamental tenets of Western defence strategy, tenets that were nearly jettisoned in Iceland. Despite her success in forcing the Reagan Administration to retreat from some of the more radical proposals broached at Reykjavik, doubts lingered about the long-term impact of the US offer to change radically the Western security structure. That SDI, which had in so many ways contributed to the atmosphere in which such radical proposals could be tabled, should have in the end prevented the dismantlement of the Western security structure was ironic, but, in the end, did little to engender support for SDI. If anything, the Reykjavik summit reinforced the belief that SDI was a dangerous and unwelcome threat to the continued viability of the deterrent regime that, from the dominant European perspective at least, had ensured security successfully for over a generation.

Thatcher reported to Parliament that she and Reagan had reaffirmed "the need for effective nuclear deterrence as a cornerstone of NATO's strategy."[2] They agreed that the Alliance "would continue to need effective nuclear deterrence, based on a mix of systems"[3] to ensure its security. She related that Reagan had reaffirmed that the United States would continue to modernize its strategic nuclear forces. Britain welcomed this latter assurance not only because it gave concrete expression to the Reagan Administration's commitment to continue basing Western security on nuclear deterrence but ensured the continued viability of the British deterrent. Thatcher informed Parliament that Reagan had "confirmed the United States' full support for the arrangements made to modernise Britain's independent nuclear deterrent with Trident.[4] That she could do so came as a relief insofar as the Labour Party had portrayed Reykjavik as a great blow to the Conservative government's nuclear modernization plans.

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[2] Margaret Thatcher, Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) Vol. 105, (18 November 1986), col. 441.

The Labour Party was critical of the Reagan Administration's refusal to abandon SDI at the Reykjavik summit. Denis Healey remarked that "It is tragic that [SDI] wrecked the whole thing at the last minute because President Reagan must have known this would be the central issue before he left for Reykjavik." Labour Party officials also argued that because Thatcher supported SDI she was at least partly to blame for the failure at Reykjavik, but the role that SDI played at Reykjavik was soon overshadowed by the Soviet Union's linking of SDI to the INF negotiations, which they deplored.[5] And on this issue Labour Party and the Government found themselves in accord.

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[3] Statement on the Defence Estimates 1987, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Defence, London, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, p. 8.

[4] Thatcher, Parliamentary Debates, 18 November 1986, op. cit., co. 441.

Indeed, at their meeting in the United States Thatcher and Reagan agreed that US-Soviet arms negotiations should give priority "to an INF agreement with restraints on shorter-range systems, to a 50 per cent. reduction in strategic offensive weapons and to a ban on chemical weapons."[6] Moreover, they emphasized that nuclear reductions should be considered in the context of the non-nuclear threats which they are designed to deter, stating that "nuclear weapons could not be dealt with in isolation, given the need for a stable balance at all times."[7] In addition Reagan and Thatcher reiterated their continued support for "the SDI research programme which is permitted by the ABM Treaty"[8] as well as their commitment to close Alliance consultation.

British Doubts About US Intentions

Despite Thatcher's success in formalizing the United States' commitment to traditional Alliance defence precepts, British officials believed that the Reykjavik summit was indicative of broad and disturbing trends in US defence policy. The British Government maintained that while the Reykjavik summit did not constitute evidence that the United States was about to retreat to "Fortress America," it was necessary, averred Howe, "to be alert to trends in American thinking which might diminish our security - perhaps not today or tomorrow, but possibly in the longer term."[9]

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[5] See The New York Times, 23 November 1986.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Statement on the Defence Estimate 1987, op. cit., p. 8.

[8] Ibid.

The British government contended that there were "signs of resurgent neo-isolationism in America, and a shift in US attention towards the Pacific Basin, so that Europe is no longer the automatic first concern of many Americans today."[10] Geoffrey Howe argued that although American and European interests continued to be "inextricably linked both economically and strategically,"[11] in fact "Europe no longer dominates American thinking as much as it did in the past."[12] He contended that the United States has devoted more and more attention to the Far East, South-West Asia and Central America. Militarily, these interests - manifested themselves in calls for a reallocation of resources from the US military's dominant mission of defending Europe to "more emphasis on world- wide maritime and air-lift capabilities"[13] that were better suited to support non-European commitments. Howe believed that US interest in restructuring its armed forces toward the ability to intervene effectively in the Third World was partially attributable to the longstanding and growing American perception that Europeans were capable of doing far more than they were to defend themselves. It was therefore imperative, intoned Howe, for Europeans to make clear the "sizable European defence effort"[14] lest the United States come to the conclusion that their partners on the other side of the Atlantic were not pulling their just weight.

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[9] Geoffrey Howe, Speech at Institute of International Relations, Brussels, 16 March 1987, p. 4.

[10] Geoffrey Howe, Speech to International Institute for Strategic Studies, 19 November 1986, p. 10. Emphasis in the original.

[11] Speech by Howe, 16 March 1987, op. cit., p. 4.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

Related to the fear that the United States was losing interest in Europe was the British concern that the traditional American "distaste for reliance on nuclear weapons"[15] was becoming stronger. Howe argued:

> It is not in the American nature to be happy when held hostage to an irresistible threat. Some have questioned whether the US would ever be prepared to use nuclear weapons in response to a Warsaw Pact conventional attack in Europe. Geographically, not being faced with an obvious conventional threat, many Americans see clear attractions in strategic defences.[16]

In addition to revealing the British government's perception that SDI was the most recent embodiment of historical US anti-nuclear proclivities, this statement provided insight into the conceptual chasm that, despite formal agreement on SDI research, still separated Britain and the United States on SDI. Britain maintained that, while arguably beneficial to the United States, strategic defences were essentially incompatible with the continued American commitment to provide nuclear deterrence to Europe and this reflected, at least partially, another dimension of the United States' neo-isolationist impulse. In contrast, the United States viewed SDI as essential to extend credibility to the very commitments that Britain believed it would vitiate. Underlying this disagreement was a more fundamental difference in the respective conception of nuclear strategy, of which the dispute over SDI was but the latest manifestation.

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

Britain and the US Strategic Nuclear Guarantee

Britain maintained that "it is impossible to over-emphasise on this side of the Atlantic the importance of the American contribution to the defence of Europe."[17] Indeed, as Howe stated, "US nuclear protection, and the presence of US troops in Europe, is at the heart of our security strategy."[18] Because these fundamental realities appeared to have been forgotten at Reykjavik, Howe thought it necessary to reaffirm old verities about the nature of the successful security regime that had obtained since World War II. To underline the importance which Britain attached to the US involvement in European affairs, Howe reminded his audience that, historically, deterrence

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[17] Speech by Howe, 19 November 1986, op. cit., p. 20.

[18] Speech by Howe, 16 March 1987, op. cit., p. 1.

> required a recognition by the countries of Western Europe and North America that only through unprecedented peacetime partnership could the common security of one and all be preserved.
> The success of this partnership opened a new era of stability, the fruits of which we enjoy today.
> And essential to this success was the enthusiastic involvement of the United States.[19]

That such a public and explicit articulation of what was after all the well-known basis for the Alliance was deemed necessary indicated just how deeply the Reykjavik summit proposals had threatened the very basis of the Atlantic Alliance and the significance which Europeans ascribed to the fact that such proposals were even contemplated.

Britain regarded "the American strategic nuclear guarantee" as an "irreplaceable"[20] element of the US contribution to European security. The Thatcher government did not believe that it was desirable or possible to replace this guarantee with either a purely European deterrent or a shift from nuclear to conventional deterrence. Howe argued that even with the conventional commitment of the United States "there is no early or practicable prospect of the Alliance getting rid of the massive imbalance of conventional forces against us."[21] Even if it were, this would not constitute a panacea for Western security, for:

Let us assume, just for a moment, that the conventional

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[19] Speech by Howe, 19 November 1986, op. cit., p. 9. Emphasis in the original.

[20] Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

[21] Speech by Howe, 16 March 1987, op. cit., p. 3.

> imbalance could be remedied-and that is, of course, a massive assumption. Would this in itself prevent war? History is full of disagreements and miscalculations of relative military strengths. All too often the true balance has been worked out only on the battlefield. And we must not forget that a war waged with modern conventional weapons would utterly devastate the European continent.[22]

Thatcher argued that only nuclear weapons could prevent conflict:

> The nuclear deterrent has stopped both nuclear and conventional war. It has kept the peace, and this is the most important thing for the future-a peace with freedom and a peace with justice. To throw it away would be utterly futile and rash.[23]

Accordingly, Britain preferred to maintain existing strategic doctrine and believed that "flexible response is the only credible strategy in the face of the Soviet threat as it now stands."[24]

The British government, however, was cognizant that the United States and Europe often held substantially different conceptions of flexible response and feared that these differences were being emphasized too much in the aftermath of Reykjavik. Howe argued that it was, in fact, one of the strengths of flexible response that it was able to accommodate both European and American views of nuclear strategy:

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[22] Geoffrey Howe, "The Foundations and Future of British Security," Speech given on 27 January 1987, reprinted in East-West Relations: Realism, Vigilance and an Open Mind, p. 8. Emphasis in original.

[23] Thatcher, Parliamentary Debates, 18 November 1986, op. cit., col. 443.

[24] Speech by Howe, 19 November 1986, op. cit., p. 19.

> NATO's strategy of flexible response was a prime example of the Alliance's adapting to changed circumstances, and was developed in response to the new strategic situation when the tripwire strategy ceased to be credible.
> It is a practical amalgam that meets the concerns of both pillars of the Alliance.
> It satisfies the Americans, whose natural wish not to place the United States - a nuclear target only - at undue risk leads them to a preference for so-called 'deterrence by denial'.
> While at the same time it meets the equally understandable preference of the European allies for pure deterrence, intended to prevent war of any description.[25]

Accordingly, Howe stated that: "We do not envisage fighting a battlefield or theatre nuclear war confined to Europe. And our concept of deterrence is not based on a pre-determined progression through specific layers of nuclear escalation."[26] In other words, he professed agnosticism concerning the actual manner in which NATO strategy should be implemented if deterrence were to fail. At the same time, Howe maintained that:

> The Soviet Union is not likely to be deterred merely by the threat of wars which would be fought on the territory of its allies. Still less through wars on the territories of its opponents, as some "defensive defence" enthusiasts now advocate. The only sure deterrence is by the threat of weapons capable of inflicting massive and unacceptable damage on the Soviet Union itself.[27]

Yet if Britain believed that it was only through the threat of "inflicting massive and unacceptable damage on the Soviet Union" that deterrence could be ensured, then the American predilection for deterrence by denial could not adequately prevent conflict; only the intention of inflicting devastating retaliation would seem capable of accomplishing the stated objective. But if, on the operational level, Britain eschewed a concept of deterrence that was not based on "pre-determined progression through specific layers of nuclear escalation," it was difficult to see how NATO could execute the threat against Soviet territory that Britain deemed essential for deterrence without embracing a strategy which envisaged immediate and unconstrained strategic nuclear attacks on the Soviet Union at the very beginning of a European conflict. It was, however, precisely the perceived incredibility of such threats that prompted the Alliance to adopt flexible response and Reagan to propose SDI.

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Speech by Howe, 16 March 1987, op. cit., p. 5.

[27] Ibid., p. 3.

In advocating reliance on a threat it did not know how to execute, Britain was in effect suggesting that the Alliance continue to ignore the difference in nuclear strategy that both Reykjavik and SDI had underlined. In short, the British Government wanted to apply its preference for continuity to the Alliance's longstanding reluctance to confront the shortcomings of flexible response as well as the transatlantic disagreement about how it should be resolved.

The British View of SDI After Reykjavik

The British government's efforts after Reykjavik to ensure that the United States commit itself to retaining existing security arrangements dictated its approach to SDI as well. George Younger reiterated the British Government's position that SDI was merely a research programme designed to investigate technologies that may have applications for ballistic missile defence. But he stressed that "British participation is based on the fact that it is research into that possibility and no further."[28] Britain remained steadfast in her insistence that SDI research continue to be conducted in accordance with the strict interpretation of the ABM Treaty and warned that any change in this policy should be subject to negotiation since it would have such a profound affect on arms control negotiations.[29]

In order to refute opposition claims that the United States' pursuit of SDI had prevented historic agreements at Reykjavik, the British government reiterated its long-standing claim that SDI was primarily a response to Soviet BMD research. Younger stated that: "Nothing that happened at Reykjavik alters the fact that the Soviet Union has been engaged in research into strategic defence matters for a long time, and that its efforts at Reykjavik were aimed at trying to prevent the United States from doing the same thing while carrying on doing it itself, which seems wholly unreasonable."[30] To further remove from the

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[28] George Younger, Parliamentary Debates, (House of Commons), Vol. 103, (4 November 1986), col. 785.

[29] Geoffrey Howe, Parliamentary Debates, (House of Commons), Vol. 110 (18 February 1987), col. 898.

[30] Younger, op. cit., col. 784.

United States the onus of blocking arms agreements with the Soviet Union, the British Government reiterated its claim that SDI's origins could be found in the Soviet Union's own strategic defence programmes.[31]

In justifying SDI by reference to Soviet BMD research, the British Government hoped to keep the entire issue of space weapons firmly within the arms control context, allowing British officials to argue that SDI could contribute to a successful outcome at the Geneva arms talks. Indeed, John Stanley, the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, argued in Parliament shortly following Reykjavik that: "If the American Administration had not persevered with the SDI research programme I doubt very much whether we would have under way the most comprehensive and radical arms control negotiations that have taken place for many years."[32] Hence, he maintained that "If the United States simply abandons this research programme it would set the arms control process back rather than take it forward."[33] SDI's potential contribution to achieving offensive reduction was, however, contingent, according to the British government, on blocking its deployment.

Not surprisingly then, Britain opposed efforts by Caspar Weinberger and other senior American officials to effect an early deployment of strategic defence systems. Thatcher believed, however, that the debate concerning early deployment was being played out through the rather arcane argument concerning the proper interpretation of the ABM Treaty. She contended that:

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[31] John Stanley, Parliamentary Debates, (House of Commons), Vol. 102 (23 October 1986), cols. 1293 and 1297.

[32] Stanley, op. cit., col. 1295.

[33] Ibid., col. 1296.

> we are not talking about deployment at the moment. We are talking about how far the research can go under the terms of the treaty. For that there are two interpretations. I must make it absolutely clear that in terms of common sense there is no point in talking about possible deployment until it is known whether something is feasible.[34]

Because she believed that such determinations had yet to be made, she argued that there is "no reason to think that any decisions on deployment of SDI are imminent..."[35]

At the same time, Britain realised that it may be necessary to prepare for a future in which nuclear weapons would play a decidedly less prominent role. Howe argued: "Technology does not stand still. We cannot assume that the present relationship between offence and defence will remain immutable for ever. To abjure research would be to ignore change in quite an artificial way. Even if the US were to do so, the Soviets would certainly impose no such restraint."[36] As the continued attempt to justify SDI research with respect to Soviet BMD research suggests, Britain did not wish to suggest that the possibility of a "'less nuclear'" world was one by which they were particularly enamoured.

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[34] Thatcher, Parliamentary Debates, (House of Commons), Vol. 110, (17 February 1987), col. 765.

[35] Thatcher, Parliamentary Debates, (House of Commons), Vol. 109, (5 February 1987), col. 1137.

[36] Speech by Howe, 19 November 1986, op. cit., p. 17.

Indeed, Britain was less than circumspect in conveying its strong misgivings about the potential consequences of SDI deployment. Howe stated that in contemplating "a strategic relationship more reliant on defences, or even for the abolition of nuclear weapons,"[37] it was essential that the West:

> not let technology drive policy. Nor must we allow it to undermine stability. The vision of a non-nuclear world, to which we should all aspire as an ultimate goal of general disarmament, should not be allowed to obscure what we need for effective deterrence now, or the modest but real steps that we can take to secure reductions in weapon levels and improve East/West relations.[38]

Britain's most profound reservations, however, concerned her deep doctrinal opposition to the strategic vision which SDI embodied:

> To replace the current situation of strategic stability with the unstable international environment that would result from a world made safe for conventional war is not, in my view, an attractive prospect. For the past forty years our security has depended on nuclear weapons. It still does. In looking for an alternative, we must make sure that we look for a better way, not just a different one.[39]

The sentiments expressed by the British Foreign Secretary echoed the concerns that the British government voiced when the Reagan Administrations originally launched the Strategic Defense Initiative. That this should be so was not at all surprising insofar as the implementation of the Reykjavik proposals would have in essence achieved through bilateral agreement what the Reagan Administration had hoped could be achieved through SDI. Although West European governments and critics of Reagan's proposals within his own government persuaded him against implementing the Reykjavik proposals, the trends set in motion by the Iceland meeting as well as the INF treaty led to an appreciable change in European security structures that brought the continent closer to the type of reduced reliance on nuclear weapons envisaged by SDI than most West Europeans would have liked.

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[39] Ibid.

III. THE WEST GERMAN RESPONSE TO REYKJAVIK AND ITS AFTERMATH

The Reykjavik summit placed the government of the Federal Republic in a difficult position. While the ruling centre-right coalition, like the British and French governments, believed that the United States had come dangerously close to signing agreements that would have seriously undermined West European security, other considerations influenced the manner in which the West German government reacted to the Iceland meeting. The mere fact that Gorbachev and Reagan could have contemplated such far reaching solutions to long-standing issues of contention indicated to many West Germans that the nature of the US-Soviet relationship was undergoing fundamental changes. The prospect that the United States and the Soviet Union could reach cooperative solutions to security issues led to the hope that the military confrontation in, and thus the political division of, Europe could be overcome. West Germany realised that for this to occur would require a delicate balancing of the need for continued security with encouraging the trend of better US-Soviet relations.

More immediately, however, the Reykjavik summit created political difficulties for the West German government. The SPD was highly critical of the Reagan Administration's refusal to abandon SDI at the Iceland meeting and did not share the relief felt by the government that the radical proposals tabled had failed to be agreed upon. This situation left the West German government in the position of denying that SDI had prevented an agreement with which they were in any case less than enamoured.

Kohl's government therefore praised the cooperative spirit in which the United States and the Soviet Union were conducting their negotiations, while distancing themselves and quietly trying to change some of the more radical proposals that had been broached. This stance they believed would enable West Germany to exploit the positive political direction of US-Soviet relations without encouraging agreements that undermined European security. Kohl and his government placed great emphasis on achieving an INF agreement, although the zero option was regarded sceptically by most security experts within the CDU, including Defence Minister Wörner. In many respects the results of the Reykjavik summit highlighted the traditional dilemma of West German security policy, namely, attempting to maintain a strong military posture while attempting to foster an East-West climate conducive to overcoming the division of Europe.

The SPD attempted to exploit the fact that Reykjavik exposed this dilemma. SPD spokesman stated that they regretted that SDI had blocked what they regarded as desirable agreements. Horst Ehmke a leading figure in formulating SPD positions on disarmament argued that the Reykjavik summit was "a black Sunday for humanity."[40] Moreover, Hans-Jochen Vogel, the leader of the SPD, attempted to lay the blame for the failure of Reykjavik partially on the West German government because they supported SDI.

In order to counter the claims of the SPD opposition and preserve allied unity, the Kohl government promoted the Reykjavik summit as a success. The centre-right coalition was particularly keen to dispel the widely held opinion that the Reagan Administration's refusal to abandon SDI was responsible for the US-Soviet impasse, lest the German government's support for SDI research be seen as having contributed to the failure to reach sweeping arms control proposals. The Kohl government, like its European counterparts, was, therefore, concerned that if Reykjavik was generally perceived as a failure, the United States would be seen as responsible for undermining the prospects for arms control.

On October 21-24, 1986, Kohl met with Reagan in Washington to discuss the Reykjavik summit. While privately he expressed misgivings concerning the content of the US proposals at Reykjavik, including the fact that they had not been previously discussed within the Alliance, Kohl was primarily interested in demonstrating US-European unanimity concerning the Iceland meeting. Reporting to the Bundestag, he stated that he concurred with Shultz's contention "that now we could possibly reach a watershed that could lead to real disarmament."[41] Kohl argued that "the American President - as he indicated in his March 1983 SDI speech - is ready for very wide ranging reductions of the offensive nuclear weapons. It is his goal to eliminate all offensive ballistic missiles."[42] Kohl hoped that drawing attention to these points would counter opposition claims that the United States was not sufficiently committed to disarmament.

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[40] Karen DeYoung, "NATO Allies Avoid Criticism, but Seek SDI Compromise," The Washington Post, 14 October 1986, p. A-20.

Kohl also defended the Reagan Administration's refusal to bargain away SDI. In keeping with past efforts to emphasize Soviet activities in BMD research, the Chancellor side-stepped the issue of whether the Reykjavik summit indicated the Reagan Administration's commitment to SDI deployment, emphasizing instead that "The United States is not willing to introduce the core of the research programme of the American Strategic Defence Initiative into the Geneva Disarmament negotiations as an object that could be negotiated away. Washington will, like the Soviet

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[41] Helmut Kohl, Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, 10 Wahlperiode, Plenarprotokoll 10/227-10/244, 6 November 1986, p. 18739.

[42] Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

Union on her part, conduct its research programme."[43] In a further effort to shift the focus of the debate away from the deployment issue, Kohl underlined that the Soviet Union had dropped its insistence on confining BMD research to the laboratory,[44] hoping that highlighting greater US-Soviet agreement on research would both legitimate US SDI research and deflect attention from the existing disagreement on deployment. Moreover, he contended that the United States increasingly viewed SDI as a means of guaranteeing "against a possible misuse [of arms control] during the foreseen disarmament process."[45]

Kohl argued that the Reagan Administration's offer of a ten-year period of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty constituted proof of American flexibility and augured well for future success at Geneva. Significantly, however, he did not mention what was implicit in this American offer, namely that following this ten-year period and subsequent negotiations, the United States (and the Soviet Union) would be free to deploy ballistic missiles defences. Instead, and in keeping with the desire to emphasize agreement, Kohl told the Bundestag that he and Reagan had reached similar conclusions concerning the significance of the summit: "Above all we agree that the meeting in Iceland represented a significant stage of East-West dialogue in which in the realm of arms control and disarmament considerable progress is being made and that the process should go forward on the basis of this progress."[46] Kohl also stressed that the proposals broached at Reykjavik remained on the negotiating table and that careful and meticulous deliberation between experts could enable the US and Soviet Union to transform general agreement into concrete achievements.

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., p. 18740.

[45] Ibid., p. 18739.

In explaining his governments post-Reykjavik position, Kohl emphasized that the West German government considered an INF agreement to be the top priority in US-Soviet negotiations. He supported an INF agreement that would eliminate all long range intermediate nuclear forces in Europe while allowing both the United States and the Soviet Union to maintain 100 missiles in Asia. Such an agreement could, according to Kohl, be quickly consummated if the Soviet Union were to abandon the linkage between SDI and INF which it once again introduced at Reykjavik. The Chancellor argued that "no arms control category should be held hostage to another category where no true relationship exists between the two."[47] He considered it particularly important to demonstrate that the Soviet Union was imposing an unrealistic and unnecessary linkage between SDI and INF, so that the Soviet Union could not successfully portray SDI to European publics as the only obstacle to an INF agreement, thereby generating pressure on the United States to abandon its research programme or risk a split with its European Allies. Kohl stated that "a policy of all or nothing blocks all possible progress."[48]

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[46] Ibid., p. 18738.

[47] Ibid., p. 18740.

West German Concerns About the INF Negotiations

If, however, the Soviet Union were to unlink the INF negotiations from the other negotiations, the Federal Republic insisted that the establishment of grey zones, in which the Soviet Union enjoyed advantages, be avoided. Alfred Dregger remarked that German and European interests could only be secured if arms control negotiations were expanded to encompass areas previously not covered in the Geneva negotiations. He wanted to avoid a situation in which the United States and the Soviet Union would transfer their arms competition from LRINFs to SRINFs. At the same time, Dregger clearly rejected the Soviet proposal, broached at Reykjavik, to freeze the levels of shorter-range weapons. Instead, Dregger proposed[49] that the United States and the Soviet Union agree to reduce present levels and establish mutual ceilings, giving NATO the right to match Soviet levels of deployment. Moreover, foreshadowing an issue that was to take on increasing importance following the Soviet Union's eventual decision to unlink the INF negotiations from other arms control concerns, he stated that he was particularly keen to see the issue of the missiles with ranges between 100 and 500km resolved as they were targeted almost exclusively on West Germany and the Benelux countries.

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Alfred Dregger, Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, 10. Wahlperiode, Plenarprotokol 10/227-10/244, 6 November 1986, p. 18769.

This concern pointed to the conceptual and political problems that the Federal Republic believed were inherent in the implementation - as opposed to the advocacy - of the zero option. Eliminating LRINF deployments inevitably placed greater attention on the SRINF (500 to 1000km) and SNF (below 500km) weapons systems, particularly since the Soviet Union had increased the number and sophistication of these systems since the double track decision was announced. The German government was understandably reluctant to have these weapons now become the primary focus of the strategic equation in Europe, after having just recently survived the political crisis engendered by the Alliance's attempt to deny the Soviet Union an advantage in LRINF deployments. To have courted a similar episode would have, in all likelihood, strained domestic and transatlantic solidarity beyond the limits of prudence. This was particularly true since, unlike the case of the LRINF deployments, it was impossible for the West German government to argue that SRINF deployments could increase German security by ensuring that a nuclear conflict would not be confined to Europe, since their ranges dictated that they would be used only on East European territory.

The elimination of the LRINF forces severely undermined the rationale for the retention, let alone the modernization, of the SRINF and SNF forces by raising fears of singularization within the Federal Republic. Significantly, there was essential unanimity on this point in German political circles. While the SPD, consistent with its anti-nuclear philosophy, opposed all European land based nuclear missiles as a matter of principle, the Kohl Government, including (and especially) its most conservative elements, saw NATO's land based nuclear forces below the LRINF range as primarily justifiable as a means to link any nuclear use in the European theatre to the use of Pershing II and GLCM's and thus the escalation of conflict to Soviet territory - a link that they believed would prevent the Soviet Union from initiating any conflict. But with the imminent or prospective disappearance of the US LRINF deployments, West German officials believed that a vital rung in the escalation ladder would be removed. This development placed the shorter range weapons in a significantly different context. Therefore, instead of performing the role of a link to LRINF and eventually to US strategic forces, the shorter range weapons were seen as the last rung in a purely European escalation ladder - a condition that evoked fears of nuclear conflict being limited to Europe.

In fact, many West Germans maintained that it would have been far better had the sequence of arms control agreements been reversed. A leading CSU politician, Theo Waigel, stated that German interests "would have been better served - this has been repeatedly stated by speakers from different fractions - if the nuclear disarmament had not started with weapons over 1000 km, but instead with nuclear weapons with a range of under 150km, with the so called battlefield nuclear weapons and with conventional weapons. We would have given preference to a different sequence for the disarmament process."[50]

This strong West German preference to see shorter range nuclear missiles, rather than intermediate range nuclear missiles, become the focus of arms control negotiations was attributable to their conception of the role of intermediate range nuclear missiles in NATO strategy. Wörner stated that:

> All considerations, which through the weakening of the middle element of the NATO triad - the short and medium range nuclear systems - reduce the link between conventional and strategic nuclear systems are unrealistic and incompatible with the security demands of Europe, and also especially the Federal Republic of Germany.
> It is precisely this middle element of the Triad that materializes the unity of the alliance and decisively contributes to the coupling of the strategic forces and the security of the United States to European security.[51]

According to this logic, the elimination of this "middle element" would precipitate the decoupling of European and American security. Yet the momentum of arms control was clearly overtaking reservations concerning its precise content, and according to Wörner, undermining nuclear deterrence through the progressive removal of the instruments necessary for its effectiveness.

Wörner believed that Gorbachev was encouraging Western denuclearization proclivities by attempting to subordinate all other issues of peace to the question of nuclear arms control, thereby ignoring the other elements that constitute a stable security regime. He interpreted Gorbachev's strategy as a manifestation of the traditional Soviet policy of attempting to eliminate the American nuclear presence from Europe as a prelude to the dissolution of the NATO Alliance. In response Wörner insisted that:

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[50] Theo Waigel, Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, 11. Wahlperiode, Plenarprotokolle 11/1-11/21, 4 June 1987, p. 946.

[51] Ibid., p. 18.

> arms control policy must contribute to war prevention. It must preserve the strategic unity of the territory of the alliance. It must maintain the community of risk between the United States and Europe. And it cannot create differing zones of security... It also cannot put into question the ability of the Alliance to control crises. He who does not apply these criteria to arms control attempts harms our security.[52]

The implementation of the zero option for LRINF, therefore, threatened to bring about the very results that West Germany most wanted to avoid; but politically it could not oppose an agreement based on proposals which West Germany had a critical role in formulating.[53] In response, German officials made a virtue of necessity. Manfred Wörner stated that West Germany's continued support for the zero option, although it "contains unarguable politico-military disadvantages for Western Europe,"[54] demonstrated the West's willingness to compromise in arms control negotiations. But more importantly, the prospect of the zero option's implementation demonstrated that the political requirements which dictated support for arms control agreements were coming increasingly into conflict with West European security requirements.

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[52] Wörner, Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, op. cit., p. 18785.

[53] See chapter 2.

[54] Speech by Wörner, 31 January 1987, op. cit., p. 21.

West German Anxieties About SDI After Reykjavik

The perception that the result of Reykjavik would increase the likelihood of nuclear war being confined to Europe did not lie solely in the calculation that Reykjavik brought the zero option closer to realization; it also stemmed from the German interpretation of American proposals to eliminate all long-range ballistic nuclear forces. Dregger maintained that the realization of these proposals would compel West Germany "to contemplate what consequences these really revolutionary changes in the present security structures could have for German and European security."[55] In order to place these proposals in their proper context he implored the Bundestag to view them as an understandable US desire to achieve invulnerability: "the Americans first lost the condition of invulnerability since strategic systems have existed that can reach her" and thus "historically it is thoroughly understandable that the USA, after having lost its nuclear superiority at all levels, desires a ballistic missile- free world."[56] And "therefore, because we Germans, if we want to maintain the alliance, cannot simply ignore the security interests of the USA, we have supported the *SDI programme* of our American allies, since, as a purely defensive system, it is not morally contestable and with appropriate precautions can also be made useful for the European allies."[57]

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[55] Alfred Dregger, Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, 10. Wahlperiode, Plenarprotokoll 10/227-10/244, 6 November 1986, p. 18766.

At the same time, Dregger argued that "the Americans must understand that if the Alliance is to be maintained, their wish for invulnerability not be achieved at the expense of an even greater vulnerability of the Europeans, especially the non-nuclear armed Europeans."[58] In other words the Federal Republic deemed the continuation of the US strategic nuclear guarantee essential so long as Europe remained threatened. And the elimination of strategic ballistic missiles could render such guarantees unenforceable and ultimately make Europe either a battleground for limited nuclear war or, absent a plausible role for tactical nuclear weapons, safe for a conventional war.

Ironically though, it was SDI itself which blocked the elimination of strategic ballistic missiles. At the same time, it could be argued that the SDI created the strategic and tactical context in which these proposals were offered. In order to assuage Soviet fears that the combination of SDI and the continued existence of US strategic ballistic missiles could pose a grave threat, the Reagan Administration, eager to remove obstacles to SDI deployment, offered to eliminate all ballistic missiles. More broadly though, these proposals elicited concern because they indicated that the original vision of perfect defence against ballistic missiles was, after all, the one that Reagan was pursuing; and as such the Reykjavik proposals were a logical concomitant to Reagan's vision of a nuclear free world ensured by SDI.

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[56] *Ibid*.

[57] *Ibid*. Emphasis in original.

[58] *Ibid*. Emphasis in original.

The anxiety which the potential elimination of strategic ballistic missiles engendered in Europe testified to an important aspect of the SDI controversy. It was not the prospect of BMD deployment but the strategic philosophy that allowed it to be even contemplated which Europeans found most disturbing. It indicated a growing reluctance to use strategic nuclear weapons, an aversion made all the more worrying in light of the increased importance that strategic nuclear weapons would play on the ladder of nuclear escalation if the LRINF were removed. But most important it was the anti-nuclear tendency which the US proposals signified which generated European concern about their security.

West Germany was concerned that the Reagan Administration was pursuing nuclear arms control without giving proper attention to the critical role that nuclear weapons played in Western security. This fear was rendered particularly acute in light of the degree to which American policy, unwittingly, dovetailed with Soviet disarmament objectives. The combination of US and Soviet arms control policies evoked the fear that arms control agreements could be reached that would undermine rather than strengthen European security. Accordingly, Wörner warned that it was important that "Disarmament not become and end in itself."[59]

West Germany was particularly concerned that the rush to nuclear disarmament would decrease or even vitiate the role of nuclear weapons in deterring conventional conflict. Kohl gave voice to these concerns in his Bundestag speech following his October visit to Washington. He told his colleagues that during his meetings with Reagan in Washington, "I explained that for Germans and other Europeans their peace and arms control policy depends on preventing every type of war - nuclear and conventional. Disarmament agreements must bring more and not less security for the allies also."[60] In order to ensure that East-West agreements indeed fulfilled these criteria, German officials constantly reiterated the fundamental tenets of Alliance strategy and the growing threat which NATO confronted.

Hence Wörner, while indicating his support for the convergence of views between the United States and the Soviet Union at Reykjavik, reminded the Bundestag that arms control served security only if it eschewed wishful thinking and concentrated on military realities. And for Western Europe these realities remained stark. According to the Defence Minister: The Soviet Union's "military doctrine remains offensive; it aims at the invasion of opposing territory, including our territory."[61] Moreover, the Warsaw Pact continued to enjoy conventional superiority vis-a-vis NATO. Wörner argued that to allow arms control to focus exclusively on nuclear weapons risked undermining Europeans' security:

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[59] Manfred Wörner, Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, 10-Wahlperiode, Plenarprotokall 10/227-10/244, 6 November 1986, p. 18785.

[60] Kohl, op. cit., p. 18739.

> The concentration of the discussion about peace, security and disarmament exclusively on nuclear arms, the removal of which is being encouraged or pursued on all sides, distracts us from the modern conventional forces which, on the Soviet side, could be used for the conquest of Western Europe, if they are given a free ride. It cannot be the purpose and goal of western security policy to denude Europe of nuclear weapons of all ranges and thus create a denuclearised theatre of conflict, in which the superior conventional attack forces of the Warsaw Pact are dominant."[62]

The very real possibility that the logic of the arms control negotiations could lead to precisely such a result led the West German Defence Minister to reiterate emphatically what he thought many had forgotten in their zeal to achieve dramatic arms control agreements:

> There is no substitute for the nuclear strategy that has helped preserve American and European peace; and it makes no sense, to remove nuclear weapons from the unity of the military instruments of this strategy, in order to isolatedly subjugate them to arms control, while

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[61] Wörner, Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, op. cit., p. 18785.

[62] Rede des Bundesminister der Verteidigung, Manfred Wörner, 24th Wehrkundetagung, Munich, 31 January 1987, Material Fur Die Presse, p. 16. Emphasis in the original.

> conventional forces remain free and able to be used for war as an instrument of aggressive policy.[63]

Clearly, Wörner feared that, absent some change in the trend of US-Soviet negotiations, the danger of denuclearization could become a reality.

Reykjavik and The Possibility of Radical Political Change

Despite the concerns that West German officials had about the security implication of the trends set in motion at Reykjavik and manifested most prominently in the INF negotiations, they continued to praise the results and implications of the Reykjavik summit because they interpreted the fact of US-Soviet convergence as far more important than the specific nature of the agreements. Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher was particularly eager to stress the positive aspects of the summit. He argued that it should have come as no surprise that the United States and the Soviet Union had considered such far ranging disarmament proposals. Genscher reminded the Bundestag that Reagan had indicated his desire to eliminate all nuclear weapons in his "Star Wars" speech of March 23, 1983. Moreover, Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Gromyko had also committed their countries to the same goal in their January 8, 1985 agreement, although many had apparently not taken these objectives seriously.

The West German government believed that the Reykjavik summit offered the possibility of a new security regime through which the division of Europe and Germany could be overcome. Dregger maintained that contrary to the perceptions of the SPD, "Reykjavik was not a failure; Reykjavik initiated a development, the ends of which are not yet foreseeable, a development that could change the world."[64] He argued that the willingness to reach cooperative solutions evidenced at Reykjavik augured well for improved East-West relations and a reduction of the military confrontation in Europe. This in turn could lead to a peaceful order in Europe in which the division of the European continent could be overcome.

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[63] Ibid., p. 15.

A New Spirit of East-West Cooperation

The West German government believed that the most significant aspect of the Reykjavik summit was not that the United States and the Soviet Union failed to reach agreement, but that the negotiations themselves revealed a desire to reach cooperative solutions. Genscher contended that "the meeting at Reykjavik has pushed open the door to a cooperative security policy. On both sides a changed thinking is revealing itself, one that is aimed at replacing confrontation and arming and counter arming with cooperation."[65] He stated that the United States and the Soviet Union "want to regulate the relationship between offensive and defensive weapons, and they want to reduce the danger of a destruction of mankind through arms control steps. The consciousness of their joint responsibility for the survival of mankind not only opens the way for disarmament negotiations, no, this consciousness aims at an improvement in the relationship between the two great powers as well."[66]

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[64] Dregger, Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, 6 November 1986, op. cit., p. 18763.

[65] Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, 11. Wahlperiode, Plenarprotokolle 11/1-11/21, 7 May 1987, p. 557. Emphasis in the original.

The West German government realised that this outcome was not guaranteed since it depended to a great extent on the ultimate intentions of Gorbachev. Even Genscher conceded that the evidence that existed in the aftermath of Reykjavik presented "only a possibility and no more."[67] Yet the opportunities that lay ahead if Gorbachev's "new thinking" turned out to be genuine, were of such momentous importance for the West, and particularly Germany, that Genscher implored the West to respond with vision:

> If there should be a chance today that, after 40 years of East-West confrontation, there could be a turning-point in East-West relations, it would be a mistake of historic dimensions for the West to let this chance slip just because it cannot escape from a way of thinking which invariably expects the worst from the Soviet Union.[68]

At the same time that the West German government was stressing that it would be shortsighted to ignore the possibilities that new Soviet thinking offered, they were equally firm in recommending continued vigilance and defence preparedness. Although Wörner was the primary expounder of this viewpoint[69], it was one Genscher also shared: "It should be beyond dispute that today still any Western policy towards Eastern Europe is possible solely on the basis of a reliable defense and deterrence capability. It is a fact that the military situation has not yet altered to the extent of allowing a different approach."[70] Moreover, Genscher believed "European security can also in the future only be guaranteed through the association of the European and North American democracies. The transatlantic Alliance is now and in the future indispensable."[71] And as Dregger stressed, "Westpolitik is the basis for Ostpolitik."[72]

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[66] Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, 11. Wahlperiode, Plenarprotokolle 11/1-11/21, 4 June 1987, p. 950. Emphasis in the original.

[67] Genscher, "Taking Gorbachev at His Word," op. cit., p. 4.

[68] Ibid., p. 5.

Need for Greater European Cooperation on Security Issues

But West German officials also realized that the contemplated arms control agreements could have a significant impact on the European security regime, and they wanted to ensure that German interests were taken into consideration, preferably through a more coordinated European defence identity. Dregger, for instance, argued that "From the possible changes in the security structures of the two world powers the future fate of Germany and Europe will be deeply affected. In this situation it is our responsibility to introduce into the discussion between the world powers European security interests."[73] This required, according to Dregger, that the German-French security collaboration be widened to include other West European countries. He hoped that this would allow for a gradual evolution of the role of Europe from one of economic cooperation to one that embraced greater cooperation in the security field. This was considered essential to allow Europe to exercise its proper weight in East-West arms control negotiations. They therefore welcomed the efforts of French Prime Minister Chirac to revitalize the WEU so that it could serve as a base from which to establish a European defence identity.[74]

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[69] Speech by Wörner, 31 January 1987, op. cit., p. 14.

[70] Genscher, "Taking Gorbachev at his word," op. cit., p. 4.

[71] Genscher, Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, 4 June 1987, op. cit., p. 951. Emphasis in the original.

[72] Dregger, Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, 6 November 1986, op. cit., p. 18763.

The Significance of Reykjavik For the West German Government

To conclude, the West German government's reaction to the Reykjavik summit was profoundly ambivalent. This ambivalence reflected the dual and often competing imperatives of West German security policy: detente and defence. There was a consensus in the West German cabinet that the double zero option, especially when viewed within the context of the Reykjavik summit and the

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[73] Ibid.

[74] The role of the WEU will be discussed more fully at the end of this chapter.

SDI programme, was not in West European security interests because it could encourage the complete denuclearization of Western Europe and vitiate the validity of NATO's flexible response doctrine. In short, they feared that the INF treaty would undermine the very security they were ostensibly designed to promote. Fears about the INF treaty were particularly acute in West Germany not only because West Germany was most geographically exposed to Soviet conventional forces, but because the US-Soviet treaty mandated the elimination of intermediate and medium range missiles but not the shortest range systems which West Germans saw as leaving them particularly exposed.[75]

Nonetheless, because the INF treaty was seen as the most visible symbol of improved East-West relations, and given the importance that the West German government attached to detente, the option of openly opposing the INF treaty was not contemplated. West German officials, particularly Defence Minister Wörner, were placed in the awkward position of being both enthusiastic supporters of the INF treaty for the reasons mentioned above, yet also most concerned about its implications for the credibility of nuclear deterrence.

At the same time, the West German government believed that the substantial changes that were produced by the INF treaty and the even more far-reaching changes broached at the Reykjavik summit held out the prospect for a radical transformation of the West European security regime which in turn could lead to the end of the division of Europe. The West German government believed that SDI was a driving force behind the possibility of this change. The Reykjavik summit and the INF treaty therefore produced a change in the West German governments position toward SDI. While they continued to oppose deployment, they maintained that proposals and trends set in motion by SDI were instrumental in initiating change in the West European security regime. Thus, in some respects, the West German government began to believe that the issue of the deployment of BMDs was not the primary issue raised by SDI.

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[75] This was a case where perception and reality diverged rather starkly. It is true that West German, (as well as the Benelux countries) were vulnerable to these systems while Britain, France, and Italy were not; all of Western Europe was vulnerable to Soviet Variable Range I.C.B.M.'s which although classified as strategic also were targeted at Western Europe. Moreover, the Soviet Union retained the ability to strike all of Western Europe with nuclear armed aircraft.

IV. THE FRENCH REACTION TO REYKJAVIK AND ITS AFTERMATH

The French government was an unambiguous and vocal critic of the proposals tabled at the Reykjavik summit. French officials believed that the results of the US-Soviet meeting in Iceland threatened to initiate a process that would delegitimate nuclear deterrence and thereby undermine the very basis of European security. In addition, the French government was concerned that the Iceland meeting could undermine the consensus behind nuclear deterrence within France itself. While Paris regarded the manner in which the American government conducted itself in Iceland as irresponsible and improvised, it later came to the view that

Reykjavik needed to be seen within the context of the Reagan Administration's overall strategy to devalue the significance of nuclear weapons and seek accommodation with the Soviet Union on this basis. French officials regarded this attempt as dangerous for it lost sight of the irreplaceable significance of nuclear weapons to Western security and dovetailed with long-standing Soviet efforts to denuclearize the European continent.

Accordingly, the proposals tabled at Reykjavik by the United States and the Soviet Union evoked considerable concern in France. Moreover, French officials were less reticent than their European counterparts in articulating their misgivings. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jean-Bernard Raimond, succinctly encapsulated the French government's reactions when he characterized the plans outlined at Reykjavik as "probably utopian"[76] and most likely "illusory or even dangerous."[77]

French officials were critical of both Soviet and US attempts to alter radically the established deterrent regime. Raimond stated that Soviet calls for the complete elimination of ballistic missiles within ten years "cannot be considered realistic."[78] And US proposals for the elimination of ballistic missiles constituted a "risky gamble on maintaining American technological superiority in third-generation cruise missiles and stealth bombers."[79] Furthermore, Raimond argued that such a proposal was "quite obviously a non-negotiable proposal for the USSR, since it would amount to abandoning investments made since the '60's."[80] Aside from the staggering technical difficulties that such a transformation of the Western and Eastern nuclear arsenals would entail, it was unclear to France what could possibly be gained by such a new deterrent regime.

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[76] Statement of Jean-Bernard Raimond, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the Geneva Disarmament Conference, 19 February 1987, Speeches and Statements, Service de Presse et d'Information, Ambassade de France à Londres, London, p. 2.

[77] Speech of Jean-Bernard Raimond at the Institute of Higher National Defence Studies, 14 March 1987, Speeches and Statements, Service de Presse et d'Information, Ambassador de France a Londres, London, p. 9.

Despite its assessment that the Reykjavik proposals were unachievable, the French government was concerned that merely broaching such far-ranging proposals could "weaken the foundations or our present-day security."[81] Raimond contended that if the public were to gain the impression that the United States was serious about abandoning its ballistic missile force, removing its missiles from Europe, and developing "a more conventionally-orientated deterrence,"[82] it would jeopardise public support for nuclear deterrence. He argued that instead of contemplating highly unlikely, and ill-advised scenarios concerning complete nuclear disarmament, it would be better to "give priority to what is possible and desirable at this stage and avoid raising prospects likely to weaken politically the nuclear deterrent on which our continent's security will depend for the foreseeable future."[83]

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[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Statement by Raimond, 19 February 1987, op. cit., p. 2.

[82] Ibid.

The French government was also concerned that the mere spectre of the superpowers giving up their nuclear arsenals would undermine the rationale for France's continued possession of a nuclear deterrent. Thus, in the aftermath of the Reykjavik summit, France missed few opportunities to reiterate the continued validity of its retention of an independent nuclear deterrent. Indeed, in response to a question about whether an agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union would cause France to change its defence policy, President Francois Mitterrand replied that:

> France's policy is one of nuclear deterrence. Why and how would that strategy be set aside, since it is the very basis of our security? For my part, I am not considering the possibility of France giving up her nuclear strategy, which is a deterrent strategy aware of its own limitations; its object is by no means to have an offensive capability, it simply rests on the idea that France must stay above the credibility threshold, so that a war against her would bring absolutely no advantage or profit to whoever might think of waging one. No, there is no question of changing France's strategy.[84]

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[83] Speech by Raimond, 14 March 1987, op. cit., p. 9.

[84] Press Conference of Francois Mitterrand, London, 16 October 1986, in Speeches and Statements, Service de Presse et d'Information, Ambassade de France a Londres, London, 3.

By denying any plans for obtaining "an offensive capability," Mitterrand was emphasizing the different function of France's nuclear deterrent and thus stressing that what transpired at Reykjavik should not affect the validity of the French deterrent.

France was similarly concerned that the results of the Reykjavik summit tended to undermine the very concept of nuclear deterrence. French officials maintained that "Nuclear deterrence remains the only way effectively to prevent any war in Europe. There is no medium-term alternative."[85] Furthermore, in a scarcely concealed reference to SDI, Raimond contended that "Developments likely to flow from technological advances must be directed towards strengthening deterrence, not calling it into question."[86] That this latter point required reiteration was significant, for it demonstrated the extent to which the American proposals at Reykjavik called into question France's previous assessment that SDI was not likely to undermine the traditional conception of nuclear deterrence. This realisation as well as the perception that the Reykjavik proposals constituted a threat to the very foundation of European security prompted French officials to articulate in the strongest and most public manner what they believed to be the fundamental realities of European security requirements.

France maintained that in addressing West European security the question of nuclear weapons could not be considered in isolation. It was necessary, argued Raimond, that the issue of nuclear, conventional and chemical weapons "be considered as a whole."[87] French officials were concerned that in contemplating the elimination or drastic reduction in nuclear weapons the United States was losing sight of the vital role that nuclear weapons played in counterbalancing traditional East-West disparities in conventional and chemical forces. Mitterrand remarked that had an agreement been reached at Reykjavik, "the question would immediately have arisen of the conventional arms imbalance in Europe, which was the original reason for deploying nuclear weapons thirty years ago and is still a reality today."[88] In short, the French were concerned that the Reagan Administration, in its anti-nuclear zeal, was failing to take into consideration the fact that nuclear weapons served purposes other than deterring Soviet nuclear weapons, and that should they be eliminated or drastically reduced the conditions that originally rendered them necessary would still obtain.

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[85] Speech by Raimond, 14 March 1987, op. cit., p. 10.

[86] Ibid.

France stressed that effective deterrence vis-a-vis the Soviet Union "necessitates the strategic coupling of the two sides of the Atlantic."[89] And this, according to Chirac, would require "the presence of American conventional and nuclear forces on our continent."[90] That the French government, which usually was reluctant to articulate Europe's ultimate dependence on the United States for its security, felt obliged to state so openly the requirements for extended deterrence attested to the deep anxiety which the Reykjavik proposals aroused in France. This admission was noteworthy as it demonstrated that the French (doubts about the credibility of US nuclear guarantees notwithstanding) viewed the continued American presence in Europe as indispensable to their security. Ironically, these sentiments were expressed at precisely the same time when it appeared that the United States was about to fulfil General de Gaulle's prophesy concerning the United States's eventual abandonment of Europe and vindicate, at least partially, the independent course that France chose in the 1960's.

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[87] Ibid.

[88] Statement of Pierre Morel, French Permanent Representative at the Disarmament Conference, Before First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, 17 October 1986, Speeches and Statements, Service de Presse et d'Information, Ambassade de France a Londres, London, p. 2.

[89] Ibid.

Thus, Reykjavik served both to vindicate France's assessment of US unreliability and to expose the limitations of the strategy which General de Gaulle envisaged as replacing the US nuclear guarantee. In many respects, Reykjavik forced France to confront the incommensurability of its doctrine and its strategic nuclear capabilities. It was one thing, they discovered, to point out the logical inconsistencies in US extended deterrence doctrine; it was something else, given France's relatively modest resources and the still incomplete state of European defence cooperation, to develop a more credible alternative. Given these difficulties

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[90] Ibid.

France felt most secure in embracing the status quo, namely, continued reliance on the residual credibility of US extended deterrence and the maintenance of its own independent nuclear deterrent.

In keeping with its declared preference for a continuation of existing security arrangements, France argued that arms control agreements "must aim at strengthening security at lower arms levels through realistic verifiable agreements."[91] While ostensibly a platitudinous endorsement of long-standing arms control positions, this statement was revealing. In advocating security at "lower arms levels" France was implicitly challenging the desirability of eliminating nuclear weapons. Moreover, by calling for agreements that were "verifiable" and "realistic" the French government indicated that it regarded the more sweeping proposals broached at Reykjavik as not only undesirable in theory but also unworkable in practice. For even if the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons were deemed desirable, it was hardly realistic, according to French officials, in view of the daunting verification difficulties attending such agreements. While the elimination of entire classes of weaponry was generally considered as easy to verify, in a regime in which the possession of nuclear weapons were proscribed the potential significance of even small numbers of nuclear weapons would be so overwhelming that pressures for cheating (as well as anxieties concerning the ability to verify the compliance of others) would conspire to render such proposals unrealistic. France therefore endorsed an arms control agenda that would stabilize the status quo through preventing both excessive or exiguous levels of nuclear weapons.

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[91] Speech by Raimond, 14 March 1990, op. cit., p. 10.

Accordingly, France proposed that rather than attempting to achieve "utopian" and essentially undesirable agreements, it would be far better to concentrate upon the "achievement of the objective agreed between the Americans and Soviets in Reykjavik of a 50% reduction of their strategic arsenals over five years."[92] As Raimond stated, "this would be a considerable result, an unparalleled one in the history of arms control negotiation and which we obviously could not but welcome."[93] At the same time, he found it disturbing that the implementation of these proposals should be presented as but a prelude to "chancy alternative objectives targeted onto [sic] ten years."[94] France viewed the principle of 50 percent reductions as desirable only in its own right and as undesirable if it were tied to an eventual agreement on the elimination of nuclear weapons. Thus while supporting the principle of a 50 percent reduction in strategic nuclear missiles within five years, France wanted to see this proposal delinked from the plans to eliminate ballistic missiles entirely during a subsequent five year period.

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[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid.

The French Government's Opposition to the INF Treaty

Pursuant to its interest in maintaining existing security arrangements, France was eager to ensure that any agreement governing intermediate range nuclear (INF) weapons not jeopardize European security. Raimond contended that changes since the original Alliance endorsement of the zero option had called into question the desirability of its implementation:

> The zero option was implicitly accepted by our Alliance partners in 1979 and explicitly [sic] proposed by them in 1981. The political reasons for this are well known. However, the situation in 1987 is different. In 1981 our Alliance partners proposed to abandon a deployment that had been announced but not yet put into effect, in exchange for a cut in the number of missiles on the Soviet side. In 1987 there are intermediate-range missiles on both sides, but in unequal numbers. So the implementation of such a formula, which would in any case presuppose a timetable and some very specific verification measures, should not result tomorrow in a situation of lesser security for Europe.[95]

The desirability of the zero option was not, however, contingent upon the number of missiles deployed at any one time. What Raimond's statement unwittingly revealed was that while support for the zero option was politically expedient when the prospects for its acceptance by the Soviet Union were slim, its implementation was something which the French government deemed deleterious to European security interests. Apart from the immediate results of the zero option France also feared that by endorsing the legitimacy of zero missiles at the intermediate level it would be difficult to resist the extension of this principle to nuclear missiles of all ranges and categories. Despite these misgivings, France officially supported the zero option, for as Mitterrand remarked:

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[95] Ibid.

> Eight years after the start of that [INF] debate, Mr. Reagan having said in 1981 that his strategy was the zero option for the long-range intermediate nuclear forces, and NATO having, on this point, accepted the prospect with France's full approval, we are not going to do a U-turn now that Mr. Gorbachev is coming round it.[96]

Yet Raimond wanted to ensure that "there be no possibility of circumventing such an agreement at the top or bottom end; I am thinking more especially of the question of shorter-range missiles (SRINF)."[97] In short, the French government was concerned that considering intermediate-range weapons in isolation obscured the multiple nuclear threats that Europe faced. As Mitterrand noted, there was "a severe imbalance in the Soviet Union's favour with respect to short- or very short-range (100 to 1,000 km) intermediate weapons in Europe."[98] Moreover, France realised that even the elimination of all "non-strategic" nuclear weapons would still leave the Soviet Union with the capacity to reach every target in Europe with their strategic nuclear weapons.

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[96] Press Conference of Francois Mitterrand with the French Diplomatic Press Association, 10 March 1987, Speeches and Statements, Service de Presse et d'Information, Ambassade de France a Londres, London, p. 2.

[97] Statement by Raimond, 19 February 1987, op. cit., p. 3.

[98] Press Conference of Mitterrand, 10 March 1987, op. cit., p. 3.

The fear of denuclearisation was exacerbated on February 28, 1987 when the Soviet Union agreed to abandon the link between the START and INF negotiations. The immediate American acceptance of this offer elicited, in France, "the impression that a new phase of East-West relations is opening."[99] Although France officially endorsed the US decision to accept the Soviet offer to negotiate the elimination of long range intermediate missiles in Europe[100], many French officials found it difficult to refrain from voicing their profound misgivings about the prospect of the zero option combined with the still unresolved status of SDI. In France, "the press and political circles" speculated that French forces now faced the "duel threat" of the denuclearization of the American presence in Europe as well as "the development of new defence systems."[101] While both these prospects existed in the aftermath of Reykjavik and evoked considerable concern, the unlinking of INF and other arms control negotiations exacerbated French fears. Whereas prior to February 28, 1987, US-Soviet disagreement on SDI blocked implementation of the zero option, now France confronted, from her perspective, the worst possible combination: the possibility of early SDI deployment and the realisation of the zero option.

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[99] Ibid., p. 1.

[100] See Press Conference of Mitterrand, 10 March 1987, op. cit., p. 2.; and Interview of Prime Minister Jacques Chirac on Soviet Television, Moscow, 16 May 1987, in Speeches and Statements, Press and Information Service, London. Both the President and the Prime Minister publicly supported the unlinking of the START and the INF talks, as well as the zero option. They left it to their ministers to express French misgivings.

[101] Speech by Raimond, 14 March 1987, op. cit., p. 1.

French officials were particularly concerned that unlinking the strategic and intermediate-range negotiations could "turn the result of a technical achievement of the negotiations into a philosophical precedent."[102] This fear reflected the long-standing French position that US arms control policy was abstractly isolating the question of INF deployment from the wider issues of the European conventional force balance and strategic nuclear systems (that were capable of reaching Western European territory) as well as the European based nuclear systems that were not included in the INF negotiations. Raimond, therefore, asserted that "an INF reduction will have repercussions on all the other military potentialities: its implementation cannot therefore be considered separately from the overall balance of East-West forces."[103] By ignoring these threats, France believed that the United States risked forgetting that "a security system can clearly not be divided up without losing its coherence and efficacity."[104]

In short, the French Government feared that the result of the INF treaty would lead to precisely the result which the original introduction of the Pershing II and cruise missiles was designed to prevent: the decoupling of European and American security. In an interview with Le Point, Jacques Chirac stated "that the withdrawal of the American missiles - their deployment having been presented by the Americans themselves as symbolizing the coupling between the United States and Europe - should not weaken that coupling."[105] France contended that this danger arose, not only from the actual removal of the long-range and intermediate- range weapons (though this was deemed sufficiently harmful in itself)[106], but from the possibility that the concept of achieving the level of zero would be pursued to its seemingly logical conclusion, leaving American forces bereft of a nuclear capability in Europe and hence effecting the denuclearization of Europe.

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[102] Ibid., p. 15.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

French Concerns About the Direction of US Defence Policy

More importantly, France regarded the Reagan Administration's stance toward a prospective INF agreement as symptomatic of a far wider and more dangerous trend in US policy. French officials believed that either by design or as a result of proposals conceived to thwart anti-nuclear sentiment, the United States was pursuing policies that would denuclearize European security and lead ultimately to reliance on conventional weapons. Raimond argued that not only France but all West European governments

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[105] Ibid.

[106] France regarded the INF deployments as somewhat of a validation of its view of deterrence, as they threatened (in France's opinion) not so much to fight of war in Europe but to trigger a general nuclear war - a role that was more akin to "pure deterrence" than warfighting.

> understand that a purely conventional deterrent in Europe is not possible economically or demographically and above all that it is not militarily credible. The feeling, whether justified or not, that the negotiation could ultimately lead to denuclearization of the American presence in Europe may, moreover, acquire a political significance. It might lead to a second question, this time concerning the maintenance of the troops stationed on our continent. Indeed, if the American presence in Europe were to lose its specificity, namely its nuclear element, it would become replaceable, that is, precarious.[107]

For France what was at stake in the arms negotiations was the future of nuclear deterrence on the European continent and the very existence of the post-war security structure. French officials contended that the logic inherent in the zero option presented the very real danger that it would begin a chain reaction of denuclearization throughout the continent.

France contended that the altered arms control regime and changes in East-West relations were the result not of Soviet but of American policy. Raimond stated that "Right from his arrival to [sic] the White House, President Reagan had set his administration ambitious goals which demonstrated a deliberate determination to break with the preceding one."[108] These included the restoration of US military power through an acceleration in military expenditures begun in the last year of the Carter Administration as well as "some spectacular decisions, demonstrating that the military strength of the United States, and this applied to all its components, was to be re-established to serve a strategy that was no longer solely centered on Europe, but was more global."[109] Furthermore, the Reagan Administration consciously reduced the importance it attached to arms control agreements and attempted "to play the economic card in its relations with the USSR."[110] This strategy, however, created difficulties within the Alliance as America's European Allies opposed the lack of US enthusiasm for arms control agreements and regarded as dangerous attempts to exercise economic leverage vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.

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[107] Speech by Raimond, 14 March 1987, op. cit., p. 15.

[108] Ibid., p. 3.

At the end of 1982 and 1983, according to Raimond, "a radical change in Washington's attitude" occurred, "the implications of which we have probably not yet fully appreciated."[111] In response to the American nuclear freeze movement, "President Reagan decided to regain the initiative by setting against the pacific tenets the technological hope of a world released from the mutual balance of terror."[112] France maintained that the true significance of this initiative lay not in the decision to pursue BMD research more energetically; rather it resided "in the accompanying strategic argument and repudiation of the theory of certain mutual destruction."[113] This conclusion, argued Raimond, had enormous implications for the entire structure of East-West security for:

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[109] Ibid. This was an apparent reference to US strategy of horizontal escalation, which was in turn tied to the US maritime strategy as well as the renewed focus on the Pacific region.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid.

> Once nuclear weapons were denounced as an intrinsic evil, transcending both East-West and ideological rivalries, cooperation with the USSR to eliminate those weapons once more became a legitimate and necessary goal. Politically, it was no longer a case of fighting a geographically and politically identified "evil empire", but an evil against which mankind should line up behind the United States and the USSR making common cause.[114]

Despite these less than encouraging developments, France argued that "both Congress and the [Reagan] administration clearly perceive the strategic importance of Europe for the United States."[115] "Nevertheless," stated Raimond, "in the United States, the higher cost in budget terms of the defence effort, combined with maintenance of stable overall tax revenue pose difficult problems for the years to come. They can but contribute to reopening the old debate on reducing the present troop strength of the American forces stationed in Europe."[116] And "it is in this context that we must understand the American reaction to Mr. Gorbachev's statement of 28 February abandoning the link established between the negotiations - themselves tied to SDI - on cutting back the strategic arsenals and those on an intermediate-range missile agreement,"[117] argued Raimond. In short France believed that a successful conclusion to the INF agreement would enable the United States to realise its desire to reduce its defence burden in Europe.

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[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

French Concerns About a Convergence in US and Soviet Thinking

The trepidation with which France regarded this American objective was compounded by her perception that it unwittingly dovetailed with the Soviet Union's "long-standing objectives vis-a-vis Western Europe, but which are now being pursued with renewed dynamism."[118] French officials were openly sceptical of the sincerity of Gorbachev's new thinking in foreign policy and Raimond characterized perestroika as "an old concept" that was "being presented in the sparkling colors of something that is brand new."[119] Raimond believed that the Soviet decision to unlink INF from SDI and the START negotiations indicated that they "have chosen to play in priority the European card"[120] by attempting to denuclearise Europe and thereby expel the United States from Europe. At the same time, French officials contended that the Soviet Union was far from oblivious to the potential effects of an INF agreement on Congressional support for SDI and the Reagan Administration's interpretation of the ABM Treaty. France maintained that:

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[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid., p. 1.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid., p. 4.

> The fact that the USSR is conducting a policy specifically aimed at Europe at one and the same time as seeking action on the United States front raises a broader question.
>
> Is the USSR pursuing unaltered goals with new methods or has Mr. Gorbachev's policy become, as he himself asserted at the recent Moscow Peace Conference, the external reflection, the simple corollary, of the new internal priorities.[121]

The conduct and outcome of the INF negotiations confirmed and even strengthened France's belief that the confluence of unchanging Soviet objectives and an apparent waning desire of the United States to extend nuclear deterrence to its Allies threatened to undermine European security. Raimond was particularly candid in articulating these French concerns:

> From one summit to the next, be it the Reykjavik meeting or the forthcoming Washington summit, the American-Soviet disarmament negotiations, particularly those on the INFs, have raised as many expectations as question marks in France, as elsewhere in the rest of Europe.
>
> For the first time for many years, the Europeans are once against waking up to their defence imperatives and to the fact that, in the security context, the world to which they have grown accustomed is crumbling.[122]

"This feeling," maintained Raimond, "originated in the

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[121] Ibid.

[122] Speech of Jean-Bernard Raimond in the National Assembly Budget Debate, 5 November 1987, Speeches and Statements, Service de Presse et d'Information, Ambassade de France a Londres, London, p. 3.

Reykjavik shock" and was subsequently exacerbated by the consideration of the second zero option which called for the elimination of all ballistic missiles between 500 and 5000km. Prime Minister Jacques Chirac therefore stressed "that the zero option was not an end in itself and that we should be careful not to let our public opinion believe that the threat had suddenly evaporated."[123] French officials believed that if this perception were allowed to gain currency, the entire basis for nuclear deterrence would be undermined.

The French government was, therefore, convinced that it was essential for the Alliance to "break out of the Soviet logic of denuclearization"[124] or risk the almost certain evisceration of European security. This required first, and above all, the recognition that the maintenance of peace in Europe in the post war era was primarily attributable to the presence of American forces armed with nuclear weapons. In this regard "Mr. Gorbachev, like his predecessors, aims progressively to weaken the military form of American presence."[125] In particular Raimond believed that Moscow wanted "to try to limit the extent to which Soviet territory can, from Western European soil, be deprived of its status as a sanctuary."[126] Judged according to that criteria Raimond regarded that

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[123] An Interview with Jacques Chirac, published in 'Le Point', 5 October 1987, Speeches and Statements, Service de Presse et d'Information, Ambassade de France a Londres, London, p. 1.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid.

> the elimination of INF systems constitutes a major gain for the USSR, even if it requires the Soviets to sacrifice a greater number of systems. In any case, these systems can be substituted for strategic systems which, it may be assumed, are capable of striking the same targets in Western Europe.[127]

French Concerns About West German Security

Furthermore, France maintained that agreement on the elimination of all land based American nuclear missiles in Europe except those of the shortest range promoted denuclearization by placing West Germany in a potentially untenable political position. With only East and West Germany in range of the remaining missiles, the perception arose within the Federal Republic that it constituted "a 'special case' in relation to the Soviet nuclear threat."[128] This, in turn, threatened to create "conditions for permanent pressure within the Alliance in favor of opening negotiations on those systems."[129] While France regarded German fears of singularization as "exaggerated, since the whole of Europe is within range of the various categories of nuclear arms the Soviet Union possesses and will go on possessing in far too great quantities, even after the INF have been dismantled," Chirac asked "how can one fail to understand the anxiety of our German friends, considering their situation?"[130] He therefore warned that, however militarily illogical, "the zero option concept is in the process of acquiring the force of precedent. If two zero options are a good thing, why, it might be thought, would the same not be true of a third zero option?"[131] France feared "the danger of falling in with the Soviet reasoning whereby, by a succession of proposed 'zero options', the American nuclear presence in Europe, which we all believe vital, could be jeopardized and even eliminated."[132]

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[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Speech of Jacques Chirac at the Institute of Higher National Defence Studies, 12 December 1987, Speeches and Statements. Service de Presse et d'Information, Ambassade de France a Londres, London, p. 3.

[129] Raimond, "The Future of European Security," op. cit., p. 4.

France maintained that not only the place that arms control occupied within the context of East-West relations but also the objective of the negotiations themselves were being substantially altered. In contrast to past practice "the objective of arms control is now not so much the predictability and stability of the power relationship as the modification of the military balance of forces itself."[133] Whereas during "the first period of detente in the seventies, the basic objective assigned to arms control was the management of overall strategic parity",[134] the Reagan Administration was now using arms control as a means of effecting "The transformation of the power relationship in Europe, and an evolution in the relationship between offensive and defensive forces."[135] The concern which this engendered was exacerbated by the concurrent appearance of US statements expressing a preference for conventional deterrence. France feared that the United States was using arms control to implement its growing preference for a global security regime in which nuclear weapons would play a less prominent role. Because France was firmly wedded to nuclear deterrence and regarded its continuation as essential to its security, these American objectives were greeted with less than alacritous approval.

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[130] Speech of Chirac, 12 December 1987, op. cit., p. 3. German fears were, of course not confined to the possibility of selective vulnerability; they feared as well that with the second and third rungs of the escalation ladder removed, the function of the SNF weapons was transformed from an initial salvo in an escalation process linking European defence to U.S. strategic systems - and thereby deterring conflict - to one of "warfighting." This concern was rendered particularly acute given that these SNF weapons could reach primarily if not exclusively East German territory.

[131] Raimond, "The Future of European Security," op. cit., p. 4.

[132] Speech of Chirac, 12 December 1987, op. cit., p. 3.

France believed that SDI played a notably deleterious role in channelling the budding US-Soviet convergence in arms control negotiations into questionable directions: "In view of the current impasse on SDI, this convergence seems, for the time being, to involve less a preoccupation with Soviet and American strategic arsenals and more a concern with the level and forms of the American presence, both nuclear and conventional, in Europe."[136] French officials were therefore concerned that Europe was, in a sense, the victim of the US-Soviet impasse on the strategic level. Because agreement was difficult at the strategic level - primarily, though not exclusively, because of SDI - Europe was seen as a convenient theatre in which the superpowers could achieve dramatic results. France believed that this led to a hasty and ill-conceived agreement, the primary virtue of which was that it fulfilled the desire for tangible progress in East- West relations.

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[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid., p. 2.

[135] Ibid., p. 5.

France argued that the limitations and dangers of this approach became apparent when, shortly after agreement on the terms of the INF treaty, discussions began concerning the compensatory military measures that would be necessary once the US-Soviet agreement were implemented. Indeed, as Raimond remarked, "it is impossible both to claim that an INF agreement in no way diminishes the effectiveness of the Alliance's flexible response and to assert that the resulting deficit must be compensated for by other means."[137] Moreover, it was hardly more credible, according to France, to assert that the functions previously performed by land-based nuclear missiles could be overtaken by air and sea-based forces without adversely affecting European security, as this would inevitably entail diverting badly needed conventional units to nuclear duties.

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[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid., p. 3.

France and European Defence Cooperation

The French government's profound reservations about the INF treaty as well as the absence of significant European input in negotiations that so profoundly affected European security led to renewed calls for achieving a new balance within the Alliance. France believed that this "new balance must ensure an increased contribution by Europeans to the common defence and assign them a greater role in shaping that defence."[138] Raimond contended that it was only through the achievement of the former that the latter would be possible. France maintained that the need for a stronger European pillar necessitated, quite naturally, greater efforts in European defence cooperation. While these efforts had been accelerated in the aftermath of Reykjavik, primarily through the WEU, the reality of the INF treaty led to a realization that European defence cooperation would assume greater urgency. This involved, above all, tighter defence cooperation with the Federal Republic of Germany, a relationship that formed the basis for any serious European defence identity. Furthermore, nuclear cooperation with Britain would be essential to maintaining, and possibly expanding, the role of European nuclear weapons in performing deterrent functions. By pulling closer together and contributing a greater share to the Alliance burden, France hoped that "it should be possible to transcend the acrimonious dispute in which Europeans are invariably considered to be concerned only with preserving the gains resulting from detente, while the

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[138] Ibid.

United States sees itself as the one country carrying the burden of defence."[139] This would in turn allow "joint consideration of the future of European security, changes in the Alliance and the role that Europeans can have in it."[140]

Ironically, the primary motivation for these efforts was not the creation of a Europe more capable of defending itself, but to ensure the continued commitment of the United States to European security. While France was concerned that greater European cooperation might "run the risk of precipitating American withdrawal",[141] they believed that ultimately if Europe were seen as doing more for itself, it would quiet those in the United States who were criticizing Europe's putatively meagre contribution to defence and calling for US troop withdrawals.

The Significance of Reykjavik and Its Aftermath for French Policy

France believed that the Reykjavik summit and the INF treaty threatened to undermine European security by creating a dangerous momentum toward the dismantlement of the basic security regime that had sustained peace since the end of the Second World War. French officials contended that this process was being driven by Soviet efforts at denuclearization as well as by the implementation of revolutionary American arms control concepts. These arms control concepts were conceived in the expectation not that the Soviet Union would take them seriously but that they would act as an antidote to what US officials considered dangerous pressures for unwise agreements. Once the Soviet Union unexpectedly decided to accept the American proposals, the Alliance was confronted with a situation which prompted Raimond to ask "is not the remedy now proving more harmful than the illness it is supposed to cure?"[142] He further queried: "If such radical objectives are assigned to arms control, how will it be possible to keep public opinion from confusing that policy [of affirming radical arms control objectives] with a Soviet approach that itself, for obvious reasons, advertises equally radical ambitions?"[143]

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[139] Ibid., p. 6.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Ibid.

In other words, France contended that Western publics needed to be reminded of the factors that had ensured its security and of what the corresponding limits to arms control were. Accordingly, Chirac stressed that it was necessary to state forthrightly and repeatedly that "it is by nuclear deterrence that peace has been preserved on our continent for more than forty years."[144] And France believed that there were no alternatives to ultimate reliance on nuclear weapons. Thus, according to Raimond, there were two choices:

> Either the Alliance accepts to be drawn, as the Soviet Union is urging, into a reasoning that ultimately could bring Europe's denuclearization and weaken the security link

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[142] Ibid., p. 5.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Speech by Chirac, 12 December 1987, op. cit., p. 3.

> between the United States and Europe. Or it goes on clearly maintaining its concept of deterrence whereby its security depends on a dual link: between nuclear and conventional weapons and between the United States and Europe.[145]

France's clear preference for the latter scenario was matched by an equally clear sense of doubt concerning the willingness of the United States to join her in upholding these traditional tenets of Western security. In fact, France feared that the entire thrust of US policy since SDI had reflected a desire to overturn the post-war security regime and that the INF treaty was only part of a more overarching design that was clearly reflected in the Reykjavik proposals as well as in the decision to pursue SDI.

As France had predicted when the Soviet Union decided to unlink the INF negotiations from both START and SDI, an INF agreement would undermine support for SDI. The primary political result of the INF treaty was thus to give impetus to calls for progress on START negotiations in order to continue the trend toward improved East-West relations of which the INF treaty itself was a prominent symbol. And since SDI was the most significant obstacle to the success of the START talks, Congressional support for SDI funding began to wane, as did, predictably, support for even contemplating deployment. Thus, in many respects SDI became the victim of precisely the circumstances that its critics argued its promulgation would surely prevent: improved East-West relations and progress in arms control. Moreover, since SDI was in many respects a response to the arms competitions which resulted from mutual antagonism, the general easing of this antagonism seemed to remove the necessity for strategic defences.

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[145] Speech by Raimond, 1 December 1987, op. cit., p. 5.

The INF treaty had an even more decisive impact on the ATM debate. Although following the implementation of the INF treaty the Soviet Union continued to possess a formidable array of SNF capable of striking Western Europe, the widespread perception was that the INF treaty had effectively eliminated the very threats that the ATMs were designed to counter. Furthermore, because continuing the trend toward improved East-West relations became the dominant consideration in European politics, continued advocacy was perceived as inimical to achieving detente.

V. THE WEU AND NATO

West European governments attempted to coordinate their positions through the WEU in the aftermath of the Reykjavik summit. It seemed a propitious time to do so, given the widespread perception in Western Europe that the United States was attempting to guide Western defence strategy in directions they opposed. They believed that by fashioning a joint West European position, they could increase their leverage vis-a-vis the United States.[146]

Following the Reykjavik summit the WEU issued a statement that indicated West European concerns about the Reykjavik summit. However, these meetings and statements had little concrete effect on the controversy, largely because the same concerns had already been expressed by the WEU members in bilateral discussions with the United States. Moreover, American officials were well aware of the almost unanimous disapproval of its conduct at Reykjavik.[147] Moreover, Britain and West German, which were members of the both the WEU and NATO's military structure, had advanced many of these concerns within NATO's NPG and Defence Planning Committee.

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[146] France was particularly interested in utilizing the WEU in this way.

While the WEU had little influence on the course of the transatlantic debate following the Reykjavik summit, the reverse is not true. The Reykjavik summit and the INF treaty led the WEU to redouble its efforts to achieve greater West European defence cooperation. On October 27, 1987, the foreign and defence ministers of the WEU agreed to a "Platform on European Security Interests."[148] The participants agreed on three main points.

1. The conditions of European security;
2. the criteria on which European security is based;

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[147] The Reagan Administration was also widely criticized within the United States, where the predominant commentary echoed the West European position about the ill-advised nature of the proposals that had been forwarded at Reykjavik.

[148] "The Platform on European Security Interests," The Hague, 27 October 1987, reprinted in Alfred Cahen, The Western European Union and NATO (London: Brassey's, 1989), p. 91.

3. the responsibilities of Europeans with regard to their security considered in the context of common Atlantic security, whether in the areas of defence, arms control or dialogue with the East.

What is a striking aspect of this communique is the emphasis placed on the imperative of the US commitment to European security. It stated that: "The substantial presence of US conventional and nuclear forces plays an irreplaceable part in the defence of Europe. They embody the American commitment to the defence of Europe and provide the indispensable linkage with the US strategic deterrent."[149] The report also reiterated the West European view that: "To be credible and effective, the strategy of deterrence and defence must continue to be based on an adequate mix of appropriate nuclear and conventional forces, only the nuclear element of which can confront a potential aggressor with an unacceptable risk."[150]

While the WEU stated that "the construction of an integrated Europe will remain incomplete as long as it does not include security and defence,"[151] it is clear that this integration was deemed important primarily to ensure the continued commitment of the United States to West European security. This was significant because it pointed out the unanimity in the West European positions on the requirements for security; but, more importantly, it also revealed Western Europe's continued dependence on the United States for security. And greater European cooperation was designed not to wean Western Europe from this dependence but to prevent the United States, through unilateral actions, from abandoning Western Europe.

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[149] Ibid., p. 93.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid., p. 91.

The reaction of NATO as an institution to the Reykjavik summit was complicated. As was the case with Reagan's March 23, 1983 speech, the Reykjavik proposals were not discussed in advance in the Nuclear Planning Group. Thus, West European governments were presented with a *fait accompli*. This came as a considerable disappointment to West European members of the Alliance, given the close consultations that had characterized Alliance deliberations following the initial unilateral manner in which SDI was originally presented. Despite the fact that the Reagan Administration resumed close consultations within NATO in the aftermath of Reykjavik, West European members of Alliance were once again confronted with the fact that one an issue of vital importance to their own security, they were not even informed about the proposed actions of the US government.

The Reagan Administration's failure to consult its Allies in advance of tabling the Reykjavik proposals demonstrated that senior American officials had a greater interest in effecting a radical change in the strategic regime than in consultations with their closest Allies. Indeed, it was what the content of Reykjavik proposals revealed more than the manner in which they were presented that caused such consternation in West European capitols. In tabling proposals that called for the complete elimination of ballistic missiles within 10 years, Reagan demonstrated that he was committed to his original conception of rendering nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete. While in the aftermath of the Reykjavik summit, Reagan retreated from these ambitious objectives in favour of attempting to secure a 50 percent reduction in US and Soviet strategic nuclear forces, the Reykjavik proposals aroused deep suspicion about Reagan's commitment to nuclear deterrence.

NATO's official reaction to Reykjavik was, therefore, to insist that the United States reaffirm its commitment to nuclear deterrence. At a December 1986 meeting of the Defence Planning Committee a communique was issued that stated:

> NATO's aim is the prevention of war; therefore the Alliance must continue to ensure its security through the provision of adequate military capabilities and the parallel pursuit of a more stable East-West relationship. Credible deterrence and defense is an essential basis for improved relations between East and West.

The importance that the Alliance attached to maintaining its reliance on nuclear deterrence was reiterated in many subsequent communiques. Although West European concerns about the Reagan Administration's commitment to established NATO doctrine abated as a result of its willingness to publicly support nuclear deterrence in Alliance communiques, doubts remained about the Reagan Administration's intentions.

Indeed, as we have seen the Reagan Administration's pursuit of the double zero option in the INF negotiations was deeply disturbing to West European members of the Alliance. Yet because the zero option was a NATO initiative and the double zero option enjoyed wide public support, NATO communiques voiced strong support for the course of these negotiations, as well as the eventual treaty that emerged. West European governments feared, however, that the Reagan Administration was, in line with the anti-nuclear philosophy underpinning SDI, attempting to denuclearize NATO strategy.

VI. CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis of the Reykjavik summit and its aftermath revealed several important aspects of the transatlantic debate about SDI. In particular, it provided insight of the objectives that Reagan was pursuing through SDI; the analysis also revealed the nature of the underlying differences within the Alliance about SDI as well as how the Alliance managed its dispute about SDI. And finally, study of this period provided findings about the role of East-West relations in determining the course and outcome of the debate.

The Reykjavik summit demonstrated that Reagan remained committed to the vision he had articulated in his March 23, 1983 speech. By tabling proposals that called for the complete elimination of ballistic missiles and seriously broaching the idea of complete nuclear disarmament Reagan demonstrated that he was indeed committed to "rendering nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete."

This revelation demonstrated that the Alliance consensus on

SDI that had been formed prior to the Reykjavik summit was predicated on a fundamentally false premise. As was discussed in previous chapters, one of the prime reasons that the United States and its West European Allies were able to fashion a consensus of sorts on SDI was the perception in Western European capitals that US SDI policy had changed from that articulated in March 23, 1983 - that instead of transcending deterrence US policy was intent upon strengthening existing deterrence arrangements. This perception was assiduously fostered by the US State Department which took advantage of the confusion within the Reagan Administration and chose to emphasize the more limited objectives of SDI. West Europeans who were understandably reluctant to accept that Reagan was intent upon a radical change in the strategic nuclear regime gladly accepted these assurances despite indications to the contrary emanating from other parts of the Reagan Administration.

It is tempting to conclude that the Reagan Administration had consciously deceived its West European counterparts or that West European officials allowed themselves to be deceived. Reality, however, is more complex. Because the deployment of BMD systems capable of providing a near perfect defence against nuclear missiles - assuming technical feasibility - would by Reagan's own admission take decades, it was not unreasonable to stress that as a practical matter SDI would not be able to provide comprehensive defences in the foreseeable future. If one adds to this rationale strong doubts about SDI's technical feasibility and the fact that Reagan would not be in office when decisions about deployment would be taken, then the perception that SDI would serve to enhance and not transcend nuclear deterrence appeared plausible. But these assumptions all rested on the premise that the issue of deployment was the primary cause of the SDI dispute.

But the Reykjavik summit and its aftermath demonstrated that the issue of BMD deployment was not the central aspect of the SDI dispute. Had the Reykjavik proposals been agreed upon, the elimination of ballistic missiles would have been accomplished not primarily through deployment but through mutual agreement about their elimination. This indicated that it was Reagan's desire to change strategy that was the driving force of the controversy. This view was given further credence by the Reagan Administration's advocacy of the double zero option which had unmistakable anti-nuclear aspects to it.

The fact that the West European reaction to the Reykjavik proposals as well as to the INF treaty were strikingly similar to their reaction to SDI had far-reaching significance. It indicated that while both the United States and West European governments continued to believe that the issue of deployment was central to the SDI dispute, in fact it was the underlying conceptions about what constituted a credible nuclear strategy and a stable nuclear regime that was the underlying cause of the transatlantic controversy over SDI.

The most important intra-Alliance diplomacy that followed the Reykjavik summit was conducted bilaterally. Shortly after the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting in Iceland, both Kohl and Thatcher travelled to Washington in order to mitigate the damage that the Reykjavik summit had done to Alliance unity. Each left after securing joint statements with the United States that reaffirmed the Reagan Administration's commitment to the defence of Europe as well as its commitment to arms control. While NATO communiques had echoed the sentiments expressed in these bilateral statements, it was clear from both the high level nature of the bilateral consultations as well as the repeated reference made to the bilateral statements in the Parliamentary debates about Reykjavik that these were the key instruments through which the post-Reykjavik diplomacy was conducted. Thus, the aftermath of the Reykjavik summit followed the same pattern that had preceded the US-Soviet meeting. The most important decisions would be reached on a bilateral basis and NATO communiques would reiterate these positions in order to create the impression of a unified position.

This is not to suggest that NATO's Defence Planning Committee and North Atlantic Council meetings did not play important roles, because they did. These declarations were significant because they indicated that despite the obvious disagreements occasioned by the Reykjavik summit and the INF treaty, the members of NATO were above all interested in maintaining Alliance unity or at least its appearance.

The Reykjavik summit also provided significant insights into how the Reagan Administration approached SDI from the perspective of Alliance politics. US officials had laboured to overcome the legacy of the March 23, 1983 speech by keeping their West European counterparts informed through extensive consultations thereafter. In numerous NATO communiques in 1985 and 1986 the importance of consultations were reiterated. Yet at Reykjavik the United States reverted to the unilateral course it had followed in launching SDI in 1983. They did so fully cognizant that this would anger its Allies and undermine Alliance unity. Why?

A definite answer to such a question must, perforce, remain speculative until further information is made available. Nonetheless, a tentative answer may still go to the very heart of the SDI controversy as well as to the dilemma facing the Alliance in the age of nuclear parity. Since the inception of the Alliance the United States has attempted to balance the requirements of fashioning a strategy for NATO that was perceived as credible to West Europeans but also one that held out the prospect that, if implemented, would not necessarily lead to the destruction of the United States.

SDI was, in essence, the manifestation of the Reagan Administration's assessment that these requirements could not be balanced under circumstances in which the United States was completely vulnerable to nuclear attack. This dictated that the condition of mutual vulnerability needed to be overcome even if it conflicted with the requirement of reassuring Alliance unity by having a nuclear strategy that West Europeans interpreted as credible. This American assessment did not indicate a weakening the United States' commitment to Europe; it merely indicated that this commitment had to be reconciled with the United States' desire for self-preservation. Thus when, as at Reykjavik, the opportunity arose to establish a regime under which the United States would be invulnerable to nuclear attack, it was seized upon, even in the knowledge that it would create disunity within the Alliance.

The substantial improvement in East-West relations that occurred after the Reykjavik summit revealed the complex relationship between the perception of external threat and doctrinal coherence in determining Alliance unity. While the INF treaty was seen in Western Europe as a promising sign that East-West relations were improving, it was simultaneously viewed as inimical to West European security interests. Yet, two factors militated against strong and public West European opposition to the INF treaty. First, an INF treaty based on the zero option had been official Alliance policy since late 1981; therefore, to reject a treaty after the Soviet Union had essentially agreed to the Western position was clearly untenable. Second, any government that opposed the INF treaty would have been open to the charge that it was undermining improved East-West relations. Thus despite believing that the INF treaty would damage their security, West European governments felt compelled to support the US-Soviet agreement.

This European support was significant because it indicated that improved East-West relations contributed significantly to improved Alliance unity. But it also indicated that the state of East-West relations, while important, was not decisive in determining West European reaction. For, despite welcoming the improvement in East-West relations, West European governments feared that this improvement was being achieved at the expense of their security by undermining the validity of nuclear deterrence. Therefore, while the linkage of the INF treaty with improved East-West relations constrained the willingness of West European governments to oppose the changes being effected through the US-Soviet agreement, it could not conceal that the Reykjavik summit and its aftermath created greater disunity within the Alliance. That it did so indicated the primacy of doctrinal concerns in determining the degree of cohesion within the Alliance and that, far from contributing to disunity within the Alliance, improved East-West relations exercised a negative influence on Alliance unity.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to answer three main questions about European/American relations over SDI. Why did the Reagan Administration's decision to pursue SDI cause such controversy within the Alliance? How, and to what extent, did the United States, Britain, West Germany and France reconcile their disagreements about SDI? And, what effect did East-West relations have on the transatlantic SDI debate? The answers to these questions can best be found by examining the findings pertaining to the three hypothesis that were posited at the beginning of this thesis.

I. THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC DIFFERENCES

The first hypothesis was that the primary or underlying cause of the disagreement within the Alliance about SDI was not the issue of deployment, but rather the differing conceptions of what constituted a credible nuclear strategy and a stable nuclear regime. With some minor exceptions this proposition was confirmed by the results of this study. In chapter four, we analyzed the British, West German and French reactions to SDI. While these reactions focused primarily on the prospective implications of deployment, a careful comparison of their positions with those of the United States revealed that while the issue of deployment was indeed important, it was more a manifestation of a deeper disagreement over strategy; SDI was a vehicle through which this disagreement was highlighted and heightened. Thus, it was found that while in general West

European governments believed that if the United States and the Soviet Union were to deploy BMDs the credibility of flexible response would be vitiated, the United States believed that under the circumstances that already existed flexible response was no longer credible. The Reagan Administration argued that under conditions of nuclear parity and mutual vulnerability the US nuclear guarantee to Western Europe was incredible because executing it entailed the destruction not only of the United States but the very territory in Western Europe that it was designed to defend.

What these transatlantic differences revealed was that irrespective of whether or not the Strategic Defense Initiative resulted in deployment, the United States and Western Europe held fundamentally different views about what constituted a credible NATO strategy. The dominant role played by preexisting strategic differences explains why SDI, although only constituting a research programme that Reagan admitted could take decades to reach fruition, evoked such a strong reaction in Western Europe.

Subsequent chapters confirmed this assertion about the importance of underlying strategic differences. In chapter six, we analyzed the debate within the Alliance about the prospect of deploying an ATBM system in Western Europe. While there was considerable unanimity on the need for a defence against the emerging threat posed by Soviet conventionally-armed missiles, the reasons for this support varied widely. West European governments, and particularly the West German government, supported ATBM deployment because they wished to reinforce the validity of flexible response and its ultimate reliance on nuclear weapons. The Reagan Administration, on the other hand, while supporting the ATBM defence advocated by West Europeans as an interim step, continued to pursue the objective of comprehensive defences because they viewed flexible response as a doctrine that needed to be replaced. Thus even when achieving apparent agreement (on the issue of deployment no less) the differences in what constituted a credible strategy for the Alliance manifested themselves.

The Reykjavik summit and its aftermath, as analyzed in chapter seven, demonstrated the underlying nature of the transatlantic disagreement over SDI. Ostensibly, the transatlantic controversy engendered by the Reagan Administration's pursuit of the Strategic Defense Initiative was attributable to West European concerns regarding the negative impact that BMD deployment would have on NATO strategy, arms control negotiations and East-West relations. In reality, the controversy was generated by a disagreement between the United States and its West European allies concerning the proper nuclear strategy and arms control strategy for the Alliance as well as the most effective means of relating to the Soviet Union. The circumstances under which SDI was eclipsed demonstrated this salient, if oftentimes obscured, aspect of the transatlantic debate about SDI. The strategic circumstances that Europeans feared would occur if SDI were to lead to BMD deployment -

decoupling of European and American security and increased risk of conventional and limited nuclear war - came about not through the deployment of BMD's but through the INF treaty. Moreover, these changes occurred within a climate of improved East-West relations and progress on arms control, circumstances to which SDI was thought to constitute an insurmountable hinderance. Consequently, the fears that were so often associated with SDI in fact existed independently of the American initiative; what SDI did was to highlight these fears rather than cause them. While publicly welcomed as marking a new stage in East-West relations, privately the INF treaty evoked considerable concern in European capitals because it was perceived as damaging to European security. European officials argued that by eliminating LRINF while keeping the shorter range nuclear weapons, the INF treaty removed a key rung in the escalation ladder which linked the use of battlefield nuclear weapons to the strategic nuclear weapons of the United States. Such a result, they contended, weakened deterrence of conventional conflict by diminishing the perception that a Soviet attack on Western Europe would lead to a strategic nuclear exchange involving Soviet territory. Moreover, they feared that if nuclear weapons were employed in response to a conventional attack, the likelihood that such exchanges would be confined to the battlefield would increase, for the remaining land-based missiles had ranges which confined their use to the immediate battlefield. In short, Europeans feared that the INF treaty would undermine the American strategic nuclear guarantee that had defined the very essence of their security since the establishment of NATO.

Therefore, the Reykjavik summit and its aftermath afforded a unique opportunity to determine the underlying causes of the transatlantic dispute over SDI. Both the proposals that the Reagan Administration tabled at Reykjavik and the INF treaty that followed it, evoked almost identical reactions from West Europeans as did the Reagan Administration's launching of SDI. Yet neither the Reykjavik proposals nor the INF treaty involved the deployment of BMDs. This had enormous significance for it demonstrated a salient feature of the transatlantic debate about SDI. While the issue of deployment was not insignificant, it was not the primary cause of the SDI dispute within the Alliance because the same concerns manifested themselves when other initiatives were forwarded. Therefore, the underlying differences in conception of strategy, not the prospect of deployment, lay at the heart of Alliance disputes over SDI.

II. MANAGEMENT OF THE DEBATE: THE PAPERING OVER OF DIFFERENCES

The second proposition that was forwarded in this thesis concerned the manner in which the dispute about SDI was managed. In examining this dispute we have attempted to determine the validity of the following proposition: that the Alliance managed the dispute by ignoring the primary strategic differences that manifested themselves in the SDI debate and, instead, concentrated on secondary issues in order to seek areas of agreement. The MoUs that the United States signed with the British and West German governments certainly bore out this proposition. Yet, there were other important aspects of the way in which the SDI dispute unfolded that were not foreseen when this proposition was formulated, and this concerned the manner in which new issues were introduced into the SDI debate.

The Reagan Administration presented SDI, the offer to participate in SDI research, the Reykjavik summit proposals, and the second zero in the INF Treaty as fait accomplis. While these proposals were then followed by consultations and attempts to create a consensus within the Alliance, the actual formulation of the initiatives was done unilaterally. This proclivity to act unilaterally reflected a change in the Alliance decision-making process. For, after the creation of the Nuclear Planning Group, the role of NATO as an institution and, therefore, the influence of the West European members of the Alliance, increased. Consequently, when the Reagan Administration bypassed NATO's decision-making mechanisms in rendering these decisions (because they believed that otherwise initiatives that they regarded as vital would be blocked) this constituted a unilateral threat to established Alliance procedures.

The Reagan Administration's unilateral strategy should be seen in light of the reasons why Reagan pursued SDI. He believed that nuclear weapons had become a liability rather than an asset to United States security. Therefore, when Reagan's advisors informed him that comprehensive defences were possible and when, furthermore, at Reykjavik Gorbachev appeared to agree to the elimination of ballistic missiles, he seized the opportunity.

Yet, ultimately, the Alliance reverted to the policy of papering over differences in order to maintain unity. As we have seen, the reaction of NATO bears out this proposition. NATO responded to SDI by attempting to minimize the degree of intra-Alliance disagreement over SDI by obscuring the extent of doctrinal disagreement and finding areas of common agreement. Besides the desire of the major parties to avoid disunity, the Alliance reaction was facilitated by the fact that SDI did constitute only a research programme and, while it was clear that Reagan was intent on eventually deploying BMDs, even he acknowledged that such a decision would only be made after he had left office.

The Alliance response to SDI consisted of three main points. The first and by far the most important aspect of this response was to ensure the continued credibility of NATO strategy. While, as this study has amply demonstrated, West European governments were far from sanguine about SDI, the official Alliance reaction was to state that: "We support the United States research programme into these technologies, the aim of which is to enhance stability and deterrence at reduced levels of offensive nuclear forces."[1] In literally every NATO communique between the March 26-27, 1985 NPG meeting when the Alliance first began detailed deliberations on SDI, until the 11 December 1987 North Atlantic Council meeting following the signing of the INF Treaty (which is the cut off point for this study) NATO stressed its continuing adherence to its doctrine of flexible response. Whether it was communiques of the NPG or DPC or the North Atlantic Council, the communiques repeated, often verbatim, that NATO was "resolved to sustain the credibility of NATO's strategy of flexible response."[2] Accordingly, the Alliance constantly reiterated that the "objective of NATO's strategy of flexible response and forward defence is the prevention of all war. Nuclear weapons play an important part in achieving this objective."[3] Moreover, communiques stressed that not only were nuclear weapons important but specifically that the strategic nuclear forces: "NATO's strategic forces are the ultimate deterrent in preserving security, peace and freedom."[4] Thus NATO constantly reiterated that it "support[ed] United States and United Kingdom efforts to maintain the credibility of their strategic nuclear deterrent capabilities."[5]

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[1] Final Communique, NPG meeting 26-27 March 1985, paragraph 4. Emphasis added.

Maintaining unity on the issue of Alliance strategy was deemed of utmost importance given the fact that NATO's raison d'etre was the defence of its members. The sentiment undergirding the strong desire to ensure that the Alliance's strategy of deterrence should remain credible was articulated on the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of flexible response when the NPG stated that:

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[2] Final Communique, Defence Planning Committee, 22 May 1985, paragraph 2.

[3] Final Communique, Defence Planning Committee, 3 December 1985, paragraph 4.

[4] Final Communique, Nuclear Planning Group, 29-30 October 1985, paragraph 3.

[5] Ibid.

> Deterrence of any aggression continues to be the central security objective of the Alliance. To that end, in this the year of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the strategy of flexible response, we noted that this strategy has stood the test of time and remains an essential and sound basis for the future security of all Alliance members. While improving NATO's conventional forces, we will maintain and improve the nuclear forces necessary to carry out that strategy.[6]

Given the Reagan Administration's stated intention to deploy strategic defences and "render nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete," it may seem surprising that the United States affixed its signature to NATO communiques that extolled the virtues of continued reliance on nuclear weapons for Alliance security. Two main points are advanced to explain this seeming incongruity and illuminate why the SDI controversy was managed successfully within the Alliance. First, while the Reagan Administration and particularly Reagan himself was keen to transcend nuclear deterrence, they argued that, in Reagan's own words, "this was many years perhaps decades away." In the interim nuclear deterrence, despite Reagan's distaste for it and his belief in its waning credibility, would have to be relied upon since nothing could immediately take its place. Given these realities as well as the imperatives of Alliance unity, the Reagan Administration could support the continued reliance on nuclear deterrence without fear of undermining the possibilities of eventually overcoming this reliance. In short, it was the fact that SDI was indeed a research programme and would remain so throughout Reagan's tenure in office that facilitated the compromise.

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[6] Final Communique, Nuclear Planning Group, 14-15 May 1987, paragraph 2.

In addition to insisting that flexible response must remain valid, NATO's response consisted of ensuring that SDI research remained within the confines of the ABM treaty and that the US negotiating position in arms control talks with the Soviet Union be supported by the Alliance. Although these two criteria were closely related, they reflected distinct concerns.

The insistence that SDI research be conduced within the confines of the ABM treaty reflected the Alliance's concern that should research go beyond the bounds of this 1972 treaty the entire basis for arms control would be undermined. As the ABM treaty was regarded as the cornerstone of the arms control regime established during the early 1970's, its continued existence was deemed essential to any future arms control agreements. Moreover, West European governments were keen to obtain the Reagan Administration's acquiescence to this provision and codify it in NATO communiques.

As with the provisions regarding the Alliance's insistence on the continuing reliance on nuclear deterrence, it may seem puzzling that the Reagan Administration would agree to provisions that were designed to prevent SDI deployment. Yet a careful examination of the US government's predicament explains why it agreed to these stipulations. Again, the fact that deployment decisions were not imminent meant that it cost little to remain within the confines of the ABM treaty during the research phase. Indeed it was an advantage. It enabled the Reagan Administration to appease its West European allies and thereby maintain unity; it was indispensable for maintaining Congressional support; and it did little to constrain the effectiveness of SDI research.

The distinguishing feature of the Alliance reaction was, therefore, the desire to demonstrate unity through avoiding the doctrinal differences that were exposed by SDI. The distinguishing factor that enabled them to do so was the fact that SDI was indeed only a research programme, a fact that enabled the Alliance to postpone the ultimate questions about SDI deployment through delay. From an Alliance perspective, however, a striking aspect of the manner in which the SDI dispute was managed was that it was not, like the INF issue, handled primarily through NATO's consultative mechanisms, such as the NPG, the DPC and the NAA. Instead these bodies were utilized on occasion to reiterate and state publicly what had been agreed to on a bilateral basis. In order to understand more fully how the SDI debate was managed it is necessary to review the role of the specific countries involved in the debate.

In Britain, Margaret Thatcher placed unique importance on the "special relationship" between London and Washington. This connection with the United States was given greater weight in London than considerations of greater European unity, for which Thatcher held well-known and thinly disguised scepticism. Apart from her generally negative attitude toward European cooperation, Thatcher contended that the United States must take precedence over Europe, particularly on defence matters, as ultimately the United States was the guarantor of European security. To risk alienating Washington over an issue which the Reagan Administration regarded as central to its defence strategy was not regarded to be in the interest of Britain or Europe. Britain was also averse to creating distinctive groups within NATO that were perceived as working against the United States.

The British government therefore decided to deal with the United States bilaterally, believing that this afforded Britain far more influence than it would have as only one voice among many Europeans. Thatcher argued that maintaining Britain's close relationship with the United States and refraining from public criticism of SDI would engender greater respect from the United States and allow Britain to exercise far more influence behind the scenes, in the spirit of genuine friendship and trust, than public carping which was bound to be ineffective in any case. Furthermore, British officials believed that they were ideally suited to act as Europe's interpreter in Washington and to extract concessions which other Europeans would be unable to obtain - a calculation that was essentially correct as Britain was able to create the framework for the transatlantic debate about SDI. Although there were other impediments to the forging of a joint European position, Britain's firm decision to deal bilaterally with the United States effectively precluded a joint European position. Without British support a European consensus was not possible.

Unlike Britain, France[7] eschewed official bilateral cooperation with the United States on SDI, fearing that this could be construed as an endorsement of SDI concepts. Moreover, Paris feared that too close an involvement might entail involving France in a defence system over which French officials would not exercise control - a prospect that was anathema to France, which prided itself on its independence in defence matters. Nevertheless, the French government, unwilling to deny French companies the technological and financial opportunities afforded by SDI research contracts, allowed French firms to participate in SDI research without, however, formalising this participation through government to government arrangements. France believed that unless a means of responding to SDI's technological implications through an exclusively European forum were found, European countries would risk falling under the economic and technological tutelage of the United States. As an alternative to SDI research, France proposed the creation of a technological consortium named Eureka that would enable European firms to pool their expertise and thereby enhance Europe's technological potential. Mitterrand argued that this was a far superior alternative to official participation in SDI research, because the technological discoveries of European firms would remain in Europe and add to Europe's technological base, whereas participation in SDI research would not allow Europe to improve its technological position vis-a-vis the United States and Japan.

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[7] The order in which the role of each country is dealt with has been modified here in order to facilitate discussion of the West German reaction to Eureka. Therefore I discuss the countries in the following order: Britain, France, West Germany.

While West Germany agreed to participate in Eureka, it did not do so to the exclusion of participation in SDI research. The Federal Republic, as a non-nuclear power in the centre of Europe, was more dependent than its European allies on the United States for its security and was therefore reluctant to embrace Eureka - which was in essence a French attempt to undermine American efforts to enlist European support for SDI. While the West German government shared many of France's misgivings concerning SDI, it was not, in light of its ultimate dependence on the United States's security guarantee, in a position to risk alienating Washington.

West Germany's decision to embrace both SDI and Eureka simultaneously was symbolic of the overall difficulty which Europe had in responding as one to SDI. On the one hand, European cooperation was deemed desirable; on the other hand, because the political will necessary to translate this desire into a military capability that would allow independence from the United States was absent, ultimate dependence, particularly for

West Germany, rested in the United States which meant that forging a truly European alternative to SDI was not practical. While in principle a joint European position made sense, in practice this ideal had to be accommodated to the reality of the continuing necessity of maintaining the US commitment to West European security. Consequently, a joint European position in opposition to a programme which the United States deemed central to its defence strategy was incompatible with the requirement of maintaining America's commitment to European security.

III. THE ROLE OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS IN THE SDI DEBATE

The third proposition examined was that the degree of cohesion within the Alliance increased as the external threat declined. Generally, this was confirmed by the evidence, although the relationship was somewhat more complex than originally posited. In chapter five, we saw how the improved East-West relationship in the aftermath of the November, 1985 Geneva summit meeting between Gorbachev and Reagan facilitated agreement on the terms of SDI research. The continued improvement in US-Soviet relations between the Geneva summit and the Reykjavik summit led to further Alliance cohesion as it appeared that SDI would not constitute the insurmountable obstacle to detente as originally thought.

The course of East-West relations and Alliance cohesion following the Reykjavik summit shed further light on the relationship between external threat and Alliance cohesion.

While East-West relations improved after the initial acrimony at Reykjavik, NATO unity did not improve in tandem with this development. But this outcome does not disprove the validity of the proposition; factors other than East-West relations had a greater impact on Alliance cohesion than East-West relations.

Because an improvement in East-West relations occurred simultaneously with the INF treaty (a treaty that most West Europeans believed was harmful to their interests), the role of East-West relations in determining Alliance cohesion was somewhat ambiguous. West European governments, particularly France, believed that the United States was sacrificing West European security in order to achieve improved East-West relations. This led to less not more Alliance unity, but not because the external threat was diminishing. In fact, the diminishing threat rendered the changes created by the INF Treaty more palatable by decreasing the perception of threat from the Soviet Union. Thus far from contributing to an a decrease in Alliance cohesion as the literature on alliances would suggest, improved East-West relations led to greater Alliance cohesion.

The reason that improved East-West relations increased rather than decreased Alliance unity points to a significant point that can be learned from the transatlantic SDI debate: the mutuality of security. Because in the age of nuclear parity the penalties for a failure to avert war entail the possibility of annihilation, it becomes at least as important to avoid antagonizing one's adversary as it does to fashion a credible strategy to thwart whatever aggressive designs he may have. Therefore when East-West relations improved dramatically in the aftermath of the Reykjavik summit, Alliance members felt more secure and thus NATO unity increased.

Still, the fundamental disagreements about what constituted a credible nuclear strategy that were at the core of the SDI dispute remained unresolved; they were managed and eventually eclipsed by the improvement in East-West relations. While it would seem unlikely that given the fundamental transformation that has occurred in international politics, that the Soviet Union will ever again pose a sufficient threat to NATO to bring these unresolved differences to the fore, it is worth making some concluding statements about SDI that may be applicable to future alliances that may confront the same dilemmas as NATO.

To properly understand SDI's role in the history of NATO strategy, it is essential to keep in mind that, while in many respects unique, it also represented the culmination of a long-standing trend in US strategic thinking towards reducing NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons. In launching SDI Reagan did not offer a way to reduce this reliance in the near term, but his rationale for pursuing SDI undermined the credibility of the very doctrine - extended deterrence - that SDI was designed to enhance and on which NATO had to depend for its security. Thus, it would seem that it is fair to conclude that it is unwise to create doubts about the credibility of a strategy on which one must depend, if one can not immediately replace it.

At the same time, the reasons that Reagan forwarded in criticizing the validity of extended deterrence were not without merit. NATO's reliance on flexible response rested on two contradictory premises: that mutual vulnerability made nuclear war unthinkable and, concomitantly, that NATO would start a nuclear war if it were attacked and could not defend itself with conventional weapons. While SDI may have contributed to exposing this contradiction, the solution it offered could not resolve it. For with SDI the Reagan Administration attempted to achieve what was at best a daunting and distant objective of overcoming the United States vulnerability to nuclear attack. A more sensible and far less divisive course would have been to use the enormous political energy expended on the SDI dispute to achieve the less glamorous and more prosaic objective of augmenting conventional capabilities and thereby creating a conventional force balance in which the attacker rather than the defender would have to use nuclear weapons first.

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