

PRIME MINISTER

SEMINAR ON NATO STRATEGY : 1 OCTOBER

The programme for this is as follows:

- 0930-1215 general discussion between all participants
- 1230-1400 continue discussion over lunch
- 1415-1530 consider policy implications with official participants

The list of participants is at reference A and the basic discussion document circulated to all participants at reference B. The latter sets out a number of issues for discussion in an annex at reference C. Finally you might like to have to hand Henry Kissinger's article at reference D.

The FCO are preparing a note on a number of current political issues in the Alliance, for discussion during the restricted part of the seminar. But it might be useful to raise some of them - US/European relations, burden-sharing, the implications of Franco-German co-operation - with the wider group over lunch.

I rather doubt that at the end of the day you are going to come out of this seminar with any major new ideas. NATO strategy is well-trodden ground, and those taking part have mostly been doing the treading for a fair time. You may want to prod them a bit for heretical ideas - e.g. on

the real value of theatre nuclear weapons, on greater
specialisation of roles in the Alliance - if you are to get
the discussion to spark.

I attach some Chairman's notes.

C.D.P.

CHARLES POWELL

26 September 1984

E.R.

SEMINAR ON NATO STRATEGY, 1 OCTOBER

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

1. Welcome you all to Chequers. Most distinguished and experienced group. Grateful to you for coming here to share your wisdom with us.

2. Purpose of the seminar is to allow more reflective discussion than we normally have time for when confronted with the need for urgent decisions. In particular a chance to look closely at the intellectual basis for accepted doctrines which we treat as though they were tablets of stone. No constraints on what we say - indeed I hope that no-one will shrink from being provocative - but there are limits on the amount of time we have to say it in. Hope everyone will make an effort to be brief. Also ask you to abide by Chatham House rules, that is that nothing be attributed either to the occasion or to participants by name.

3. The main subject for our discussion is the doctrine of flexible response, on which you have all received a paper, and I propose that we devote most of our time to this. Goodness knows it is a big enough subject! But if there is time over lunch we might also touch on some of the current political issues in the Alliance - the problem of burden-sharing for example and the implications for the UK of growing Franco-German co-operation.

Flexible Response

4. Since time is so short, I shall not use up more with a lengthy introductory statement, but plunge straight into the main issue. There are two main aspects to be looked at:

- the viability or otherwise of NATO's current strategy;
- the means by which its effectiveness can be enhanced.

5. The discussion paper states in paragraph 28 that no credible alternative to the strategy of 'flexible response' has been advanced. The only clear alternative is, in fact, the 'trip wire' strategy which preceded it and which ceased to be credible with the Soviet attainment of strategic nuclear parity with the United States. Root and branch critiques of 'flexible response' usually turn out, on closer examination, merely to be suggestions as to ways in which the strategy could be made more effective rather than attacks on the strategy itself. It would nevertheless be useful to open the discussion by establishing whether or not there is a consensus round the table in favour of 'flexible response' in principle. One of the invitees, Lord Cameron, chaired earlier this year a study group of the British Atlantic Committee which, in its report "Diminishing the Nuclear Threat" concluded that NATO's strategy of 'flexible response' is "no longer credible" and "needs to be replaced". You might invite Lord Cameron to defend this view, for which Sir James Eberle may express some support. The first thirty minutes of the plenary could be devoted to a discussion of the basic concept of 'flexible response'. The conclusion of the majority is likely to be that, in terms of effective deterrence, there is no substitute for the triad of conventional, theatre nuclear and strategic nuclear forces on which the flexible response strategy is based.

The next hour of discussion in plenary might be devoted to ways in which the flexible response strategy, and the components of the strategic triad, could be enhanced. You will wish to emphasise at the outset that NATO's objective must be to create the strongest possible deterrent to Soviet attack: once hostilities have begun, there will be no certain scenarios and no guaranteed assurance of carefully controlled or graduated escalation. You might ask each of the invited unofficials to speak for five minutes each, summarising briefly their own prescriptions for an improved NATO deterrence posture. You might encourage them in the process to air the particular question of the UK contribution, picking up Peter Carrington's theory that the UK should make its main contribution through air and naval rather than ground forces. You might also canvas views on whether a new initiative is required to strengthen the Alliance's conventional defences (another theme which Peter Carrington is likely to pursue and on which HMG will have to react); and if so whether it can be achieved without great expenditure of additional funds, e.g. through more efficient use of resources.

In the remaining half hour of plenary, there are some questions which it would be useful to raise if they have not already emerged in discussion, namely -

- (i) The Russians have recently done a great deal to improve their capacity to attack on short warning: the concept of the Operational Manoeuvre Group (OMG) represents an important evolution of Soviet military thinking. Does not this weaken even further the viability of the NATO concept (cf. paragraph 10 of the discussion paper) of forward defence? Could the threat posed by Soviet OMGs be used to encourage the Germans to

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FLEXIBLE RESPONSETHE ORIGINS AND NATURE OF FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

1. NATO's security is based on the twin approaches of deterrence and defence. Deterrence seeks to influence decisively and positively the calculation of the leaders of the Soviet Union that they would run an unacceptable degree of risk regardless of the nature of an attack: if deterrence fails, NATO's declared aim is, by carrying out a robust forward defence, to restore the status quo ante using a level of force as far short as possible of an all out strategic nuclear exchange. NATO's present strategy is one of flexibility in response to aggression, and seeks to blend into an overall strategic consensus the disparate elements which form NATO's military and political posture.

2. 'Flexible Response' was adopted in December 1967 after some 'ten years' of debate about the Alliance's strategic posture. The previous strategy - massive nuclear retaliation - which dated from 1956, assigned to NATO's (weak) conventional forces the tasks of:

- a. forcing the aggressor to mobilize for an attack (thereby increasing the warning time to NATO).
- and
- b. holding him as far forward as possible just long enough for the certain and overwhelming nuclear response to be made.

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3. This 'tripwire' was accepted by the Europeans in particular who were able to see that it:

- a. linked the defence of the US inextricably with Europe.
- b. provided a less expensive alternative to maintaining the size of conventional forces that would otherwise have been needed to ensure defeat of a Soviet conventional attack.

But even during the late 50s, developments in Soviet nuclear capabilities were undermining the credibility of tripwire. These encompassed the introduction of Soviet long/medium range bombers, and the development of ICBMs. The attainment in the 1960s by the Soviets of the ability to strike US territory with nuclear weapons (along with their overwhelming conventional forces) destroyed the credibility of 'tripwire' because the deterrent threat that the US would automatically launch a strategic nuclear attack on Russia to defeat conventional aggression had irretrievably lost its force. As de Gaulle was reported to have said "No US President will exchange Chicago for Lyon".

4. Some 10 years lapsed between the first suggestion that NATO should revise its strategy and the adoption of the strategy of flexible response. In the course of that process, described in a recent US Report as "the longest and

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most divisive debate in the history of the Alliance", virtually every issue that has emerged in the current questioning of NATO's strategy was addressed in depth in the Alliance: the reliability of the US nuclear guarantee; the feasibility of achieving a satisfactory conventional balance in Europe; the benefits and risks of first use of nuclear weapons; and the implication for deterrence of stronger conventional defence and a 'higher' nuclear threshold.

5. France has pursued an independent nuclear policy which is akin to 'tripwire'. Although there is potential for more flexible employment options inherent in her modernisation plans and an enhanced role for conventional forces, she remains sceptical about NATO's strategy of flexible response, and the declared role of her theatre weapons remains that of a "final warning" of a strategic nuclear response. Such a policy would not suit NATO's sophisticated theatre nuclear doctrine and is made possible only by the unique position of France who, though outside NATO's military structure, nonetheless enjoys the shelter of the US strategic umbrella and the "glacis" provided by the FRG. Many analysts doubt the credibility of France's nuclear stance, notwithstanding these advantages.

6. There are three key principles underlying NATO's deterrent strategy:

- a. a manifest determination to act jointly and defend NATO's Treaty Area against all forms of aggression.

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- b. a recognisable Alliance capability to respond effectively at all levels of aggression, and to escalate if necessary.
- c. a flexibility in response which would prevent the Soviet Union from predicting with confidence NATO's specific response to aggression, and which will lead the Soviet Union to conclude that an unacceptable degree of risk would be involved regardless of the nature, place and time of an attack.

These three principles are built on a coalescence of political will and military posture. Both aspects must be demonstrable and credible to the potential aggressor (and also to electorates) if NATO's deterrent strategy is to succeed.

7. It is implicit in the Alliance, whose treaty states that "an armed attack against one ... shall be considered an attack against them all", that all members participate on an equal basis in the process of decision-making. And it is also central that the Alliance should send to the Soviet Union clear signals of continuing political cohesion and of its political will to mount direct defence and to escalate where necessary to whatever level is needed to persuade the aggressor to pull back. This demonstration of cohesion - which should not be confused with absolute harmony at all times - must be maintained in peacetime and, critically, in a period of rising tension. Failure to maintain a clear signal, especially during tension, could allow the Soviets to (mis-) calculate that NATO's political determination, and thus its military capacities, would crumble in the face of actual aggression.

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8. There are three basic components of NATO's military posture:

- a. conventional forces - to deter and counter as far as possible any Soviet non-nuclear attack by direct defence, with an implicit threat of escalation to the use of nuclear forces.
- b. theatre nuclear forces - to provide an additional deterrent to conventional attack, and also to Soviet use of TNF; and to provide NATO with a range of nuclear options short of a strategic exchange, but which demonstrates our willingness to escalate the conflict to the strategic nuclear level if necessary.
- c. strategic nuclear forces - to be able to inflict unacceptable damage on the Soviet Union even after a Soviet pre-emptive first strike, and to provide the ultimate threat to deter Soviet aggression.

COMPROMISES IMPLICIT IN FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

9. The conclusions which were reached in 1967 are based on a series of compromises that reflected the (differing) views of the US and its Allies. In some instances the compromises stem from geography: others derive from markedly different political viewpoints. In every case, however, the compromise was built on the desire not to expose cracks between the US and Europe: these same potential differences remain, albeit below the surface, within the Alliance today.

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10. There are some military penalties to be paid in a slavish interpretation of forward defence - a cardinal military precept once hostilities have started is to use depth in defence to give our forces greater protection and more freedom of action - and the resultant deployments in the FRG do not necessarily make best use either of terrain and/or the conventional capacities of the Alliance. But the Europeans, and especially the FRG, with vivid memories of the devastation of two world wars, were (and are) not prepared to accept the principle of a forward 'glacis' of territory: there could be no 'disposable' Western states to act as a buffer between super-powers.

11. Ever since their first efforts at the February 1952 Lisbon North Atlantic Council meeting, Alliance members have never been prepared to provide the resources needed to mount a full conventional defence to a major Soviet attack. The concept of threatened escalation by NATO to the first use of nuclear weapons reflects this fact.

12. There is no defined length to any phase of NATO's response. There is an underlying tension between the US who would wish to delay nuclear exchanges as long as possible (hence their emphasis on building up warstocks in Europe, and the need to reinforce) and the Europeans, especially the FRG, who view with alarm the consequences of a major conventional war fought on their soil. (Henry Kissinger tartly observed that the Europeans would prefer to have a nuclear war fought between the US and the USSR over their heads). These wishes represent the extremes of polarity: there are other elements which although implicit were never addressed in detail; they include:

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- a. the natural preference to defeat the enemy quickly by conventional means as close to NATO's borders as possible.
- b. the need to be able to fight the conventional battle long enough to allow NATO political authorities to make calculated decisions about the employment of nuclear weapons if necessary, and for further reinforcements to arrive.

13. Nor was the impact of 'flexible response' on NATO's maritime posture addressed in detail. Different considerations apply to the conduct of operations on land and at sea; for example, mobility of maritime forces and their relative freedom from geographical constraints provide a wide range of options in tension, transition to war and war - yet the same principles underlying flexible response must apply in both areas.

14. Striking the right balance between ready and in-place forces and rapid reinforcement is no easy matter. Reinforcement is a vital element of deterrence: however, its implementation raises difficult and conflicting issues for decision makers. Its success will depend in no small measure on timely political decisions early in a period of tension which may not prove easy, not least because they may be seen as escalatory. Equally, the costs (political and resource) of in-station forces make it inevitable that heavy reliance will be placed on reinforcement.

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CRITICISMS OF FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

15. Whilst there is clear and unequivocal public support for NATO there are many critics of the West's reliance on nuclear weapons. Critics range from the responsible to the absurd fringes of the peace movements who have no interest whatsoever in the concept of deterrence. It is important, however, even when considering the important contributions to the debate made by the 'responsible' critics, to make a clear distinction between those who doubt the intellectual, political and military validity of the overall strategic concept, and those who merely regard its implementation as deficient. A number of so-called 'alternative strategies' have been propounded by various commentators responsible and mischievous alike. These cover concepts such as: no first use of nuclear weapons; nuclear free zones; rapid moves to new advanced weapons technology (to obviate the need for nuclear, especially battlefield, weapons); unilateral nuclear disarmament.

16. As paragraph 4 indicates, none of these issues is new. However, there are various reasons why public concern has revived in recent years. They include worries about the growth of Soviet military power across the spectrum and about the role of nuclear weapons in NATO strategy following the 1979 decision to modernise NATO INF, as well as US and UK strategic modernisation programmes. There is also a growing aversion to nuclear matters, both civil and military, and an inchoate feeling in some quarters that Arms Control is not being pursued adequately by the Alliance.

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17. When analysing alternative defence strategies, however, it is vital not to address them solely from a western perspective: although the strategy must be credible in Western eyes it is important to state clearly that the most critical analysis, in terms of the efficacy of a strategic concept, is that of the potential aggressor. NATO's objective is to seek to influence Soviet calculations to ensure that Soviet leaders decide that whatever the incentive (which at the moment is not great) the gamble of using the military option would not be worth taking. The litmus test, therefore, of any alternative defence concept is whether it would be more convincing to the Soviet Union. There is no evidence that, since 1967, the Soviet leadership has ever doubted the political will and military capacity of the Alliance to respond robustly to aggression. There is no immediately obvious reason, despite Soviet preponderance in conventional and longer range theatre nuclear forces, and broad strategic nuclear parity, why the Soviets should alter their assessment. And there is nothing in any of the alternative defence concepts that would be any more credible than flexible response in Soviet eyes. Indeed, inasmuch as such concepts could simplify Warsaw Pact operational planning or leave NATO forces at risk, they would work to the Soviets' advantage. This is not to say that there are not areas of weakness which if allowed to go uncorrected might lead to a change in the Soviet perception. Flexible response is only as flexible as the forces provided to put it into effect allow.

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18. That said, powerful and responsible criticisms have been made of NATO's military posture which could have implications for future Alliance policy, and which call into question the ability of the Alliance to meet its current military objectives. It is therefore worth analysing the circumstances under which flexible response may be invalidated:

a. a complete collapse of the strategic balance in favour of the Soviet Union would destroy the threat of ultimate retaliation and would leave the Alliance open to nuclear blackmail.

b. if NATO's theatre nuclear capabilities ceased to provide an appropriate range of options linking conventional and strategic forces the ability of the Alliance to threaten a controlled escalation would be damaged. This could put NATO in the impossible dilemma of suing for peace or launching a strategic nuclear attack because it was left with no adequate intermediate options.

c. a major conventional reduction in Europe could deny the Alliance the ability to undertake a robust direct defence and would in effect be a return to 'tripwire'. It could thereby tempt the Soviet Union to make a quick 'surgical' attack with limited aims confident that the US would not

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risk a strategic nuclear exchange in such circumstances, though such a scenario would need to assume that the UK's and French strategic forces would also be similarly inhibited.

d. A perception by the Soviets - rightly or wrongly - that NATO's political will would collapse in the face of a major conventional attack would obviously be a disastrous development: and it follows therefore that the Alliance should seek to foster and demonstrate its political cohesion as one of its highest priorities.

e. a force posture in any Region, for example on the Flanks, so weak as to inhibit an Alliance response to a limited Soviet incursion.

19. We believe that the overall strategic concept is sound - indeed there is neither evidence to support an early obituary, nor any available alternative strategy that would score in the same way as flexible response in Soviet calculations. But we should analyse against current criticisms whether any changes need to be made to NATO's military posture to enhance the strategy. This paper does not address the highly complex issues of strategic nuclear forces, and the US Strategic Defence Initiative: suffice it to say that the retention of broad strategic nuclear stability with a secure second-strike capability between the

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super-powers is a necessary pre-condition of the NATO's deterrent strategy. The three key areas which need to be addressed are conventional forces and theatre nuclear capabilities; and regional imbalances within the Alliance.

20. Criticisms of the conventional leg of the triad of forces is based on evidence of: sheer numerical inferiority; limited sustainability; low level of equipment standardisation and interoperability; inadequate reserves; blunting of the qualitative edge. An understandable (and sometimes automatic) reaction is to seek to extend our conventional capacity simply by spending more on defence. For a wide variety of reasons, this is impossible to achieve evenly across the Alliance, and our approach has been to question whether the UK and NATO are getting the maximum value for the already substantial resources deployed. Could the Alliance undertake its conventional roles more rationally - eg by role specialisation among nations, and by increasing the volume of efficient equipment collaboration? And how should the Alliance balance its various needs for powerful land forces against the equally strong claims for air defence and a strong maritime capability?

21. A separate but related issue is whether it is in NATO's interest, given the geopolitical compromises and subliminal tensions inherent in flexible response, to seek to enhance conventional capabilities to make it possible to fight an extended conventional war. Would it actually be preferable to relying on early use of nuclear weapons? Would this be likely to increase the risk of

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war - either by appearing to threaten the Soviet Union or by making the nuclear element less credible? It is at least arguable that excessive reliance on conventional capabilities could appear to demonstrate that the West had lost its resolve to escalate to nuclear weapons, and therefore that the Soviet Union could expect to be able to wage a conventional war in Europe without the threat of nuclear attacks against its homeland. It is also possible to argue that such a strengthening of NATO's conventional forces, especially if matched by the Soviet Union, would not necessarily extend the period of conventional hostilities, but merely increase its intensity. War fighting capabilities would be enhanced, but should deterrence fail, early recourse to nuclear weapons might still be needed.

22. Evidently there is a balance to be struck here - but, equally, it is a matter of judgement whether overall, despite all the criticisms, NATO's conventional forces are excessively weak (though see 23 below). There are plainly many areas, such as sustainability and interoperability, where NATO can and must do much better. But we must not assume that NATO's conventional defences would be a push-over for the Soviets. If the present levels of expenditure on nuclear systems were used to bolster conventional forces, the switch would produce only relatively modest enhancements in our conventional capabilities. At the same time the UK would be denuded of her ultimate national retaliatory capability.

23. The principal criticisms of theatre nuclear weapons are based on doubts, as expressed for example by McNamara, on the utility of very short range or

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battlefield systems. Although many studies have been undertaken, and the issues aired thoroughly, no adequate alternative in terms of deterrence to NATO's possession of some battlefield nuclear weapons has been advanced. There has been a gradual reduction in such weapons in Europe in recent years, and this will increase in pace over the next few years. But in considering the role of battlefield weapons it is important to identify likely Soviet perceptions. The removal of the short range nuclear threat would allow the WP to mass conventional forces for attack with relative impunity, while NATO forces would still be at risk from comparable Soviet systems. Whilst there is a case for further reductions in such systems it has not been demonstrated that it would be to NATO's advantage to renounce such a capability in its entirety.

24. There are wide disparities between the different NATO regions in terms of force levels, equipment standards, and overall defensive posture. It must follow from this that those areas which are weakest - notably North Norway and Eastern Turkey - could present comparatively easy targets should the Soviet Union wish to test NATO cohesion and the level of response. This is an acute difficulty for NATO, and it could present serious difficulties for the Alliance should the Soviets seek to probe Alliance resolve. Would it be credible for NATO to make a major military response in another theatre to, say, a Soviet incursion into Finnmark? Should NATO plan to seize a 'countervailing' area of strategic interest to the Soviet Union, or take appropriate measures at sea? Could NATO take any credible military measures in such circumstances? Is it possible to

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rectify the regional imbalances? How should Norway's defences be strengthened? Should the Alliance provide additional military aid to Turkey? The questions can be easily posed, although there are no straightforward answers. However, it is important that NATO should maintain its ability to deploy specialist reinforcement forces as a tangible demonstration of politico-military cohesion and its will to give effect to Article 5.

25. Two further areas need to be addressed: NATO's stance on out of area matters and burden-sharing.

26. The threat to Alliance interests outside the NATO area is acknowledged by NATO. However, it has no adequate collective mechanism for handling such crises as Afghanistan. This places the Alliance at a disadvantage in that it presents options for the Soviet Union to test Western resolve without running the risk of a united NATO response. Thus the responsibility for any military action will remain with those Allies who are able to respond to a crisis out of area in consultation with other friendly powers, leaving NATO, EEC and other fora to consider what collective political support can be given. Nevertheless, the potential drawdown of reinforcement forces (particularly the US RDF) faces the Alliance with an acute dilemma in crises out of area.

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27. There is growing evidence that the Alliance collectively needs to devote greater efforts to ensuring that the risks and burdens (as well as the benefits) of membership are shared equally between members. There are obvious transatlantic ramifications to this as manifested by the Nunn/Cohen resolutions; it is also an intra European problem. The political, military and resource implications are considerable.

CONCLUSION

28. Analysts, both serious and mischievous, enjoy writing obituaries about NATO's strategy. None has yet, however, advanced any credible alternative to the strategy of flexible response. This is no surprise: flexible response is designed to provide as many options as possible to the defender, and every alternative that has yet been propounded would reduce flexibility in varying measures. Most efforts to debunk flexible response misunderstand the fundamentals of the strategy: it does not commit NATO to a preordained sequence of responses, conventional to nuclear, and it does not require NATO to match the WP system for system at every level. Above all, there is no absolute nuclear threshold. Flexible Response provides NATO commanders and political authorities with a wide range of options for response to aggression. Clearly, the stronger and more enduring the conventional leg, the longer the time available to NATO to consider other (especially nuclear) options: but paradoxically there is a danger that over reliance on increased conventional forces could also weaken deterrence because the Soviets might assume NATO was losing the will to resort to nuclear weapons if necessary.

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29. Given that NATO's objectives are to deter aggression, there is no empirically verifiable formula which will guarantee that the Alliance's success over the last 35 years will be replicated in the next 35 years. But, two key points stand out from our analysis which point the way ahead. In order to preserve its political and military credibility NATO must preserve and nourish the two primary links on which the Alliance is founded: the political links between Europe and the USA (and within Europe) and the military links between conventional and nuclear capabilities. The efforts made by the Soviet Union to de-couple Europe from the USA by attempting to block INF modernisation vividly demonstrates that their own analysis has identified the same key elements in NATO's future posture.

Finale. "Take but degree away, untune that string and hark what discord follows."

30. The credibility of the strategy of flexible response depends crucially on convincing the Soviet Union.

- that NATO has sufficient material resources to respond to attack, to go on responding, and to raise the stakes if necessary.
- that NATO has the political will to use the formidable military assets at its disposal.

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In these circumstances, NATO can therefore ensure that, as the IISS judges "military aggression (would be) a highly risky undertaking the consequences for an attacker would be unpredictable, and the risks, particularly of nuclear escalation, incalculable".(1)

31. The Chiefs of Staff recently reaffirmed that in their judgement no credible alternative to flexible response exists, but acknowledged that there were a number of weaknesses in its implementation which detract from the inherent flexibility required which needed to be addressed and overcome; these included sustainability, and mobilisation and reinforcement measures.

32. In sum, there is no reason to judge that, in Soviet eyes, flexible response has ceased to be credible: but, equally, we must not be complacent about the present state of NATO's defences and we must continue to give priority to areas such as sustainability, interoperability, efficient use of NATO's resources and effective equipment collaboration to ensure that NATO's posture remains as credible to the Soviet Union in the next decades as it evidently has been until now.

(1) Military Balance 83/84.

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ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what way (if any) are the circumstances surrounding conventional, theatre nuclear and strategic forces in 1984 different from 1967?
2. Is Flexible Response the right strategy; are there any credible alternatives given the geo-political realities? Are there any lessons to be learnt from French strategic and nuclear thinking?
3. Is there any evidence that Soviet perceptions of NATO's credibility have changed? What is their likely risk analysis?
4. Is it necessary to undertake further conventional improvements in Europe to maintain credibility of Flexible Response?
5. Is NATO's political solidarity under threat from the weaker members? If so how can this division be countered both politically and militarily?
6. Are NATO governments doing enough to reassure publics of the viability of NATO strategy?
7. Is NATO doing enough to maintain the primary linkages both between Europe and USA and between conventional and nuclear response?

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Cheques Summer.

A Plan to Reshape NATO

By HENRY KISSINGER

After 35 years of preserving peace in Western Europe, the Atlantic Alliance confronts new military, political and social realities. In this article, a former Secretary of State proposes dramatic—and in his view, vital—steps to help the alliance meet the challenges ahead. Among them: NATO's Supreme Allied Commander should be a European, not an American, as is now the case; Europe should have a decisive voice in certain nuclear arms-control talks and greater responsibility for its ground defense. If Europe refuses to accept that responsibility, the U.S. should withdraw up to half of its ground forces from Europe.

Lebanon and the Soviet succession have preoccupied us in recent weeks, but the Atlantic Alliance must remain the pivot of American policy. On its unity depends the security of free peoples. From its cohesion will flow whatever hopes the Soviet succession offers for a new dialogue. Unfortunately, just as storms recur in nature, crises recur in the Atlantic Alliance. Nearly every Administration for a generation has been involved in them. However, the present controversies in NATO are both unprecedented and unsettling.

In West Germany, Scandinavia, the Low Countries and even in Britain (though to a lesser extent), "peace" movements have been pulling governments in the general direction of their policies, even though those governments disagree with their premises. In addition, the main opposition parties in West Germany and Great Britain—which, in the nature of democratic politics, can be expected to get into office eventually—are advocating policies that amount to unilateral nuclear disarmament for their countries. Because these groups hold sway over key segments of public opinion, too many European leaders—even conservative ones—have yielded to the temptation to demonstrate their peaceful intentions the easy way, by pretending to be reining in a bellicose and insensitive U.S. through their ministrations. As a result, among those who shape public attitudes—and thereby set what become the limits of the politically possible—there is less intellectual or philosophical agreement than in any previous period.

This creates an exceedingly dangerous situation. An alliance cannot live by arms alone. To endure it requires some basic agreement on political aims that justify and give direction to the common defense. If military arrangements provide its only bond, it will sooner or later stagnate. It will surely prove unable to take advantage of diplomatic opportunities for an easing of tensions. That is the central issue before the Atlantic Alliance today. It requires a remedy that is fundamental, even radical—in the literal sense of going to the root.

Four problems in particular are gnawing at the alliance:

1) *Lack of an agreed, credible strategy.* The gap between NATO's formal strategy and what the public will support has widened dangerously. The so-called flexible response devised in the 1960s remains NATO's official doctrine. It contemplates a defense of Europe that begins with conventional weapons and then goes up the ladder of nuclear escalation—until it reaches whatever level is necessary to halt Soviet aggression. In today's circumstances this doctrine has a fatal weakness: neither existing nor projected NATO conventional ground forces are adequate to

repel a major Soviet conventional attack. Therefore, the doctrine would require a nuclear response at an early stage. Yet strategic nuclear parity deprives the threat of strategic nuclear war of much of its credibility; mutual suicide cannot be made to appear

as a rational option. And no alternative nuclear strategy has been developed. Partly for this reason, public opinion, essentially unopposed by most NATO governments, is moving powerfully against any reliance on nuclear weapons—even tactical ones.

The alliance is thereby trapped in a precarious combination of (a) inadequate conventional forces, leading to (b) reliance on nuclear weapons in (c) a strategic environment that makes the threat of their use, and therefore their deterrent value, less and less credible, and (d) a public climate of growing nuclear pacifism that undermines what credibility remains. Lack of a coherent defense policy leaves the alliance, possessing a huge stockpile of enormously destructive weapons, disarming itself psychologically.

2) *Intermediate-range weapons and arms control.* The arrival of the new U.S. intermediate-range weapons in Europe late last year was properly hailed as a major success. For if public demonstrations and Soviet pressure had succeeded in blocking that deployment, the Soviet Union would in effect have achieved a veto over NATO's military dispositions. But unless the alliance clarifies the purpose of these missiles, the accomplishment is likely to be transitory, since the basic European attitude toward the missiles is that of a host toward a now unwanted guest whose invitation to dinner it would be too awkward to withdraw. Some prominent Europeans purport to see in the missiles' presence a hidden American design to confine a nuclear war to Europe. Others treat them as one of those peculiar American aberrations that periodically upset the alliance's equilibrium. Too few recognize, and even fewer are willing to admit, that in fact the missiles link the strategic nuclear defense of Europe and the U.S. Weapons capable of reaching Soviet territory stake the American homeland to the defense of Europe; they do not enable America to remain immune.

European ambivalence makes it excruciatingly difficult to define "progress" toward arms control, while the nearly desperate eagerness with which progress is pursued makes its attainment less likely. The Soviets have refused even to discuss any proposal balancing U.S. intermediate-range missiles in Europe against the Soviet arsenal at a lower level. They insist on total withdrawal of American missiles while retaining a large number of their own. The goal of leaving Europe vulnerable to Soviet nuclear blackmail is obvious. Yet significant segments of European opinion persist in blaming the U.S. for the deadlock. In Europe



in the U.S., this attitude must in-
crease the public support needed
not only for missile deployment but
for coherent arms control.

3) *East-West relations.* Behind the
sharp differences over defense strategy
and arms control lies a parallel dispute
over the alliance's posture toward the
Soviet Union. Too many Europeans ac-
cept the caricature of a U.S. run by trig-
ger-happy cowboys whose belligerence
has provoked Soviet intransigence.
Many Americans, on the other hand,
consider such European notions naive and believe that together
with the pacifist and neutralist demonstrations, they reflect a
trend toward appeasement that encourages Soviet intransigence.

4) *Relations with the Third World.* Most European leaders
believe that they have a special opportunity to establish prefer-
ential relationships with Third World countries. In the flash
points of the Middle East, Africa and Central America, they see
U.S. approaches as hopelessly tainted by an obsession with Sovi-
et ambitions; some hope to win favor in the Third World by an
ostentatious dissociation from the U.S. More than a few Ameri-
cans view such behavior as a free ride paid for by U.S. sacrifices
or as a positive incitement to Third World radicalism.

These differences could be healthy if they led to compatible
and constructive policies for the 1980s and '90s. So far this has not
happened. Mutual recriminations have created opportunities for
Soviet political warfare even during this period of stagnation in
the Kremlin leadership. The Politburo is obviously convinced
that the West has become so paralyzed concerning nuclear weap-
ons that there is no urgency about nuclear arms control; the Soviets
can simply wait for a while to harvest the fruits of Western
anxieties. By contrast, there may be concern in Moscow that
NATO will move to close the gap in conventional forces; hence the
willingness to resume the talks, moribund for ten years, about
limiting conventional arms. Does this reflect a genuine interest in
arms control, or is it a means to thwart the desperately needed
Western conventional buildup by creating the same conditions by
which public opinion was mobilized on the missile question? And
what is one to make of the almost deferential pleas by all major
NATO countries for the resumption of a dialogue that the Soviets
have interrupted? Or of the upgrading of all major European dele-
gations except the French to the Andropov funeral, compared
with the Brezhnev rites 15 months ago—especially as Andropov's
rule was marked by the flagrant attempt to influence the German
election, the walkout from arms-control talks and the shooting
down of the Korean airliner, not to speak of Andropov's 15-year
stewardship of the KGB?

Will the Soviets see Western pleas for dialogue as a demon-
stration of good will, or will they learn from the compulsion to
demonstrate good intentions after months of harassment that in-
transigence pays because the West has weak nerves? Will we fail
to relax tensions because the Soviets conclude that atmospherics
can substitute for dealing with the real causes dividing the world?
Europe is not moderating the U.S., and the U.S. is not stiffening
Europe's spine, as the folklore on each side would have it. More
likely, each is in danger of paralyzing and demoralizing the other.
Western disunity is perhaps the principal obstacle to progress in
East-West negotiations.

This state of affairs has deeper causes than particular poli-
cies on either side. The present NATO
structure is simply not working, either
in defining the threat or in finding
methods to meet it.

Existing arrangements are unbal-
anced. When one country dominates
the alliance on all major issues—when
that one country chooses weapons and
decides deployments, conducts the
arms-control negotiations, sets the tone
for East-West diplomacy and creates
the framework for relations with the
Third World—little incentive remains

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for a serious joint effort to redefine the
requirements of security or to coordi-
nate foreign policies. Such joint efforts
entail sacrifices and carry political
costs. Leaders are not likely to make the
sacrifice or pay the cost unless they feel
responsible for the results.

An imbalance such as the one now
existing cannot be corrected by "con-
sultation," however meticulous. In the
long run, consultation works only when
those being consulted have a capacity
for independent action. Then each side

takes the other seriously; then each side knows that the other's
consent has to be won. Otherwise consultation becomes "brief-
ing." Agreement reflects not conviction but acquiescence for
want of an alternative.

The present imbalance is not new. It has existed ever since
World War II. But military dependence on another nation has a
cumulative impact. When dependence no longer results from
wartime destruction but from a policy choice, made under condi-
tions of relative prosperity, it can breed guilt, self-hatred and a
compulsion to display *independence* of the U.S. wherever doing so
is safe, especially with regard to some Third World issues and cer-
tain aspects of East-West relations.

The problem has become even more acute because the gen-
eration of leaders that built NATO has virtually disappeared.
Those who governed Europe during the early postwar years were
still psychologically of the era when Europe bestrode the world.
Global thinking came naturally. European leaders assumed re-
sponsibility for their own security policies and gave it up only re-
luctantly because of special circumstances. But nearly 40 years
have passed since the end of World War II. The new leaders
were reared in an era when the U.S. was pre-eminent; they find
it politically convenient to delegate Europe's military defense to
us. Too many seek to position themselves somewhere between
the superpowers—the first step toward psychological neutral-
ism. Thus Europe's schizophrenia: a fear that the U.S. might not
be prepared to risk its own population on a nuclear defense of
Europe, coupled with the anxiety that America might drag Eu-
rope into an unwanted conflict by clumsy handling of Third
World issues or East-West relations.

The rush to condemn our actions in Grenada by so many of
our European allies is a case in point. What could have been in
the minds of their leaders? Even making allowance—especially
in the case of Britain—for totally inadequate consultation, they
could hardly have wanted us to fail. That would surely have af-
fected our willingness to run risks in defense of other areas, ulti-
mately including even Europe. Rather, they must have assumed
that their actions were irrelevant and costless: that we would not
be deterred, that we would exact no penalty and that therefore it
was safe to use the incident to score points with "progressives" at
home and with Third World radicals abroad.

The change in the nature of European leadership has been
paralleled in the U.S. Our new elites do not reject NATO
any more than do their European counterparts. But for
them, too, the alliance is more a practical than an emo-
tional necessity, more a military arrangement than a set of com-
mon political purposes.

On both sides of the Atlantic, we find ourselves threatened
by the dominance of domestic politics over global political strat-
egy. In Europe this leads in too many
countries to a faintly disguised neutral-
ism. In the U.S. it accelerates our al-
ready strong tendency toward unilat-
eralism and isolationism.

U.S. leaders have too often adjust-
ed foreign policies to political pres-
sures, bureaucratic infighting or
changing intellectual fashions. The
history of the American attitude to-
ward intermediate-range missiles in
Europe is an example. These were pro-
posed to the Europeans in 1957-58, in-

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gotiations that deal with
weapons stationed on
European soil.**

led in Britain, Italy and Turkey by 1960 and withdrawn in 1963. They reappeared later in 1963 as part of a NATO multilateral force, and were abandoned once again by 1965. They were put before NATO for the third time in 1978 and accepted once again in 1979. Not surprisingly, Europeans organizing to stop the current deployment are encouraged by the knowledge that previous American decisions have not proved immutable.

Similarly, our allies have had to adjust from passionate U.S. advocacy of SALT II to its rejection, and then to the fact that we have chosen to observe a treaty we refuse to ratify; from a strategic doctrine of massive retaliation to one of flexible response; from a policy of détente to one of confrontation and back to conciliation, not to speak of the gyrations in our Middle East policy—all in addition to the reassessments that occur whenever a new Administration comes into office. Each change of course leaves victims among European leaders who have staked their domestic positions on policies that the U.S. later abandons. Each lurch encourages a kind of neutralism, as Europeans seek to avoid being made hostage to sudden swings in American policy.

A continuation of existing trends is bound to lead to the demoralization of the Western alliance. An explicit act of statesmanship is needed to give new meaning to Western unity and a new vitality to NATO. In my view such an effort must have three components: (a) a more significant role for Europe within NATO, (b) a reform of the NATO organization and (c) a reassessment of current NATO deployment.

A NEW ROLE FOR EUROPE

During the entire post-World War II period it has been an axiom of American policy that for all the temporary irritation it might cause us, a strong, united Europe was an essential component of the Atlantic partnership. We have applied that principle with dedication and imagination, insofar as it depended on American actions, in all areas except security. With respect to defense, the U.S. has been indifferent at best—at least since the failure of the European Defense Community—to any sort of Europeanization. Many in this country seemed to fear that a militarily unified Europe might give less emphasis to transatlantic relations or might botch its defense effort and thus weaken the common security. The opposite is almost certainly the case.

In the economic field, integration was bound to lead to transatlantic competition, even to some discrimination. What defines a Common Market, after all, is that its external barriers are higher than its internal ones. In the field of defense, by contrast, increased European responsibility and unity would promote closer cooperation with the U.S. A Europe analyzing its security needs in a responsible manner would be bound to find association with the U.S. essential. Greater unity in defense would also help to overcome the logistical nightmare caused by the attempt of every European nation to stretch already inadequate defense efforts across the whole panoply of weapons. For example, there are at least five kinds of battle tanks within NATO, different types of artillery and different standards for calculating the rate of consuming ammunition. In a major conflict it would be nearly impossible to keep this hodgepodge of forces supplied.

Thus the paradox: the vitality of the Atlantic Alliance requires Europe to develop greater identity and coherence in the field of defense. I am not talking about traditional "burden sharing," paying more for the existing effort. I have in mind something more structural—a more rational balance of responsibilities. The present allocation of responsibilities fails to bring the allies to reflect naturally about either security or political objectives. Everyone has been afraid to take the initiative in changing the present arrangement, lest doing so unravel the whole enterprise. But since drift will surely lead to unraveling—if more imperceptibly—statesmanship impels a new approach.

STRUCTURAL REFORM

Structural reform cannot substitute for a sense of purpose and clear doctrine. But if pursued with care and sensitivity, it can help catalyze the development of shared political purposes. These common objectives require that European judgments on security, East-West diplomacy and other matters emerge from Europe's own analysis. Mere acquiescence in American decisions, briefings and pressures provides a façade of unity; shared purposes require a deeper sense of participation. Specifically:

1) By 1990 Europe should assume the major responsibility for conventional ground defense. This is well within the capability of a group of countries with nearly one and one-half times the population and twice the G.N.P. of the Soviet Union. The Soviets, moreover, have to divide their forces on at least two fronts.

2) This requires that planning for Europe's defense become a more explicitly European task. Heretofore, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) has been American. In the new arrangement a European officer should take that traditionally American place, probably with a U.S. deputy. Such a change is also likely to give a new perspective to allied strategic planning. The U.S. has generally achieved its military successes by the weight of the equipment that our vast industrial potential has made available. This has tended to tempt our military leaders to equate strategy with logistics. European nations have rarely

enjoyed such a material margin; rather, they have had to rely on superior leadership, training, initiative and tactics—precisely what NATO needs in an age of nuclear parity and renewed emphasis on conventional defense.

3) Since the beginning of NATO, the Secretary-General, who is responsible for running the alliance's political machinery, has been European. In the new structure, with its greater emphasis on political coordination, it would make more sense for this official to be American—whenever the new Secretary-General, Lord Carrington, decides to retire. Meantime, no Western leader is better qualified for guiding NATO's transition than the wise and thoughtful Carrington.

4) Europe should take over those arms-control negotiations that deal with weapons stationed on European soil. The INF negotiations with the Soviets (for intermediate-range missiles) and the MBFR negotiations

(on conventional forces) have heretofore been conducted by American delegations. Both of these negotiations should be "Europeanized" as quickly as possible, with a European chairman, an American deputy and a mixed, though predominantly European, delegation.

The structure that I am proposing would enable Europeans to confront—on their own initiative and in their own context—issues that have been evaded for at least two decades: the precise definition of an adequate conventional defense; the nature of the so-called nuclear threshold—the point where there is no choice except conventional defeat or nuclear escalation; the relationship between strategy and arms control. Since nuclear weapons would presumably be used only if conventional defense failed, Europe would be responsible for setting the nuclear threshold by its own efforts; it could relieve its nuclear anxieties by the simple expedient of augmenting its conventional defenses.

By the same token, European leadership in the MBFR and INF negotiations would place final responsibility for both conventional force levels and intermediate-range missile deployment in Europe with the leaders whose countries will have to bear the brunt—for good or ill—of the outcome of these negotiations. This is especially important with respect to the American intermediate-range missiles in Europe. That deployment makes sense only if the allies genuinely believe that the prospect of a nuclear blow from Europe



on Soviet territory will help deter a Soviet conventional attack or nuclear blackmail. If our principal allies do not share this conviction, the psychological basis for the deployment will evaporate.

European chairmanship of the INF talks would oblige Europe's leaders to face the issue head-on; their domestic critics would no longer be able to argue (as they do now) that U.S. intransigence is the principal obstacle to arms control.

As for the U.S., it would of course participate in these deliberations—in a less dominant position—through its continued membership in the integrated command, its responsibility for nuclear defense, and its ground, naval and air forces in Europe.

REDEPLOYMENT

The issue of redeploying American forces touches raw European nerves like no other. The slightest hint of altering present arrangements jangles sensibilities; it evokes fears of American withdrawal and prospects of European neutralism. But if present trends continue, it is certain to become a central issue in the alliance relationship. Before dealing with it in the context of a program of NATO reform, a few facts must be noted:

1) The present NATO deployment of five American divisions and supporting air and naval forces evolved in the 1950s, when NATO's doctrine was massive retaliation—to react to aggression with an immediate and overwhelming nuclear blow against Soviet territory. Massive retaliation paradoxically required that the total forces on the Continent be kept below the level required for conventional defense. NATO did not wish to tempt Soviet conventional aggression by doing anything to suggest that a Western response would be limited to nonnuclear means. Hence the American conventional deployment in Europe reflected political, not military, criteria: it was intended to give us no choice about nuclear retaliation and to leave the Soviets no doubt that this would be the consequence of even a conventional war. European conventional forces represented a similar political decision: they too were conceived as a trip wire for our nuclear riposte. From the birth of NATO a full conventional defense has been part neither of its strategy nor of its efforts.

2) This situation became anomalous when the growth of Soviet strategic forces deprived general nuclear war of much of its credibility. Yet NATO deployment has been essentially unaffected by the change. NATO has improved its conventional defenses but has not closed the gap in such forces. As the current NATO commander made clear recently, even counting the five American divisions that have remained in Europe, the alliance is still unprepared to withstand a major Soviet ground attack for more than a few days. European ambivalence continues 35 years after NATO's creation. Our allies remain unwilling to develop forces strong enough to provide an alternative to nuclear weapons—and yet much of their public opinion shies away from even thinking about nuclear deterrence.

3) Were we to start all over again, we would therefore hardly repeat the decision of the '50s in today's circumstances. Let us assume a group of wise men and women from both sides of the Atlantic came together to plan a global strategy unconstrained by the past. Assume further that it started from the premise that ultimately the defense of the West is indivisible and that European security should be viewed under the aspect of the defense of the West in Europe—as a thoughtful French observer, François de Rose, put it. Such a group would almost surely conclude that the sensible division of responsibilities would be for Europe, with economic resources and manpower exceeding those of the Soviet Union, to concentrate on the conventional defense of the Continent. To maintain the global balance of power—by definition as essential for Europe as for

If nuclear weapons remain the ultimate deterrent to even conventional attack, a gradual withdrawal of up to half of our ground forces would be logical.

America—the U.S. would emphasize highly mobile conventional forces capable of backing up Europe and contributing to the defense of, for example, the Middle East, Asia or the Western Hemisphere.

Such a division of responsibilities would also enable our military establishment to shift some of its intellectual energies and scientific research from a hypothetical esoteric war in an area where we have major allies to the defense of regions where conflict is much

more likely. In such regions our allies are less prone to see their interests immediately engaged, and the countries being threatened are in a worse position to assist in the defense effort.

Even if we were to start all over again, an irrefutable case would exist for maintaining considerable American ground forces in Europe. This would be essential to keep our allies from feeling abandoned and to eliminate any Soviet misunderstanding that the defense of Europe no longer reflects a vital American interest. In a new division of responsibilities we should also preserve and preferably strengthen existing U.S. land-based airpower on the Continent. And we should continue our responsibility for both strategic and tactical nuclear defense, assuming that we and the Europeans could agree on a strategy for the latter. American intermediate-range missiles should remain in Europe to "couple" the nuclear defenses of both sides of the Atlantic so long as European leaders desired them. No change in naval deployments would be involved.

Why then is such a division of responsibilities not realized? The principal obstacle is psychological. For all their criticisms of American policy, Europeans dread a return to isolationism in the U.S. Americans fear that any tinkering with deployment would drive Europe into explicit neutralism. And some in the Pentagon would rather maintain our troops in Europe in a less than rational deployment than return a portion to the U.S., where they are more exposed to congressional budget cutters.

In my view, persisting in a deployment that is losing its rationale accelerates these attitudes. Pacifism and neutralism are on the march in Europe even under the present setup; isolationism in America is not yet so vocal but is being powerfully encouraged by endless allied disputes. An alliance that cannot agree on its political premises cannot sustain itself by clinging to military arrangements decided a generation ago in totally different circumstances. With current trends the issue of the rationale for the NATO deployment will become unavoidable. If it arises not as an integral component in a comprehensive design but as a single question of whether to continue stationing American troops in Europe, unilateral changes will be arbitrarily imposed by the potentially most destructive means—the American budgetary process. Then indeed we might see in America a psychological wrench away from Europe and in Europe a panicky resentment against the U.S. A change in deployment without a positive political and strategic purpose, withdrawal for its own sake, might shock our allies into neutralism; it could mislead our adversary and tempt aggression.

There is an urgent need for a serious and rapid re-examination of NATO doctrine, deployment and policies, conducted by men and women known for their dedication to Western unity. The group—to be formed immediately after our elections—must begin with one of the most divisive issues before the alliance: an agreement on the nature and scope of the threat.

The group must avoid the tendency of previous such efforts, which set unrealistic goals and thereby magnified the problem. A deadline for completion should be set—certainly no longer than two years.

Theoretically, such a study could lead to one of three outcomes: 1) The group could come to the same conclusions about the optimum division of responsibilities in an agreed global strategy outlined above. Given the dis-

We must not let our future pass by default to the neutralists, pacifists and neoisolationists who systematically seek to undermine all joint efforts.

reements about the nature of the interests involved in regions outside of Europe and the domestic priorities of most European countries, such a conclusion, however rational, is extremely improbable. 2) The group could agree that the strategic interests of the West require a full conventional defense, but that for practical and psychological reasons, Europe can undertake the required effort only if the present American ground deployment in Europe is maintained intact. 3) The group could decide that the realities of European domestic politics preclude more than the current gradualistic, marginal improvement of defense efforts.

I hope very much that Europe would choose the second option. If Europe should agree to build a full conventional defense and were prepared to express that commitment in unambiguous yearly obligations to increase its forces, the U.S. should accept the judgment that its present ground forces in Europe are an indispensable component. Such a decision might in fact invigorate the conventional arms-reduction talks and in time lead to stability at a lower level. But if Europe should opt for a perpetuation of the present ambivalence or for only a token improvement, then the U.S. will owe it to the overall requirements of global defense to draw certain conclusions. If Europe by its own decision condemns itself to permanent conventional inferiority, we will have no choice but to opt for a deployment of U.S. forces in Europe that makes strategic and political sense. If nuclear weapons remain the ultimate deterrent to even conventional attack, a gradual withdrawal of a substantial portion, perhaps up to half, of our present ground forces would be a logical result. To provide time for necessary adjustments, that withdrawal could be extended over five years. To ease the transition further, we could, if Europe agreed, keep the excess ground forces in Europe for a time afterward in a new status analogous to that of the French forces, prepared for use in Europe but also available for use in emergencies outside it. Any withdrawal would make sense only if the redeployed forces were added to our strategic reserve; if they were disbanded, the effect would be to weaken the overall defense.

The proposed redeployment would leave intact air and naval forces, as well as intermediate-range missiles, so long as Europe wants them. A useful byproduct of the process would be a systematic re-evaluation of the existing inventory of very short-range tactical nuclear weapons, a legacy of three decades of *ad hoc* decisions; these weapons now represent at one and the same time an increment to deterrence and the greatest danger of unintended nuclear war because, being deployed so far forward, they are unusually subject to the exigencies of battle.

In this scheme, withdrawal would be not an end in itself—as it will if frustrations on both sides of the Atlantic go much further—but one component of an adaptation to new circumstances extending over some eight years that rededicates the U.S. to the alliance for the indefinite future.

Psychology is immensely important in international relations, especially when policies turn not only on cold, professional assessments of the national interest by trained political leaders, but on public opinion. I would like to believe that restructuring the alliance to give Europeans greater responsibility for their own defense, while important American forces remain in Europe, will be seen not as an abandonment but as an embrace of Europe. It is a means of enlisting Europeans as full partners in the process of decision on which their safety as well as ours depends. For a son of Europe reared on the existing NATO orthodoxy, the very idea of even a partial redeployment is painful—all the more so after Lebanon. But we will not be fulfilling our obligations to the West if we fail to put forward an initiative to forestall the crisis that will otherwise confront us in much worse circumstances.

POLITICAL OBJECTIVES

By themselves, neither organizational nor doctrinal adaptations can remedy the political incoherence rending NATO. This article has emphasized security issues. However, a few general observations on the alliance's political problems are necessary.

1) Those leaders on either side of the Atlantic who value the alliance, with all its failings, as the ultimate guardian of Western freedom must seek urgently to end political disputes over East-West relations and North-South policy, especially Western conduct in the flash points of conflict in the Third World. The tendency to grandstand before domestic audiences, the growing self-righteousness, will in time make a mockery of the key assumption of the Atlantic Alliance: that we share a common approach to security. Defense requires after all *some* agreed political purpose in the name of which it is conducted. The Atlantic Alliance must urgently develop a grand strategy for East-West problems and Third World relations applicable for the rest of this century. Otherwise, it will tempt constant pressures and crises.

2) The U.S. cannot lead the alliance or even contribute to its cohesion if we do not restore bipartisanship to our foreign policy. Ever since the Viet Nam War, we have disquieted our friends and confused, where we have not emboldened, our adversaries by periodic wide swings on essential elements of our policies. But the national interest does not change every four or eight years. At

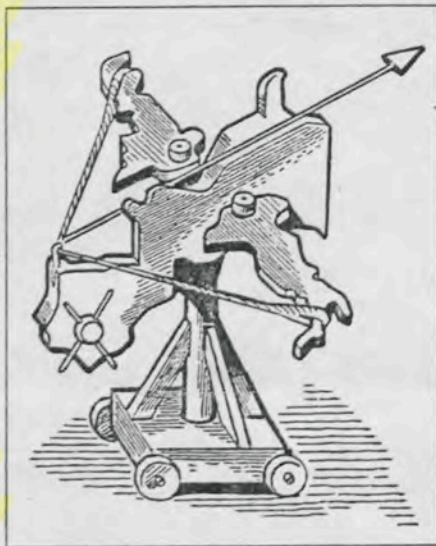
some point the national interest must be accepted by our public as clearly recognizable and constant. Otherwise, we shall become a source of dangerous instability, still relevant for our power but irrelevant for our ideas. A presidential election year is probably not an ideal time to forge a bipartisan consensus. But whoever wins the presidential election faces no more important and urgent challenge than to restore the element of bipartisanship to our foreign policy.

3) European governments must meet head-on the disturbing trends toward pacifism and neutralism in their countries. These movements are led by people of conviction; they cannot be defused by accommodation. They can only be resisted with a compelling vision of a new future. If European governments continue to humor those who profess to see the danger to the peace in a bellicose America, not an intransigent Soviet Union, they will find themselves making concession after concession and will become hostages of their critics.

The current condition of the alliance cries out for a rethinking of its structure, its doctrine and its unifying purposes. The creativity and courage with which we approach this challenge will determine whether the alliance enters a new and dynamic period or gradually withers.

I have outlined proposals to reinvigorate allied cohesion by defining clear responsibilities for each side of the Atlantic, to be implemented over a period of years. On that basis European leaders could defend cooperation with the U.S. as something they sought as a matter of their own conviction and in their own national interest. American leaders would have a rational, understandable policy to defend and would benefit from dealing with a more equal partner. A new era of allied creativity and American dedication could give inspiration to the generation that has come to maturity since World War II and since the postwar crises that infused NATO's founders with their sense of common purpose.

We must not let our future pass by default to the neutralists, pacifists and neoisolationists who systematically seek to undermine all joint efforts. The nations bordering the North Atlantic need above all faith in themselves and the will to resist the siren calls of those who use fear and panic as instruments of policy or domestic debate. In the end we must fulfill our trust: to preserve and strengthen a North Atlantic alliance that represents the hope of human dignity and decency in our world. ■



ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what way (if any) are the circumstances surrounding conventional, theatre nuclear and strategic forces in 1984 different from 1967?
2. Is Flexible Response the right strategy; are there any credible alternatives given the geo-political realities? Are there any lessons to be learnt from French strategic and nuclear thinking?
3. Is there any evidence that Soviet perceptions of NATO's credibility have changed? What is their likely risk analysis?
4. Is it necessary to undertake further conventional improvements in Europe to maintain credibility of Flexible Response?
5. Is NATO's political solidarity under threat from the weaker members? If so how can this division be countered both politically and militarily?
6. Are NATO governments doing enough to reassure publics of the viability of NATO strategy?
7. Is NATO doing enough to maintain the primary linkages both between Europe and USA and between conventional and nuclear response?

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MR POWELL

Chequers Seminar

As we agreed, I attach a draft Steering Brief (which you will wish to tailor to match the format of other briefs) for the NATO half of the seminar on 1 October. No Great Thoughts, I fear: it is very well-trodden ground!

B G Cartledge

26 September 1984