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After Reykjavik: arms control and the allies

JANE M. O. SHARP*

The contradictory reactions of defence and foreign policy elites in Western Europe to arms control diplomacy between the United States and the Soviet Union often confuse and irritate their American counterparts, unused to the discomforts of dependence. In the spring of 1986, commenting on West European opposition to a proposal to remove all the intermediate-range nuclear weapons of both superpowers from Europe, two professors of public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government suggested that European contrariness was simply a resistance to *any* change in the current situation:

Europeans' initial opposition to any new initiative should be respected as simple opposition to change. But once change occurs they readily adapt to it. Their capacity not only for adapting to any new situation but also for becoming staunch advocates of it is impressive. Europeans' predictably negative reactions to our initiatives are essentially independent of the substance of the specific proposals.¹

To West European ears, the paternalistic tone of this passage sounds uncomfortably close to the way a member of the Politburo or a Russian *institutnik* might brush off the concerns of the East European members of the Warsaw Pact. It reveals a startling insensitivity to the security dilemma of smaller, more dependent powers, and helps to explain the mutual recriminations at NATO ministerial meetings and at transatlantic gatherings of scholars and practitioners of arms control. At its most destructive, this bickering degenerates into what Lord Carrington has called 'megaphone cartoonery': West Europeans resent the arrogance and the 'cowboy' image of their friendly neighbourhood superpower, while Americans grow increasingly impatient with the inconsistencies of the 'Eurowimps'.²

Responses to the Reykjavik summit meeting in October 1986 between Mr Mikhail Gorbachev and President Ronald Reagan reflected the recurrent anxiety that besets European governments as they contemplate an arms agreement limiting weapons on which the NATO security guarantee is thought to depend. It should be noted, however, that not all Europeans concur in their assessments of the requirements for extended deterrence. For those conservatives who believe that the credibility of the nuclear guarantee requires American strategic invulnerability and superiority over the Soviet Union, it is difficult to conceive of any equitable Soviet-American arms control

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1. Graham T. Allison and Albert Carnesale, 'Is Europe contrary?', *New York Times*, 26 Mar. 1986.
2. Reuters, 'Carrington hits at bickering in NATO alliance', *Financial Times*, 28 May 1986.

agreement that would be acceptable.³ But even mainstream centrists who believe that effective deterrence requires mutual vulnerability, balanced Soviet and American nuclear forces and a possible 'first-use' policy were disturbed by the proposal to ban all ballistic missiles.⁴ On the other hand, those Europeans who believe in a finite nuclear deterrent and a 'no-first-use' policy did not find the radical cuts proposed at Reykjavik alarming—though some of these minimalists might have preferred the United States to retain submarine-launched ballistic missiles, invulnerability of nuclear systems being more critical than numbers or accuracy.⁵

The allies are uncomfortable when bad relations between Washington and Moscow prevent arms control negotiations, and are often active in pressing for the reopening of Soviet–American talks after a hiatus. Nevertheless, while the process of Soviet–American negotiation appears to reassure most Europeans, the prospect of the two superpowers actually coming to an agreement that imposes constraints on American nuclear weapons usually generates alarm among defence and foreign policy establishments in Bonn, Paris and London, at least, even if not in the rest of NATO Europe.

Allied leaders regard *both* Soviet–American agreements *and* cohesion in the Atlantic alliance as goals worthy of pursuit. In practice, however, these two goals are often difficult to reconcile. For those leaders with the most conservative view of the requirements for NATO's extended deterrence, the two may even be incompatible.

This article will examine the responses of the allies to the October 1986 Reykjavik summit, against a background of recurrent anxiety among the West Europeans over three decades of Soviet–American negotiations. It aims to explore the apparent conflict between the security requirements of the NATO countries and the objectives of superpower arms control.

The alliance security dilemma

States join alliances to pool their military capabilities with others facing a common external threat. Each member of the alliance thereby saves resources and gains protection. At the end of the Second World War, Western Europe faced two potential threats: a resurgent Germany and an aggressive, expansionist Soviet Union. NATO sought to absorb the first threat by binding the western half of Germany into an alliance of Western democracies; after the scare of the Korean war, it took steps to

3. Franz-Josef Strauss, leader of the Christian Socialists (CSU) in West Germany, welcomed the Reagan administration's 'strategic defence initiative' on the grounds that American invulnerability would enhance the credibility of the US offensive nuclear systems; see interview with Manfred Schell, *Die Welt*, 27 Mar. 1983, p. J 11. See also Uwe Nerlich, making the case for nuclear modernization over limitation in the interests of NATO's maintenance of escalation dominance over the Soviet Union, in 'Arms negotiations and the process of political change in Europe: reordering priorities of Western security policies' in *The Western panacea: constraining Soviet power through negotiation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1983), pp. 391–408. For a British argument in favour of the restoration of American strategic superiority to regain the confidence of the allies, see Geoffrey Lee Williams and Alan Lee Williams, *The European defence initiative* (New York: St Martin's, 1986), p. 10.

4. For centrist views in West Germany on the requirements of extended deterrence, see Karl Kaiser, Georg Leber, Alois Mertes and Franz-Josef Schulze, 'Nuclear weapons and the preservation of peace', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 60, No. 5, Sum. 1982, pp. 1157–70.

5. For West German arguments in favour of a minimal deterrent and no-first-use, see: Eckhard Lubkemeier, 'Extended deterrence: implications for arms limitation and reduction', *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1985, pp. 249–54; and 'Do Europeans have to fear nuclear disarmament?', *New York Times*, 4 Nov. 1986. For a survey of different West German views on deterrence, see Gert Krell, Thomas Risse-Kappen and Hans Joachim Schmidt, 'The no first use question in West Germany', in John D. Steinbruner and Leon V. Sigal, *Alliance security: NATO and the no first use question* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1983), pp. 147–72.

deter the second by stationing American troops in Europe, rearming West Germany and threatening nuclear retaliation against any conventional aggression. The essential NATO bargain is therefore this: the West European allies rely directly on the United States for military assistance, and the United States relies indirectly on Western Europe to provide a politically stable strategic base from which to contain the reach of Soviet power and influence.

NATO has been so successful in absorbing the traditional German problem in central Europe that Americans often take for granted the important achievement of preventing any re-emergence there of heavily armed great powers that might trigger old animosities or of maintaining the political integrity of valuable trading partners.⁶ NATO's success in coping with the Soviet military challenge is less clear cut.

There has been no direct military confrontation between East and West on the continent of Europe since the war. To that extent, deterrence has been effective. But there has not been any relaxation in the Soviet military build-up in Eastern Europe either. Although NATO's military posture is considered defensive by the West, it serves in the East to justify a high concentration of Soviet forces in the Warsaw Pact countries, and thereby could be seen to hinder the establishment of normal relations between the two halves of Europe. Moreover, in order to justify the allocation of substantial American resources to NATO, officials in Washington tend to play down NATO's success in solving the German problem and to focus on the need to counter a menacing Soviet challenge. Thus NATO serves as much to perpetuate as to alleviate the Soviet threat.⁷

For all its shortcomings, NATO is supported by West Europeans across a wide political spectrum. But, as in all military alliances, the benefits of shared resources and increased protection are offset by the costs associated with dependence and reduced freedom of action. The essence of the dilemma is that the two types of costs themselves conflict. Each ally oscillates between the fear of abandonment by its partners in a crisis—the cost of dependence—and the fear of being entrapped or dragged into a conflict not of its own choosing—the cost of reduced freedom of action.

Nuclear weapons exacerbate this dilemma. For the United States, the degree of direct dependence is small, and there is thus little fear of abandonment. But there is considerable apprehension that America's nuclear guarantee to NATO could lead to its being trapped into a nuclear war with the Soviet Union. To the extent that European members of the alliance feel dependent on American nuclear weapons, over which they have little or no control, they are more vulnerable to fears both of abandonment and of entrapment than the United States. Their worst fear of abandonment is that the threat of American nuclear retaliation against a Soviet attack would cease to look credible and so cease to deter, while their worst fear of entrapment is that the Americans might resort to nuclear weapons too soon, and incinerate the continent in the process. Thus Europeans who fear abandonment tend to resist arms control agreements that impose limits on American nuclear forces, while those who fear entrapment support stricter controls on the arsenals of both superpowers. Bilateral

6. Christoph Bertram, 'European security and the German problem', *International Security*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Winter 1979–80, pp. 105–16; Josef Joffe, 'Europe's American pacifier', *Foreign Policy*, No. 54, Spr. 1984, pp. 64–82.

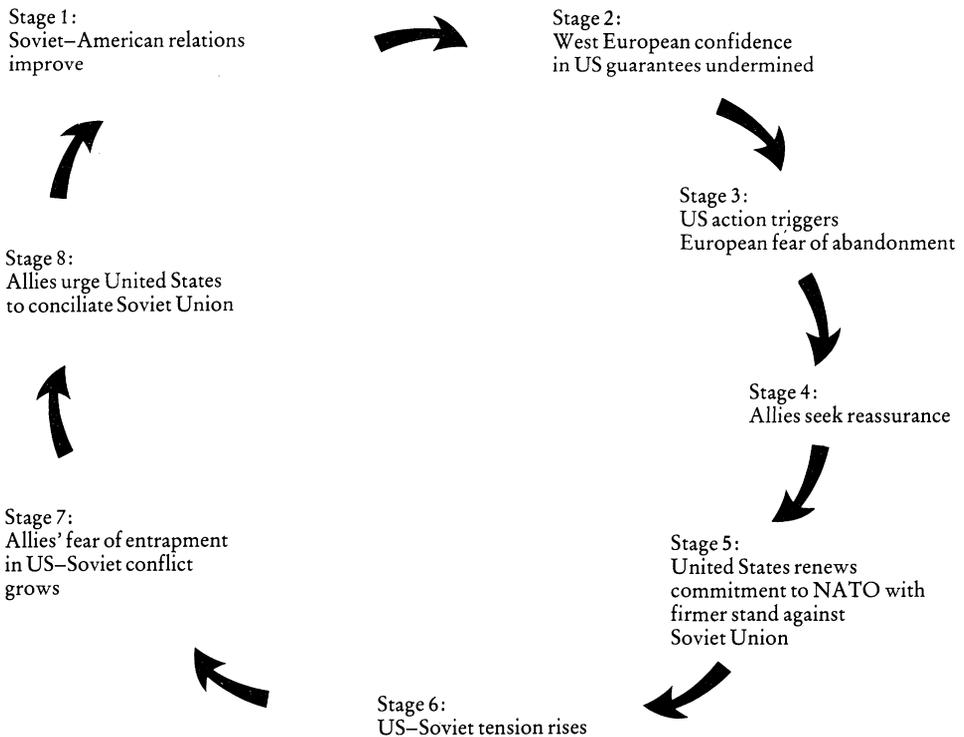
7. On NATO as the 'keeper of the threat', see: Michael MccGwire, 'Dilemmas and delusions of deterrence', *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Sum. 1984, pp. 745–68. On NATO's potential to bring stable peace to Europe, see: Stephen Van Evera, 'Why Europe should remain the focus of American strategy: a geopolitical assessment', testimony before Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings, 3 Oct. 1986.

Soviet–American negotiations exacerbate this dilemma, as the balance of opinion among European leaders swings from fear that an agreement will discriminate against NATO interests to fear that talks will collapse, leaving the Soviet Union and the United States to engage in an unbridled nuclear arms competition.⁸

As Henry Kissinger has observed, allies are comfortable with neither collusion nor collision between the superpowers.⁹ Moreover, the cycle of abandonment and entrapment is a permanent source of anxiety for the NATO allies, because the steps taken by the United States to alleviate one worry tend to set off the other. This explains the apparent contrariness of European reactions to American plans to deploy and limit intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe since the late 1950s. When the United States responds to European fears of abandonment by giving more explicit security guarantees or extra nuclear hardware for the European theatre, East–West relations worsen and the Europeans’ fear of entrapment in a superpower conflict becomes more acute. On the other hand, when America responds to fears of entrapment by pursuing bilateral agreements with the Soviet Union more vigorously, the allies who are most dependent feel that their security guarantees are being undermined.

NATO’s security dilemma can be viewed as a cycle of anxiety, comprising eight stages (see Figure 1). Stage 1 represents an improvement in relations between the

Figure 1: The abandonment–entrapment cycle



8. Glenn H. Snyder, ‘The security dilemma in alliance politics’, *World Politics*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 4, July 1984, pp. 461–95; on the arms control variant of this dilemma, see Thomas Risse Kappen, ‘Western Europe and nuclear arms control’, *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1985, pp. 283–9; and Jane M. O. Sharp, ‘Arms control and alliance commitments’, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 100, No. 4, Winter 1985–6, pp. 649–67.

9. Henry A. Kissinger, *The White House years* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1979), p. 382.

United States and the Soviet Union which, while welcome immediately after periods of tension, nevertheless (in Stage 2), becomes increasingly uncomfortable for those West Europeans who fear the loss of American protection. In these circumstances, many different kinds of event could trigger Stage 3, a heightened fear of abandonment.

Actions in which the United States reneges on specific commitments to an ally or denies political or military support when it has been requested or anticipated are especially traumatic if they coincide with aggressive Soviet behaviour. President Dwight Eisenhower's condemnation of the Anglo-French effort to take control of the Suez canal in October 1956, at the same time as Bulganin was threatening London and Paris with nuclear weapons and Soviet forces were suppressing Hungarian dissidents in Budapest, is a case in point. But less traumatic events, such as changes in the security policies or military force postures of either or both superpowers, can also trigger fears of abandonment among those in allied countries who are more dependent and less confident. Changes which might seem minor and routine to bureaucrats can heighten anxiety in allied governments, which see the rules of the game being changed at their expense, or at least without their interests being taken sufficiently into account.

Recurrent efforts by American leaders to reduce risk to United States inherent in the nuclear guarantee have been particularly troublesome for Europeans. This anxiety can be traced through the resistance to US Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's campaign in the 1960s to change NATO policy from the increasingly incredible 'massive retaliation', which promised automatic massive American nuclear retaliation to a Soviet conventional attack on Western Europe, to 'flexible response', which leaves open the possibility of nuclear retaliation but reduces its automaticity—and to his more recent, personal attempt to influence policy to change from flexible response to no first use.¹⁰

In Stage 4 of Figure 1, European leaders who have lost confidence in the American security guarantee seek reassurance in the form of a renewed or more explicit commitment from Washington. Such governments also tend to take steps to make themselves appear more attractive and reliable partners, in order to earn reaffirmation of the security guarantee which is now seemingly in question. These steps could include standing firm next to the United States against the adversary and taking on an extra share of the alliance defence burden, either by increasing defence spending or offering territory as a military base.

If the United States can restore confidence by political or diplomatic means, the cycle of anxiety can be short-circuited at this stage, and superpower detente can again be made palatable to the allies. In the late 1960s, for example, in order to alleviate West German anxiety after President Lyndon Johnson had cancelled the proposed multilateral nuclear force, Defense Secretary McNamara agreed to a Nuclear Planning

10. For McNamara's first attempt to change NATO policy, see: Robert S. McNamara, remarks delivered at a restricted session of the NATO ministers meeting (Athens, Greece, 5 May 1962), released under Freedom of Information Act, 17 Aug. 1979; on the intra-NATO debate on flexible response, see David N. Schwarz, *NATO's nuclear dilemmas* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1983). On the no-first-use proposal, see McGeorge Bundy, George F. Kennan, Robert S. McNamara and Gerard Smith, 'Nuclear weapons and the Atlantic alliance', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 60, Spr. 1982, pp. 753–68. For earlier no-first-use proposals, see: Morton H. Halperin, 'A proposal for a ban on the use of nuclear weapons', Institute for Defense Analyses, Special Studies Group, Study Memorandum #4 (Washington, DC: IDA, 1961), Richard H. Ullman, 'No first use of nuclear weapons', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 50, July 1972, pp. 669–83, and Laurence D. Weiler, 'No first use: a history', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 39, Feb. 1983, pp. 28–34. On the no-first-use debate, see: John Steinbruner and Leon Sigal, eds., *Alliance security: NATO and the no first use question* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1983), and Frank Blackaby, Jozef Goldblat and Sverre Lodgaard, eds., *No first use* (London: Taylor and Francis for SIPRI, 1984).

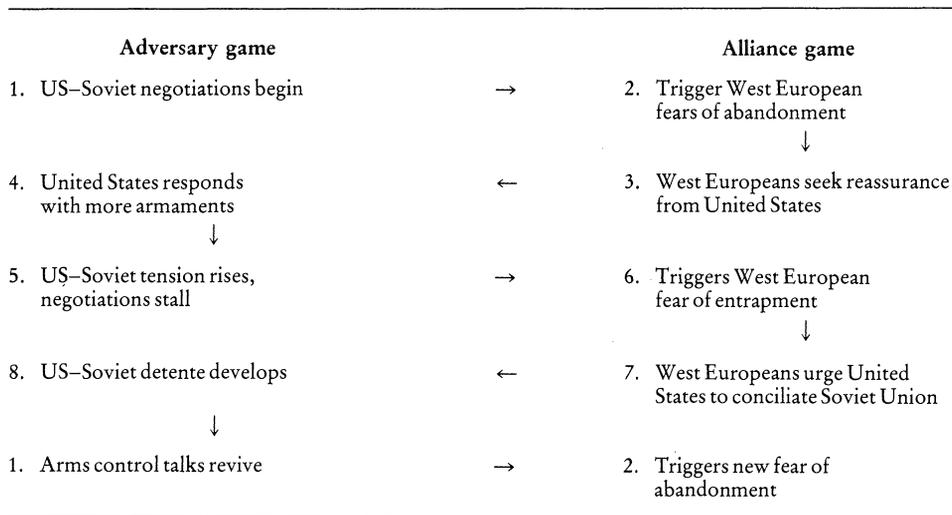
Group in NATO to enhance intra-alliance consultation on nuclear matters.¹¹ More often, however, the response comes as Stage 5, with additional military assistance, generally in the form of a new generation of nuclear weaponry. After Suez, for example, President Eisenhower responded to European calls for reassurance by sharing control of American battlefield nuclear weapons with the allies.¹²

But the American response (Stage 6) is often perceived as provocative—not only by the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies but also by many in the NATO countries. If tensions rise between Moscow and Washington, fears grow in Europe of entrapment in a superpower conflict. At this stage of the cycle, American military adventures in the Third World, use of confrontational anti-Russian rhetoric by senior administration officials, the adoption of provocatively offensive doctrines or the acquisition of manifestly offensive weapons systems could all further exacerbate European fear of entrapment.

Allies fearing entrapment try to insulate themselves from what they perceive as dangerous alliance policies (Stage 7). The more radical proposals usually come from opposition parties—the establishment of various kinds of weapon-free zones, the withdrawal of military base rights for American forces, reduction of the national share of the alliance burden. Governments usually footnote their distance from NATO policy in official communiqués and, most frequently, urge reconciliation with the Warsaw Pact. If the United States responds, dialogue and a measure of detente can be re-established with the Soviet Union (Stage 8).

Before looking more closely at the European reactions to Reykjavik, we should note how NATO's cycle of anxiety has been manifest in previous Soviet–American arms control negotiations. In Figure 2, NATO's eight-stage abandonment–entrapment

Figure 2: NATO's arms control dilemma



11. On the MLF controversy, see John Steinbruner, *The cybernetic theory of decision-making: new directions in political analysis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974); on the establishment of the NPG, see Harland Cleveland, *NATO: the transatlantic bargain* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 53–64; and David N. Schwarz, *NATO's nuclear dilemmas*, pp. 179–92.

12. Catherine M. Kelleher, *Germany and the politics of nuclear weapons* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), especially chs. 4 & 5.

cycle is imposed on the pattern of bilateral Soviet–American arms control negotiations to show how American moves in the adversary game affect the alliance game, and vice versa. In the adversary game, American policies designed to promote agreements with the Soviet Union to limit or reduce nuclear weapons usually trigger fears of abandonment and unsettle the West European allies. Conversely, American policies designed to reassure insecure European leaders in the alliance game, for example by reaffirming flexible response and the commitment to use nuclear weapons first, or by promising a new generation of nuclear hardware, risk provoking the Soviet Union and stimulating another round of arms build-ups.

When allied governments fear abandonment, they tend to resist arms control agreements, and when they fear entrapment they tend to support arms control and promote detente. As the United States tries to respond to one fear, it usually triggers the other. This creates a seesaw effect that works against agreements which could lead to deep cuts. Since the Second World War, Soviet–American arms control efforts have not been able to achieve more than a series of status quo agreements that codify some aspect of the existing balance. Even these modest treaties have been difficult to reach, requiring tortuous negotiations over many years. Figure 2 illustrates how, since the mid-1970s, the interaction between the adversary and alliance games has defied efforts to control the level of intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) in Europe.

Stage 1 in the first INF cycle began in early 1977 with high hopes for Soviet–American arms control. In January, President Jimmy Carter (in his inaugural address in Washington) and General Secretary Brezhnev (in a speech in Tula) both emphasized themes of detente and arms control, and both disavowed the pursuit of military superiority for the less provocative goal of military sufficiency. This can be seen as Stage 1 in the adversary game.

The negotiation agenda was ambitious. New bilateral talks began on conventional arms sales, chemical weapons and anti-satellite systems. Bilateral talks on strategic arms, trilateral talks on a comprehensive test ban, intra-alliance negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR) and the multilateral Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) all continued from the Ford administration. In addition, President Carter moved aggressively in the field of preventing nuclear proliferation by tightening up the transfer of nuclear technology to potential proliferating states.

It soon became clear that the Carter arms control agenda was too ambitious for some of the allies (Stage 2). Japan and West Germany both felt they were being unduly discriminated against in the non-proliferation crusade. The German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, resented the fact that the bilateral strategic arms talks were not only leaving Soviet intermediate-range bombers and missiles unconstrained but could also limit the transfer of American cruise-missile technology to the NATO countries.

The more anxious European leaders sought reassurance (Stage 3), as was shown in a speech given by Chancellor Schmidt in October 1977 at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London.¹³ President Carter's vacillation over the neutron bomb further exacerbated alliance concerns in May 1978. These concerns in turn were exploited by those, on both sides of the Atlantic, who wanted a new generation of medium-range missiles to replace the 'dual-capable' aircraft (used for carrying both nuclear and non-nuclear weapons) that were becoming increasingly vulnerable to

13. Helmut Schmidt, Alastair Buchan Memorial Speech, 28 Oct. 1977, reprinted in *Survival*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Jan./Feb. 1978, pp. 2–10.

improved Soviet air defences. They persuaded President Carter, against the initial judgement of senior members of his administration, to deploy the new missiles to reassure those concerned about a potential INF imbalance.

The compromise 'double track' decision emerged in December 1979 at the North Atlantic Council meeting in Brussels (Stage 4). This was designed to ease European fears of abandonment with the promise of cruise and *Pershing* II missiles as coupling measures, and to pre-empt new fears of entrapment by promising new negotiations to limit this class of intermediate-range nuclear weapons.

Not surprisingly, the decision to deploy new *Pershing* II ballistic and *Tomahawk* ground-launched cruise missiles in Western Europe at ranges that could strike at Soviet territory triggered a reaction in Moscow (Stage 5). Mr Brezhnev withdrew an earlier offer to negotiate reductions in Soviet INF missiles before the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) had been ratified. Soviet-American relations deteriorated even further when Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan and President Carter withdrew the SALT II Treaty from the process of ratification.¹⁴

Ronald Reagan won the American presidential election in November 1980 and began his term of office in January 1981 by employing confrontational anti-Russian rhetoric and displaying an embarrassing ignorance about nuclear issues. This breakdown in Soviet-American civility in general, and arms control in particular, alarmed NATO governments and publics alike. West European fears of entrapment were displayed in public demonstrations against new generations of Soviet and American nuclear weapons (Stage 6). Fears of entrapment in a Soviet-American nuclear war were now also appearing in Eastern Europe, and the leaders of the Western anti-nuclear movement began to make common cause with dissidents protesting about human rights abuses in the Warsaw Pact countries.¹⁵

The nuclear build-up was now seen by many as a far greater threat than the Soviet Union itself. NATO leaders began to urge the Reagan administration to reopen the arms control dialogue with Soviet leaders (Stage 7). In the United States, the nuclear freeze campaign was getting under way. This combination of domestic and alliance opinion led the Reagan administration back to the negotiating table in late 1981, despite what appeared to be a genuine antipathy to arms control among the President's senior advisers.

The cycle began again in November 1981, with considerable confusion in Europe about the relative importance of the deployment and limitation tracks implicit in the December 1979 double-track decision. Some European leaders, including Chancellor Schmidt, now sensitized to fears of entrapment by President Reagan's confrontational rhetoric, talked as though the best INF agreement would be one that obviated the need to deploy any new NATO missiles—a zero INF agreement. On the other hand, hardliners in Washington, those Europeans still more worried about abandonment than entrapment, and strategists on both sides of the Atlantic who thought cruise and *Pershing* were necessary to penetrate Soviet air defences, all suggested that this was irresponsible talk that could undermine the American negotiating position in Geneva.

14. For a flavour of the cold war mood in the United States during President Carter's last year in office, see: unsigned special report, 'The new cold war economy: a strategy to answer the Soviets', *Business Week*, 21 Jan. 1980, pp. 77–89; and 'Defense: is the US prepared?', seven articles in *New York Times*, 21–7 Sept. 1980. See also Fred Halliday, *The making of the second cold war* (London: Verso, 1983).

15. Robert English, 'Eastern Europe's doves', *Foreign Policy*, No. 56, Fall 1984, pp. 44–60; John Sandford, *The sword and the ploughshare: autonomous peace movements in East Germany* (London: Merlin, 1983).

Thus NATO policy-makers transformed the European zero option for INF, proposed by Chancellor Schmidt and others, into a proposal for a global zero INF agreement that was patently not negotiable with the Soviet leadership at that time. In the summer of 1982, INF negotiators Paul Nitze and Yuly Kvitsinsky took a walk in the Jura mountains above Geneva and proposed a compromise agreement that would have been acceptable to most European leaders (had they been consulted) but which was apparently vetoed in Washington at the instigation of Richard Perle.¹⁶

European fears were further exacerbated in March 1983 when President Reagan announced his vision of perfect strategic defences, the strategic defence initiative (SDI) that would make nuclear weapons obsolete. Worse yet, the President spoke of sharing this new system with the Soviet Union. To those Europeans most worried about abandonment, not only did the Star Wars speech imply a 'fortress America' that was abandoning Europe to the threat of Soviet nuclear weapons, but it suggested that the Soviet Union would be safe from the effects of nuclear weapons, thereby undermining the deterrent effect of British and French nuclear forces.

On the other hand, the more confident, less dependent Europeans who support arms control and fear entrapment more than abandonment found the American proposals to invest in strategic defences both provocative and destabilizing: provocative because in order to test the components of the new systems, the Reagan administration appeared willing to sabotage the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the fragile arms control regime it underpinned, and strategically destabilizing because the obvious Soviet countermeasures would take the form of more offensive missiles.¹⁷

European fears of entrapment reached new heights later in the year as East–West tension rose as a result of the deployment of the new cruise and *Pershing* missiles in November 1983. As had been threatened, the Soviet Union responded to the deployment by walking out of both the INF and the START (strategic arms reduction) talks in Geneva. Soviet–American relations hit a new low. At this stage European leaders, particularly the new West German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and the East German leader, Erich Honecker, took steps to limit the damage that the superpower rift was now inflicting on East–West detente in Europe, and especially on the relationship between the two Germanies.¹⁸

The combined pressure of the allies and his own domestic presidential re-election campaign brought about a change in tone of President Reagan's rhetoric in the following year, 1984. The more conciliatory tone he adopted enabled the new Soviet leadership, headed by Mr Gorbachev, to return to the negotiations in 1985. Nevertheless, in January 1985, immediately after US Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko had announced that bilateral arms talks

16. On developments in the INF talks, see Strobe Talbott, *Deadly gambits* (New York: Knopf, 1984; London: Pan Picador, 1985); NATO Special Consultative Group, Progress Report to Ministers (Brussels: NATO Press Service, 8 Dec. 1983).

17. On Soviet strategic defence programmes and probable countermeasures to the American SDI, see: Andrei Kokoshin, Roald Sagdeyev and Yevgeny P. Velikov, *Weaponry in space: the dilemma of security* (Moscow: Mir, 1986); Stephen M. Meyer, 'Soviet strategic programmes and the US SDI', *Survival*, Vol. 27, No. 6; Jeffrey D. Boutwell, Donald Hafner and Franklin A. Long, eds., *Weapons in space* (New York: Norton, 1986); Stephen E. Miller and Stephen Van Evera, eds., *The Star Wars controversy: an International Security reader* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), esp. contributions from Holloway and Glaser.

18. Jeffrey D. Boutwell, 'The German search for security', in Stephen J. Flanagan and Fen Osler Hampson, eds., *Securing Europe's future* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 113–36; Jonathan Dean, 'The inner-German relationship', ch. 11 in his *Watershed in Europe: dismantling the East–West military confrontation* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington, 1987).

were soon to resume in Geneva, Helmut Schmidt, the former West German chancellor, reiterated the concerns he had voiced in October 1977—that European interests would be swept under the superpower table, ‘as had happened twice already, at SALT II and in the rejection of the walk-in-the-woods compromise on INF.’¹⁹ Negotiations began again in June 1985, and were followed by the first Reagan–Gorbachev summit in November. The possibility of an interim agreement on INF emerged early in 1986, triggering more European anxieties. NATO’s political leaders were now hoist by their own petard, a dubious rationalization for cruise and *Pershing* II in the late 1970s. Then they had exploited European fear of abandonment to make the case for the new American INF in Western Europe. With new Soviet SS-20 missiles targeted on Western Europe (the argument had gone), NATO needed analogous systems, visibly land-based in Western Europe, to restore the credibility of its extended deterrence and to maintain escalation control. But according to this logic, if Mr Gorbachev was now serious about reducing the number of SS-20s targeted on Europe to zero, there was no longer much justification for retaining the new American INF systems. Secretary Shultz explicitly argued along these lines after Reykjavik, apparently oblivious to the fact that most NATO defence officials wanted cruise and *Pershing* II missiles to penetrate Soviet air defences, not to counterbalance SS-20 missiles.

The Reykjavik proposals

At the Reykjavik meeting in October 1986, the proposals that were made for a new ten-year bilateral agreement fell into two categories: a set of pragmatic arms control limits for the first five years, and radical disarmament measures for the second five—a package that Stanley Hoffmann has described as the promise of a somewhat better nuclear world and the delusion of a world without nuclear weapons.²⁰ In the first category, both sides agreed to eliminate land-based INF missiles targeted on Europe, to set a limit of 100 warheads on INF based in the United States and the Soviet Union, and to discuss a freeze on shorter-range systems. Early reports also suggested an agreement to reduce both sides’ long-range strategic systems by 50 per cent. In fact the proposed limits would have amounted to little more than a 25 per cent reduction of all American strategic forces. This is because they exempted sea-launched cruise missiles, and heavily discounted air-launched cruise missiles by counting an entire bomber payload as one warhead. In the second category, Mr Reagan proposed the banning of all ballistic missiles, while Mr Gorbachev wanted to eliminate nuclear weapons altogether.²¹

In the pragmatic arms control package designed for the first five years, Mr Gorbachev made major concessions on the previously stated Soviet position. He no longer insisted on compensation for the British and French strategic systems in a bilateral agreement limiting Soviet and American INF. In addition, for the first time,

19. Helmut Schmidt, ‘Europa muss jetzt handeln’, *Die Zeit* (overseas edn.) 11 Jan. 1985, cited in trans. by Richard C. Eichenberg, ‘European perspectives on nuclear weapons and arms control: the public dimension’, in Douglas Kinnard and Karl Pieragostini, *Nuclear weapons and foreign policy* (Burlington, Vt.: University of Vermont, 1985), pp. 176–7.

20. Stanley Hoffmann, ‘An Icelandic saga’, *New York Review of Books*, Vol. 33, No. 18, 20 Nov. 1986, pp. 15–17.

21. For summaries of the proposals offered by both sides at the Reykjavik summit, see: Jack Mendelsohn, ‘Arms Control back in Reagan’s court’, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 42, No. 10, Dec. 1986, pp. 8–10; Chalmers Hardenburgh, ed., *The arms control reporter* (Brookline, Mass.: Institute for Defense and Disarmament, 1986), pp. 611 B 346–56.

he recognized the important distinction in the ABM Treaty between permitted research and prohibited testing with respect to components of strategic defence systems. Nevertheless, the Reykjavik summit broke down over President Reagan's refusal to compromise on his broadly permissive interpretation of the ABM Treaty. Among other things, the President claims that the prohibition on development and testing of components of space-based, air-based, sea-based and mobile land-based ABM systems or components applies only to components employing technologies in use in 1972.²²

The most intriguing aspect of Reykjavik for the general public was the vision it offered of Mr Gorbachev and Mr Reagan, momentarily out of the clutches of their national security keepers, preparing to make radical reductions not only in their nuclear arsenals but also in the level of animosity that has characterized Soviet–American relations for four decades.²³ The proposals to ban ballistic missiles and to remove all intermediate-range nuclear missiles from Europe suggested that they might be interested in real disarmament, rather than traditional arms control, which usually merely legitimizes existing force levels. Not since 1961, when President John F. Kennedy and General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev endorsed the McCloy–Zorin statement on General and Complete Disarmament, had the superpowers discussed measures as radical as these. Many in the transatlantic strategic community, especially those with close ties to defence industries, were thoroughly alarmed, and, together with the more conservative NATO leaders, moved quickly to downgrade the disarmament proposals and return the American focus to more modest arms control objectives.

European responses to Reykjavik

Given the recurrent cycle of anxiety evident in NATO since at least 1956, negative reactions to Reykjavik should have been anticipated. Responses from the capitals of France, West Germany and the United Kingdom predominantly reflected fear of abandonment, and focused on the lack of consultation both before and after Reykjavik as well as on the destabilizing potential of President Reagan's proposals for deep cuts. Senior NATO military officers, as well as the Joint Chiefs in Washington, also complained about the lack of consultation. By contrast, some opposition leaders in Britain and West Germany, as well as some leaders of the other NATO countries, focused on the disarmament opportunity that had been squandered by President Reagan's unwillingness to compromise on the testing of strategic defences, so reflecting a predominant fear of entrapment.

Perhaps the greatest irony in the reaction to Reykjavik was the way in which defence and foreign policy elites in Britain, France and West Germany—the majority of whom were highly sceptical about the technical feasibility and political wisdom of President Reagan's strategic defence initiative—were heard to admit, in private at least, that 'Star Wars' had saved NATO from a potentially disastrous package of disarmament measures. Only the French openly acknowledged this debt to SDI. British and West German leaders tended to offer thanks under their breath.²⁴

22. Alan B. Sherr, 'Removing the Star Wars obstacle', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 42, No. 10, Dec. 1986, pp. 11–13; and 'Sound legal reasoning or policy expedient: the new interpretation of the ABM Treaty', *International Security*, Vol. 11, No. 3, Winter 1986–7.

23. See Ian Davidson, 'At the headland of history', *Financial Times*, 27 Oct. 1986.

24. Fred Kaplan, 'Reagan can thank his lucky Star Wars', *Boston Globe*, 2 Nov. 1986.

At the meeting of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group in Gleneagles, just two weeks after the summit, NATO ministers gave only half-hearted approval to the Reykjavik package. Most felt that the proposal to ban ballistic missiles had undermined the credibility of extended deterrence and the legitimacy of the British and French strategic arsenals. Despite the fact that the Group had endorsed the zero option for INF as a NATO bargaining proposal in 1981, it was now decidedly lukewarm about the prospect of implementing it, preferring an earlier proposal which would have allowed the Soviet Union and the United States each to retain 100 INF warheads in the European theatre. In an election speech in Mainz in the following month, the West German Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, claimed that many of those who had previously backed the zero INF agreement had done so only because they were confident that the Soviet Union would reject it.²⁵

On the question of linkage, NATO ministers appeared to have somewhat double standards. They condemned Mr Gorbachev's insistence on linking the Reykjavik proposals to limit offensive missiles to limits on strategic defences, but urged the United States to link limits on INF to limits on short-range systems.²⁶ To those interested in more radical disarmament measures, it appeared that linkage was being invoked primarily to block progress towards the agreement in question.²⁷ The British opposition leader, Neil Kinnock, made this point repeatedly in his criticism of Mr Gorbachev's arms control proposals.

Chancellor Kohl was the first European leader to visit Washington after the summit. He expressed public approval of President Reagan's initiatives, but in private apparently claimed that a zero INF agreement would expose Western Europe to shorter-range systems, and suggested that radical cuts in strategic offensive forces would require an improvement in NATO's conventional forces.²⁸ These concerns were addressed by administration spokesmen in the following weeks. Richard Perle told NATO defence ministers in Gleneagles and a press conference in London that, while there had been some modernization, Soviet short-range nuclear-capable missiles were not at significantly higher levels than they had been in 1976.²⁹ Meanwhile, in a number of interviews and speeches after Reykjavik, Secretary of State Shultz played down the Soviet conventional threat, and emphasized the inherent economic, technological and innovative advantages enjoyed by the NATO countries over those of the Warsaw Pact.³⁰

Speaking at a banquet given by the Lord Mayor of London, the British Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, reiterated her basic distrust of the Soviet Union and

25. Reuters, *Boston Globe*, 23 Nov. 1986, as cited in Hardenburgh, ed., *Arms control reporter*, p. 403 B 411.

26. On the Gleneagles meeting, see: David Buchan, 'Britain sees US proposal on missile abolition as dangerous', *Financial Times*, 22 Oct. 1986, and 'NATO endorses US position at Reykjavik', *Financial Times*, 23 Oct. 1986; Ian Davidson, 'NATO cannot survive another triumph', *Financial Times*, 20 Oct. 1986; Robert Mauthner, 'France and Britain stress need for nuclear deterrent', *Financial Times*, 17 Oct. 1986.

27. On the difference between 'positive', 'passive' and 'punitive' linkage, see Stanley Sloan, 'Linkage: nuclear arms control in the broader context of United States-Soviet relations', part 8 of *The fundamentals of nuclear arms control* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 1986); James K. Sebenius, 'Negotiating arithmetic: adding and subtracting issues and parties', *International Organization*, Vol. 37, No. 2, Spr. 1983.

28. David Shieler, *New York Times*, 22 Oct. 1986.

29. Mark Urban, 'Zero option safest despite European worries, US says', *Independent*, 21 Oct. 1986.

30. George Shultz, 'Reykjavik: a watershed in US-Soviet relations', *Current Policy*, No. 883 (Washington, DC: US Dept. of State Bureau of Public Affairs), 31 Oct. 1986; and 'Nuclear weapons, arms control, and the future of deterrence', *Current Policy*, No. 893 (Washington, DC: US Dept. of State, Bureau of Public Affairs), 17 Nov. 1986.

indicated that she was in no mood to compromise on the British deterrent. She then flew off to Camp David to 'tone down all that visionary stuff' and make certain that Britain's order for the new *Trident* D-5 submarine-launched ballistic missile had not been shelved at the summit.³¹

Facing election campaigns as they both were, Chancellor Kohl and Mrs Thatcher would have preferred a Reykjavik outcome which had promised a modest agreement, satisfying the yearning for a continuing process without incurring any dramatic reductions in force levels. After the United States' air raid on Libya, launched from bases in Britain in April 1986, its abrogation of the SALT II Treaty, and the scandal that began to emerge in November 1986 about secret American arms sales to Iran and the *contras* in Nicaragua, West Germans and Britons had become increasingly uneasy about their governments' close ties with the Reagan administration.³² The White House staff were sensitive enough to Mrs Thatcher's difficulties to wait until after her visit to Camp David in mid-November 1986 before announcing deployment at the Carswell air force base of the 131st bomber equipped to carry nuclear air-launched cruise missiles—the step that put US offensive force levels over the SALT II limits, and embarrassed NATO leaders who wished to see the maintenance of an East–West arms control regime.

Thus, despite silent prayers to the saving grace of SDI, both Mrs Thatcher and Chancellor Kohl were at some level sensitive to the entrapment fears of their electorates. Both leaders hinted that more willingness on the part of the United States to accept limits on SDI testing would be welcome concessions in pursuit of an agreement before the end of the Reagan term.³³ In Washington, however, Representative Les Aspin, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, noted that time was already running out for a Reagan treaty, in view of the lengthy congressional ratification process.³⁴

Both the French President, M. Francois Mitterrand, and the Prime Minister, M. Jacques Chirac, emphasized the inadequacy of transatlantic consultation in general and on the Reykjavik summit in particular.³⁵ In a speech to the West European Union in December 1986, M. Chirac said that NATO was threatened by 'the feeling, whether justified or not, that decisions vital to the security of Europe could be taken without Europe really having any say in the matter.'³⁶

European governments have rarely been satisfied with transatlantic consultation on nuclear arms control matters, but the Reagan administration seems particularly insensitive to the allies' need to be treated like grown-ups on this score. In the summer of 1982, without consulting the allies, the administration rejected the Nitzze–Kvitsinsky 'walk in the woods' compromise at the Geneva INF talks. In March 1983 Mr Reagan launched his own personal strategic defence initiative without any prior intra-alliance discussions. Then, in October 1986, President Reagan notified Chancel-

31. Anthony Bevins, 'Thatcher stresses distrust of Soviets', *Independent*, 11 Nov. 1986.

32. Joseph Lelyfeld, 'Britain's ties to the US are beginning to chafe: Thatcher isn't likely to say Yes again', *New York Times*, 27 Apr. 1986; unsigned leader, 'The eagle devalued', *The Economist*, 29 Nov. 1986; William Safire, 'Don't worry world', *New York Times*, 11 Dec. 1986; Jean Daniel, 'Europe is baffled and annoyed', *New York Times*, 12 Dec. 1986; Jonathan Fenby, 'The world-wide danger of a weaker White House', *Independent*, 10 Dec. 1986; James Callaghan, 'Europe, worried, watches the White House', *New York Times*, 19 Dec. 1986.

33. Steven Erlanger, 'For British, Germans, arms failure may hurt', *Boston Globe*, 19 Oct. 1986.

34. R. Jeffrey Smith, 'Doubts on arms accord increases in US', *International Herald Tribune*, 9 Dec. 1986.

35. Michael Dobbs, 'Mitterrand says US should consult allies', *Boston Globe*, 17 Oct. 1986.

36. David Housego, 'US leadership of NATO alliance worries France', *Financial Times*, 3 Dec. 1986.

lor Kohl and Mrs Thatcher from Reykjavik about his new position on INF, with a telephone call between negotiating sessions at the Hofdi House.³⁷

The communiqué of the NATO foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels in December endorsed the zero INF proposal, with reservations. French Foreign Minister Jean-Bernard Raimond insisted on wording that excluded France, for example.³⁸ M. Raimond also blocked any NATO endorsement of the US proposal to eliminate all ballistic missiles, noting that British and French officials concurred in the belief that the second five-year proposal at Reykjavik devalued the first five. Paris and London could hardly claim to have been uninformed about the ballistic missile ban, however, since Paul Nitze had been dispatched to both capitals in the spring of 1986 with a draft of the President's letter to Mr Gorbachev of 25 July 1985. At that time, Mrs Thatcher and Francois Mitterrand had succeeded in deleting wording which suggested that Britain and France would join the United States and the Soviet Union in negotiations to ban ballistic missiles. After Reykjavik, these sentiments were echoed again in Washington. There the proposed ban on ballistic missiles was dubbed 'son of sharing', equating it with the President's notion of sharing Star Wars technology with the Russians.³⁹

Reykjavik and the conventional balance

The argument that President Reagan's proposals at Reykjavik amounted to the abandonment of the NATO allies was stated largely in terms of the prevalent assumption that radical cuts in American nuclear arsenals would expose the West European allies to the overwhelming superiority of Warsaw Pact conventional forces. In the post-Reykjavik analysis and commentary, Warsaw Pact superiority was usually asserted as a given, without further explanation or elaboration. Yet there is now a carefully researched body of literature which shows that the strength of NATO and Warsaw Pact conventional forces is such that neither side could seriously contemplate attacking the other.⁴⁰

While most measuring techniques show a Warsaw Pact advantage, others show a small NATO advantage. No serious study shows a decisive advantage in favour of

37. Hardenburgh, ed., *Arms control reporter*, pp. 611 B 355.

38. James M. Markham, 'NATO ministers spurn proposal to abolish all ballistic missiles', *New York Times*, 13 Dec. 1986.

39. Elizabeth Drew, *New Yorker*, 27 Oct. 1986.

40. For analyses of the East-West conventional balance, see: Barry M. Posen, 'Measuring the European conventional balance: coping with complexity in threat assessment', *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 3, Winter 1985-6, pp. 47-88; John J. Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets can't win quickly in central Europe', *International Security*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Sum. 1982, pp. 3-29; William Mako, *US ground forces and the defense of central Europe* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1983); Joshua Epstein, *Measuring military power: the Soviet air threat to Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); James Meacham, 'The sentry at the gate: a survey of NATO's central front', *The Economist*, 30 Aug. 1986; Roger Facer, *Conventional forces and the NATO strategy of flexible response* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1985); Fen Osler Hampson, 'Groping for technical panaceas: the European conventional balance and nuclear stability', *International Security*, Vol. 8, No. 3, Winter 1983-4, pp. 57-82; Robert Lucas Fischer, 'Defending the central front: the balance of forces', Adelphi Paper 127 (London: IISS, 1976); *NATO and Warsaw Pact force comparisons* (Brussels: NATO Information Service, 1984); Christian Krause, *The balance between conventional forces in Europe* (Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, 1982); Matthew Evangelists, 'A tale of two commissions', *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 45-69; William W. Kaufmann, 'Non-nuclear deterrence', in John D. Steinbruner and Leon V. Sigal, eds., *Alliance security and the no-first-use question* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1983). For a discussion of the bias in many Western estimates and the political controversy surrounding the quantitative NATO-Warsaw Pact balance, see Jonathan Dean, 'Military balance in Europe: what do the figures mean?', ch. 2 of Dean, *The watershed in Europe*, pp. 38-59.

either side. The NATO countries both outman and outspend the Pact, even though the Pact has more men in uniform in the Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions guidelines area in central Europe. The Pact has more tanks, but NATO has more anti-tank munitions. When airpower is brought into the equation, some analysts even argue that NATO is superior, especially as Soviet air defences become increasingly vulnerable to American 'stealth' technology aircraft dedicated to ferreting out enemy radars. The quality of military training and the political reliability of its allies are two further factors which probably favour NATO.

A number of sophisticated analyses probing both the qualitative and quantitative factors of the balance, and exploring alternative attack scenarios, have concluded that NATO's conventional forces stand a better than even chance of thwarting any likely Pact offensive. If NATO's conventional forces are already at a sufficiently high level to provide a robust deterrent against a Warsaw Pact conventional attack, why do political leaders and opinion-makers on both sides of the Atlantic perpetuate the myth of Western inferiority?

One answer is that allied leaders, sensitive to fears of abandonment, believe that an image of NATO weakness is necessary to make the coupling of American and West European security interests credible to the Soviet Union. This is what Kenneth Hunt has called 'deterrence by conventional inadequacy'.⁴¹ If the Soviet leaders believe that Western Europe cannot mount a serious conventional defence (the argument goes), then their military planners must assume that NATO would have to rely on the United States to initiate nuclear use early in any conflict to prevent Western Europe being overrun. To the extent that the Soviet Union expects a nuclear response, it will be deterred from initiating conventional aggression. Thus, no matter how confident such West European allies are in NATO's conventional forces, they are reluctant to admit it, for fear of losing American protection, which might leave the continent vulnerable to conventional war.

Other European leaders like to foster an image of conventional inferiority and reliance on the American nuclear umbrella, not because they fear a Soviet invasion, but because this vision of the balance relieves them of the need to upgrade their conventional forces. If the conventional imbalance looks hopeless, then obviously it makes no sense to allocate additional resources in a futile effort to match the Warsaw Pact; better by far to rely on the threat of first use of nuclear weapons to maintain the deterrent balance. For Europeans who see little likelihood of a Soviet move westwards, and thus little prospect of NATO having to carry out its threats of first use, retaining the nuclear option is a relatively risk-free insurance policy.

Several generations of American officials have gone along with the image of Warsaw Pact superiority, without really believing it, for the sake of their alliance partners. Cyrus Vance, former US Secretary of State under President Carter, told John Newhouse in 1982 that 'we are stronger conventionally than we concede, although there is some disparity. I agree with the view that the Europeans tend to exaggerate the weakness of the conventional balance because of their reluctance to yield the nuclear option.'⁴² In general, however, maintaining the option to use nuclear weapons first is not a very appealing policy for Americans, many of whom find nuclear threats not only morally abhorrent, but frightening. US Senator Sam Nunn, for example, the new chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, sees European reluctance to spend

41. Kenneth Hunt, 'Defence with fewer men', Adelphi Paper 98 (London: IISS, 1973).

42. John Newhouse, 'Arms and orthodoxy', *New Yorker*, 7 June 1982, pp. 96–7.

more on conventional forces and thereby raise the nuclear threshold as heightening the risk of entrapment for the United States, and, in terms of alliance burden sharing, as irresponsible 'free riding'.

Variations in the NATO response

The eight-stage cycle of anxiety outlined in Figure 1 helps to illustrate the structural problems of alliance dependencies, to show how American actions affect European fears of abandonment and entrapment, to predict the general NATO response to Soviet-American arms control efforts and to explain one of several sources of pressure on the United States to negotiate status quo agreements rather than to attempt radical arms reductions by treaty. The cycle model also shows how the allies' fear fluctuates over time. But, at any given time, not all the allies fear abandonment and entrapment to the same degree. Geopolitics and historical experience make some countries more vulnerable and more dependent than others. And within each country, not all political parties and not all parts of the government bureaucracy will share the same anxieties.

It appears that the more dependent a country's leadership feels at any particular time on the alliance in general and the United States in particular, the more vulnerable it will be to fears of abandonment, and the more likely to invoke the Soviet threat as a means of alliance cohesion. Conversely, the less dependent a political leader in an alliance country feels on the transatlantic relationship for its basic security, the more sensitive they are to fears of entrapment, and the more likely to endorse policies of detente with the Warsaw Pact countries. Those most susceptible to fears of abandonment tend to be most easily alarmed by proposals for arms control and to take a hard line towards the Soviet Union, particularly when the two superpowers come close to reaching an agreement. On the other hand, those most susceptible to fears of entrapment support arms control, and rapprochement with the Soviet Union.

Some European responses to the Reykjavik summit deplored the lost opportunity to achieve radical cuts and reflected greater sensitivity to fear of entrapment than of abandonment. Such responses came from opposition leaders in the Labour Party and the SDP-Liberal Alliance in Britain, the Social Democratic Party in West Germany, and some of the governments of the other allies. In December 1986, Neil Kinnock gave a series of lectures in the United States designed to acquaint American audiences with the British Labour Party's defence policy. Mr Kinnock invoked the more radical elements of President Reagan's proposals at Reykjavik to support his own proposals to denuclearize British forces and remove the nuclear components from American bases in Britain. A zero INF agreement would deactivate the American cruise missile bases at Greenham Common, Berkshire, and Molesworth, Cambridgeshire. A ban on ballistic missiles would obviate the need for *Poseidon* bases at Holy Loch in Scotland, as, in Mr Kinnock's view, would strict adherence to SALT II limits. Only the denuclearization of American F-111 aircraft stationed in Britain would go beyond the President's own proposals, Mr Kinnock argued.⁴³

Making the case for British denuclearization on the strength of President Reagan's strategic analysis may not be very sound, however. It assumes that the President and his advisers were serious at Reykjavik. Many opposition leaders in Europe, together with many in the arms control community in the United States, suspected that the summit proposals were as radical as they were only because there had in fact been no

43. Neil Kinnock, 'Components of security: defence, democracy and development', text of speech delivered at Harvard University, 2 Dec. 1986.

chance of their being accepted unless the President also gave up his vision of SDI. This suspicion was reinforced in the days after Reykjavik by the White House's emphasis on the President's courage in saying 'No' to Russian demands for limits on SDI. The timing of Reykjavik also lent support to the theory that the dramatic disarmament gesture was designed to undermine recent congressional limits imposed on the American defence budget, and to assist the Republican candidates in the 1986 congressional elections only weeks away.⁴⁴ Still, working on the assumption that many politicians do not know what they believe until they hear themselves say it, some arms control optimists hoped that Ronald Reagan would find it difficult to back away from his own disarmament rhetoric.⁴⁵

Dr David Owen, the leader of the British Social Democratic Party, distanced himself from Mr Kinnock's anti-nuclear stance and echoed the complaints of more conservative Europeans about the lack of consultation on Reykjavik and the arbitrary way in which President Reagan had proposed the elimination of all ballistic missiles. He was not, however, as troubled as Mrs Thatcher about the possible cancellation of the *Trident* D-5 submarine-launched ballistic missile, which Britain was due to buy from the United States. In Dr Owen's view, *Trident* would perpetuate an unhealthy British dependence on decision-making in Washington. But the summit package suited Dr Owen, since it left unconstrained the sea-launched cruise missiles with which he wants to modernize the British nuclear arsenal.⁴⁶

In general, opposition leaders in Europe deplored the lost opportunity to concede on SDI and make real progress in nuclear arms control at Reykjavik. In West Germany, after moving from government to opposition status the Social Democratic Party reversed its position on the need for cruise and *Pershing II*, proposed the withdrawal of short-range battlefield nuclear weapons, and urged NATO to adopt a no-first-use policy on nuclear weapons. After the Reykjavik meeting, former chancellors Helmut Schmidt and Willy Brandt were both impatient with the official lukewarm West German response to the proposal for a zero INF agreement. Herr Schmidt argued against attaching any conditions to an INF agreement, noting that the cruise and *Pershing II* missiles had already served their purpose by inducing the Soviet Union to negotiate away its SS-20 missiles, that shorter-range Soviet missiles posed neither a military nor a political threat to Western Europe, and that, far from a conventional imbalance between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the six original European Community countries (West Germany, France, Italy and the Benelux) were strong enough to hold off any Russian force and deter any Soviet marshal from pondering conventional attack.⁴⁷

Conclusion

The mixed responses to Reykjavik underscore a persistent dilemma for the United States: how to conduct its security policy with the Soviet Union in such a way as to reassure West Europeans—both governments and publics. Those most prone to fears of abandonment, those most prone to fears of entrapment, and those that oscillate

44. John Isaacs, 'Using summitry to thwart Congress', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 42, No. 10, Dec. 1986, pp. 4–5.

45. Arthur Macy Cox, 'Inch by inch towards arms control: Reagan's evolution on security', *New York Times*, 6 Nov. 1986.

46. Joseph Lelyfeld, *New York Times*, 30 Nov. 1986.

47. Elizabeth Pond, 'West Germany's Schmidt touts a Europe independent of US', *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 Nov. 1986.

from one to the other, all need reassurance, albeit of different kinds. In practice, American presidents have found it difficult to strike this balance and have shown more sensitivity to one alliance fear than the other. Ideology and party affiliation appear less reliable guides to superpower and alliance relations than management styles.

During the early 1950s, President Harry Truman was more concerned about American fears of entrapment in European squabbles than with European fears of abandonment. Truman resisted sending American troops to Europe until after the shock of the Korean War, and was also reluctant to share nuclear information with the allies, despite British and French wartime collaboration on the Manhattan Project. After Suez, President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John F. Dulles grew more sensitive to European fears of abandonment, and appeared more willing to share both nuclear information and nuclear control with the European allies than to negotiate arms reductions with the Russians. Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and their Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, took a different view. For them, arms control with the Soviet Union was more important than the sharing of nuclear control with the allies. But the priority they attached to arms control upset France over the test ban and triggered severe West German resentment and fear of abandonment, first over cancellation of the multilateral nuclear force control-sharing scheme and later over the discriminatory aspects of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Presidents Nixon and Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger were more adept at balancing the allies' political needs for detente with their military needs for a credible deterrent, achieving the most impressive arms control record of any administration since the war. (Out of office, Henry Kissinger showed less sensitivity to European fears of abandonment, and chastized the Europeans for insisting on American commitments that he claimed no President could fulfil.)

Presidents Carter and Reagan, while far apart in their political ideology and foreign policy objectives, both managed to upset NATO allies across a wide political spectrum. Both presidents' administrations gave the impression of erratic policy-making, taking too little account of European interests. For some, the Carter administration moved ahead too quickly, too ambitiously, on too many arms control fronts; while others were confused by the Carter build-up of strategic forces in parallel with the SALT II negotiations, and by the President's reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. President Reagan upset conservatives with his proposals to share SDI technology with the Russians and to make deep cuts in nuclear forces; while his deliberate abrogation of the SALT II limits and the attempt to reinterpret the ABM Treaty upset those Europeans who wanted to pursue detente and promote arms control. As long as NATO exists the allies will be troubled by the abandonment-entrapment cycle to some degree; but understanding the dilemma may be the first step to better alliance management.

A few clear lessons emerge for the United States. First, that in the interests of alliance cohesion, arms control diplomacy should not carry the main burden of the Soviet-American relationship, but be part of a broad web of political, economic and military interactions. Putting all the Soviet-American eggs in the arms control basket gives too much leverage to those allies that are most vulnerable to fears of abandonment, whose need for reassurance in turn puts too great a strain on East-West relations and leads to disappointed expectations. On the other hand, when the United States is engaged with the Soviet Union on a wide range of issues, arms control negotiations are less publicly visible and can be conducted at a less dramatic, more businesslike pace.

Secondly, once both superpowers are engaged in a set of bilateral negotiations, an incremental bargaining style will reap greater arms control benefits and disturb the allies less than a series of grand gestures that have later to be retracted or drastically modified. To date, arms control agreements have rarely done more than codify some aspect of the status quo. More ambitious reductions are often better achieved through intra-alliance negotiations—as with the recent decision to withdraw short-range battlefield nuclear weapons—than by negotiations with the Soviet Union. Attempts to negotiate radical arms reductions with an adversary without first resolving underlying political differences seem not only doomed to fail, but likely to unsettle the allies in the process. The more dependent allies who fear abandonment will resent the initial effort, while the less dependent, who fear entrapment, will resent the failure to achieve it.

It is harder to make policy prescriptions for the European allies, since they are usually confined to reaction rather than their own initiatives. But certain pitfalls should be avoided. For those that fear abandonment by the United States, the principal lesson should be that the appeal for reassurance and for the reaffirmation of the American security guarantee should not be made lightly, as it is likely to be exploited by the hardline, confrontational wing of the Washington defence establishment, and will often generate inappropriate military solutions to what are essentially political problems.

Those Europeans vulnerable to fears of entrapment, on the other hand, must be aware that taking independent steps or making common cause with members of the Warsaw Pact on sensitive security issues can sometimes unsettle their alliance partners and may encourage isolationist tendencies in the United States. Maintaining a broad range of contacts with Eastern Europe is essential for the preservation of detente, but the case for more effective arms control might best be made within NATO. Specifically, Europeans fearing entrapment should be arguing for a more realistic assessment of the economic, political and military challenge posed by the Soviet Union, for a manifestly retaliatory nuclear deterrent, and for robust but non-provocative conventional forces.