

## In favor of “effective” and “non-discriminatory” non-dissemination policy.

### The FRG and the NPT negotiation process (1962-1966)

*Andreas Lutsch*<sup>1</sup>

Focusing on the early years of the NPT negotiations between 1962 and 1966, this chapter offers a new explanation of the Federal Republic of Germany’s nuclear policy since the mid-1950s by introducing the analytical concept of West Germany’s *limited nuclear revisionism*. The paper demonstrates that West Germany supported nuclear non-dissemination policy, even though Bonn opposed the NPT-concept until late 1966, when articles I and II of the later NPT were agreed upon by the superpowers. It illustrates a little-known West German proposal of March 1966 to establish a regional non-proliferation regime as an alternative to the NPT-concept. The chapter concludes with the theses that the NPT had no non-proliferation effect with regards to the FRG and that West Germany’s *limited nuclear revisionism* was significantly transformed in the autumn of 1966.

The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) never became a nuclear power and it never controlled nuclear weapons. In 1954, Bonn accepted a legal obligation vis-à-vis some of its Western allies to abstain from producing nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons on German territory.<sup>2</sup> This waiver seems to have provided sufficient reassurance to West Germany’s allies for them to agree to the 1955 Paris Accords, thereby permitting West German admittance to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). During 1956-58, the Adenauer administration cautiously probed West Germany’s nuclear options in terms of Western European cooperation – probably as a supplement to

---

<sup>1</sup> The paper was accepted as a chapter of a volume (currently under peer review) related to the conference: “The Making of a Nuclear Order: Negotiating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Hosted by the Center of Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich, in association with the Nuclear Proliferation International History Project (NPIHP). Ittingen CH, 1-2 March 2014. The author would like to thank the participants of the ETH conference and in particular David Holloway, Francis J. Gavin, Leopoldo Nuti, Christian F. Ostermann, Andreas Wenger, Roland Popp, Liviu Horovitz, Ursula Jasper, Christine M. Leah, Eliza Gheorghe, Lodovica Clavarino, Elmar Hellendoorn, Grégoire Mallard, and Jonathan R. Hunt for their helpful comments.

<sup>2</sup> Art. I protocol Nr. III on arms control, revised Brussels Pact of 23 October 1954, *Bundesgesetzblatt 1955*. Teil II, No. 7 (Bonn, 1955), p. 267.

an exclusive Atlanticist nuclear policy.<sup>3</sup> Yet after this episode, German nuclear policy remained exclusively oriented towards NATO. During the 1960s, as the negotiations on a Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) progressed, West Germany's stance toward the treaty changed from rejection in the early 1960s to a rather grudging acceptance – coupled with an attempt in the second half of the 1960s to achieve a fairer balance of treaty rights and obligations. Ultimately, the FRG signed the NPT in late 1969 and ratified it in 1975.

The field lacks a precise understanding of the complexity of West German non-dissemination diplomacy and its linkages to related political and strategic processes during the 1960s<sup>4</sup>. Also, German non-dissemination policy is not well understood within Bonn's overall nuclear policy-making approach. This gap is particularly visible regarding the early years of the NPT negotiations, between 1962 and 1966, i.e. before Articles I and II of the later treaty were concluded. In contrast, more is known about the fact that German NPT-diplomacy intensified in early 1967 and that it had a limited impact on the treaty's provisions other than Articles I and II.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, this chapter focuses

---

<sup>3</sup> Leopoldo Nuti, "F-I-G Story Revisited," *Storia delle Relazioni internazionali* 13, no. 1 (1998): 69-100. It is far from clear that the intended, expected or likely outcome of this attempt of cooperation would have been "a national nuclear deterrent" in the case of West Germany as some scholars contend: Harald Müller and Andreas Schmidt, "The Little-Known Story of Deproliferation: Why States Give up Nuclear Weapons Activities," in *Forecasting Nuclear Proliferation in the 21st Century. Volume 1: The Role of Theory*, ed. William C. Potter and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova (Stanford: SUP, 2010), pp. 124-158, here: p. 135. In any case, the failure to achieve the F-I-G cooperation cannot be described as "the official end to the West German nuclear weapons program", see: Nuno P. Monteiro and Alexandre Debs, "The Strategic Logic of Nuclear Proliferation", *International Security* 39, no. 2 (Fall 2014): 7-51, here: 43.

<sup>4</sup> Compare: Fred L. Kaplan, *The Long Entanglement. NATO's First Fifty Years* (Westport: Praeger, 1999); Andrew Priest, *Kennedy, Johnson and NATO. Britain, America and the Dynamics of Alliance, 1962-68* (London: Routledge, 2006); Helga Haftendorn, *NATO and the Nuclear Revolution. A Crisis of Credibility, 1966-1967* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Beatrice Heuser, *NATO, Britain, France and the FRG. Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe, 1949-2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997); Christoph Bluth, *Britain, Germany and Western Nuclear Strategy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Basil Germond, Jussi M. Hanhimäki and Georges-Henri Soutou (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Transatlantic Security* (London: Routledge, 2010); Andreas Wenger, "Crisis and Opportunity: NATO's Transformation and the Multilateralization of Détente, 1966-1968," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 1 (2004): 22-74; Andreas Wenger, Christian Nuenlist and Anna Locher (eds.), *Transforming NATO in the Cold War. Challenges beyond Deterrence in the 1960's* (London et al.: Routledge, 2006); Christian Nuenlist and Anna Locher (eds.), *Transatlantic Relations at Stake. Aspects of NATO, 1956-1972* (Zurich: ETH Zurich, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Stephan Geier, *Schwellemnacht. Bonns Atomdiplomatie von Adenauer bis Schmidt* (Paderborn: Schoeningh, 2013); Peter Hoeres, *Außenpolitik und Öffentlichkeit. Massenmedien, Meinungsforschung und Arkanpolitik in den deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen von Erhard bis Brandt* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2013); William G. Gray, "Abstinence and Ostpolitik. Brandt's Government and the Nuclear Question," in Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer (eds.), *Ostpolitik, 1969-1974. European and Global Responses* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009), pp. 244-268; Erwin Häckel, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Atomwaffensperrvertrag. Rückblick und Ausblick* (Bonn: Europa-Union-Verlag, 1989); Uwe Nerlich,

on the early stage. First, it briefly reviews and offers an explanation for West Germany's ambitions in terms of the nuclear sphere of security policy since the mid-1950s. Second, it discusses how governments in Bonn perceived nonproliferation policy and the nascent nonproliferation regime in light of West German nuclear policy. Thirdly, it inquires why Bonn proposed an almost forgotten NPT counter-scheme in early 1966 and how this proposal fitted to Bonn's nuclear policy. Finally, it explains why and to what extent West Germany's nuclear policy was transformed in late 1966.

### Approaching West German nuclear ambitions

Throughout the 1960s, many believed the FRG's waiver of 1954 would not be sufficient to prevent Bonn from somehow acquiring nuclear weapons.<sup>6</sup> Ever since, much of the research on the origins of the NPT has seen the treaty as an effort by the superpowers – and other states – to codify especially West Germany's non-nuclear status.<sup>7</sup> An influential school of thought developed on the FRG and the nuclear question. This school focuses on the FRG as a 'threshold state', prima facie capable in a technological, industrial and financial sense to become a nuclear power. Regarding the latter, it is important to note that this school is totally fixated on nuclear weapons; it does not address other crucial issues in terms of nuclear power like the availability of or the ability to procure secure and effective delivery vehicles and a reliable command and control infrastructure<sup>8</sup>. Authors assume or postulate explicitly that the West German government especially in the era of Chancellor Konrad

---

*Der NV-Vertrag in der Politik der BRD. Zur Struktur eines außenpolitischen Prioritätenkonflikts* (Ebenhausen: SWP, 1973).

<sup>6</sup> Catherine McArdle Kelleher, *Germany and the Politics of Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Columbia UP, 1975), p. 9. A German interest to obscure "remaining loopholes" was postulated recently by Michael Knoll, *Atomare Optionen. Westdeutsche Kernwaffenpolitik in der Ära Adenauer* (Frankfurt et al.: Peter Lang, 2013), p. 325.

<sup>7</sup> Francis J. Gavin, "Nuclear Proliferation and Non-Proliferation during the Cold War," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Vol. 2: Crisis and Détente*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd A. Westad (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge UP, 2010), pp. 395-416; Hal Brands, "Progress Unseen: U.S. Arms Control Policy and the Origins of Détente, 1963-1968," *Diplomatic History* 30, no. 2 (2006): 253-285; Shane J. Maddox, *Nuclear Apartheid. The Quest for American Atomic Supremacy from World War II to the Present* (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 2010); Susanna Schrafstetter and Stephen Twigge, *Avoiding Armageddon. Europe, the United States, and the Struggle for Nuclear Non-Proliferation, 1945-1970* (Westport et al.: Praeger, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> On C<sup>3</sup>I: Peter D. Feaver, "Command and Control in Emerging Nuclear Nations," *International Security* 117, no. 3 (1992/93): 160-187.

Adenauer clandestinely “sought to acquire an independent nuclear deterrent”, even though authors vary regarding the definition of ‘political will’. In any case, the FRG is portrayed as a sometimes openly distrusted state that had to be prevented from ‘going nuclear’. These authors contend that coercive actions enforced Bonn’s alleged “nuclear reversal”; thus coercive actions were effective and decisive tools of nonproliferation policy against West Germany. Two coercive actions stand out. First, some pointed to seemingly credible and effective “U.S. threats of military abandonment” coupled with concurrent US assurance and protection “to obtain compliance with” US “nonproliferation demands”<sup>9</sup>, even though it is questionable whether the US actually ‘threatened’ West Germany “to withdraw its security guarantees”<sup>10</sup> in direct way. Second, this school of thought adheres to the narrative that the NPT thwarted West Germany’s ambitions for the national nuclear option, that it froze the FRG’s status as a non-nuclear-weapon state (NNWS), and that the German nuclear question was seemingly ‘solved’ when Bonn acceded to the regime in 1969/1975.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast, another school of thought concentrated on a narrative which is the prevailing opinion in German historiography and which is supported by some accounts of political scientists. Basically, these authors postulate that there was “ample and growing capacity” regarding “an autonomous [nuclear] weapons acquisition program”, “but no will”.<sup>12</sup> This thesis implies that West Germany was not a case of “nuclear reversal”, but a case of nuclear “renunciation”<sup>13</sup> or “forbearance”<sup>14</sup>. These authors agree that we lack and that we will very likely never be able to detect unambiguous evidence

---

<sup>9</sup> Gene Gerzhoy, “Alliance Coercion and Nuclear Restraint. How the United States Thwarted West Germany’s Nuclear Ambitions,” *International Security* 39, no. 4 (2015): 91-129, quotes: pp. 94 and 127; Monteiro and Debs, “The Strategic Logic of Nuclear Proliferation,” pp. 10, 42-47.

<sup>10</sup> Gerzhoy, “Alliance Coercion”, p. 92. Snyder clarified: “A complete withdrawal is hardly conceivable.” Glenn H. Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (1984): 461-495, quote: p. 487.

<sup>11</sup> See accounts in fn. 9; Matthias Küntzel, *Bonn and the Bomb. German Politics and the Nuclear Option* (London, Boulder: Pluto Press, 1995); Harald Müller, “German National Identity and WMD Nonproliferation,” *The Nonproliferation Review* 10, no. 2 (2003): 1–20; Müller and Andreas Schmidt, “The Little-Known Story of Deproliferation”; Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace. The Making of the European Settlement 1945-1963* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999), pp. 234ff.; Knoll, *Atomare Optionen*, pp. 325-337; Oliver Bange, “NATO as a Framework for Nuclear Nonproliferation: The West German Case, 1954-2008,” *International Journal* 64, no. 2 (2009): 361-382; Jonas Schneider, *Amerikanische Allianzen und Nuclear Reversal. Warum manche Entscheidungsträger von Allianzpartnern der USA einer Beendigung ihrer Kernwaffenaktivitäten zustimmen und andere nicht* (Kiel: PhD dissertation, 2015), p. 62.

<sup>12</sup> Horst Mendershausen, *Will West Germany try to get Nuclear Arms - Somehow?* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1971), p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> I refer to the definitions in: Jeffrey W. Knopf, “Security Assurances: Initial Hypotheses,” in: *Security Assurances and Nuclear Nonproliferation*, ed. Jeffrey W. Knopf (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2012), pp. 13-38, quote: p. 21f.

<sup>14</sup> T. V. Paul, *Power versus Prudence. Why Nations Forgo Nuclear Weapons* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s UP, 2000), p. 11.

which proves the contrary, and that it has to be stated that the West German government neither decided to acquire the national control of nuclear weapons nor implemented a policy towards this end, be it with or without a formal decision making process on government level.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, scholars have not identified an ambition let alone activities to make use of West Germany's fuel cycle technologies (such as heavy water reactors, enrichment and reprocessing of fissile materials) for the purpose of an indigenous production of nuclear weapons,<sup>16</sup> not to mention the potential illegality of involved actions considering that Bonn had waived the right to produce atomic weapons on German soil in 1954. Thus, also the thesis of a certain and/or temporary "hedging" function of West German fuel cycle technologies is not evident.<sup>17</sup>

In general, my view corresponds with the last-mentioned school of thought. But my view goes beyond the conventional narrative:<sup>18</sup> Before and after the FRG acceded to the NPT, West German governments pursued a *limited nuclear revisionism*. As an 'umbrella state' and as a protégé within the framework of US extended deterrence and NATO, West Germany was discontent with the status quo and continuously sought to achieve incremental enhancements to Germany's position and influence within the nuclear order – but on a limited scale, that is without becoming an atomic power under the

---

<sup>15</sup> Helga Haftendorn, *Deutsche Außenpolitik zwischen Selbstbeschränkung und Selbstbehauptung 1945-2000* (Stuttgart, Munich: DVA, 2001), pp. 94-134; Bruno Thoß, *NATO-Strategie und nationale Verteidigungsplanung. Planung und Aufbau der Bundeswehr unter den Bedingungen der massiven atomaren Vergeltungsstrategie 1952-1960* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2006), pp. 483f. and 496; Hans-Peter Schwarz, "Adenauer und die Kernwaffen," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 37, no. 4 (October 1989): 567-593; Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, Third Edition (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 310; Kelleher, *Germany and the Politics of Nuclear Weapons*; Jeffrey Boutwell, *The German Nuclear Dilemma* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990); Jenifer Mackby and Walter Slocombe, "Germany: The Model Case, A Historical Imperative," in *The Nuclear Tipping Point. Why States Reconsider Their Nuclear Choices*, ed. Kurt M. Campbell, Robert J. Einhorn, and Mitchell B. Reiss (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), pp. 175-217.

<sup>16</sup> Joachim Radkau and Lothar Hahn, *Aufstieg und Fall der deutschen Atomwirtschaft* (Munich: oekom, 2013), pp. 118-223. There is consensus in German historiography that another account is flawed because it does not display but still postulates a secret effort behind the build-up of West Germany's nuclear infrastructure in order to achieve an indigenous break-out capability under the pretext of exploiting nuclear energy for civilian purposes: Tilmann Hanel, *Die Bombe als Option. Motive für den Aufbau einer atomtechnischen Infrastruktur in der Bundesrepublik bis 1963* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> On the contrary thesis see: Ariel E. Levite, "Never Say Never Again. Nuclear Reversal Revisited," *International Security* 27, no. 3 (2002-2003): 59-88, here: p. 75.

<sup>18</sup> This view is based on my PhD dissertation *Westbindung or Balance of Power? The FRG's Nuclear Policy between the NPT and NATO's Dual Track Decision (1961-1979)* (Mainz: PhD dissertation, 2014).

conditions of the Cold War, and while referring to and thus sheltering behind its legal status as a NNWS. Hence, the NPT had no nonproliferation effect regarding West Germany.

In recent years, a significant amount of government records was declassified.<sup>19</sup> My review of these sources revealed no German attempt to emulate British and French nuclear acquisition efforts. Chancellor Adenauer, at least in the mid-1950s, seems to have regarded any non-nuclear state as “outclassed.”<sup>20</sup> And there is agreement that Adenauer personally never ruled out – and probably favored – that the FRG (or a re-unified Germany) would eventually become a nuclear power. But in light of the available sources, there is no clear empirical nexus between such personal desires and a governmental policy to implement them, while ‘personal desires’ should not be regarded as being equivalent to political will to acquire the national control of nuclear weapons. I argue that West German nuclear policy should be seen in the context of Bonn’s orientation towards NATO and the US nuclear umbrella and that Bonn’s *limited nuclear revisionism* was no end in itself. Its political core function during the 1960s was to enhance the FRG’s position and influence within NATO in order to fortify the FRG’s ties to the West (*Politik der Westbindung*).

Bonn’s security policy was anchored in fundamental politico-military calculations. West Germany had to face a three-sided nuclear dilemma. First, in a divided Europe, the FRG faced a grave threat from the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. Bonn’s officials were painfully aware that Germany would serve as a main battleground of a war, perhaps nuclear war. West German policy-makers were particularly “worried since the late 1950’s by Soviet IR/MRBM [Intermediate Range/Medium Range

---

<sup>19</sup> Even if many military aspects of nuclear history are publicly unknown, an impressive body of declassified files enables nuclear historians to understand West German governmental policies much better than ever before. The most important US files are State Department files, located at the *National Archives and Records Administration*, College Park, USA [NARA], NSC files, located at Presidential Libraries, and files from collections like the Digital National Security Archive [DNSA]. The *UK National Archive*, London, UK [TNA] and the *NATO Archives*, Brussels, Belgium [NATO] are of great importance as well. Most declassified German files are foreign office files, available in the *Politische Archiv, Auswärtiges Amt*, Berlin, Germany [PA AA]; formerly classified files of the chancellery and the ministry of defense are by and large inaccessible, even though some declassified files are available at two venues of the *Bundesarchiv*, Koblenz, Germany [BA] and Freiburg, Germany [BA-MA]. Selectively, classified files can be found in personal papers of German politicians, which are located at private or party archives.

<sup>20</sup> Cabinet meeting, 20 July 1956, *Die Kabinettsprotokolle der Bundesregierung* [Kab.Prot] 1956, (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998), p. 486f.

Ballistic Missiles] and medium bombers targeted on Europe.”<sup>21</sup> Any German chancellor, in the words of Helmut Schmidt, “had to remember that if the Soviet MRBMs were pointed at his country he would have to go begging to President Giscard or to Mr Callaghan or to President Carter in order to ask them to produce a counter-threat.”<sup>22</sup>

Second, the FRG was entirely dependent upon NATO and the US nuclear umbrella. However, beginning in the late 1950s, the German leadership had to wrestle with the cardinal question of whether US extended nuclear deterrence was “absurd” and incredible.<sup>23</sup> And yet, nobody was able to rule out that US protection actually ‘worked’ to deter Moscow: there were massive deployments of American troops and nuclear weapons in Western Europe, backed by the US strategic nuclear potential; the US threatened to use nuclear weapons first also below a level of conflict involving “the grand non-nuclear invasion of Western Europe”<sup>24</sup>; and even in the face of the trend towards ‘nuclear parity’ between the superpowers, the US “aggressively sought strategic nuclear primacy”,<sup>25</sup> thereby probably bolstering the credibility of its nuclear umbrella. Given these realities, West German experts and decision-makers believed even under the strained circumstances of the early 1960s that uncertainty in itself, due to the impossibility of excluding an uncontrollable spasm of nuclear escalation in conflict, may suffice to make deterrence work.<sup>26</sup> In Bonn, US nuclear power was regarded as indispensable to balance the threat of the Warsaw Pact. It could not be substituted.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Action memorandum from Hartman, Gelb and Lake, 3 February 1977, NARA, Record Group [RG] 59, Decentralized Files - Lot Files [DC-LF], Policy Planning Council [PPC], Records of Anthony Lake [AL], box 2, TL 2/1-15/77.

<sup>22</sup> MemCon Callaghan-Schmidt, 18/19 October 1978, TNA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office [FCO] 46/1822.

<sup>23</sup> Schmidt’s off the record talk with chief editors of German newspapers, 31 October 1978, *Privatarchiv Helmut Schmidt*, Hamburg, Germany, Eigene Arbeiten, 11.10.-15.11.1978, Nr. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Speech by McNamara before the NAC, 14 December 1962, *Foreign Relations of the United States* [FRUS], 1961-1963, VIII, doc. 120, p. 442.

<sup>25</sup> Francis J. Gavin, “Strategies of Inhibition. U.S. Grand Strategy, the Nuclear Revolution, and Nonproliferation,” *International Security* 40, no. 2 (2015): 9-46, quote: p. 16; Keir A. Lieber and Daryl Press, “The End of MAD? The Nuclear Dimension of U.S. Primacy,” *International Security* 30, no. 4 (2006): 7-44; Austin Long and Brendan Ritterhouse Green, “Stalking the Secure Second Strike: Intelligence, Counterforce, and Nuclear Strategy,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38, nos. 1-2 (2015): 38-75.

<sup>26</sup> Memorandum, Gleichgewicht und Atommacht, sent by Schmückle to Knieper on 19 October 1962 on behalf of Strauss, BA-MA, BW 1/2377. See also Schelling’s thesis of the “threat that leaves something to chance,” Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict. Revised Ed.* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990), pp. 187-204.

<sup>27</sup> See the internal high level talks on 6 March 1962, *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* [AAPD] 1962, I, doc. 110.

Thirdly, the West German elites accepted the FRG's inability to provide security through nuclear acquisition. The political class perceived the FRG's status as NNWS as a fact of life, at least under the conditions of the Cold War.<sup>28</sup> Trying to change this status was regarded as an "impossibilité politique."<sup>29</sup> Such action would lead to "suicide in domestic politics."<sup>30</sup> Many also believed German proliferation might unleash a Soviet "preemptive attack."<sup>31</sup> In addition, independent of West Germany's economic prowess, decision-makers were painfully aware of the country's *de facto* status of a "protectorate" in terms of security policy.<sup>32</sup> Thus, it was unnecessary to remind West German leaders of the "simple fact [...] that Germany depends, and must depend, on collective nuclear defense," because "[i]f you would not sign [the NPT], and decided to defend yourself with your own nuclear weapons, you would a) tear apart the Alliance [and] b) face a very difficult period during which you might well be destroyed."<sup>33</sup>

Scholars have tended to exaggerate the potential value of national nuclear weapons for German security. Potential costs – isolation, loss of influence, military intervention – can well dramatically outweigh potential gains.<sup>34</sup> This calculation certainly applied in the case of the FRG. Notwithstanding, West German decision-makers thought the Soviet's fear of a nuclear FRG was not merely a propaganda construct.<sup>35</sup> Bonn had no illusions about the destabilizing effect of a West

---

<sup>28</sup> Just a few examples: Instruction from the Foreign Office to Grewe, 8 June 1960, PA AA, B 130, Vol. 1987A; Strauss' remarks before the North Atlantic Council, Verbatim Record, 17 December 1960, NATO, IS-C-VR(60)51; MemCon Strauss-Rusk-Rostow, 23 July 1968, FRUS 1964-1968, XI, doc. 259, p. 650; MemCon Kiesinger-Moro-Fanfani, 2 February 1968, AAPD 1968, I, doc. 49; MemCon Adenauer-de Gaulle, 20 February 1967, in *Adenauer. Die letzten Lebensjahre: 1963-1967. Briefe und Aufzeichnungen, Gespräche, Interviews und Reden. Vol. 2: September 1965-April 1967*, ed. Hans P. Mensing (Paderborn: Schoeningh, 2009), doc. 433.

<sup>29</sup> MemCon Messmer-McNamara, 1 December 1961, *Documents Diplomatiques Français 1961*, II, doc. 200, p. 674; Michael Quinlan, *Thinking about Nuclear Weapons. Principles, Problems, Prospects* (New York: Oxford UP, 2009), p. 34; McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival. Choices about the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York: Random House, 1988), p. 498.

<sup>30</sup> Schwarz, "Adenauer und die Kernwaffen," p. 577.

<sup>31</sup> Letter from McGhee to Rusk, 25 August 1966, FRUS 1964-1968, XV, doc. 163, p. 395; memorandum from Ball, 27 October 1965, *Lyndon B. Johnson Library*, Austin, USA [LBJL], Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson President, National Security File [NSF], Agency File, Box 39, NATO-George W. Ball Analysis of a Collective Nuclear System; MemCon de Gaulle-Debré-Couve de Murville-Kiesinger-Brandt, 27 September 1968, AAPD 1968, II, doc. 314.

<sup>32</sup> Memorandum, Gleichgewicht und Atommacht, October 1962, BA-MA, BW 1/2377.

<sup>33</sup> MemCon Barzel-Rostow, 23 February 1968, FRUS 1964-1968, XV, doc. 248, p. 637.

<sup>34</sup> Paul, *Power versus Prudence*, p. 148; Francis J. Gavin, "Same as it ever was. Nuclear Alarmism, Proliferation, and the Cold War," *International Security* 34, no. 3 (2009/2010): 7-37.

<sup>35</sup> Memorandum by Carstens, 7 August 1963, AAPD 1963 II, doc. 283.



German attempt to acquire nuclear weapons. Such “endeavor[s] would go directly against German national interests.”<sup>36</sup> To understand the FRG’s behavior, “German national interests” should not be understood in a narrow sense of territorial security, but in broader political terms. Besides the above mentioned security concerns, German proliferation had the potential to destabilize Europe. Yet stability had to be preserved as a precondition for achieving the primary “German national interest:” Germany’s re-unification. In this respect, US support was also indispensable. Thus, from Bonn’s point of view, everything needed to be done to tie German and Western European security to a credible US security guarantee.

### **International Nonproliferation Efforts and Bonn’s “Leveraging Nuclear Suspicion” Strategy (1962-1964)**

Especially after the Kennedy administration assumed office, the US policy community engaged in a widespread debate on the “N+1 country problem.”<sup>37</sup> This mechanistic model implied an accelerating and quasi-automatic tendency towards further proliferation. Thus, to many US decision-makers, the spread of nuclear weapons appeared as a tide that needed to be stemmed.<sup>38</sup> In retrospect, it is obvious that proliferation pressures were more modest, especially when contrasted with the predictions of “generations of alarmists.”<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, the Kennedy administration was deeply concerned that the FRG might follow Britain and France’s example and acquire nuclear weapons. Therefore, nonproliferation policy needed to be intensified, many in Washington argued.

As recently declassified documents make clear, the West German leadership repeatedly and unambiguously denied any interest to acquire the national control of nuclear weapons.<sup>40</sup> However,

---

<sup>36</sup> Circular decree of the Foreign Office, 17 September 1964, PA AA, B 43, Vol. 10.

<sup>37</sup> Albert Wohlstetter, “Nuclear Sharing: NATO and the N+1 Country,” *Foreign Affairs* 39, no. 3 (1961): 355-387.

<sup>38</sup> Glenn T. Seaborg and Benjamin S. Loeb, *Stemming the Tide. Arms Control in the Johnson Years* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1987).

<sup>39</sup> John Mueller, *Atomic Obsession. Nuclear Alarmism from Hiroshima to Al-Qaeda* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010), p. 91; Francis J. Gavin, “Politics, History and the Ivory Tower-Policy Gap in the Nuclear Proliferation Debate,” *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 35, no. 4 (2012): 573-600, here: p. 586; Gavin, *Same as it ever was*.

<sup>40</sup> For example: telex from Grewe, 12 June 1962, conv. Strauss-Kennedy, 8 June 1962, AAPD 1962, II, doc. 236; MemCon, Strauss-McNamara, 3 May 1962, NARA, RG 200, Records of Robert S. McNamara [MNR], Box 133, MemCons with Germany I-II, Vol. I, Sect. 1.

the Adenauer government felt that West Germany was massively threatened by Soviet IR/MRBMs. Bonn thought only the deployment of several hundred mobile land-based and sea-based MRBMs in Western Europe under West German participation could possibly counterbalance the Soviet threat. Key officials in the FRG shared the gloomy assessment of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Lauris Norstad, that “Western Europe would be without an adequate defense capability at the latest in 1967” if the MRBM-problem would not be solved. And “then NATO would disappear.”<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, for political and strategic reasons, the Kennedy administration opposed any MRBM deployment in Western Europe.<sup>42</sup> Washington only lukewarmly supported the idea of a purely sea-based MRBM force, and insisted on a setting “truly multi-lateral in ownership and control.”<sup>43</sup>

Policy-makers in Bonn were dismayed by what they saw as American disregard of West German security interests.<sup>44</sup> To gain leverage with Washington towards solving the MRBM problem, German officials started nurturing existing perceptions about the potential consequences of an insecure FRG. On the one hand, the country might eventually drift towards the East, the argument went.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, it might embark upon a nuclear weapons program.<sup>46</sup> The Adenauer government attempted to exploit the FRG’s status as a seeming ‘nuclear threshold state’ and suspicions on the part of Bonn’s allies as a source of intra-alliance bargaining power. But given West Germany’s *limited*

---

<sup>41</sup> Norstad’s Conclusion before the NATO Council on 17 October 1962, telex from von Walther, 18 October 1962, AAPD 1962, III, doc. 404, p. 1741; memorandum from von Walther, 28 February 1962, PA AA, B 150, Vol. 441; MemCon Strauss-McNamara, 15 December 1961, NARA, RG 200, MNR, Box 133, MemCons with Germany I-II, Vol. I, Sect. 1; MemCon Norstad-Foertsch, 22 November 1962, Nuclear History Program archives [NHP], Bonn, doc. 113.

<sup>42</sup> See McNamara’s remarks before the North Atlantic Council on 14 December 1961 for a central technical argument: US strategic nuclear forces outside Europe would more than suffice to cover targets in the Western Soviet Union, Summary Record of a meeting of the Council, NATO, IS-C-R(61)69-E; US political objections appeared to arise from proliferation concerns and because the US anticipated a deterioration of the East-West relationship: memorandum by von Hase, 28 May 1962, PA AA, B 150, Vol. 449.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>44</sup> Speech by President Kennedy in Ottawa, 17 May 1961, <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=8136>> (accessed on 21 August 2014).

<sup>45</sup> Memorandum by Sahm, 18 June 1962, PA AA, B 150, Vol. 451.

<sup>46</sup> MemCon Strauss-Finletter, 22 January 1962, AAPD 1962, I, doc. 35, pp. 196f.

<sup>47</sup> See Adenauer’s reference that the FRG’s waiver of 1954 to produce nuclear weapons in Germany had to be understood as “rebus sic stantibus,” MemCon Adenauer-Schröder-Rusk, 22 June 1962, FRUS 1961-1963, XIII, doc. 145, p. 422; Adenauer-de Gaulle, 4 July 1962, DDF 1962, II, doc. 4, IV, p. 30; Adenauer-de Gaulle on 21 January 1963, AAPD 1963, I, doc. 37, p. 113; see also Schröder’s remarks to SACEUR Norstad on 12 July 1962, AAPD 1962, II, doc. 282, p. 1261.

*nuclear revisionism* such proliferation hints did not indicate that the FRG was engaging in “nuclear hedging.”<sup>47</sup>

Bonn’s leveraging-strategy achieved mixed results. On the US side, Secretary of State Rusk reported to his British counterpart, Lord Home, that “the Germans would, sooner or later, seek to have a nuclear capacity of their own unless they were offered some alternative arrangement such as the multilateral force.” Yet, London remained rather unimpressed. Apparently, their assessment of the possibilities of German nuclear policy was rather realistic.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, the German leadership accepted a very high price for this diplomatic strategy: distrust, suspicion, and even resentment of friend and foe alike were the consequences. Thus, this diplomatic move would ultimately catalyze numerous states’ already existent predisposition towards balancing against and containing the FRG, a country whose leadership appeared to show an “increasing sign of being obsessed” with nuclear weapons.<sup>49</sup>

When the trend towards a nonproliferation regime materialized as a basic agenda item in superpower deliberations over Berlin and Germany and was paralleled by the adoption of the “Irish Resolution” by the UN General Assembly in late 1961, the FRG was alarmed. Because key officials of the Adenauer government referred to the “French belief that nuclear diffusion is desirable because of US unreliability,”<sup>50</sup> contemporary and subsequent analysts assumed that Bonn wanted to avoid the prohibition of the national nuclear option by a nonproliferation treaty. Yet, in fact, the FRG genuinely supported the Irish Resolution and endorsed the principle of non-dissemination.<sup>51</sup> But Bonn refused to support every means of nonproliferation policy. For Bonn, nonproliferation policy could not compromise other core interests – and the superpowers’ proposed NPT ideas were threatening to do just that.

---

<sup>47</sup> On this concept see Levite, “Never Say Never Again,” p. 69.

<sup>48</sup> MemCon Rusk-Earl of Home, 25 June 1962, TNA, Ministry of Defense and Admiralty [DEFE] 11/223; McNamara-Thorneycroft discussions 10-13 September 1962, NARA, RG 200, MNR, Box 133, MemCons UK 1-22.

<sup>49</sup> Couve de Murville to Rusk on 20 June 1962, MemCon, FRUS 1961-1963, XIII, doc. 144, p. 417.

<sup>50</sup> MemCon, Rusk-Strauss, 9 June 1962, FRUS 1961-1963, XIII, doc. 140, p. 405.

<sup>51</sup> Statement by Schröder before the NAC on 14 December 1961, Summary Record of a meeting of the Council, NATO, IS-C-R(61)67-E.

Emerging until August 1962, the general design of what were to become Articles I and II of the NPT included a non-transfer/non-assistance-declaration by the nuclear powers and a non-production/non-acquisition-declaration from all other states. Yet the superpowers disagreed in regard to NATO as a nuclear alliance. The Soviets were interested in using the NPT as a means to denuclearize the transatlantic alliance, for instance by prohibiting both nuclear weapons deployments on territories of non-nuclear states and any nuclear sharing arrangements.<sup>52</sup> Thus, Bonn rejected the NPT proposal.<sup>53</sup> Its de facto position remained hidden behind a diplomatic smokescreen: The FRG would commit herself to such treaty if all other non-nuclear-weapon states in the world would do so as well.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, the West German position did not aim to preserve a “right to become a nuclear Power in the future” due to an existing plan or intention to do so. It was rooted in three politico-strategic considerations.<sup>55</sup>

First, the West German government strictly rejected any kind of nonproliferation settlement singling out both German states, a provision that the superpower-envisioned concept did entail at that point.<sup>56</sup> Second, Bonn opposed renouncing any of its nuclear options within the scope of an accord which would be legally binding between West Germany and the Soviet Union. Aware of Moscow’s concern with a West German nuclear option, the FRG regarded any such waiver as an important “bargaining point” for the eventual negotiations on the German question.<sup>57</sup> According to the West German political concept of ‘*Politik der Stärke*’ (policy of strength) towards dealing with the Soviet Union, Moscow should feel the squeeze of the German “sword of Damocles,” the argument went.<sup>58</sup> In other words, even though German policy-makers regarded the nuclear option *de facto* as

---

<sup>52</sup> Memorandum from Schmoller, 4 January 1963, AAPD 1963, I, doc. 5, pp. 16ff.; memorandum from Foster, 21 November 1962, NARA, RG 59, DF-LF, Office of Politico-Military Affairs, Records relating to disarmament and arms control, 1961-1966, box 9, DEF-DEFENSE AFFAIRS (14) 1961-1962/ DEF-18-10 NONPROLIFERATION; Soviet draft of a nonproliferation agreement of 15 March 1962, *Documents on Disarmament 1962*, I, p.113.

<sup>53</sup> Letter from Adenauer to Schröder, 11 May 1962, AAPD 1962, II, doc. 204, p. 918.

<sup>54</sup> Telex from Werz, 3 September 1962, AAPD 1962, III, doc. 345, pp. 1491f.

<sup>55</sup> See Rusk’s insinuation on the basis of unspecified “evidence,” MemCon Rusk-Earl of Home, 25 June 1962, TNA, DEFE 11/223.

<sup>56</sup> Memorandum from Balken, 12.4.1962, PA AA, B 150, Vol. 446.

<sup>57</sup> See Schröder’s thesis, MemCon Kennedy-Rusk-Adenauer-Strauß-Schröder, 22 December 1961, FRUS 1961-1963, XIV, doc. 221, p. 626.

<sup>58</sup> Letter from Mertes to zu Guttenberg, 2 August 1965, *Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv*, Bamberg, Germany [StA Bam.], Personal Papers Guttenberg [NLG], Vol. 50.

unfeasible, a seeming state of “nuclear latency”<sup>59</sup> should keep Moscow in uncertainty in regard to Bonn’s intentions. Thus, the “sword of Damocles” appeared as an “*atout*,” a trump.<sup>60</sup> Perhaps it could even be a “decisive diplomatic weapon,” some suggested.<sup>61</sup> In any event it could not be given away without anything in return. Thirdly, Bonn did not want a treaty that would negatively affect the “present and future nuclear defense posture of NATO.”<sup>62</sup> The West Germans were concerned, for example, with the deployment of US nuclear weapons in the FRG and Western Europe, with existing nuclear sharing arrangements, and particularly with the deployment of MRBMs under West German participation. Given West Germany’s aim to bolster its position within NATO, a superpower agreement on nonproliferation was seen as both being undesirable and dangerous. Also, when compared to other political questions, the whole nonproliferation issue was regarded in Bonn as of secondary importance. Nobody saw a need at this stage to propose a workable alternative to the superpower’s scheme to deal with nonproliferation.<sup>63</sup>

After the multiple crises within NATO in late 1962 and early 1963, the Kennedy administration took concrete steps towards establishing the so called Multilateral Force (MLF) – a seaborne MRBM-force to be owned, controlled, and manned multilaterally under the participation of interested NATO allies.<sup>64</sup> Given French opposition to this initiative, both West Germans and Americans thought the British held the key to success. Thus, Washington tried to win London over. Yet many in the UK felt that “the Germans should be kept quiet in other ways,” i.e. through a nonproliferation agreement.<sup>65</sup> In response, Kennedy argued that British Prime Minister Macmillan should agree to the MLF in

---

<sup>59</sup> Scott D. Sagan, “Nuclear Latency and Nuclear Proliferation,” in *Forecasting Nuclear Proliferation in the 21st Century. Volume I: The Role of Theory*, ed. Willam C. Potter and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2010), pp. 80-101.

<sup>60</sup> See Carstens’ remarks to George Ball on 16 November 1964, AAPD 1964, II, doc. 339, p. 1332.

<sup>61</sup> Letter from Mertes to zu Guttenberg, 26 July 1965, StA Bam., NLG, Vol. 50.

<sup>62</sup> Telex by Werz, 3 September 1962, AAPD 1962, III, Doc. 345, 1492.

<sup>63</sup> Memorandum from Lahn, 6 October 1962, PA AA, B 150, Vol. 460.

<sup>64</sup> For the broader context of US policy besides US nonproliferation concerns, see Francis J. Gavin, “The Gold Battles within the Cold War: American Monetary Policy and the Defense of Europe, 1960-1963,” *Diplomatic History* 26, no. 1 (2002): 61-94.

<sup>65</sup> Letter from Bundy to Philip de Zulueta, 10 May 1963, FRUS 1961-1963, XIII, doc. 195, p. 573.

order to avoid negative consequences: Franco-German nuclear cooperation or an “independent nuclear effort in Germany - not now but in time”.<sup>66</sup>

In Bonn, policy-makers were less than enthusiastic about the MLF scheme. Adenauer feared that the US had now ruled out any deployment of land-based MRBMs.<sup>67</sup> However, the West German government was determined to achieve a MLF agreement at the least. Political and strategic reasons spoke in its favor – “above all to participate in the strategic nuclear area in some form.”<sup>68</sup> Thus, the German Atlanticist orientation was confirmed by the FRG’s unconditional acceptance of the MLF.<sup>69</sup> And burgeoning détente demanded additional concessions: In late August 1963, the Adenauer government had to meet international expectations to accede to the Partial Test Ban Treaty. It did so reluctantly. A “system” of East-West relations managed by the superpowers began to emerge.<sup>70</sup> In October 1963, Adenauer’s successor Ludwig Erhard assumed power, signaling a predominance of the Atlanticist attitude inside the FRG government.

However, starting in mid-1964, both the French government and West German “Gaullists” like Adenauer, Strauss, and others castigated the Erhard government for exclusively pinning German hopes on the US in terms of security policy – political pressure that constrained Erhard’s freedom of movement. In addition, MLF-diplomacy aroused France’s furor. The Warsaw Pact countries waged massive propaganda campaigns. In Britain, the Tory and the Labor governments were determined to contain German power in Europe – in late 1964, under the guise of a British counter-proposal to the MLF, the ANF. Thus, by autumn 1964, with Bonn repeatedly stating its positions both openly and behind closed doors, the perception of the FRG coveting nuclear weapons worried many. The PRC’s nuclear test of October 1964 had led to a sense of exceptional urgency in the US regarding nuclear proliferation. President Lyndon B. Johnson’s decision, laid down in National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 322 in late 1964, came as a massive blow for the Atlanticist German

---

<sup>66</sup> Letter from Kennedy to Macmillan, 29 May 1963, TNA, Records of the Cabinet Office [CAB] 21/6044.

<sup>67</sup> See Adenauer’s remarks before the CDU/CSU parliamentary fraction on 5 February 1963, in *Die CDU/CSU-Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag, 1961-1966*, I, doc. 133, p. 554.

<sup>68</sup> MemCon, McNamara-Thornycroft, 14 December 1963, NARA, RG 200, MNR, Box 133, MemCons UK 1-22.

<sup>69</sup> Letter from Adenauer to Kennedy, 5 April 1963, FRUS 1961-1963, XIII, doc. 187.

<sup>70</sup> Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace*, p. 352.

leadership.<sup>71</sup> In the critical words of the former US High Commissioner in Germany, John McCloy, the effect of NSAM 322 was “to go easy on the MLF, to put the ball in the court of the Europeans with, at best, an equivocal attitude on the part of the United States in respect of MLF.”<sup>72</sup> Under these circumstances, Bonn feared that the US might sooner or later give preference to a nonproliferation settlement and abandon the collective nuclear force within NATO. In reaction, statements of West German leading figures became rather flamboyant. Clearly alluding to a NPT-like agreement, Foreign Minister Schröder warned Rusk that the FRG could never accept “discriminating measures.”<sup>73</sup> In conclusion, while German disagreement with the NPT-concept was intense, the underpinning logic was much more convoluted than conventional explanations propose.

### **Against the NPT - In Favor of an Alternative Regime (1965-1966)**

There were clear indications in mid-1965 that a breakthrough on a nonproliferation agreement along the general lines of the 1962 design had become possible. The Gilpatric Committee had argued in its report to President Johnson for giving nonproliferation priority, even though US internal disagreements remained on how to deal with the FRG.<sup>74</sup> The MLF-proposal had become politically shipwrecked. But many in Bonn still hoped that triangular high-politics between Washington, London and Bonn would lead to the establishment of a NATO collective strategic nuclear force. Within this context, the British circulated a NPT draft among the NATO allies, with the intention to table it at the formal venue for negotiations on the treaty, the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENDC). The UK draft ruled out any collective nuclear force in which the participating nuclear-weapon states would not hold a veto over the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>75</sup> In Bonn, the Erhard

---

<sup>71</sup> NSAM 322, 18 December 1964, FRUS 1964-1968, XIII, doc. 65.

<sup>72</sup> Memorandum from McCloy, 8 January 1965, LBJL, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson President, NSF, Committee File, Committee on Nuclear Proliferation, Box 6, McCloy Memorandum, 1/8/65.

<sup>73</sup> MemCon Schröder-Rusk, 26 November 1964, AAPD 1964, II, doc. 360, p. 1401.

<sup>74</sup> Francis J. Gavin, “Blasts from the Past: Proliferation Lessons from the 1960s,” *International Security* 29, no. 3 (2004/2005): 100-135; Hal Brands, “Rethinking Nonproliferation: LBJ, the Gilpatric Committee, and U.S. National Security Policy,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 2 (2006): 83-113.

<sup>75</sup> See the British NPT draft of June 1965, TNA, Foreign Office 371/181388; memorandum from Oncken, 21 January 1965, PA AA, B 150, Vol. 55.

government was alarmed, to say the least. Within this general context, a number of FRG attempts to secure German interests ensued.

For West Germany, the British proposal seemed to be another step in an undesirable direction. In May 1965 US Secretary of Defense McNamara had argued NATO should establish a “Select Committee” of defense ministers in order to give some non-nuclear states – and mainly the FRG – a chance to participate in nuclear consultation. Such consultations would include, inter alia, “planning for the use of nuclear forces, including the use of strategic nuclear forces.”<sup>76</sup> McNamara had intimated that his proposal would merely be a supplement to – and not a substitute for – the continuing US offer to establish a collective nuclear force.<sup>77</sup> However, the Germans feared that the “Select Committee” could be played up politically to legitimize a change of US policy towards a definitive abandonment of the concept to establish a collective MRBM force.<sup>78</sup>

Against this background, an article by William C. Foster, the director of the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), in a widely-read policy journal suggested that US rejection of the multilateral force option may be a prerequisite for achieving a nonproliferation treaty. In Bonn, the article was understood as inclining the balance of influence in Washington in favor of those who seemed willing to compromise with Moscow to achieve nonproliferation at the expense of a certain “erosion” of NATO.<sup>79</sup> The article was seen as another manifestation of the arrogance of nuclear powers, intending to fix the given hierarchy in the international state system in favor of the nuclear *beati possidentes*.<sup>80</sup>

The FRG’s reaction was loud and public. First, Foreign Minister Schröder deliberately staged the FRG as a “role model non-nuclear weapon state,” advocating that others should first emulate West

---

<sup>76</sup> Summary Record of a meeting of the Council, 31 May 1965, NATO, IS-C-R(65)26-E.

<sup>77</sup> Memorandum from Ref. II7, 4 June 1965, AAPD 1965, II, doc. 23; telex from Sahm to AA, 31 May 1965, PA AA, B 150, Vol. 53.

<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, the German government was eager to participate in the “Select Committee.” See MemCon McNamara-Erhard, 4 June 1965, LBJL, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson President, NSF, Country File, Box 185, Germany, Memos Vol. VIII, 4/65-7/65.

<sup>79</sup> William C. Foster, “New Directions in Arms Control and Disarmament,” *Foreign Affairs* 43, no. 4 (1965): 587-601, quote: p. 600.

<sup>80</sup> Memorandum from Krapf, 9 July 1965, PA AA, B 150, Vol. 56; Horst Osterheld, *Außenpolitik unter Bundeskanzler Ludwig Erhard 1963-1966. Ein dokumentarischer Bericht aus dem Kanzleramt* (Düsseldorf: Droste 1992), p. 214.



Germany's 1954 voluntary renunciation. Second, he argued Bonn could abdicate nuclear "acquisition" only vis-à-vis her allies and only after German participation in a collective MRBM force had been secured. Thirdly, he claimed the FRG would not be able to accede to a NPT. Only a reunified Germany could do so.<sup>81</sup> Critics of the Erhard government quickly portrayed Schröder's statement as an implicit threat: West Germany would 'go nuclear' if its conditions were not met.<sup>82</sup> In fact, Schröder's reaction reflected the government's position since 1962 and particularly the "Sword of Damocles" strategy.

Ensuing consultations between Bonn and Washington and within NATO are revealing in regard to both West German priorities and strategy. The FRG leadership was quickly confronted with the US argument that the NPT could not be linked to the German question.<sup>83</sup> All the more then, the Erhard government insisted on the well-known German demand to participate in a collective nuclear force.<sup>84</sup> Given the anticipated consequences of strategic parity between the superpowers and the ensuing decreasing credibility of the US nuclear umbrella, Bonn was worried that Moscow might ultimately feel emboldened to blackmail West Germany.<sup>85</sup> The German Permanent Representative to NATO, Wilhelm G. Grewe, argued Bonn was bound to understand nonproliferation in the general context of European security: an "erosion" of NATO as a side effect of the NPT would be "catastrophic."<sup>86</sup> In this context, the US reaction is telling: While brushing away the other arguments, Secretary of State Rusk was quick to point out that Foster's article had no governmental endorsement and that Washington would not compromise with Moscow on a collective nuclear force.<sup>87</sup>

Remarkably, after Washington tabled a draft NPT in the ENDC in August 1965 – from West Germany's viewpoint, a moment marking a "new stage" of international nonproliferation diplomacy

---

<sup>81</sup> "Interview with Schröder," *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, 2 July 1965.

<sup>82</sup> Joachim Besser, "Schröder droht," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, 13 July 1965.

<sup>83</sup> Telex from Hillenbrand, 26 July 1965, LBJL, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson President, NSF, Country File, Box 186, Germany, Cables Vol. IX, 7/65-1/66.

<sup>84</sup> MemCon Erhard-Harriman, 24 July 1965, AAPD 1965, II, doc. 300, pp. 1249f.

<sup>85</sup> Telex from Knappstein, 30 July 1965, AAPD 1965 II, doc. 311, p. 1304; memorandum from Kaufmann, 16 September 1965, LBJL, NLJ-050-002-7-24-4.

<sup>86</sup> Instruction for Grewe, 24 July 1965, AAPD 1965 II, doc. 301, pp. 1258; Summary Record of a meeting of the Council, 26 July 1965, NATO, IS-C-R(65)34-E.

<sup>87</sup> Rusk was quoted in a telex by Knappstein of 9 July 1965: "There will be no nonproliferation treaty without MLF," AAPD 1965 II, doc. 275, p. 1157.

– Bonn’s public reaction was ostentatiously reserved.<sup>88</sup> The draft was a “significant contribution.” But NATO’s “defense interests” should not be impaired, the West Germans argued publicly.<sup>89</sup> Internally, however, leading figures inside the government bureaucracy still referred to the NPT as the “*Knebelungsvertrag*” implying that it would restrain only the have-nots.<sup>90</sup> Bonn complained to Washington that the US draft was completely imbalanced, given the nuclear powers’ uninhibited freedom of action.<sup>91</sup> When analyzed carefully, these mixed reactions are fully consistent with West German preferences and constraints. On the one hand, the draft treaty clearly allowed for schemes for a collective nuclear force within NATO. On the other hand, it ruled out the establishment of a European nuclear force under the participation of non-nuclear states except for remote cases.<sup>92</sup> Especially in the eyes of German “Gaullists” it was of vital importance to preserve the full spectrum of remaining options to participate a European nuclear force, irrespective of the currently hostile British and adverse French attitudes.<sup>93</sup>

In contrast to the West German government, former Chancellor Adenauer complained publicly that a NPT would be a “tragedy for Germany.” An insecure FRG would be handed to the Soviet Union on a silver platter.<sup>94</sup> Former Defense Minister Strauss blustered that the NPT would amount to a “military Versailles” and demanded to establish a European nuclear force immediately. The Erhard government should “not perform the role of the Atlanticist prig,” Strauss argued.<sup>95</sup> However, these harsh criticisms were aimed at least as much at the US as they were aimed at domestic audiences in advance of the *Bundestag* elections in autumn 1965.

These fiery domestic exchanges notwithstanding, the Erhard government was confirmed in the elections. With the Soviet Union having submitted its own NPT draft – an initiative widely interpreted as attempting to denuclearize Western Europe by banning all nuclear arrangements

---

<sup>88</sup> Telex from Schnippenkötter, 12 August 1965, AAPD 1965 II, doc. 325, p. 1347.

<sup>89</sup> Declaration of the federal German government, 17 August 1965, *Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung* 1965, no. 140, p. 1129.

<sup>90</sup> Osterheld, *Außenpolitik unter Bundeskanzler Ludwig Erhard*, p. 214. Literally translated: “Gagging Treaty”.

<sup>91</sup> MemCon, Schröder-McGhee, 13 September 1965, AAPD 1965, III, doc. 348, p. 1434.

<sup>92</sup> Art. II, 1 Draft Treaty, 17 August 1965, *Documents on Disarmament* 1965, p. 348; see the memoranda from Theißinger, 19, 24 and 27 August 1965, BA, B 136/ 6899.

<sup>93</sup> Letter from Finletter to Rusk on 12 July 1965, FRUS 1964-1968, XIII, doc. 96, p. 232.

<sup>94</sup> “Adenauer: Abrüstungskonferenz eine Tragödie“, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 20 August 1965.

<sup>95</sup> Franz J. Strauss, “Das Genfer Schelmen-Spiel“, *Rheinischer Merkur*, 27 August 1965.

within NATO – the FRG tried for the last time to achieve a breakthrough regarding a collective nuclear force.<sup>96</sup> Thus, Bonn sent a little known new scheme to the highest level in both Washington and London – a mixture between ANF-components and new elements including a long-range version of land-based PERSHING missiles.<sup>97</sup> Subsequently, the Germans attempted to lobby the US to bring the British onboard. The Atlanticist Erhard government still had many supporters in Washington. Like their German peers, American advocates of the collective NATO force took the British Labor leaders at their word to give up the UK deterrent. This “would strike a blow for nonproliferation more significant than any piece of paper,” these US officials argued.<sup>98</sup>

However, another fraction within the US bureaucracy advanced the opposite argument: Because the US would retain a veto on the decision to use the nuclear weapons of the collective force, the control scheme would only “dramatize that no one believes that Germans can be trusted with nuclear weapons.” This may augment Bonn’s nuclear ambitions instead of satisfying them, it was argued.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, President Johnson was very reserved towards the West German proposal.<sup>100</sup> Yet he advised British Prime Minister Wilson to accept the West German formula without putting pressure on London to do so.<sup>101</sup> On the part of the British, some argued it was “wishful thinking” to hope Bonn would be content merely with nuclear consultations,<sup>102</sup> with the “artichoke without the heart,” as some US officials portrayed it.<sup>103</sup> Nevertheless, the British government “backed away” in early 1966 from its ANF-proposal, thereby removing what had been the basis for the new German scheme.<sup>104</sup> Thereafter President Johnson seemed to act like an “honest broker” between London and Bonn,

---

<sup>96</sup> Soviet Draft Treaty, 24 September 1965, *Documents on Disarmament 1965*, pp. 443ff.

<sup>97</sup> See the German proposal of a “Common Nuclear Force (CNF),” undated memorandum, “The Nuclear Question,” LBJL, Papers of Francis M. Bator, Subject File, Box 30, Non-Prolif. 3 August 1965 – 29 July 1966.

<sup>98</sup> Memorandum from Ball, 27 October 1965, LBJL, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson President, NSF, Agency File, Box 39, NATO-George W. Ball Analysis of a Collective Nuclear System.

<sup>99</sup> Memorandum from Bator, 9 December 1965, LBJL, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson President, NSF, Country File, Box 186, Germany, Cables Vol. IX, 7/65-1/66.

<sup>100</sup> Erhard’s report to the cabinet on 22 December 1965, Kab.Prot. 1965, p. 458.

<sup>101</sup> Letter from Johnson to Wilson, 23 December 1965, FRUS 1964-1968, XIII, doc. 121, p. 296.

<sup>102</sup> Telex from Sir Frank Roberts, 8 October 1965, to the Foreign Office, TNA, DEFE 25/59.

<sup>103</sup> Memorandum from Ball, 27 October 1965, LBJL, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson President, NSF, Agency File, Box 39, NATO-George W. Ball Analysis of a Collective Nuclear System.

<sup>104</sup> Memorandum from Rusk, 11 April 1966, FRUS 1964-1968, XIII, doc. 155, p. 364. David J. Gill, *Britain and the Bomb. Nuclear Diplomacy, 1964-1970* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2014), pp. 76-140.

without putting pressure on either side.<sup>105</sup> But he continued emphasizing the “importance of the Germans finding a place in the sun.”<sup>106</sup>

In a curious mixture of decisiveness and restraint, the Erhard administration now concluded it would not push for a collective force for the time being, but it would repel attempts to curtail Bonn’s remaining nuclear options in consequence of arms control. The collective force was still seen as the only means to solve the MRBM-problem and to bolster the Federal Republic’s status within NATO.<sup>107</sup> Corroborating this high level of uncertainty with the alliance crisis unleashed by France’s final withdrawal from the integrated NATO command, the FRG leadership clearly felt the danger “that we will be steamrolled by a nonproliferation agreement.”<sup>108</sup> West German experts did not perceive any teleology in terms of NPT diplomacy. But they did not preclude a tacit agreement between the two superpowers. As a consequence, the NPT would codify the given nuclear order. It would rule out the non-nuclear states’ ability to *influence* the control of nuclear weapons through co-ownership. And it might only allow a consultative nuclear arrangement like the “McNamara-Committee” besides existing nuclear arrangements.<sup>109</sup> This was not an outcome the Erhard government was willing to accept, be it explicitly or silently.

Thus, to get out of the political danger zone, the Erhard government launched another – today nearly forgotten – major initiative in late March 1966: a German disarmament plan. This “peace note” included a package for all Warsaw Pact states except East Germany. It comprised offers to conclude bilateral agreements to renounce the use of force, to exchange maneuver observers, to control the export of fissile materials, and to establish a regional nonproliferation regime which should appear as ‘effective’ and ‘non-discriminatory’ – in contrast to the NPT.<sup>110</sup> Obviously, the FRG wanted to square

---

<sup>105</sup> Memorandum from Ruete, 25 February 1966, AAPD 1966, I, doc. 46, p. 211.

<sup>106</sup> Memorandum from Bator, 4 April 1966, LBJL, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson President, NSF, Country File, Box 186, Germany, Memos Vol. X, 1/66-8/66.

<sup>107</sup> Memorandum from Ruete, 25 February 1966, AAPD 1966, I, doc. 46, p. 216; conv. von Hassel-Lord Chalfont, military diary von Hassel, 8 March 1966, *Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik*, St. Augustin, Germany [ACDP], I-157-227/1.

<sup>107</sup> Memorandum from Ruete, 25 February 1966, AAPD 1966, I, doc. 46, p. 216.

<sup>108</sup> Heinrich Krone, *Tagebücher. Vol. 2: 1961-1966* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2003), p. 455.

<sup>109</sup> Letter from Kolb to Stamp, 31 January 1966, BA, B 136/ 6899.

<sup>110</sup> Note by the federal German government, 25 March 1966, *Europa-Archiv 1966*, D174; Memorandum from Wickert, 24 May 1966, PA AA, B 43, Vol. 82. All non-nuclear states within NATO and the Warsaw Pact should declare not to produce

the circle: deal constructively with the general trend of détente, behave positively on nonproliferation, reduce suspicion and distrust, and protect West German interests.<sup>111</sup> However, the West German government was under no illusion that its proposal had slight chance to be implemented. All Warsaw Pact states rejected the proposal.<sup>112</sup> Not even the Western powers took the initiative seriously.<sup>113</sup> The US approached the idea “quite reservedly.”<sup>114</sup> Even Italy proved uninterested.<sup>115</sup> Ultimately, the initiative had very little impact.<sup>116</sup> In any case, the initiative documented Bonn’s positive stance towards nonproliferation policy, even though the opposition to the NPT endured.

The meager result of West Germany’s initiative had to be seen against the background that there was already much political momentum behind the superpowers’ drive towards the NPT. Increasingly, as the Soviets signaled acceptance of existing nuclear arrangements within NATO and even some future ‘software’ arrangement of nuclear consultations, a compromise solution appeared possible.<sup>117</sup> Nevertheless, even while telling the Germans that they did “not have to worry,” Washington was aware that Bonn was still committed to obtaining a hardware solution.<sup>118</sup> Additionally, the Erhard government at no time explicitly conveyed its approval of the NPT approach.<sup>119</sup> It was clear in Washington that the US would face stiff opposition “if we tried to jam down their throats the sort of agreement now proposed to us by the Russians.”<sup>120</sup> Thus, in early December 1966, after the Erhard

---

atomic weapons. The four atomic powers of both alliances should declare not to transfer nuclear weapons into the national control of non-nuclear states. Like in the West German case, the waivers of individual states should be valid legally only vis-à-vis this state’s respective allies. The German scheme for a regional nonproliferation regime would be ‘effective’ because it would block the only possible paths toward the spread of national nuclear capabilities, if all NATO- and Warsaw Pact states would adhere to it. Compared to the NPT approach, it would be ‘non-discriminatory’ because individual waivers would be declared ‘voluntarily’ and because they would be legally valid only within the respective military alliance.

<sup>111</sup> Government declaration by Erhard, 25 March 1966, *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages. Stenographische Berichte*, Vol. 61, p. 1608. Geier, *Schwellenmacht*, p. 388 shows a normative bias by describing the initiative simply as “stuporous”.

<sup>112</sup> Memorandum from Lahusen, 24 May 1966, PA AA, B 43, Vol. 82,

<sup>113</sup> Circular letter from Ruete, 1 April 1966, PA AA, B 43, Vol. 82.

<sup>114</sup> Memorandum from Ruete, 21 October 1966, AAPD 1966, II, doc. 346.

<sup>115</sup> Memorandum from Schnippenkötter, 8 November 1966, AAPD 1966, II, doc. 363.

<sup>116</sup> Memorandum from Wickert, 25 May 1966, PA AA, B 43, Vol. 82.

<sup>117</sup> Memorandum from Foster, 15 September 1966, LBJL, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson President, NSF, National Security Council Histories, Box 55, The Non-Proliferation Treaty, Vol. II [61-80].

<sup>118</sup> Rusk’s remark according to the memorandum from Ruete, 8 August 1966, AAPD 1966, II, doc. 249, pp. 1043f.

<sup>119</sup> Memorandum from Carstens, 24 September 1966, BA, Personal Papers Carstens [1337]/629.

<sup>120</sup> Memorandum from Rostow, 10 October 1966, FRUS 1964-1968, XV, doc. 181, p. 439.

government had already fallen and a ‘grand coalition’ between Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and Social Democrats (SPD) had been established, the FRG was still “reassured” by the US: “no decisions” had been taken on the NPT issue, “no secret deal with the Russians” had been reached, and “no positions of the alliance and options whatsoever have been abandoned.”<sup>121</sup>

### **The Transformation of West German Limited Nuclear Revisionism**

Despite US reassurances to the contrary, the Germans feared a superpower NPT *fait accompli* which would infringe German interests. In such a situation, even if West Germany would “formally” be consulted, she would “practically” have no other choice but to concede defeat.<sup>122</sup> From Bonn’s perspective, this scenario materialized when the Germans received the draft Articles I and II of the NPT before the end of 1966 – draft language that would find its way almost unchanged into the ultimate text of the treaty that opened for signature on 1 July 1968.<sup>123</sup> However, the Grand Coalition government of CDU/CSU and SPD that governed until autumn 1969 could not agree upon a formal NPT decision. The views of the SPD- and the CSU-leadership were incompatible. The CDU-leadership was leaning towards the CSU’s stance, but without sharing the CSU’s more radical rejection of the NPT. In contrast, immediately after the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Liberals (FDP) formed a government the FRG signed the NPT on 28 November 1969. This policy change can be seen as a significant step towards the FRG’s redefined *Ostpolitik*.

Under these circumstances, what the West Germans were left with since late 1966 was to influence the details of the future treaty to a certain amount. In mid-1968, US-President Johnson would claim “the Germans had practically written the Treaty as it stands now.”<sup>124</sup> Starting in early 1967, Washington had been highly receptive to German demands on the specifics of the NPT language. Thus, Bonn’s NPT diplomacy was surprisingly influential, given the fact that Germany – not a

---

<sup>121</sup> Telex from Knapstein, 7 December 1966, PA AA, B 150, Vol. 89.

<sup>122</sup> Memorandum from Schnippenkoetter, 1 December 1966, AAPD 1966 II, doc. 383, p. 1570.

<sup>123</sup> Memorandum from Schütz, 17 December 1966, PA AA, B 150, Vol. 90.

<sup>124</sup> MemCon Johnson-Schröder, 25 July 1968, LBJL, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson President, NSF, Country File, Box 189 (1 v. 2), Germany, Memos Vol. XV, 3/68-8/68.

member of the ENDC – was not directly participating in the negotiations.<sup>125</sup> Still, Johnson’s remark was a euphemism.<sup>126</sup> The West Germans were only allowed to influence at most secondary provisions of the treaty. Nonetheless, many of these items were complex and politically sensitive. Bonn was, for instance, influential in addressing the safeguards question pursuant to Article III, the right to use nuclear energy for civil purposes according to Article IV, and – as FRG’s Foreign Minister Brandt put it – the alleged “practical lever” to disarmament in Article VI.<sup>127</sup> In contrast, Articles I and II – the core of the NPT – remained sacrosanct.<sup>128</sup> Johnson’s remarks also reflected that it had become a test of stamina for American officials to listen closely to ‘legalistic’ Germans in innumerable and redundant bilateral meetings on the specifics of the NPT to ensure that these consultations were assessed as at least partially successful by the German side.

Putting aside the specifics of NPT diplomacy since early 1967 in order to avoid a cursory and inappropriate evaluation of the German assessments, it is worth noting that the German debate on the FRG’s NPT signature in late 1969 focused once again on the implications of Articles I and II. The same had been true until the turn of the year 1966-67. The first two articles were paramount because they were seen as an attempt by the two superpowers to codify the given nuclear order on a global scale.<sup>129</sup> States that had tested nuclear weapons before 1 January 1967 were declared as nuclear-weapon states (NWS). All other states were supposed to accept their status as non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS). Existing NATO nuclear arrangements were shielded, even though the NPT language of “indirect transfer of control” was in fact ambivalent. A collective nuclear force with co-ownership of nuclear weapons by NNWS was legally ruled out.<sup>130</sup> The participation of a NNWS (party to the NPT) in a European nuclear force would also be prohibited as long as no European federal state

---

<sup>125</sup> Hoeres, *Außenpolitik und Öffentlichkeit. Massenmedien, Meinungsforschung und Außenpolitik in den deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen von Erhard bis Brandt*, pp. 279-344; Gray, “Abstinence and Ostpolitik.”

<sup>126</sup> See also: Carl Ungerer, “Influence without Power: Middle Powers and Arms Control Diplomacy during the Cold War,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 18, no. 2 (2007): 393-414. In contrast, Geier, *Schwellenmacht*, pp. 216 claims that the US and the FRG secretly negotiated on the NPT “at eye level.”

<sup>127</sup> Brandt, “Sperrvertrag und Gleichberechtigung,” *Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst*, 31 January 1969.

<sup>128</sup> Memorandum from Schnippenkötter, 21 July 1968, PA AA, B 1, Vol. 378; memorandum from Keeny, 24 December 1968, LBJL, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson President, NSF, National Security Council Histories, Box 55, The Non-Proliferation Treaty Vol. I [1-3].

<sup>129</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>130</sup> Memorandum from Blomeyer-Bartenstein, 16 May 1968, PA AA, B 80, Vol. 806.

would have been established beforehand, thereby superseding at least one of the two European NWS, France or Britain.<sup>131</sup> Thus, the NPT explicitly codified a new aspect of sovereignty within international law: the control of nuclear weapons had to be regarded as “measure of sovereignty and big power status symbol.”<sup>132</sup>

The superpower compromise on the NPT was a massive setback for West German interests. However, after the US and the Soviet Union agreed upon Articles I and II, there was a general expectation in Washington that the FRG had to accede to the NPT “whether they like it or not.”<sup>133</sup> In contrast, the successor to Erhard, Kurt-Georg Kiesinger, later remarked that if the FRG acceded to the NPT, West Germany would appear as a “protectorate of the US.”<sup>134</sup> Grewe, who opposed the treaty as a matter of principle but denied any interest in a German nuclear weapons capability, criticized the NPT in early 1967: “The MLF was aimed at achieving long-term equality, the NPT is aimed at producing long-term inequality.”<sup>135</sup> Grewe’s complaints were paradigmatic for the perception of leading figures within the German administration. In the eyes of Atlanticists and “Gaullists” alike, the superpower’s agreement on the first two articles of the NPT was tainted.

First, the NPT put a cap on Bonn’s aim to bolster the FRG’s status within NATO. The NPT relegated the FRG to a secondary position within the international state system and NATO. West Germany had gained a permanent seat within the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), in consequence of McNamara’s “Select Committee” proposal. But it was far from being self-evident in late 1966 that German “pressures for greater influence in nuclear policy” would in fact be absorbed entirely by the NPG deliberations.<sup>136</sup> Second, the superpower’s compromise provided no solution to the MRBM-problem that had eroded German confidence in the credibility of the US nuclear umbrella for years. The

---

<sup>131</sup> Telex from Knappstein 13 January 1967, PA AA, B 150, Vol. 94; Ralph L. Dietl, “European Nuclear Decision Making? The United States, Nuclear Non Proliferation and the ‘European Option’, 1967-1972,” *Historische Mitteilungen der Ranke-Gesellschaft* 24 (2011): 43-89.

<sup>132</sup> This was McNamara’s thesis, MemCon McNamara-Walker, 20 February 1964, NARA, RG 200, MNR, Box 133, MemCons UK 1-22.

<sup>133</sup> Memorandum from Ball, 27 October 1965, LBJL, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson President, NSF, Agency File, Box 39, NATO-George W. Ball Analysis of a Collective Nuclear System.

<sup>134</sup> Handwritten note from Barzel, 10 February 1969, BA, Personal Papers Barzel [1371]/ 81.

<sup>135</sup> Telex from Cleveland, 29 January 1967, NARA, RG 59, CF-SN 1967-1969, Box 1728, DEF 18-6 (1/1/67).

<sup>136</sup> Memorandum from Hillenbrand, 8 May 1969, Gerald R. Ford Library, Melvin R. Laird Papers, C13, NATO, 1969-1973-Documents 25-26.



failure to establish any kind of collective nuclear force in NATO contributed to a desperate feeling of insecurity “among knowledgeable people in Germany.” But even if Bonn wondered “how much of Germany had to be overrun before the [nuclear] riposte would be forthcoming,” it remained beyond doubt that US protection was indispensable.<sup>137</sup> According to the available evidence, the gloomy assessments of the early 1960s that NATO might collapse if the MRBM-problem remained unresolved were replaced by a consensus that NATO deterrence may well remain credible in relation to Moscow and that it would be more dangerous than ever before to doubt its credibility.<sup>138</sup>

If the preservation of the global nuclear status quo is to be regarded as the core objective of the NPT, then the treaty’s immediate effect on the FRG was actually very low. By freezing the European nuclear order, the NPT thwarted Bonn’s efforts to improve the West German *institutional position* within nuclear NATO. But the objective to increase the FRG’s politico-strategic *influence* especially in nuclear NATO did *not* cease in autumn 1966 when the *position* of the FRG in nuclear NATO and in the European nuclear order was laid down. Bonn would continue to use its leverage to advance West German interests in terms of nuclear security policy and particularly within NATO’s nuclear structures.<sup>139</sup>

## Conclusion

In autumn 1966, after the superpowers had agreed on articles I and II as the core of the NPT, West Germany’s *limited nuclear revisionism* was significantly transformed. Bonn had at no time actively striven for the national control of nuclear weapons. It supported nonproliferation policy, irrespective of the fact that it had rejected the NPT as a means to deal with the non-dissemination issue. West German nuclear policy was committed to achieve two specific objectives. First, the FRG’s institutional position in nuclear NATO had to be expanded by participation in nuclear arrangements.

---

<sup>137</sup> Telex from McGhee, 21 October 1966, on Erhard-McCloy talks, LBJL, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson President, NSF, National Security Council Histories, Box 50, Trilateral Negotiations and NATO: Book 1, Tabs 26-44; MemCon, FRUS 1964-1968, XV, doc. 174.

<sup>138</sup> Cabinet meeting, 14 October 1966, Kab. Prot. 1966, p. 425-431.

<sup>139</sup> This German disposition crystallized particularly in the NPG proceedings since 1967. The summit meeting of Guadeloupe in January 1979 may be regarded as an apex with regards to Bonn’s willingness to increase its influence in nuclear matters.

Second, the FRG's influence in nuclear NATO had to be continuously increased with the general objective to increase its credibility and to work towards a more favorable balance of risks and burdens within the alliance. Autumn 1966 brought a transformation of the FRG's *limited nuclear revisionism* in the sense that the FRG acquiesced in her *position* in nuclear NATO and the nuclear order. Thus, the FRG stopped being revisionist in this regard. But the FRG continued to be willing to expand her *influence* in nuclear matters, first of all within the structures of nuclear NATO, and especially within the Nuclear Planning Group. In this respect, West Germany remained a revisionist state and we still lack a precise understanding of Bonn's respective activities, particularly regarding the period of transition between the late 1960s and the prehistory of the NATO Dual-Track Decision of 1979.

Until the late 1960s, the political core function of German nuclear policy was to fortify the FRG's ties to the West (*Politik der Westbindung*) by bolstering the FRG's position in NATO and by expanding West German influence in nuclear matters without becoming a nuclear power. Given the politico-strategic calculation behind the FRG's *limited nuclear revisionism*, the unchanged circumstances of the Cold War, the undisputed West German *Westbindung*, and the role of the SPD in the government, there was also no 'danger' after 1966 that Bonn might abandon its previous path and go nuclear. Thus, the NPT had no nonproliferation effect with regards to the FRG. The NPT was unnecessary to keep West Germany non-nuclear. Even before the NPT-regime was established, any assessment of costs and benefits made the national nuclear option look unbearable. Still, the NPT can be characterized as an additional "powerful constraint"<sup>140</sup> which cemented the FRG's non-nuclear status. The FRG's accession to the NPT in 1969/1975 strongly fortified the already given architecture in which the security of non-nuclear West Germany was guaranteed by the US nuclear umbrella.

---

<sup>140</sup> Gavin, "Blasts from the Past," p. 135; see also: Gavin, "Strategies of Inhibition", p. 25ff.