

THEATER NUCLEAR FORCE MODERNIZATION
AS AN ISSUE IN WEST GERMAN POLITICS,
1977-1980

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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

Monterey, California



THESIS

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by

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December 1980

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T199322

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Date Entered)

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) Theater Nuclear Force Modernization as an Issue in West German Politics, 1977- 1980		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Master's Thesis; December 1980
7. AUTHOR(s) Thomas Carl Glad		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California 93940		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California 93940		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		12. REPORT DATE December 1980
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 148
		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) Unclassified
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) nuclear weapons, Federal Republic of Germany, Helmut Schmidt, Manfred Wörner, enhanced radiation weapons, long-range theater nuclear forces		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) This thesis reviews the dominant opinions within the main poli- tical groupings of West Germany regarding the two major theater nuclear modernization issues of the recent past--enhanced radia- tion weapons (ERW) and long range theater nuclear forces (LRTNF). The broad strategic context of both the ERW and LRTNF questions sets the scene for exploration of the major hypothesis: whether differences in the capabilities of proposed new theater nuclear		

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Theater Nuclear Force Modernization
as an Issue in West German Politics, 1977-1980

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 1980

ABSTRACT

This thesis reviews the dominant opinions within the main political groupings of West Germany regarding the two major theater nuclear modernization issues of the recent past--enhanced radiation weapons (ERW) and long range theater nuclear forces (LRTNF). The broad strategic context of both the ERW and LRTNF questions sets the scene for exploration of the major hypothesis: whether differences in the capabilities of proposed new theater nuclear systems are a principal variable in explaining the positions adopted by each of the three major political party groupings in West Germany--the CDU/CSU, the SPD-FDP government, and the left wing of the SPD. The thesis concludes that weapons characteristics did influence the government. Characteristics of the political balance in the West German political system, however, as well as perceptions of Soviet threat and reliability of American guarantees to Europe, were also significant.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis reviews the dominant opinions within the main political groupings of West Germany regarding the two major theater nuclear modernization issues of the recent past--enhanced radiation weapons (ERW) and long range theater nuclear forces (LRTNF). The broad strategic context of both the ERW and LRTNF questions sets the scene for exploration of the major hypothesis: whether differences in the capabilities of proposed new theater nuclear systems are a principal variable in explaining the positions adopted by each of the three major political party groupings in West Germany--the CDU/CSU, the SPD-FDP government, and the left wing of the SPD. The thesis concludes that weapons characteristics did influence the government. Characteristics of the political balance in the West German political system, however, as well as perceptions of Soviet threat and reliability of American guarantees to Europe, were also significant.

Indeed, the last year has witnessed dire predictions on the future of West German-American relations. The ability of the Atlantic Alliance to maintain itself has been questioned both in this country and abroad. The West German press has devoted considerable space to the issue. In February 1980, Die Welt reported that "Every time Soviet armies fall on a weaker neighbor America's Presidents react with indignation...

Every time, too, the Americans fail to attend to prior indications..." Die Welt added that "calls to goodness" from American leaders will not defend German borders anymore effectively than they had those of Afghanistan.

On this side of the Atlantic there is also dissatisfaction. In April 1980, Senator Jacob Javits stated that America had given the Europeans much; it is now time for them to repay their benefactor. The NATO allies should, he said, take a much more active part in sanctions against Iran.

Many Europeans, especially some West Germans, however, are no longer sure the American connection is valuable. The collapse of CENTO and SEATO, American inability to achieve a fair bargain in SALT, the apparent slipping of initiative to the Soviet Union during the period of detente, inconsistent pursuit of such policies as the human rights campaign, and the failure of the United States to recognize or respond to the Soviet military buildup, all chipped away at the credibility of American power.

The debate concerning the relationship between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany has been especially vociferous in the latter country. This is not just because of the intrinsic importance of the security issue, but also because critical political stakes are involved for West German politicians. The elections this past October gave voters a choice between continuing the Social Democratic-Free Democratic government run by Helmut Schmidt or electing a

Christian Democratic Union/Christian Socialist Union government under Franz Josef Strauss. The political stakes were more complex than simply an electoral campaign between two party coalitions. Helmut Schmidt had to take into account a powerful left wing in his own SPD. Failure to do so could have led not just to election defeats, but even splits in the party.

All of these issues are made more immediate by the presence of twenty Soviet divisions on the other side of the intra-German border. Samuel T. Cohen and W. C. Lyons, two experts on nuclear weapons, have noted that "The only land area where NATO and Soviet forces face each other directly is the European theater. This theater, therefore, has become the major concern of Western strategists and the focal point for tactical nuclear weapons development and deployment."¹ In other words, nothing has so concentrated the attention of Western strategists as the virtual presence of the hangman.

The Soviet Union has also influenced West German economic policies and politics. Ostpolitik and economic investment in the East have been practiced by the Federal Republic for the past decade. Important economic and political ties have developed between West Germany and the nations of Eastern Europe in that period of time. The benefits of these ties have become obvious to virtually every West German citizen. As a result elements of the SPD have come to believe that the continuation of detente is essential to the continuation of SPD electoral success.

Another factor in the debate over West German-American relations is the problem of American trustworthiness. This issue is closely related to security considerations. Christoph Bertram, Director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, wrote recently that doubts about American reliability are inevitable:

...since in the absence of a war that nobody wants, there is no guarantee that the United States will indeed use its nuclear weapons in the pursuit of European security objectives. Alliance deterrence, therefore, rests essentially on political trust, and it is no more than natural that nuclear hardware will become an issue when political trust is wavering.²

Former Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Alexander Haig, adds that without a strong,

forward deployed American presence in Western Europe, the Allies there will be left with a complete sense of isolation. This happens to be the greater danger today and it's not exclusively the product of the changing strategic balance. It has to do with the full range of American credibility and policies.³

Friction has been a perennial problem in the Atlantic Alliance. During the Presidency of Jimmy Carter, however, difficulties between the Federal Republic and the United States were especially obvious. Gebhard Schweigler, a member of the Foundation for Science and Politics near Munich has written that;

Two themes...have determined American foreign policy, and also the nature of international politics since the accession to office of President Carter, detente and human rights. Indeed, although the Administration sought

to establish new directions on several international fronts, the sharpest contrast to the politics of the Nixon-Ford Administration was in the area of detente policies. The tone of the human rights issue, which was directed at the Soviet Union, served to heighten international differences. This not only endangered East-West rapprochement, but also the relations between the allies.⁴

This disruption of detente has caused some West Germans to be very nervous about the fragility of detente. Several members of the Social Democratic Party, for example, have taken their concern for detente to an extreme, refusing to have anything to do with East European dissidents or even Eurocommunists for fear that such contracts would impair their relations with the Soviet Union. Pierre Hassner wrote recently in Daedalus that this form of detente,

...shows its fragility and dangers: it is highly vulnerable both to general tension and to specific blackmail. It leads the SPD leaders to be highly reticent toward any changes that risk destabilizing the Soviet regime...not only is much of the West German attitude motivated by the fear of losing or upsetting Brezhnev and having to face his more hawkish successors, but it also involved a negative retrospective judgement on the Prague Spring, reticence toward East German dissidents... because they may create trouble for the Soviet Union and hence have a destabilizing effect.⁵

Josef Joffe, another German political commentator, has explained how this detente dependency derives from internal West German politics:

Schmidt is well aware that a new chill in East-West affairs would tip the electoral scales in favor of the CDU/CSU...Having staked its fate on detente, the SPD is condemned to demonstrate its viability over and over again. There is no denying that West Germany has become a good deal more sensitive to Soviet pressures in the past decade...⁶

This does not mean, according to Joffe, that the Federal Republic is entirely to blame. He returns to the problem of political trust and blames the United States--specifically the Carter Administration--for failure of leadership.

Theater nuclear weapons modernization issues constitute perhaps the most important manifestation of the debate over security and American trustworthiness. These issues have been--and continue to be--objects of great concern among many Germans. This debate has important implications for the political and strategic posture of the Federal Republic, NATO and the United States.

Prior to 1978 the discussion focused on the merits of enhanced radiation weapons (ERW). ERW--or "neutron bombs"--were strongly supported by those who considered them effective war-fighting weapons. These writers noted that such weapons, with limited blast and thus limited collateral damage, would be easier to use in battle. Usable defensive weapons, it was argued, would make for the best possible deterrent. Other commentators thought that enhanced radiation weapons blurred the 'firebreak' between nuclear and conventional weapons and therefore made the possibility of nuclear war too great. Some

also feared that such weapons would ensure the FRG would become the battleground in a more likely nuclear conflict. The observers were also concerned that such a weapon would 'de-couple' Europe from US strategic nuclear forces.

In December 1979, NATO decided that the United States would deploy Pershing 2 MRBMs (with improved guidance and extended range) and ground launched cruise missiles in Europe beginning in 1983. These two systems would both have the capacity to strike the Soviet Union directly. It was decided to station 572 of these missiles in West Germany, Britain, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands. At the same time the NATO allies promulgated arms control proposals with an offer to the Soviet Union to negotiate before deployment began. The decision also involved withdrawal of some 1,000 nuclear warheads from Europe once deployment of GLCM and Pershing 2 began.

Proponents of these long-range theater nuclear forces (LRTNF) saw them as an aid to Western control of the escalatory process and as a link to the strategic weapons of the United States. Some in West Germany opposed the NATO decision on the grounds that they were the wrong kind of weapons. Among these commentators were some who thought sea launched cruise missiles would be preferable. Probably the majority of West German defense observers believed it was best to emphasize the arms control aspect of the negotiation. In this way, they thought detente would not be damaged.

The issue of theater nuclear force improvement is thus central to the political and military relationship between the United States and the Federal Republic. These political and military dimensions are closely related. Uwe Nerlich points out that if NATO does not make a decision on theater nuclear forces "...which meets strategic requirements, this may maintain broad domestic support for the alliance, but it would at the same time display NATO's inability to meet major challenges..."⁷ In other words, the deployment of these weapons is determined by political realities as much by military necessity.

The division of Germany, the massive Soviet military presence, political factors in West Germany, and doubts about the reliability of the United States as an ally, have all served to confuse German-American relations. None the less, it is still clear to most leaders in both countries that security interests coincide. Both governments have frequently repeated declarations of loyalty to each other.

Secretary of Defense Brown said in January 1979 that "Western Europe is of vital interest to the United States."⁸ In the 1981 Department of Defense Annual Report, Brown noted that

there can be no doubt that Western Europe is of vital interest to the United States. With an aggregate population of 260 million and GNP of \$2 trillion, it is, outside of North America, the greatest concentration of economic power in the world. Its nations, like the United States, are

democracies;...We have been involved in European affairs since the foundation of the Republic; our two greatest wars involved Europe. We are prepared, if necessary, to fight in defense of our European allies again.⁹

Similar declarations of partnership with the United States from Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and Defense Minister Hans Apel have emphasized that West Germany would not be secure without its alliance with the United States. Chancellor Schmidt in April 1978, just after Carter deferred production of ERW, said in a speech before the Bundestag that "...the framework of the German-American consensus is unshakable...Good German-American relations were and are one of the most important basis of our existence as a free community."¹⁰

Since the United States came of age as an international power at the beginning of this century, Europe has been important to American security. The reason for this is simple: control of that continent by any hegemonic power would constitute a threat not only to the most lucrative of American markets but also would threaten military and economic lines of communication. Although Europe would not necessarily become the springboard for direct attack against the United States, Europe could provide a base from which a stranglehold might be applied. As Malcolm Toon, former U.S. Ambassador to the USSR, put it, the loss of Europe would alter the balance of power to the point where the United States could not recover.¹¹ David Watt has made the point even more comprehensively:

For the United States, Western Europe has represented not only a vital extension of the American economic system but also a bulwark against geopolitical encroachments on that system by the Soviet Union. For Western Europe, the United States has been not only the sole credible source of military security, but--notwithstanding Europe's increasing prosperity--the ultimate provider of her economic security as well.¹²

It is within this context that this study will examine the two important decisions taken in the NATO alliance on theater nuclear forces: the April 1978 decision on Enhanced Radiation Weapons and the December 1979 decision to deploy modernized Long Range Theater Nuclear Forces. What is under scrutiny here is the political decision-making process in the Federal Republic of Germany: what forces at work in West German party politics influenced the position of the Schmidt government? The debate both within and between political parties will be examined in detail. Although the weapons systems that provoked these political debates have considerably different military functions, the political factors involved in deployment decisions were consistent. Issues and essential arguments did not change substantially over the course of the three year long debate.

Before a complete analysis of the two debates can occur, however, it is necessary to outline two important factors: West German perceptions of the reliability of the United States and the nature of the Soviet military threat in Europe.

II. THE BACKGROUND: AMERICAN RELIABILITY AND THE SOVIET THEATER NUCLEAR THREAT

The late 1970s--the years of the most recent debate on theater nuclear weapons--were not years of great consistency in American foreign policy. A new world balance of forces became visible to members of the Atlantic alliance. This new balance brought into clear relief the question of whether the United States would defend Europe at the risk of its own security. This section will briefly outline the effect of a changing correlation of forces on German perceptions. It was not simply a new correlation of forces, however, that degraded American reliability. The Carter Administration pursued policies that often appeared amateurish to Europeans. One example was the human rights campaign.

On June 6, 1977--the same day the 'neutron bomb' story was printed in the Washington Post--Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, testified before Congress on the upcoming Belgrade Conference. Vance said,

We seek full implementation of all the commitments contained in the Helsinki Final Act. The freer flow of people and ideas is as important to long-term security and cooperation as, for example, advance notice of major military maneuvers; the humanitarian pledges at Helsinki are as important as, say, the promises of greater commercial cooperation.¹³

On June 9, in a speech at the Naval Academy commencement, Vice President Mondale spoke in a similar vein. He said,

We cannot teach our children to believe in human rights and democracy, we cannot honor those values in our churches and synagogues and our schools, and then betray those same ideals abroad without betraying everything we stand for as a people.¹⁴

The Soviet Union reacted negatively to such pronouncements. On June 7, 1977 TASS said that the Carter Administration had instigated a "malicious publicity campaign over alleged human rights violations in the USSR." TASS went on to state that:

The Soviet Union will not tolerate interferences in its internal affairs by anyone and under any pretext. Those officials in the USA who are encouraging anti-Sovietism would do well to keep in mind that such hullabaloo, while it will not make socialism budge an inch, will have an adverse effect on the Soviet-American relations and on detente as a whole.¹⁵

The week before the TASS story, the Soviet government had announced it was preparing to try Anatoly Shcharansky, a Jewish computer scientist who had been accused of working for the CIA.

Carter's stance on human rights lost credibility when he refused to see Shcharansky's wife, Natalya. On June 14, 1977 she was visiting Washington to attend a meeting of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. She asked to see President Carter to talk about her husband's trial. In a news conference on that day, Carter refused to meet with her, saying "I don't have any plans to meet Mrs. Shcharansky." He did go on to say, however, that he had "inquired deeply within the State Department and within the CIA as to whether or not

Mr. Shcharansky has ever had any known relationship in a subversive way or otherwise with the CIA. The answer is no."¹⁶

The human rights campaign was dealt another blow at the Belgrade Conference. When the Belgrade meeting ended in March 1978, the final document made no reference to human rights. In fact, the chief of the Soviet delegation, Yuri Vorontsov, in his parting speech said that although the US had pushed the human rights issue, Soviet diplomatic skill had prevented US meddling in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. Vorontsov accused American negotiators of preventing the meeting from dealing with substantive European security issues. He also said, "Everything indicated that their objective was to lead the meeting away from the basic questions connected with furthering the process of detente and strengthening European security."¹⁷

The human rights stand of the Carter Administration caused great alarm among those West German politicians who wanted to maintain contacts and detente with the East. Pierre Hassner wrote recently that,

...we cannot avoid being reminded of the essential ambiguity of the SPD's Ostpolitik expressed in famous formulas like Egon Bahr's 'change through rapprochement' or Willy Brandt's 'in order to change the status quo one has to accept it.' The essential assumption is that in order to bring about improvements in the relations of Communist regimes with other societies, and with their own, one has to reassure them, and that, in order to reassure them one has to help them stabilize their rule.¹⁸

Clearly, the Carter human rights policy was not reassuring to the Soviet Union. It was therefore also not reassuring to many in West Germany. What is more, in the eyes of a good many Europeans the human rights issue was mainly a device for creating consensus within the United States. Uwe Nerlich, Director of Research for the Foundation of Science and Politics in Munich, pointed out that "With the cynicism of Vietnam and Watergate still almost fresh in European minds, current misgivings now concern the way the human rights campaign is being used to reinvigorate a sense of American destiny."¹⁹

The human rights issue was just one example--in the opinion of some West Germans--of a position taken by the United States that was both dangerous and dangerously inconsistent. Stanley Hoffman, Chairman of the Center for European Studies at Harvard, cogently summarized American diplomatic difficulties in this period as follows:

The Administration...threatened to link trade, or even SALT, to Soviet behavior in Africa (or trade to Soviet performance on human rights) while reassuring the Soviets about the importance of arms control as a goal in itself. It made of one dissident's trial a presidential test case and signed a communique in Belgrade that did not refer to human rights despite the important provisions of the 1975 Helsinki agreements... It hardened its line on Euro-communism (thus continuing in the case of Italy to make the United States a force in domestic affairs)... the Administration was very quiet about pro-Soviet coups in South Yemen and Afghanistan... it reverted to a far more relaxed attitude toward Soviet and Cuban activities in Africa... having introduced the Soviets into the

diplomacy of the Arab-Israeli conflict in September 1977...we carefully kept the Russians out of the new negotiations that followed Sadat's initiative and led to Camp David.²⁰

For many West Germans this catalogue of confusion and misdirection compounded a more enduring problem, the fact that the American commitment to the defense of Europe might ultimately involve the destruction of the United States. Manfred Wörner, the CDU defense expert and Chairman of the Bundestag Defense Committee, has written on this issue:

The United States is obviously interested, in the event of a breakdown of the deterrent in Europe, in containing the military conflict to the Continent as long as possible-- in keeping it from escalating and prevailing on the battlefield without endangering American territory. By contrast, it is in the European interest that the risk for the aggressor be heightened by the prospect of relatively quick escalation of the battle and its consequent endowment with new qualitative and geographical dimensions.²¹

This analysis is not unique to Wörner; it is commonly held on both sides of the Atlantic.

Thus, the deployment and build-up of Soviet ICBMs after 1957 has been critical for the postwar relations between the United States and its allies. Uwe Nerlich noted:

As Adenauer, for one, recognized instantly, it would reduce the strategic importance of NATO for the United States...It put the American homeland at risk in the protection of Western Europe, thereby amplifying existing uncertainties in Western European dependence on American strategic forces... In the past, the original objective of American strategic power had been the

protection of allies, with strategic forces offsetting superior Soviet general-purpose forces in a 'balance of imbalances.'²²

This new and changing correlation of forces altered America's relationship with Europe; fear that the United States would decouple her strategic forces from those used to help defend the continent has led to a series of crises. The withdrawal of France from NATO, for example, was at least partly caused by the belief that the American strategic guarantee was not valid. In spite of these fears among allies about American reliability, the US continued to de-emphasize both strategic and theater nuclear weapons. To be sure, much of this was the result of the cost of the Vietnam War. But there was more to it than just that. Fred C. Iklé, Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency from 1973 to 1977, wrote that the Kennedy Administration embarked on a policy that led to "the substantial downward trend in total stockpile yield and a leveling off in missile numbers in the US nuclear arsenal... What has taken place is a major transformation in the relationship of military strength between the United States and the Soviet Union..."²³

On the theater level, there has even been a general resistance in the US defense community to full exploitation of the capabilities of nuclear weapons. The problems surrounding the deployment of the Davy Crockett provide a case in point. According to Wolfgang Heisenberg, these weapons

...would require quite considerable changes in tactical concepts, equipment and force deployment which seemed hardly compatible with an effective conventional defense, and so would weaken the option for non-nuclear warfare. Integration of nuclear battlefield weapons into the Western forces was therefore regarded by the then Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara as leading to a dangerous loss of flexibility and was never implemented. The Davy Crockett was not deployed on a sufficiently large scale and was finally withdrawn in 1967.²⁴

Major John Rose, in a soon-to-be-published study, demonstrates that US Army nuclear doctrine was left to stagnate during the 1960s and that it has yet to be completely renovated:

In the 1960s when national policy changed to conventional emphasis, so did the Army. There was a significant abrupt de-emphasis in nuclear weapons employment training... At present, in the 1970s, the situation is ambivalent...the major deficiency in US Army warfighting doctrine is the absence of guidance for nuclear battlefield operations.²⁵

It is not just in nuclear doctrine that American forces have lagged. Acquisition of weapons systems by United States forces has also fallen behind. Even Secretary of Defense Harold Brown admits in the 1981 Annual Report that, although there is presently essential equivalence,

Longer term stability is not equally assured. The most immediate source of future instability is the growing Soviet threat to our fixed, hard ICBMs...within a year or two, we can expect them to obtain the necessary combination of ICBM numbers, reliability, accuracy, and warhead yield to put most of our MINUTEMAN and TITAN silos at risk from an attack with a relatively small proportion of their ICBM force.²⁶

This rather gloomy situation has not been improved by the amount the United States has spent on defense. Voltaire is reputed to have remarked once that "God is always on the side of big battalions." It is a maxim the Soviets have taken to heart; they have consistently tried to build bigger and better forces in every military field. In August 1980 The Economist reported that the Soviet Union passed the United States in defense spending in 1971

...and the margin has been widening ever since as Russian outlays have continued to grow at 3-5% a year in constant prices, while those of the United States have declined. By the end of the 1970s, the dollar cost of Russian military spending was about 50%²⁷ higher than that of the United States...

With all this money, the Soviets have bought themselves a great deal of new hardware over the last ten years. They have four new models of ICBMs, a new generation of tanks, several new models of tactical aircraft, more helicopters than any other nation, virtually a new navy. More specifically still, in 1979 alone, the Soviet Union produced: 250 intercontinental ballistic missiles, 40,000 anti-aircraft missiles, 1,800 combat aircraft, 3,000 tanks, 4,000 armored personnel carriers, 5 major ships and 9 submarines.

A mathematical comparison of warheads, megatonnage, or numbers of troops does, of course, not tell the whole story. A large proportion of US strategic delivery systems are carried by old bombers or submarine-launched ballistic missiles. The Economist noted that,

The bombers have a much smaller chance of getting through than missiles do and the submarine missiles are not only much less accurate than the land-based ones--not accurate enough to destroy the other side's missile silos--but also less readily usable (only about half the American missile submarine fleet is at sea and ready for action at any given time.) Thus, a tally of 'reliable and accurate' warheads--those on land-based ballistic missiles and cruise missiles gives a sobering second view of the warhead balance.²⁸

Lothar Ruehl, a West German journalist and defense expert, observed in 1978 that this increasing disparity in the worldwide military balance was profoundly altering the European balance as well. He wrote,

In the past, the function of Soviet medium and intermediate range delivery systems was to hold West Europe hostage, so as to offset American strategic superiority. Now that strategic nuclear parity is being achieved, this now modernized arsenal is no longer required to balance an American advantage in the over-all relationship; it offers instead a separate, and new, Euro-strategic option.²⁹

This trend, in which American nuclear weapons and tactical doctrine have failed to meet the requirements for effective battlefield use and in which a new Euro-strategic balance has developed, has led to considerable uncertainty on the part of the West German government.

In his 1977 speech before the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Helmut Schmidt called attention to the effects of the altered strategic balance. Having deduced that the strategic, intercontinental nuclear forces of the super-powers had neutralized each other, he added, that

...strategic arms limitations confined to the United States and the Soviet Union will inevitably impair the security of the West European members of the Alliance vis-à-vis Soviet military superiority in Europe if we do not succeed in removing the disparities in military power in Europe in parallel to the SALT negotiations.³⁰

Schmidt did not mean that Western Europe should engage in a rapid conventional and theater nuclear force build-up. Instead he advocated force reduction talks.

It seems clear, then, that the years prior to the December 1979 decision on LRTNF witnessed a growing belief among some West German decision makers that the United States and NATO could no longer deny the Soviet Union some political benefits derived from its military power. Yet, they often seemed unwilling to try to reverse detrimental military trends. It is to an outline of those trends that the second half of this chapter turns.

A good deal has been written on the conduct of a possible war in Europe. Imagined scenarios range from long conventional wars to a theater nuclear struggle that quickly escalates to intercontinental nuclear war involving the homelands of the superpowers.³¹ One of the major difficulties in writing about Soviet war-time intentions, however, is the intense secrecy of the Soviet political and military machines. At least on certain key issues it is virtually impossible to make statements that go beyond conjecture. Of course, there is an element of uncertainty in any calculations of a nation's intentions.

The Soviet Union, however, has managed to make pronouncements about its intentions more insecure than usual.

The objective here, therefore, is to outline some thinking on theater nuclear war that is available from the Soviet Union. This attempt cannot be definitive. Instead, only a flavor of Soviet thinking on the subject will be presented.

This section will also present four Western estimates of the Soviet theater nuclear strength. These estimates were all written at about the same time and reflect differing perceptions of the Soviet theater threat.

The build-up of Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces in Europe over the past several years has been recognized by some in the West. Jacquelyn K. Davis and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. wrote in 1978 that,

The Soviet Union has been engaged in a military build-up which has no parallel for a major power in peacetime since that of Nazi Germany in the 1930s. With an economy less than half the size of that of the United States, the Soviet Union has consistently devoted a larger percentage of its GNP to defense spending than has the United States.³²

In an interview in February 1978, NATO Secretary General Joseph Luns said that if the Soviets "take a look at the power ratio, they need not be afraid, for NATO is incapable of initiating an offensive." He went on to say, "compared with the situation 15 to 20 years ago all countries of the alliance--Germany as well as the United States and France, and Great Britain--are spending far less in relation to their gross national product."³³

The Soviet military build-up seems intended to serve the political ends of the Soviet government. Many Soviet commentators believe that the only legitimate purpose of military forces is their political utility. In Marxism Leninism on War and Army, published in the Soviet Union, it is noted that,

War is the continuation of politics by violent means. It is an implementation of politics by armed struggle, and its main feature. At the same time not all armed struggle should be considered war. Without a political aim even the fiercest struggle will not be war but simply a fight. The political interests of the classes at war or their states determine the war aims, while armed struggle is the means of achieving these aims.³⁴

Some Soviet commentators do not exclude any type of warfare as a political tool: nuclear weapons are as legitimate as any other: "...this does not mean that nuclear war... has ceased to be an instrument of politics, as is claimed by the overwhelming majority of representatives of pacifist, anti-war movements in the bourgeois world."³⁵

The build-up that has brought global reach to the Soviet military has been well orchestrated. In a 1977 speech General Alexander Haig said that a

...key characteristic of the expansion of Soviet military power is its balanced distribution across all major categories of capability--nuclear and conventional... During the past decade, the Soviets have methodically isolated and addressed force weaknesses and vulnerabilities which enabled the West to counterbalance traditional Soviet strengths without seeking to match them.³⁶

The new Soviet military machine has been designed for offensive action. Soviet writers have consistently emphasized the value of offensive action. Marshal V.D. Sokolovskiy wrote,

Offensive operations in a future war will be the basic means for solving the problems of armed conflict in land theaters of military operations...The main role in solving the combat problems of an offensive operation will be played by operation-tactical rocket troops and frontal aviation using nuclear ammunition and also by tank, motorized infantry and airborne troops.³⁷

The idea that the Soviets think only in terms of nuclear conflict is open to serious question. There can be no doubt, however, that they do consider nuclear warfare a distinct possibility and that they prepare for it. In the Soviet view of offensive nuclear war, nuclear weapons seem to be considered as a sort of super-artillery. This super-artillery is qualitatively different, of course, because it can provide support that is both accurate and highly destructive. V.E. Savkin wrote in this regard that,

As a result of the wide use of nuclear weapons both sides will suffer considerable losses. Troops which have retained combat effectiveness will strive to immediately take advantage of the results of nuclear strikes. Under these conditions anticipation of attacks by tank and motorized rifle troops often will decide the outcome of combat...the side which is the first to begin to exploit these results will be able to impose its will on the enemy.³⁸

Thus, on the European battlefield, nuclear weapons would not be used by the Soviets only to destroy installations,

transportation or command and control. Such weapons have been seen by some Soviet military commentators as only one strike in a phased attack. As such they would be followed by other strikes, probably mounted by ground troops, whose job it would be either to maintain the initiative or to hold the territory.

Nor do Soviet commentators see nuclear weapons in exactly the same terms that they view artillery. The idea that nuclear weapons have brought about a revolution in the military art is commonplace in Soviet writings:

Arming troops with nuclear missile weapons and extensive adoption of radio electronic devices of various functions caused a revolution in military affairs. It was necessary to revise the organizational structure of troops and control entities and to elaborate an entire system of measures to ensure protection of personnel, control facilities and equipment from mass destruction weapons.³⁹

It seems, however, that this revolution has been interpreted in the light of traditional Russian military thought. Much of that thought has been impressed with the value of artillery to offensive operations. For them, therefore, it makes a good deal of sense that nuclear weapons provide more effective and powerful ground support.

Savkin's writings clearly indicate two things about the use of nuclear weapons in the European theater: first, surprise is considered very valuable; second, when nuclear weapons are used, employment should be massive. Major General Korzun, a Candidate in Military Science, expressed the same view:

While paying great attention to the surprise factor, Soviet military art...never made a fetish of it. It considers that to achieve victory in military operations, besides surprise it is necessary to observe other most important principles of military art, to take into account the real correlation of forces of the sides and...create the necessary superiority in manpower and equipment...⁴⁰

These doctrinal imperatives led the Soviet Union to develop a more accurate generation of long-range theater weapons. In 1975, deployment of Backfire bombers began. These were to supplement and eventually replace the Badger and Blinder aircraft. According to the 1979 Defense White Paper of the Federal Republic, by the spring of 1979 approximately 80 Backfires had been deployed with a deployment rate of approximately 30 per year.⁴¹ In 1976 deployment of the SS-20 missile commenced. This new weapon system was deployed as a supplement to other MRBM/IRBM, the SS-4 and SS-5--of which there were approximately 500. The SS-20 is a mobile system and delivers three warheads with great accuracy. Each mobile launcher is equipped with three or four reloadable missiles. Reports on the number of SS-20s deployed by 1979 vary widely, but the Federal Republic officially set the figure at 100 in the spring of 1979 with an annual deployment rate of 50 launchers.⁴²

It is important to note that these new Soviet weapons--especially the SS-20 are more valuable as battlefield weapons than the older theater nuclear forces. Better accuracy and lower vulnerability mean that follow-on airmobile or airborne

landings would be easier. They also would be less likely to cause collateral damage that might diminish the speed of a breakthrough.

The final section of this chapter will examine several different assessments of the theater nuclear balance in Europe. Only weapon systems with a range greater than one thousand kilometers have been included so that an accurate comparison can be made between these different assessments. Each of these calculations varies in its assumptions and therefore also in its results. Two of these assessments were produced by members of the SPD and CDU. Although their estimates are not officially endorsed by their parties, they do seem to reflect the approach of the respective political factions. These two studies are that of Paul Neumann, Chairman of the Arbeitsgruppe 1, a committee serving the SPD parliamentary group; the second was compiled by Wolfgang Pordzik of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Bonn, an organization associated with the CDU. The other two calculations are those of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and that published by Secretary of Defense Brown in the 1981 Annual Report.⁴³

The IISS estimate of the theater nuclear balance makes several assumptions that are questionable in both logic and consistency. Some of these questionable assumptions are also applicable to all four estimates. The most important of these common false assumptions seems to be that payload and megatonnage are not significant. The IISS--the only one to

explicitly state its assumptions--declared that "It has not been thought useful to assess total yields, throw weight, or bomber payloads...Total deliverable megatonnage is not considered to be very significant."⁴⁴ This is not true: yield has considerable significance for the type of target that can be destroyed. It is, however, easier to count launchers than it is to assess the significance of megatonnage. All of the analysts reviewed here have adopted the launcher measure. It is important to recognize that this only measures one dimension of the problem.

All of these estimates of the theater nuclear balance except Secretary Brown's, assume that some central US systems --SLBMS--will be dedicated to the European theater. This is not an unnatural assumption since it is part of American declaratory policy that some SLBMs have been allotted to SACEUR.

The IISS writes, however, that the number of Poseidon warheads allocated to SACEUR is arbitrary and could be raised without difficulty. In a non-sequitur the IISS therefore decided that it would not be necessary to count SS-20 reloads. Of the four estimates only the SPD's includes reload capability. In fact, of course, a crisis might just as easily cause American decision makers to hold back SLBM rather than allocate more to Europe.

Another questionable assumption can be found in these balances. That is that no Soviet naval air forces or cruise missiles will be used against land targets. The IISS study,

however, includes half of the aircraft on two US carriers as being capable of attacking Warsaw Pact territory.

The IISS also includes half of the total US FB 111 A in the theater balance even though they are stationed in the United States. These aircraft, however, are under the control of SAC. Once again, it is unlikely that SAC would be anxious to release them for theater missions in the event of hostilities.

The IISS estimates that one quarter of nuclear-capable ground attack aircraft in the Warsaw Pact will be allocated to the nuclear role. The IISS estimate allocates one third of NATO ground attack aircraft to this role. No explanation is given for this difference of proportion that increases the nuclear capability of the NATO side.

One difference between these estimates must be noted: The ISS subtracts a variable proportion of the total available warheads from that total to arrive at the "current balance of usable warheads." Theirs is the only assessment to do so.

These assumptions--especially those made by the IISS--seem to skew the theater nuclear balance toward higher results on the NATO side than should actually be the case. On the other hand, since the United States does not in any way account for French systems, some nuclear-capable aircraft or SLBM, the Annual Report 1981 figures are also open to dispute. The two West German estimates lie between these two extremes.

TABLE I: LAND BASED SYSTEMS

WARSAW PACT SYSTEMS

Category	Range	Inventory	Number Warheads/ System	Warheads Available
SS 5				
IISS	4,200 km	90	1	60
SPD	4,100	90	1	90
CDU	4,200	90	1	90
US ^a				
SS 4				
IISS	2,200km	500	1	337
SPD	1,900	300	1	300 (with 300 reloads)
CDU	2,280	500	1	500
US	1,900-4,100	450	1	450
SS 20				
IISS	6,300km	120	3	243
SPD	4,400	70	3	210 (with 420 reloads)
CDU	4,500	150	3	450
US	4,400	100	3	300

NATO SYSTEMS

SSBS S-2 ^b				
IISS	3,470km	18	1	14
SPD	NA	18	1	18
CDU	3,400	18	1	18
USC				

TABLE I: LAND BASED SYSTEMS (contd)

Category	Range	Inventory	Number Warheads/ System	Warheads Available
Pershing 2*				
IISSC				
SPD	1,000km	108	1	108
CDU	1,300	108	1	108
US	1,000	108	1	108
GLCM*				
IISSC				
SPD	2,000km	464	1	464
CDU	2,500	464	1	464
US	2,000	464	1	464

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LAND BASED SYSTEM SUBTOTALS

	WARSAW PACT	NATO
IISS	640	14
SPD	600 (1,320)	18 (590)
CDU	1,040	18 (590)
US	990	0 (572)

(Figures in parantheses indicate reloads and post-GLCM, Pershing 2 deployment totals.)

- * Pershing 2 and GLCM are not expected to be deployed before 1984-1985
- a included in following category
- b French system not integrated in targeting plans
- c not included

TABLE 2: MEDIUM RANGE BOMBERS

<u>WARSAW PACT SYSTEMS</u>		Inventory	Number Warheads/ System	Warheads Available
Category	Range			
TU 16 Badger				
IISS	3,000km	318	4	376
SPD	NA	280	2	560
CDU ^a				
US ^a				
TU 22 Blinder				
IISS	3,200km	135	3	117
SPD	NA	100	1	100
CDU	3,000km	500	NA	500
US	2,800-3,100	350	2	600
SU 19 Fencer				
IISS	1,100km	230	2	68
SPD ^C				
CDU	1,000km	230	NA	230
USC				
TU 22 Backfire				
IISS	5,600km	50	5	74
SPD	4,200km	60	2-4	120
CDU	3,500	80	NA	80
US	4,200	40	4	160
IL 28 Beagle				
IISS	2,600km	5	1	5
SPD ^C				
CDU ^C				
USC				

TABLE 2: MEDIUM RANGE BOMBERS (contd.)

<u>NATO SYSTEMS</u>		Range	Inventory	Number Warheads/ System	Warheads Available
Category					
Vulcan B 2					
IISS	3,700km	48	4	152	
SPD	NA	48	1	48	
CDU	1,800	48	NA	48	
US	2,000	56	NA	56	
Mirage IV ^b					
IISS	3,700km	33	3	78	
SPD	NA	37	NA	37	
CDU	1,700	33	NA	33	
USC					
F 4					
IISS	2,600km	499	2	262	
SPD	NA	24	1	24	
CDUC					
USC					
F 111 A/E/F					
IISS (In- cludes US based air- craft)	2,600km	222	3-4	394	
SPD	1,800	152	2	304	
CDU	2,000	156	NA	156	
US	1,800	170	2	340	

TABLE 2: MEDIUM RANGE BOMBERS (contd.)

<u>NATO SYSTEMS</u>				
Category	Range	Inventory	Number Warheads/ System	Warheads Available
F 104				
IISS	1,400	367	2	96
SPDC				
CDUC				
USC				
Jaguar				
IISS	1,900	177	1	48
SPDC				
CDUC				
US				
Mirage 5F & IIIE				
IISS	1,900km	199	1	51
SPDC				
CDUC				
USC				
Carrier Air				
A 6E & A 7E				
IISS	1,500-2,200km	60	1-3	40
SPDC				
CDUC				
USC				

TABLE 2: MEDIUM RANGE BOMBERS (contd.)

<u>MEDIUM RANGE BOMBER SUBTOTALS</u>	WARSAW PACT	NATO
I ISS	640	1,121
SPD	780	413
CDU	810	237
US	760	396

TABLE 3: SUBMARINE BASED SYSTEMS

WARSAW PACT SYSTEMS

Category	Range	Inventory	Number Warheads/ System	Warheads Available
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SSN 4
IISS Range considered to be below 1,000km--not included

SPDC
CDUa
USC

SSN 5

IISS 1,300km
SPD NA
CDU 1,200
USC

1 54 33
1 39 39
1 80 80

SSN 8

IISS 8,900km
SPDC
CDUC
USC

1 6 5

NATO SYSTEMS

Polaris A 3

IISS 5,300km
SPD NA
CDU 5,300km
USC

1 64 32 (two boats deployed)
1 64 64
3 64 192

M 20^b

IISS 5,500km
SPD NA
CDU 5,500
USC

1 64 32 (two boats deployed)
1 64 64
1 64 64

TABLE 3: SUBMARINE BASED SYSTEMS (cont'd.)

<u>NATO SYSTEMS</u>			Number Warheads/ System	Warheads Available
Category	Range	Inventory		
Poseidon*				
IISS	5,200	40	10	400
SPD	NA	32-48	NA	400
CDU	5,000	40	10	400
USC				
 SUBMARINE BASED SYSTEM SUBTOTALS				
	WARSAW PACT	NATO		
IISS	38	456		
SPD	39	528		
CDU	80	656		
US	Not included			

TABLE 3: SUBMARINE BASED SYSTEMS (con td.)

TOTAL

	IISS	SPD	CDU	US
<u>WARSAW PACT</u>				
LAND BASED	640	600 (1320)	1,040	990
M-R BOMBERS	640	780	810	760
SLBM	<u>38</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>Not included</u>
	1,318	1,419 (2,139)	1,930	1,750
<u>NATO</u>				
LAND BASED	14	18 (590)	18 (590)	0 (572)
M-R BOMBERS	1,121	413	237	396
SLBM	<u>456</u>	<u>528</u>	<u>656</u>	<u>Not included</u>
	1,577	959 (1,531)	911 (1,483)	396 (968)

(Figures in parentheses indicate reloads or post GLCM and Pershing 2 deployment for WTO and NATO respectively.)

These estimates make clear one point about the theater nuclear balance: there is little agreement on how that balance should be calculated. There is not even agreement on what weapons systems are to be included. It is thus very difficult to make an accurate judgement of the actual balance.

These figures do show, some of the difficulties in the concept of a 'balance'. It is simply not possible to produce a completely objective system that reveals where one military force stands in relation to another. In other words, if a military mission can be said to have two components--firepower and maneuver--then the ability to carry out that mission cannot be judged by inventorying only the firepower component. Michael Howard has noted that "The belief that technology has somehow eliminated the need for operational effectiveness is, in short, no more likely to be valid in the nuclear age than it was in the Second World War."⁴⁵ What is important is not just the raw numbers of TNF but how they would be used in the operational environment.

As will be seen, this employment, or maneuver, dimension of TNF was often overlooked in the debates on ERW and LRTNF. Decision-makers often concentrated on the static firepower balance charted in tables. Both politicians and the military in the councils of NATO often seemed to have been more concerned with political issues and with redressing the impression of imbalance in Europe than they were with establishing military objectives for the weapons systems they were considering.

This, then, was the political and military milieu in which the Federal Republic operated during the ERW and LRTNF decisions. Fears in the Federal Republic grew that strategic parity would sever the American tie to Europe. Some commentators in West Germany even raised the specter of Tauroggen and Rapallo, suggesting that Germany had historically been forced to look East when it could no longer depend on the West. At the same time the continued Soviet theater build-up and offensive orientation also contributed to insecurity among political observers in the Federal Republic.

Although nuclear weapons have been stationed in West Germany since the 1950s, they are in need of modernization. By the late 1970s the time for a debate both in the United States and West Germany on theater nuclear weapons had come. It is to a more thorough examination of that debate and the West German political decision making process on the issue that this paper now turns.

III. THE ENHANCED RADIATION WARHEAD DECISION

The public debate on enhanced radiation weapons for Europe began on June 6, 1977 when Walter Pincus of the Washington Post published a story entitled "Neutron Killer Warhead Buried in ERDA Budget." He wrote that "The United States is about to begin production of its first nuclear battlefield weapon that specifically is designed to kill people rather than to destroy military installations through heat and blast."⁴⁶ The weapon quickly became a matter for debate in West Germany as well. In July 1977 Egon Bahr, Special Minister in the government of the Federal Republic and a powerful figure in the Social Democratic Party, wrote in the party newspaper that the 'neutron bomb' raised the question of "whether it will become a principle of thought and action that material goods are more valuable than humanity." He concluded that a weapon that preserved goods but destroyed men was a "symbol of mental perversion."⁴⁷

The opening of the public debate was not, however, the beginning of the development of enhanced radiation weaponry. In fact, the concept was first developed in the late 1950's by Samuel T. Cohen while he was working to reduce fall-out in atomic weapons. The ER warhead eventually developed achieved its destructive power from the prompt production of high-energy neutrons. This phenomenon occurs in all thermo-nuclear reactions, but is proportionally higher in ER weapons. The radius

of the radiation effect is increased and casualties are caused more by radiation than by blast or heat. The Carter Administration's "Arms Control Impact Analysis" put it this way: "For example, a 1 KT ER Warhead gives the same approximate damage expectancy of tank crew incapacitation through radiation effects as a 10KT fission warhead does through radiation effects."⁴⁸ Put simply, the amount of energy that contributes to blast and heat effects is minimized while the amount of energy used to produce radiation is maximized.

The first test of an enhanced radiation warhead took place in 1963. Although first projected for deployment in the Sprint anti-ballistic missile system, it was recognized as early as the late 1950s that the system would be useful in the defense of Europe. At the same time the weapon would cause less physical war damage than older generations of nuclear arms. James Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense in 1973, and General Alexander Haig, SACEUR in 1975, were both concerned with the ability of NATO to defend the continent. Haig stated, "I recall arriving in Europe...and finding a situation in which there was very little concern about the nature and character of the relentless growth of Soviet and Warsaw Pact military power."⁴⁹ Schlesinger too, was interested in new methods of dealing with the Warsaw Pact. In March 1974 he hinted at the possibility of ER warheads for Europe when he stated that there were "serious possibilities of replacing the existing tactical nuclear stockpile with nuclear weapons and systems more appropriate."⁵⁰

In June 1974, the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) of NATO conducted one of its bi-annual meetings in Bergen, Norway. This group is composed of the defense ministers from eight NATO countries. There are four permanent members from the United States, Britain, West Germany, and Italy. In addition, there are four members from other NATO countries--except France and Iceland--attending on a rotating basis.

At the Bergen NPG meeting, the United States introduced what were called "Enhanced Radiation, Reduced Blast" warheads as a possible solution to some of the battlefield problems of NATO commanders. Throughout 1975 and 1976, the United States provided the NPG information on the ER warhead and possible deployment configurations. By the end of 1976, agreement had been reached among the NATO allies to produce ER warheads for the 155mm and 8 inch howitzers and for the Lance missile.⁵¹ The Lance is a short range missile with a simplified inertial guidance system. It has a maximum range of approximately 70 miles.

It was just before the June 1977 meeting of the NPG that Walter Pincus broke his story on 'Killer Warheads'. Throughout June, Pincus continued to publish articles on the issue. He accused the Pentagon of attempting to slip production of the weapon into the budget without the knowledge of the President and Congress.⁵² Congress quickly divided over the issue. Senator John Stennis thought the weapon was "the best news I have heard in years." Senator Mark Hatfield however, was

incensed: "We discovered that it was in the budget. We discovered that no President had ever approved it. This whole thing was stumbled into our life...My ultimate hope is that this weapon never enters the arsenal."⁵³ Although unwilling at this time to commit itself firmly to production and deployment of ER weapons, the Carter Administration was certainly leaning in that direction. On July 11, 1977, President Carter sent a letter to Senator Stennis saying:

I have requested that the Department of Defense provide me a study of such weaponry by August 15, 1977; it will be accompanied by an Arms Control Impact Statement (ACIS). I intend to make a final production decision shortly after receiving these two documents... It is my present view that the enhanced radiation weapon contained in the ERDA budget is in this Nation's security interest. I therefore urge Congress to approve the current funding request.⁵⁴

This position, however, was already a step back from a decision to deploy ER weapons that had virtually been reached. Until June of 1977 there seems to have been little if any opposition from the members of the NPG to ER production and deployment. Yet Carter guaranteed that the issue would become controversial by demanding that NATO members, especially the FRG, agree publicly to deployment prior to the beginning of production. This move, no doubt, was domestically expedient since the Administration could point out that it was sharing the responsibility for ER weapons with its NATO partner. But this attempt to share responsibility meant that the issue would automatically become extremely sensitive in West German politics. This

sort of move was likely to conjure up images of Europe decoupled from the American strategic guarantee in the minds of many German politicians.

The reaction in the Federal Republic of Germany to the sudden bursting of the 'neutron bomb' issue was sometimes extreme. Egon Bahr's declaration that the weapon was morally perverse has already been mentioned. A number of SPD members agreed. Others, from the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Socialist Union--notably Manfred Wörner, the Chairman of the Defense Committee in the Bundestag--welcomed ER weapons as a counter to Soviet forces in Europe.

The Schmidt government seems to have taken its cue from the Carter Administration. Schmidt, too, refused to accept responsibility for the ER decision. Deciding to remain aloof on the issue, he stated that the Federal Republic would consider deployment on West German territory only after the United States had put the weapon into production.

On October 12, 1977 the NPG concluded another meeting, this time held in Bari, Italy. The results of the meeting were confused at best. Although a number of NATO leaders were convinced that ER weapons were the proper response to Soviet theater superiority, they were unwilling to take the political risks involved in deployment. The Associated Press reported that a senior NATO official "...warned against renouncing the neutron weapon, saying that it was needed to 'provide balancing capability' against the Soviet Union. But politically,

no nation supported deployment of the neutron bomb in Europe, partly because of growing leftist opposition to the weapon."⁵⁵ West German Defense Minister Georg Leber refused to make any comment on ER deployment. Harold Brown indicated that the United States would continue to "sound out" its allies on the issue.

From November 15 to 19, 1977 the SPD held a convention in Hamburg. The ER issue was the one of the most divisive on the agenda. The left wing of the Party was vehemently against deployment of the weapon on West German soil. They presented a resolution calling for a complete prohibition of the neutron warhead on the territory of the Federal Republic. The resolution read,

The Social Democratic Party of Germany will not permit the stationing of neutron warheads on the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany. At this early state of the political and military discussion on these new weapons of mass destruction the Party takes the opportunity to prevent imminent danger to the German People.⁵⁶

In the end a somewhat less strident approach prevailed. The final form of the resolution called on the Federal Government to keep in mind that,

During a decision on the deployment of qualitatively new weapons, it is essential that their procurement does not hinder arms control negotiations...The government of the Federal Republic should use its influence to reduce continued technical development of atomic weapons that point the way to a reduction of the nuclear threshold.⁵⁷

Some thought that the passage of this resolution gave the Schmidt government new room for maneuver. In fact, however, the left wing of the party had made it clear that they took a very dim view of new developments in nuclear technology. To be sure, the resolution that was passed did keep the door to ERW open--but at best only a crack. Schmidt could not categorically support ERW in public: to do so would have seriously divided the party.

There was no such hesitation on the part of the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic on the issue of Enhanced Radiation weapons. They quickly moved to take advantage of the situation. In December 1977, the West German news magazine Der Spiegel published a manifesto purported to have been written by dissidents in the GDR. In retaliation, the GDR closed down the East Berlin office of Der Spiegel. In January 1978, East German border guards refused entry to East Berlin of a number of CDU/CSU Bundestag deputies because "their visit to the GDR is not desirable at present."⁵⁸

These actions by the East Germans, along with a number of expressions of displeasure from the Soviet Union served--if not intentionally, at least in effect--to cloud the ERW issue. Helmut Kohl, head of the Christian Democratic Union called for retaliatory measures against the GDR. He was reported to have stated that the Federal Government should be clear in its attitude on such matters and not be continually caught napping.⁵⁹ Egon Bahr, a leader in the SPD left wing, discounted the

authenticity of the manifesto and stated; "I think the GDR believed it has reason to react harshly to the Der Spiegel publication..." He also thought that the GDR would not ultimately endanger detente because "...in that case the GDR would really have to become culpable for breach of contract."⁶⁰

For his part, Chancellor Schmidt reacted with caution. Concerning the refusals to allow CDU delegates into East Berlin, he stated, "We do not understand these refusals. For this reason we have protested. On the other hand, we must not retaliate in the same vein."⁶¹

Whether or not the Soviet Union and the GDR intended their actions specifically to have an effect on the Federal Government's decisions concerning ERW, they did prove that detente in Germany was very fragile. These sorts of moves hinted that the 'human contracts'--the new freedom of movement--between East and West Germany established in the early years of Entspannungspolitik were subject to modification by the East. If the Der Spiegel manifesto or speeches by the CDU/CSU in the Bundestag resulted in a constriction of the pipeline between East and West Germany, it is clear that the effects of ERW deployment would be even more severe.

On January 23, 1978 Die Welt, a Hamburg newspaper, reported that Soviet Party Secretary Brezhnev had sent a letter to several NATO governments warning the West against introducing ERW. Der Spiegel later noted that Brezhnev's intimidation worked:

While Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Defense Minister George Leber continue to deem the weapon system indispensable because of the deterrence capability for the Western Alliance, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has lately been increasingly inclined to follow the opinion of the SPD majority not to allow any neutron warheads on West German soil.

This was in spite of pressure from the Carter Administration to approve deployment. Der Spiegel continued:

Washington, which is making its decision on the serial production of the new weapon dependent on the vote of its West European allies, has been increasing its pressure in Bonn since the Federal Government, in its opinion, should make it clear at long last whether it wants to yield to the pressure of Moscow, or whether it continues to stay firmly on the side of the United States. A high ranking ministry official said bitterly; 'Now we can no longer make a free decision.'⁶²

On February 3, 1978, Defense Minister Leber resigned as the result of a wiretapping episode involving Military Intelligence. Leber was succeeded by the Finance Minister Hans Apel. Apel's views on the ER warhead issue seemed to coincide more with those of Schmidt than had Leber's.

The CDU/CSU Bundestag faction voted on February 21, 1978 to support production and deployment of ER weapons in Europe. According to reports the faction stated that "It is the FRG's moral and political duty to secure peace. This includes preventing war by means of a credible deterrent. The neutron bomb increases deterrence..."⁶³

Chancellor Schmidt was not influenced by the CDU/CSU call for action on ERW. In a statement issued on February 23, 1978,

he declared that the decision to produce the weapons was up to the United States. He also declared that the deployment of such weapons must be preceded by intensive efforts to secure arms control agreements.⁶⁴ Christoph Bertram, the head of the International Institute for Strategic Studies and a West German citizen, wrote in 1979 that Schmidt's objective was to avoid responsibility for the ER decision both because of domestic politics and to preserve detente:

Bonn wanted Washington--as in the past--to shoulder the responsibility for the production decision while reserving for itself the right to introduce the matter into current East-West arms control negotiations--both to reduce political controversy at home and to demonstrate detente credibility toward the East. Moreover, when it became clear that the United States insisted on a positive German response to the deployment decision, the Federal Government made its own agreement contingent upon the consent of one other West European state to station the new weapon on its soil--although the neutron weapon would make little military sense if deployed far in the rear of the prospective battle zone.⁶⁵

Several sources report that Schmidt's hesitant public position was less reserved in private. The Economist and The Washington Post reported in March and April that Bonn had sent quiet signals to Washington.⁶⁶ The Carter Administration seems, however, to have been willing to accept only public assurances that ER weapons would be deployed in NATO. Carter decided on the weekend of 18-19 March-- when public assurances from NATO were clearly not in the offing--to cancel completely the production of ER warheads for Europe. He sent Deputy of

Secretary of State Warren Christopher to NATO capitals to inform the governments of his decision. When Schmidt heard the news, he was taken by surprise. He was so shocked, in fact, that he asked Christopher to confirm the message with Carter, who was then travelling in Brazil. It took until the next day, March 31, for Christopher to contact Carter; the decision stood. Schmidt told Christopher on the spot that the Federal Government now stood prepared to support deployment in Europe of ERW. The Federal Government was so concerned that it dispatched Foreign Minister Genscher to Washington on April 4. He urged the Carter Administration to go ahead with production and promised that, if the Soviets did not reciprocate in arms control negotiations, the Federal Republic would publicly support deployment in Europe.⁶⁷

Although this did not change Carter's mind completely, he did modify slightly his decision; instead of eliminating the production of ERW, he decided to 'defer' production. On April 7, 1978, he announced:

I have decided to defer production of weapons with enhanced radiation effects. The ultimate decision regarding the incorporation of enhanced radiation features into our modernized battlefield weapons will be made later, and will be influenced by the degree to which the Soviet Union shows restraint in its conventional and nuclear arms programs and force deployments affecting the security of the United States and Western Europe...

The United States is consulting with its partners in the North Atlantic Alliance on this decision and will continue to

discuss with them appropriate arms-control measures to be pursued with the Soviet Union.⁶⁸

This put the Schmidt government in a difficult situation. On one hand, it opened Schmidt to attacks from the CDU/CSU. Helmut Kohl lost no time in launching them. The Times of London reported that "Herr Helmut Kohl...said today the Chancellor himself was partly to blame for what he called the 'dramatic deterioration' in German-American relations. Herr Schmidt had not dared to make the German position public for fear of upsetting the left wing of his party..."⁶⁹ On the other hand, because Schmidt appeared to have supported ERW deployment in the FRG he was also open to criticism from that very left wing.

On April 18 and 19, while anti-neutron bomb demonstrations were held outside, the Nuclear Planning Group met at the Danish naval base at Fredrikshavn. They issued a communique stating that future developments on ERW were dependent on Soviet action. They recognized that,

...the option of introducing enhanced radiation capability (neutron) in these systems would be influenced by the degree to which the Soviet Union shows restraint in its conventional theater nuclear arms programs and force deployments affecting the security of NATO.⁷⁰

They also agreed that modernization of NATO's nuclear forces was critical, "including the steps underway in the United States to modernize the Lance and eight-inch artillery systems."

On April 25, 1978, Brezhnev responded to these half-heated moves in NATO. In a speech before the 18th Congress of the Young Communist League, he said that Carter's deferral of a final decision on ERW was "at best a half measure. But I can inform you that we have taken the President's statement into account and that we, too, will not begin production of neutron arms so long as the United States does not do so."⁷¹ Brezhnev also claimed in this speech that the Soviet Union had not increased its forces in the European theater for ten years. In November, Brezhnev told a group of US Senators visiting in Moscow that Soviet designers had already tested a neutron bomb but gave it up.

With Brezhnev's November pronouncements the Enhanced Radiation Warhead episode drifted to a close--at least for the time being. This synopsis of the events surrounding Carter's decision to 'defer' production of enhanced radiation weapons reveals some important points. First, the Carter Administration did appear to be unwilling to accept sole responsibility for the ERW decision. Even private assurances of support from West German leaders and widespread support within the councils of NATO were not enough for the President. The Carter stance undoubtedly contributed to difficulties in the relationship between the United States and the Federal Republic because it seemed to be completely oblivious to the second major factor: the political situation within the ruling coalition in the West German government. This overview

has pointed out some of the difficulties facing Schmidt on the ERW issue. The section that follows will examine in considerably more detail the debates in the Federal Republic of Germany on the issue.

IV. THE ERW DEBATE IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC

In April, 1977 a staff report for the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations stated that:

The European NATO members have traditionally considered theater nuclear forces...a key connection between the conventional forces and the United States' strategic deterrent. Because of this, the Europeans are less interested in battlefield weapons...but rather favor longer-range systems capable of either delivering strategic strikes...or...of extending the battle beyond the immediate battlefield.⁷²

Although this analysis contains an element of truth, the West German debate over the enhanced radiation warhead was considerably more complex than the staff report indicates.

This section will outline in some detail the views on ERW of the major groups in West German politics. The primary spokesman of the CDU/CSU opposition was the Chairman of the Bundestag Defense Committee, Manfred Wörner. The second group - the left wing of the SPD - had as its most prominent ERW spokesman Egon Bahr, a member of the SPD who held positions in both the party and as Special Minister in the government. The third and last group was the SPD-FDP government itself. Helmut Schmidt and the FDP spokesman on defense matters, Jürgen Möllemann, enunciated the coalition's position on ERW.

This chapter will analyse the impact of these three political groups on the actions of the Schmidt government. It will be suggested that Schmidt's government could openly support

ERW only at the risk of internal party cohesion. Schmidt, therefore, attempted to keep party and coalition together by balancing the left wing and the FDP with each other. In other words, the mechanics of internal party politics determined Schmidt's external position on ERW.

In the Fall 1977 issue of Strategic Review, Manfred Wörner published one of the most comprehensive statements on theater nuclear weapons issued by a West German politician. In it he complained that NATO does not have an adequate strategy for the TNW it already has:

"serious consideration of the actual use of these weapons--and of its possible consequences--tends to be smothered under a psychological blanket...There is the belief, on the one hand, that TNW contributed to the securing of the peace--but the fear on the other hand, that a future conflict in Europe would mean inexorably the nuclear extinction of the Federal Republic of Germany..."⁷³

Wörner argued that serious examination of the nature of nuclear arms is necessary because the military threat from the Soviet Union has been growing. In an interview in February 1978 he said, "It is indisputable that the Soviet Union in the past years systematically developed its superiority in Europe vis-à-vis us, particularly in the sector of conventional arms, medium-range missiles and tanks."⁷⁴ He also asserted that a Soviet move into Western Europe would be characterized by an attempt to destroy Allied forces "through the sudden deployment, striking power and speedy advance of

substantially superior and tightly coordinated forces... If large scale resistance should...be encountered, the offensive must be sustained through the sheer weight and momentum of superior forces..." On whether or not such an offensive would include nuclear weapons, Wörner wrote,

...traditionally Soviet strategists have not been enticed by the notion of a 'fire-break' between conventional and nuclear conflict...[however] the trend of improvements...could be interpreted to mean that a higher probability is being attached to a conventional conflict without escalation. Nevertheless, the equipment and training of Warsaw Pact forces, as well as prevailing Soviet military doctrine, continues to emphasize the concept of a fully integrated conventional and nuclear offensive. ⁷⁵

Wörner, then, believed that Soviet power on both the nuclear and the conventional levels was growing rapidly in the European theater. Yet, he found Europeans, and especially West Germans, unable to make an appropriate response. During the debates in the Bundestag on the ERW issue in September 1977 he said,

...two basic conditions, which many in the populace and also many politicians overlook, are:

First, Europe is not in a position to balance the military power the USSR brings to bear against it and therefore remains for some time dependent on the nuclear protection of an extra-European power, specifically the United States; and this at a time in which the nuclear parity of the superpowers can be expected to put the existence of that state...which employs nuclear weapons at risk.

The Second basic condition: Europe is evidently neither ready nor willing to adjust the conventional inferiority vis-à-vis the Warsaw Pact, and remains dependent on the threat of the first use of nuclear weapons.⁷⁶

In spite of this need for nuclear weapons in Europe Wörner contended that the Europeans have evaded discussion of a rational doctrine for their employment. He accused them of "blinking their eyes and contending that tactical nuclear weapons are useful only for deterrence but not for the potential battlefield... Anyone who weighs the deterrent effect of tactical nuclear weapons...cannot do so in isolation of a realistic...doctrine regarding their actual use in combat."⁷⁷ In other words, he said effective deterrence is inescapably tied to the willingness of NATO nations to suffer significant damage. The greater the capacity to absorb destruction the more effective the deterrent.

Wörner's prescription in this situation was (and remains) to use TNW within the frame work of the NATO doctrine of flexible response. He wrote;

...it is essential that publicity be given-- through declaratory policies as well as visible deployments -- to the roles that NATO has assigned to tactical nuclear weapons, namely:

- (1) To deter the Warsaw Pact from conventional aggression against Western Europe and, if necessary, to blunt such aggression.
- (2) To deter the Warsaw Pact from the use of tactical nuclear weapons and, if necessary, to respond at the same level.

(3) To signal to the Warsaw Pact that the United States is willing to accept the risk of escalation in the defense of Europe, and is prepared even to resort to strategic nuclear weapons in that defense.⁷⁸

During the Bundestag debates, too, Wörner was an advocate of flexible response and the ability to escalate if necessary. He said,

The tactical nuclear weapons form an irreplaceable essential part of our deterrence and defense landscape. They are--not alone but an essential part of--that which makes escalation and along with it the incalculability of risk believable to the opponent... If we have been successful since the end of the Second World War in preventing a war here in Europe, we are not in the least obliged to the fact that the Warsaw Pact knows that if it took drastic action in Europe the risk of nuclear war increases.⁷⁹

Wörner thus believed that a strong theater force was necessary. During the debate on ERW, he called for the deployment of both ground launched cruise missiles and enhanced radiation weapons. He told the Bundestag, "Who would attack us cannot be allowed to delude himself with the illusion that he could contrive a war limited to our territory and leaving his own territory undamaged."⁸⁰ To allow such a sanctuary would "not only...degrade the risk variable in the calculations of a Soviet planner...but it will also promote the notion among Europeans that they have been left in the lurch." Shorter-range, battlefield weapons such as ERW mounted on Lance missiles are also necessary according to Wörner because they

apply the principle of deterrence through denial. They make prohibitively high "the risk element in the Soviet utility-versus-costs-versus-risk calculus."⁸¹

Wörner also argued that ERW were not a 'moral perversion' but were in fact humane. He said in the Bundestag,

The neutron weapon compared to the present tactical nuclear potential reduces not just damage to buildings, but also to everything, including people. It is a weapon that meets the Allied damage limits for the civilian population...The only legitimate question is this: Is it in the nature of these weapons to prevent the outbreak of war; to make war less likely or not.⁸²

Wörner's colleagues in the CDU/CSU for the most part agreed with his analysis. CDU Bundestag Deputy Alois Mertes was also of the opinion that the Soviet military build-up reached a critical stage in 1977. During a Bundestag debate on security matters he said:

While the West desires parity, the Soviet side desires superiority--although they say they only want equality--so that they maintain parity even after their recent reductions. Even with this "fictional parity" they want a contractually assured superiority.⁸³

According to Mertes this build-up of Soviet military power served political ends. During a debate on Munich television on ERW, he said; "To me it seems to be important to recognize in this connection that the Soviet Union has always regarded military power as a power not only for the purpose of defense, but also for the purpose of political control, and above all

as power for exerting psychological influence on the opposite side to make him more susceptible to political pressure."⁸⁴

Mertes also agreed with Wörner that ERW make for deterrence through gain denial:

As far as the politician is concerned the decisive question in this context is whether this weapon makes war more probable or less probable. This is the decisive political question...and the decisive moral question...The strength of the West may well lead the Soviet Union, which thinks highly politically and has a great aversion to risks, to push the possibility of war into even further remoteness...⁸⁵

Adelbert Weinstein, a commentator for the Frankfurter Allgemeine and another participant in the Munich television debate, agreed. He said, "I might advance the audacious thesis that if the neutron weapon is capable of halting the other side's masses of armor, then 19,000 Soviet tanks are rolling scrap metal. And this is a deterrent effect indeed."

As the Carter Administration moved toward a decision on ERW in March 1978, the CDU/CSU opposition frequently called for an end to Schmidt's and the SPD's "emotional dithering" on the issue. CDU Bundestag Deputy Willi Weiskirch accused Schmidt of handling the problem "without authority." He also said that "The Chancellor constantly looks over his shoulder to the leftist forces in the SPD."⁸⁶

The opposition party, then, during 1977 and 1978 thought it imperative to accede to Carter's demand for public commitment to deployment of enhanced radiation weapons. This

position was backed by Wörner's analysis of the strategic problems faced by the NATO alliance. Politicians in the CDU/CSU also took advantage of the issue to attack the 'leftward drift' of the Schmidt government.

Egon Bahr and some of his colleagues on the left wing of the SPD objected to the Wörner analysis. In July 1977 Bahr established the direction of the SPD Left's analysis in a series of articles in the party newspaper Vorwärts and in other publications. Bahr emphasized the moral implications of enhanced radiation weapons. In a July 1977 Vorwärts article, he quoted Dr. Konrad Kraske, a member of the CDU, whose opinion was that "the most important moral commandment is the prevention of war through an effective deterrent. All else is emotional day-dreaming." Bahr attacked Kraske as follows: "It is impressive that some in the opposition fall all over themselves in their attempt to spend beyond their budget just to acquire a new type of weapon."⁸⁷ Throughout the debate on ERW Bahr continued to accuse the CDU/CSU of an immoral "political greed for atomic weapons."⁸⁸

Bahr's moral arguments against ERW were not confined to the fact that the CDU/CSU wanted them, however. He consistently found ERW reprehensible because;

If the preservation of material becomes the center of what we call progress--and this was the starting point of the discussion the past summer--then man runs the risk of pushing himself out to the edge. This would be a perversion of thinking or turning our values upside

down; or, to express it in the words of the German Presidium of the International Pax Christi Movement: "If it is said in the discussion that the neutron bomb is a clean and humane weapon, then such an utterance represents a reversal of all values."⁸⁹

Bahr's dictum that it was perverse to think that "material goods are more valuable than humanity" led him to the conclusion that the proper solution to the military problem would be to develop a weapon that "deprives the opponent of the material basis for an attack."⁹⁰ Bahr seemed to believe that the deaths involved in destroying the 'material basis' would be more legitimately inflicted.

Bahr also doubted that ERW would be an effective deterrent. In February 1978, he wrote that it had been argued that an ER warhead was,

Smaller, can be used more purposively, destroys objectively less and, above all, seems better suited for defense, especially against superior tank forces-- and this is what we would be up against in the case of a potential adversary. If all this were true, then thereby an effective military use would become more credible and deterrence more effective. This...is confronted with the other argument which says that the very enhanced probability of its use lowers the nuclear threshold.⁹¹

He also pointed out that the tactical necessity of stationing ERW in forward units would significantly reduce the time available for a decision to employ them. If employment could not be approved in the new, reduced time available for a decision, the weapons could be over-run and useless anyway.

Finally, Bahr criticized the military effectiveness of ERW on the grounds that the other side would also have such a weapon within a few years and thus might feel encouraged to conquer the Federal Republic without destroying its industry.

Bahr doubted that the Soviet threat to Western Europe was severe enough to warrant deployment of ERW. He argued, however, that even if the threat were severe, ERW were nonetheless morally reprehensible and militarily ineffective. The only legitimate function of nuclear weapons stationed in Europe would be to link theater nuclear war to strategic nuclear systems stationed in the United States. Bahr therefore opposed modernization of the battlefield nuclear capability in Europe through deployment of ERW. Bahr argued that such weapons would lower the nuclear threshold and increase the likelihood that a nuclear war could be confined to Europe. In other words, such weapons were reprehensible because they would make strategic nuclear war less likely:

Europe is under the effect of a global balance consisting of the United States and the Soviet Union with their respective allies. The area geographically covered by the two security systems must be completely secure. There must be no such thing as a silent agreement to the effect that we would not feel so strongly about it if Neukoln, Hamburg or Sicily were involved.

For this reason absolute solidarity within the two alliances is the glue holding the alliances together. In other words, thinking along such lines as decreasing the risk for the two superpowers and increasing it for the allies,...is legitimate if you looked at it from the two

superpowers point of view...For the allies, however, that is not only insufficient, it basically undermines the solidarity of the alliance...The vital interests of the United States and the Soviet Union can stand a limited war in Europe. The vital interests of Germany cannot.⁹²

Bahr's reluctance to develop a modernized nuclear capability in the European theater thus made him dependent on US strategic nuclear might. He acknowledged this even more explicitly by writing that in a Europe-held hostage--he said that all of Europe is a Berlin writ large-- "Security against attack ultimately resides in the credibility of the global strategic potency of the United States..."⁹³

While insisting on the maintenance of American strategic potency, Bahr also argued for continued relaxation of tensions in Europe:

The policy of detente is based on strategic-local balance between East and West, trying to reduce [arms] without disadvantages to one party or the other. Detente demands a long term policy creating confidence through new agreements... Detente demands steps be made toward reduction and arms limitation and not toward intensified armaments and the introduction of new systems which would create new instability.⁹⁴

This put Bahr into a difficult position: while he believed that Germany was dependent on American strategic potency, he feared that any improvement in the American strategic position would result in destabilization that might destroy detente. Bahr stopped short of a complete rejection of ERW. He followed

the official SPD position in saying that the production decision was for the American President alone. He added, however, that once the production decision was made, only then should the Federal Republic determine whether the weapon system should be stationed in West Germany; and then only after ERW had been introduced in disarmament talks.

A number of other SPD members agreed with Bahr's analysis. Christian Krause wrote on the Soviet threat in Vorwärts,

We do not want to proceed here on the basis of the deliberate propaganda which continually tries to hammer home that the East is superior militarily. The western experts to be taken seriously are agreed that, given differences in subareas overall a military balance exists between the two power groups.⁹⁵

Alfons Pawelczyk, one of the spokesmen on defense matters for the SPD Bundestag Fraktion, also objected to the idea that the Soviet Union had been pursuing the goal of military superiority. During the September Bundestag debates he said,

Can it not be deduced from that, that the Warsaw Pact has not increased the numbers of its land forces in Central Europe since 1974/75? That alone could be the basis for an increase in detente with the goal of securing concrete results.

At another point Pawelczyk said,

The discussion of security policy is oriented too simply on the readiness of the potential opponent to take risks. The Warsaw Pact has, however, proven--up to this point--that they present only calculable risks, which exclude the possibility of a misunderstanding and a direct confrontation with the USA...⁹⁶

Bruno Friedrich, the foreign policy spokesman for the SPD faction in the Bundestag called for a disarmament initiative from the Federal Government in lieu of the introduction of the new ER warhead technology. He termed such a move "a contribution in the spirit of the detente policy pursued by the coalition since 1969."⁹⁷

Similarly, Pawelczyk told the Bundestag that

An increase in security can only be reached through arms policy cooperatively agreed to by both sides...A defensive capability means security today, and I think no one can doubt that today security is at hand... Relaxation and cooperation must in the future guarantee security at the lowest possible level.⁹⁸

SPD deputy floorleader in the Bundestag, Horst Ehmke, said in August 1977 that arms procurements were a threat to the human contacts developed during the era of relaxation:

Our apprehension is that one should not, by reverting to a crusade ideology, as it were, bury again what has been achieved for the people. If millions of people yearly can visit each other in divided Germany today... then this is a practical success for the human rights of these people. We do not want to jeopardize this practical success by making a show of muscle...⁹⁹

Finally, many in the left wing of the SPD were not concerned with the warfighting capabilities of nuclear weapons. For them the only possible function such weapons had was as a deterrent. Pawelczyk expressed this belief in the supremacy of deterrence in September 1977:

The present NATO strategy and every other strategy can only serve the function of deterring and warding off aggression that has been undertaken with a limited risk. That means that one must proceed with his planning on the basis that the potential opponent will pursue policies that are rational rather than irrational. Against insanity there is no strategy.¹⁰⁰

Bahr's moralistic pronouncements on ERW and the approach of some prominent left-wing SPD members were therefore somewhat inconsistent. This group generally asserted that there had been no Soviet military build-up over the previous decade-- or at least that such a build-up had been exaggerated. They believed that a substantial nuclear capability on a limited battlefield would damage the 'vital interests of Germany.' They therefore generally advocated that the strategic nuclear power of the United States be maintained and even modernized as necessary. This, in their view, was necessary to deter war--the only function any strategy could legitimately have. At the same time, however, the left wing of the SPD feared that any modernized nuclear capability--including both a weapon such as the enhanced radiation warhead and longer range weapons - would be a threat to super-power detente and to the relaxation of tensions between the two sections of Germany.

The last group of politicians whose views on ERW will be discussed is the government coalition of SPD and FDP. Two key figures in this group during the controversy were Helmut Schmidt and Bundestag Deputy Jürgen Möllemann, the FDP spokesman on defense matters. The earlier discussion of the events

in the ERW controversy suggested that Schmidt was personally open to the possibility of deployment of ERW in Germany--even if he was unwilling to take a strong public stand. Much of Schmidt's public hesitation may be explained by the strong opposition to ERW in the left wing of his own SPD. Schmidt consistently stated that the ERW production decision was one for the President of the United States and that the Federal Republic did not want to and could not participate in such a decision--directly or indirectly. In spite of this public neutral stand, Schmidt was clearly disappointed when Carter initially decided to cancel the ERW program altogether. The Schmidt government may have been influential in changing the cancellation to a 'deferment'.

Schmidt's actions during the ERW debate were thus far more constrained by the position of the SPD left than by the CDU/CSU who supported the modernization program. Schmidt's FDP coalition partners were also in favor of ERW deployment--at least initially. Faced with a recalcitrant and uncompromising SPD left-wing, however, both Schmidt and M llemann were forced to modify and camouflage their support for this form of theater nuclear modernization.

In November 1977 the German Press Agency reported that M llemann had supported ERW by saying that,

deployment of the neutron weapon in Europe could, while maintaining the fundamental strategic principles of the North Atlantic Alliance contribute

to improving the alliance's deterrent capability and defensive strength, as long as efforts to strengthen conventional combat forces are not neglected.¹⁰¹

Möllemann was reported to have supported ERW on the grounds that it could serve as a bargaining chip in disarmament talks. Möllemann apparently went so far as to suggest that the Federal Republic should have some control over the use of nuclear weapons stationed on West German territory. He suggested that the Federal Republic be given the power of veto.

In December, however, after both the FDP and the SPD had held their November congresses, Möllemann somewhat modified his view. In an interview published in Die Welt he stated that the 'conditional yes' advocated by the FDP on ERW meant:

1. Encouragement to the Americans to produce the weapon.
2. The decision on its deployment in Europe only when a more reliable assessment of the course of the arms control negotiations is possible; and
3. The clarification that the neutron weapon is exclusively understood as a political weapon as is true for the other nuclear weapons as well.

I consider it necessary and logical to encourage the Americans to produce the system. This will not be contradicted by the attempt to use this weapon, which then will be available, as a motor in the disarmament talks.¹⁰²

As the ERW controversy progressed, the position of Möllemann and the FDP increasingly emphasized the conditional aspect of their 'conditional yes'. In November 1977 Möllemann had pointed out both the deterrent and defensive capabilities of ERW, but by March 1978 he was equally concerned with the

weapon's implications for arms control negotiations. In that month Möllemann told an interviewer,

During the production phase--which is projected to be about two years--a balanced military strength ratio should in some measure be moved toward a lower level through the serious and strongly supported introduction of the neutron weapon in suitable arms control negotiations. Because there is an atomic equilibrium between the blocs created as a result of the SALT talks, a closer parity in the conventional realm should now be sought. I am therefore of the opinion that the neutron weapon will be discussed at the MBFR negotiations in Vienna. There it will concern not so much the SS-20 as the armored forces of the Warsaw Pact.¹⁰³

In short, Möllemann's views moved further and further from their position at the beginning of the controversy--a position that was not dissimilar to that of Manfred Wörner--to a position resembling the public position of the SPD Chancellor. It therefore seems that Möllemann and the FDP were maneuvered by Schmidt into a position more closely aligned to the SPD.

The essence of Schmidt's position on ERW has already been outlined. What is notable about the development of his position, however, was his caution. In July 1977 Schmidt said that these new warheads,

raise considerable psychological and strategic problems, both within NATO and in relationship to the Warsaw pact. This was something which needed to be cleared up in NATO in joint deliberations. If the United States were to announce the intention of stationing this new weapon on German soil...there would be very thorough discussions within the alliance as well as direct German-American talks.¹⁰⁴

Yet a story published on the same day Schmidt made his statement revealed that the Federal Chancellor's office had long been contemplating the deployment of ER warheads. Der Spiegel asserted that "A study by the Chancellor's office compiled in 1974 saw a remedy in a 'combination of novel conventional weapons with the limited use of nuclear weapons of minimum caliber.'" The report continued that it ought to be "made clear to all parties involved that the effect of such nuclear (clean) minimal weapons must indeed be equated with the large scale use of conventional weapons."¹⁰⁵

When the Party Congress was held in Hamburg in November 1977 it was clear that opposition to ERW was considerable within the party. When Schmidt spoke to the convention he did not refer to ERW directly, but did say again that SALT made it ever more important "to secure in Europe, as well as in the conventional realm, a stable equilibrium." To accomplish this, Schmidt said, it was necessary to engage in arms control negotiations as well as maintain an effective defensive force. Schmidt concluded, "All attempts to drive a wedge between myself and my party are without purpose: they result from naive illusions. I stand in the middle of my Party."¹⁰⁶

Nonetheless, as noted earlier, the resolution passed by the Parteitag on the ERW issue clearly showed the influence of the SPD left-wing,

The Federal Government ought to exert its influence within the framework of alliance consultations in order to

avoid further technical development of nuclear arms lowering the nuclear threshold. The Federal Government has been asked to create the political and strategic prerequisites within the framework of security and disarmament policies so that storing the neutron weapon on the territory of the Federal Republic will not be necessary...¹⁰⁷

This motion, passed with only one dissenting vote, had been introduced by a party commission chaired by Herbert Wehner. It seems, considering the eventual similarity between the FDP position and this SPD resolution, that Schmidt was able to change the position of his government coalition partners for the sake of SPD party unity. The Federal government's position after November 1977 was essentially that of the SPD--in short, a position considerably influenced by the thinking of Egon Bahr.

The government's position on ERW, then, was not significantly influenced by inter-party politics during 1977 and 1978. The position taken by Manfred Wörner and his colleagues in the CDU/CSU did not have any significant impact on the decisions taken within the coalition government or on the relationship between the United States and the Federal Republic. The Carter Administration does not seem to have looked to the CDU/CSU for support in their attempt to secure West Germany's approval.

It seems, in conclusion, that the most important variable in the West German position on enhanced radiation weapons was

the internal one--party politics. Although the external Soviet threat was recognized and attempts were made to counter it by some segments of the Federal Parliament, the influential policy makers tended to deny the threat or deny its importance-- at least publicly. The other variable examined here--the problem of American reliability and declining relative power-- certainly had an impact on the analyses conducted by those in power in the Federal Republic. The importance of this variable was perhaps as important as the machinations of SPD internal politics. In any case, the American torpor seems to have produced a paralysis in the Federal Republic as well.

V. THE LONG RANGE THEATER NUCLEAR MODERNIZATION DECISION

While the debate on enhanced radiation weaponry had caused some difficulty in the NATO Alliance, that on long range theater nuclear weapons seemed less acrimonious--at least on the surface. This was perhaps because much of the preparation for the decision was conducted in a more open atmosphere. Even the Soviet Union for a time seemed less hostile to these weapons than they had been to ERW. However, the final decision was not as unanimous as had been anticipated. Both Belgium and the Netherlands were unable to agree to the final LRTNF program in December 1979. They both deferred final decisions. The Federal Republic seemed more concerned that it should not be the only non-nuclear NATO power with LRTNF on its soil and that arms control negotiations take place, than with the deployment of Pershing 2 and ground launched cruise missiles.

At the London meeting of the Nuclear Planning Group in November 1976 it was first decided to begin planning on GLCM. At the next meeting in June 1977, the United States presented a detailed briefing on the state of development of Cruise missiles and the possibilities for deployment in Europe.¹⁰⁸ It was at this Ottawa meeting that Secretary General Luns announced that the Soviet Union had begun deployment of the SS-20 in the western military regions of Russia.¹⁰⁹

(Production decisions on the SS-20 were evidently made by the Soviet Union no later than 1970).

The next meeting of the Nuclear Planning Group was held in Bari, Italy. There was considerable enthusiasm expressed by the European delegations for the development of LRTNF, either in the form of cruise missiles or IRBM. It was decided to establish a special High Level Group, chaired by the United States, to outline the comprehensive needs for theater nuclear weapons and to develop program proposals. The HLG chairmanship position was filled by David E. McGiffert, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. The initial findings of the HLG were presented in April 1978-- just after the decision to defer production of ERW. This first report called for an evolutionary increase in NATO LRTNF. The HLG hoped that greater in-theater capacity could be developed, but recognized that political complications made deployment difficult.¹¹⁰

Some public statements by the Schmidt government seemed to indicate a more favorable attitude toward this 'evolutionary' approach than had been the case toward ERW. In October 1978 at the NPG meeting in Brussels, Defense Minister Apel declared himself "for the development of a new version of the 'Pershing' missile with a doubled range..."¹¹¹

This October meeting, however, was disrupted by considerable disagreement between Apel and Secretary General Luns. Apel evidently considered that the military in NATO had too much

influence over the LRTNF decision. He reportedly accused Luns of weak leadership by allowing military men to make too many decisions and politicians too few. After the Brussels NPG meeting, Luns traveled to Bonn to straighten the matter out in talks with Chancellor Schmidt. Eventually ruffled feathers were smoothed, but the episode brought into the open a latent West German dissatisfaction with the work of the HLG and the NPG.¹¹²

On January 4 to 6, 1979 the leaders of the United States Britain, France and West Germany met at Guadaloupe. According to Richard Burt of The New York Times the SS-20 was a major concern of the summit. Four weapons systems were discussed as a response to the Soviet deployment. These were sea and ground launched cruise missiles, an extended range Pershing, and a new medium-range ballistic missile. These systems were all to have a range greater than 1,000 miles: they would all be able to strike the Soviet Union.¹¹³

The Guadaloupe conference touched off a period of debate in West Germany on security policy. The government maintained a position similar to the one it had held on the ERW issue. On January 21 Apel said in a television interview,

First, the Federal Republic of Germany seeks no power of disposition over atomic weapons...Second, the U.S. is the West's primary nuclear power. There, America needs to take on the leadership function. But, third, naturally we have our responsibility to shoulder. And, fourth, the whole issue is a matter of high policy and nobody should get into it alone--certainly not the Federal Republic of Germany.¹¹⁴

On February 1, 1979, government spokesman Klaus Bölling reported that a Cabinet meeting the previous day had discussed the European nuclear problem. The Cabinet called for a reduction of Soviet Euro-strategic weapons systems in the framework of SALT III. They added, however, "We are not a nuclear power, and we do not seek our own nuclear weapons. As for the problem of the 'grey zone' we think this involves...nuclear weapons systems and as such the problem is primarily one for the nuclear powers."¹¹⁵

Schmidt was concerned that Soviet military power in Europe was becoming dangerous, however. In his own report on the January Cabinet meeting, Schmidt told his party that,

When the Soviet Union puts into service every year 30 to 50 new SS-20 missiles, each with at least three warheads, and also puts into service 30 to 50 new Backfire bombers, one can see that in the course of the 1980s...the Soviet Union could theoretically be put in the position of using military intimidation for political purposes.¹¹⁶

The floor leader of the Social Democratic Party, Herbert Wehner, did not agree with the Chancellor. He claimed that Soviet arms were not offensively but defensively oriented. He also declared in Die Neue Gesellschaft that "it is not in keeping with the Federal Republic's true position to argue that new weapons systems are indispensable...rather than to urge NATO to aim first and foremost at arms limitation and disarmament."¹¹⁷ Wehner's comments touched off a flurry of editorial comment in the West German press--not an unusual occurrence.

In March 1979, the commanding general of the 12th Armored Division of the Bundeswehr, Gurt Bastian, declared that Wehner was right in assessing Soviet forces as defensive in orientation and only preparing for 'the event of an aggression.' The case was also widely publicized. The government did nothing to punish Bastian: he even retained his command.¹¹⁸ This incident would have little importance except that it might be a demonstration of the influence of the left wing of the SPD. They would not want to see a like-minded member of the Bundeswehr discharged.

The Federal Republic also seemed to continue to distrust the 'military influence' in possible NATO decisions on LRTNF. Schmidt's government, therefore, requested--along with the Netherlands--that a second study group be established in the NPG. This group would work in parallel with the High Level Group on arms control aspects of LRTNF modernization. This new subcommittee was to be called the Special Group and also was chaired by an American representative, Leslie Gelb of the State Department. Gelb was later succeeded by Reginald Bartholomew.

In April the NPG met at Homestead Air Force Base, Florida. The meeting concluded that it would be necessary to maintain and modernize theater nuclear forces. The HLG and the SG were tasked to develop specific proposals by the autumn.¹¹⁹

Some in West Germany saw the Homestead declarations as merely a ploy to get the US Senate to pass SALT II. They

thought Carter was cynically using LRTNF to increase the safety of the United States--by limiting strategic arms--while increasing the threat to Europe. The Munich newspaper, Süddeutsche Zeitung commented;

...there is reason not to take it too seriously because the missile fanfare of Homestead possibly may have served its purpose by helping the SALT II agreement to be passed more quickly in the Senate... the curtailments imposed by the SALT agreement with regard to intercontinental missiles have been dodged by Moscow in the field of medium and short range missiles in Europe, thus creating a military and political advantage for itself.¹²⁰

In July 1979 the Special Group began meeting on a monthly basis to iron out difficulties between the members on arms control proposals. According to Karl Felmeier in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, the Special Group was faced with the dilemma of developing a proposal the Soviet Union would find suitable as a basis for negotiation, but which did not include the French and British nuclear forces. Felmeier wrote, "A demand for parity between American and Soviet medium range arms would be impossible [but any other formula] would be problematic because it could be interpreted as Western preparedness to accept Soviet superiority."¹²¹

There was concern during the summer of 1979 with the Soviet reaction to LRTNF. In June the Bonn newspaper Die Welt reported that the Soviet reaction was relatively mild, but implied that this was only a ploy: "If it is possible to deploy this weapon [Pershing 2] together with others, Bonn

wants nothing to do with its handling. The field is wide and the Russians are already tilling it with a strategy of smiles vis-à-vis the Germans."¹²² This policy of smiles was not without its darker side, however. On March 2, Leonid Brezhnev had given a speech in which he warned against U.S. attempts to deploy LRTNF in Germany and hinted that these weapons might jeopardize the economic gains of detente:

Reports have been appearing ever more frequently of late that the Pentagon is putting pressure on the Federal Republic of Germany to obtain its consent to the stationing in that country of medium range nuclear missiles aimed at the Soviet Union...the implementation of these plans, just like the plans of the U.S. military with regard to neutron weapons, would result only in a new increase in tension in Europe and also in a drastic increase in the danger to the FRG itself.

The economic ties between European countries are becoming more stable...such agreements are a sort of East-West capital investment in a very necessary and mutually advantageous business--the preservation and consolidation of international peace.¹²³

The Soviets, then, took something of a different approach to LRTNF modernization than they had on ERW. While the Soviet position on the possible deployment of ERW had been explicitly negative, a year later Brezhnev sometimes smiled, sometimes frowned.

On June 18, 1979, after six years of negotiation, the SALT II accords were signed by Carter and Brezhnev. The ceremonies in Vienna were to prove the high-water mark--at least for a

time--of the Soviet-American detente. From the European perspective, however, they did little more than to confirm symbolically the parity of the United States and the Soviet Union. To many, Vienna represented not so much the solution to old problems as confirmation of a new European political situation.

At the beginning of September, while demonstrations against LRTNF were conducted in Bonn, a conference was held in Brussels on the issue. This symposium, organized by Georgetown University, the Atlantic Treaty Association, and the Atlantic Institute, was addressed by such luminaries as Henry Kissinger and Alexander Haig. In the conference keynote address, Kissinger--in something of a self-reversal--said that

If there is no theater nuclear establishment on the continent of Europe, we are writing the script for selective blackmail in which our allies will be threatened, and in which we will be forced into a decision whereby we can respond only with a strategy that has no military purpose but only the aim of destruction of populations.¹²⁴

While Kissinger's call for deployment of LRTNF echoed through the halls of power in Brussels, the West German Foreign Minister Genscher tried to convince representatives of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg to accept some of the new missiles on their territory.¹²⁵ As usual the West German government emphasized that deployment should be diffused throughout the alliance and that arms limitation negotiations should precede deployment.

On September 4, the Federal Ministry of Defense released a defense white paper. This analysis of the security position of West Germany noted that "Our Ostpolitik has proved satisfactory," and that economic relations with the East were proving beneficial. On the nuclear balance, the White Paper judged the sides to be essentially equal:

An overall comparison of the East's and the West's nuclear potentials shows that, due to the conceptual and structural inter-linkage of the central strategic nuclear forces of the United States with the nuclear forces in Europe and in the light of the existing essential overall equivalence deterrence is ensured at the present time.¹²⁶

The White Paper pointed out, however, that in medium-range systems, the Soviet Union enjoyed a considerable superiority. Taken together the U.S., British and French medium range systems in Europe totalled 386. The study put Soviet systems at 1,370. The disparity was assessed as follows: "Warsaw Pact superiority in the medium-range potential can only be offset by resorting to the overall deterrence spectrum. The Alliance is faced with what it can do to cope with the developing situation."¹²⁷

By the end of September, the HLG and the SG had completed their respective studies. They met in Brussels on 28 September to ensure their findings were complementary. The recommendations for an evolutionary upward adjustment of LRTNF and the arms control initiative were found by the two groups to be compatible, and they were forwarded to Secretary General Luns.

The Chairmen of the HLG and SG then prepared a draft Integrated Decision Document which was sent along with the two committee reports to the governments involved for review.

In the meantime, on Wednesday October 5, some of the tanks of the Soviet 6th Guards Army began a withdrawal from East Germany. Brezhnev announced in East Berlin on the occasion of the anniversary of the founding of the German Democratic Republic that the Group of Soviet Forces Germany would be reduced by 20,000 troops and 1,000 tanks. This unilateral gesture was accompanied by a warning, however. Brezhnev said that if NATO went ahead with LRTNF modernization, it would "destroy the basis" for further arms negotiations. To emphasize the point to the Germans, Andrei Gromyko flew to Bonn where he told a press conference that there would be no disarmament talks if the NATO missile program went ahead.¹²⁸

In November, less than a month before the meeting of NATO Foreign and Defense Ministers, Schmidt spoke before a caucus of SPD Bundestag members. In his discussion, he emphasized the need for a Western response to the Soviet theater threat:

In the course of the last two years, the East has achieved a quantum leap in the quality of their continental-strategic weapons...For two years the SS-20 has been deployed to the Soviet forces on a very efficient basis...This has had an impact on the problem of equilibrium because SALT II has codified parity in inter-continental forces and because an American strategic superiority no longer exists: a superiority that could have--and did--offset a Euro-strategic deficit.¹²⁹

Schmidt went on to say that Secretary General Brezhnev had written in a letter to the government of the Federal Republic that he was willing to negotiate the LRTNF issue. Schmidt said that Brezhnev had backed this official offer with public offers in Berlin and in an article in Pravda. Schmidt told his colleagues that he would propose that the United States and the Soviet Union should begin negotiations as soon as possible.

On December 4, 1979, Chancellor Schmidt spoke to his Party Congress in Berlin. He repeated almost word for word the analysis he had given to the Bundestagfraktion a few weeks before. Once again he emphasized the need for LRTNF in the context of arms control:

We shall continue in the eighties to make our appropriate contribution within NATO to the collective defense of the West... But our responsibility at the same time demands fresh efforts to achieve arms control and disarmament...I am firmly convinced that the leadership of the Soviet Union wants peace...Equal balance and 'equal security' for both sides are prerequisites for the success of detente and arms control policy.¹³⁰

Schmidt also pointed out that detente in Europe had considerably profited the German people as a whole: "It is thanks to the policy of detente that Central Europe is no longer the critical point of conflict, that millions of people in the West who visit the East have helped to preserve the national substance of our people."

Schmidt's position was not supported by the entire party, however. What might be called the disarmament wing of the SPD put far greater emphasis on the arms control aspects of the impending LRTNF decision. Karsten Voigt, a delegate to the convention from Hessen-Süd, said during the debate on LRTNF modernization:

We must put the brakes on the process that drives the arms race...the weapons decision can be withdrawn when political negotiations make it superfluous. If the will to negotiate is in earnest, then the forthcoming decision can be merely tentative and in principle. The decision on deployment--whether and how many weapons to deploy--need be made only after the results of the negotiations have been evaluated and before actual stationing starts...even this new resolution on deployment may be tentative--we do not have to be automatic on this--if we decide on further talks.¹³¹

Saying that he intended to "bring all nuclear weapons to the negotiation table," Alfons Pawelczyk, a member of the Platform Committee, put the motion on LRTNF before the assembly. The passed version read in part:

The disparities in the nuclear medium range potentials should be compensated for by a combination of defense and arms control measures.

These should include:

-Political priority to arms control arrangements so as to reduce instabilities in this way;

-At the same time fixing the necessary defense options which could become effective if arms control efforts fail...the Federal Government should consent to the medium range

weapons, to be developed by the U.S.... being stationed in Europe (in 1983 at the earliest) only on condition that their introduction can be renounced should arms control negotiations lead to satisfactory results.¹³²

The SPD Congress, then, allowed Schmidt to agree to NATO proposals for LRTNF provided Germany was not the only stationing country and provided negotiations were pursued and failed prior to deployment. Schmidt's success at the Party Congress was widely regarded as a victory for his policy and a successful compromise with at least some of the disarmament wing of the party. Once again however, as with the ERW issue, Schmidt's party had left him with very little room to maneuver. With an election less than a year away, he could not afford to alienate a powerful faction in his party. A split in the party could well have meant the end of his coalition government since the CDU/CSU was the largest single party.

While Schmidt was working with his party in Berlin, other European capitals were also struggling with the LRTNF problem. Several found themselves stalemated on the issue. On December 6, ministers from Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands traveled to Washington to discuss alternatives to LRTNF modernization. They asked for delay of the NATO Council meeting that was scheduled to rule on LRTNF deployment. In this case the Carter Administration stood firm. Jody Powell said, "It is our view that this should go forward in December."¹³³

On December 12, 1979, the Foreign and Defense Ministers of the NATO alliance met in Brussels. The proposals for LRTNF modernization and the arms control initiative developed by the High Level Group and the Special Group were agreed upon by all except Belgium and the Netherlands. In those two countries the coalition governments had proven too fragile to establish agreement on the issue. Belgium initially postponed its decision for six months, while the Netherlands suspended participation in the deployment decision for two years.

The December decision anticipated deployment of 108 Pershing 2 missiles and 464 GLCM in Europe. The Federal Republic's share of these LRTNF was to be all 108 Pershings and 96 GLCM. The arms control proposal contained five points:

1. Any future limitations on U.S. systems principally designed for theater missions should be accompanied by appropriate limitations on Soviet theater systems.
2. Limitations on U.S. and Soviet long range theater nuclear systems should be negotiated bilaterally in the SALT III framework in a step-by-step approach.
3. The immediate objective of these negotiations should be the establishment of agreed limitations on U.S. and Soviet land-based long range theater nuclear missile systems.
4. Any agreed limitations on these systems must be consistent with the principle of equality between the sides. Therefore, the limitation should take the form of a de jure equality in both ceilings and in rights.
5. Any agreed limitations must be adequately verifiable.¹³⁴

The December decision seemed for the time being at least, to be a victory for the Carter Administration. Most of the Alliance had agreed to the stationing of LRTNF in Europe. There were still forces, however, working against deployment on the continent. In the Federal Republic those forces had already shown their strength during the debate in that country on whether the Federal Republic should participate in the deployment of LRTNF.

VI. THE LRTNF DEBATE IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC

When the debate in West Germany on LRTNF began in the spring of 1979, it was often as confused and irrational as that on ERW the year before. Many of those involved seemed unable to escape parochial perspectives. It was difficult for some commentators to seriously address the problems of European defense; peripheral issues and obfuscation often dominated public discourse. Few were willing to examine in detail the wartime battlefield, strategic, and political effects of long-range theater nuclear weapons.

General Johannes Steinhoff, a retired Chairman of NATO's Military Committee, has noted that such confusion results from the inability of Europe-and the Federal Republic-to answer some fundamental questions:

Everything hangs on the answer NATO gives to the question, 'How is Europe to be defended?';...

The structure of the forces, nuclear doctrine and weapons systems, and the necessary reserve forces must all be planned in reference to such questions. To put it bluntly the Europeans fail to answer how they want to be defended.¹³⁵

With some exceptions, West German participants in the LRTNF debate did not consider Steinhoff's fundamental question. Their concern was often not so much the development of a more effective military deterrent as the political implications of LRTNF.

As in the debate on ERW, three major schools of thought were important. These were again associated with major political factions. The first, consisting of the CDU/CSU opposition, believed that LRTNF were useful war-fighting weapons. This, they thought, enhanced their deterrent function. CDU/CSU defense commentators also considered LRTNF a link to US strategic forces. These were the only commentators who emphasized balanced and integrated military capabilities. The second group consisted of members of the SPD left. These commentators were concerned that arms efforts not interfere with detente. For many in this group, the declining strategic power of the United States meant that a link through LRTNF to US strategic forces was not as important as it had once been. They therefore believed negotiated limits on both strategic and theater nuclear arms should be the primary objective of the entire LRTNF program. The final group--consisting of the government coalition--seems to have been convinced that after the ERW difficulties, some sort of positive steps were needed toward LRTNF modernization. They welcomed LRTNF as an enhancement of flexible response. Schmidt, however, was severely limited by the opposition in his own party. In order to maintain SPD unity, the government as a whole was required to emphasize the negotiation aspect of the LRTNF program.

The CDU/CSU parties believed that the Soviet Union had continued its arms build-up since the previous year's debate on ERW. They took the position that the twin objectives of

deterrence and detente could only be achieved through 'assured defensive capability.' Dr. Zimmermann, a CDU/CSU delegate to the Bundestag, said during the extensive debates on defense matters in March 1979, that the most important problem for European defense was the Soviet Eurostrategic potential. He went on to describe the dimensions of the Soviet preponderance:

For quite a long time, hundreds of Soviet medium-range missiles have been targeted on sites in Western Europe. But now new Soviet missiles of the SS-20 type have been added which can be fired from mobile pads and are equipped with three warheads--a potential with a range of 4,000 kilometers, which can hit anyplace in Western Europe...but also China and all places of strategic importance in the Middle East. By the mid 1980s the Soviet Union--according to latest estimates--will have 300 to 400 launchers.¹³⁶

The Chairman of the Bundestag Defense Committee, Manfred Wörner, agreed with Zimmermann. During the same Bundestag debate he noted that "These medium-range missiles are aimed at us. We are the object of these new Soviet missiles..." He emphasized the unique capabilities of the SS-20.

The situation has been altered on the one hand because the SS-20 is mobile. It has also been altered because the launcher can be re-fired--each has three re-loads. It has been altered because each missile has three warheads. Thus, one hundred carriers deploy 900 warheads...The situation is changed because these warheads--in contrast to previously deployed MRBM--have pinpoint accuracy. This means that they are suitable for a pre-emptive nuclear strike.¹³⁷

In the view of the CDU/CSU, the Soviet effort in the military realm was part of an attempt to gain superiority over Europe through military power. Zimmermann discounted Brezhnev's statements that the Soviet Union had no superiority and desired none. He contended that the Soviet superiority had grown to overpower the West to such an extent that "it is the main strategic concern of the United States."

Dr. Helmut Kohl, former CDU/CSU candidate for chancellor, in an official party statement, outlined the Soviet build-up. He made six points on the character of the Soviet military machine:

1. In the area of strategic nuclear weapons, virtual parity exists at the beginning of the 1980s between the United States and the Soviet Union...
2. In the area of medium range nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union has a clear superiority as the result of the SS-20 and the Backfire Bomber...
3. The Soviet Union is about to reach a numerical and qualitative superiority in the realm of tactical nuclear weapons.
4. The threshold of Warsaw Pact superiority in conventional forces was crossed long ago...Before the phase of detente NATO had at its disposal a clear qualitative advantage. Today the Soviet Union has also equalled us in this...
5. The Soviet Union has built her Air Force and Navy into a world-wide military instrument that must be accounted for in a correlation of forces.
6. The Soviet Union is also prepared to use its Cuban mercenaries to intervene in regional crises. It must be

said clearly in the German Parliament that it is alarming that the GDR has assumed a similar role.¹³⁸

This general Soviet arms build-up, and especially the nuclear threat to Europe, then, resulted in considerable agitation among CDU/CSU members of the Bundestag. A number feared that the balance had already tipped in the favor of the USSR.

Dr. Zimmermann noted that "even if the United States could introduce new weapons systems immediately, which is impossible," NATO would still be unable to match the Warsaw Pact in Europe.¹³⁹

As a result of this assessment of Soviet armament, CDU/CSU members of the Bundestag doubted Soviet commitment to detente and arms limitation. Their analysis indicated that the Soviet Union had as its objective the military domination of the European continent. Detente was a sort of ruse used to hide Soviet attempts to gain superiority and to lull the West into inadequate arms efforts. CDU/CSU analysts believed that the Soviet Union had not essentially changed its European objectives since the days of Stalin. In their view, the Russian leadership still wanted to reduce American influence on the continent, cause NATO to be disbanded, and increase Soviet influence. Dr. Zimmermann said during the March 1979 Bundestag defense debate:

Interim goals of the Soviet Union are the weakening of the United States, the severance of Western Europe from the Atlantic pact system, and the subordination of the Western European states to Soviet hegemony. The attractiveness of

these interim goals lie in the idea that the economic potential of the East bloc and Western Europe combined would exceed the potential of the United States...¹⁴⁰

According to Zimmerman, these goals had remained constant during the era of detente. He said that "detente to the Soviet Union has been nothing else to date but the continuation of a politics of expansion through other means."¹⁴¹

For a number of CDU/CSU politicians, the government itself used detente as a screen to hide the growing Soviet military power from West German citizens. Manfred Wörner was reported by the German Press Agency to have said that "the Federal Government had not dared to inform the public about the massive Soviet arms buildup because it did not fit into the image of detente."¹⁴² Alois Mertes commented in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung that the lack of western response to Soviet build-up was not simply the result of deception caused by detente. He noted that the Soviet system was rejected by the peoples living "between the Bug and the Elbe." He said that because Western Europeans have not been ideologically challenged by the East, however, they have not felt threatened.¹⁴³ CDU/CSU politicians--whether they saw the lack of Western response as the result of a sense of well being, or the result of unwillingness to face up to the challenges of detente--were agreed that Soviet intentions were anything but benign.

CDU/CSU politicians also accused the Federal Government of failure to resist the left wing of the SPD on defense matters. Manfred Wörner in an interview on Radio Free Berlin said, "...on the decisive point of military imbalance especially in the field of medium range missiles, the Federal Government avoids any concrete conclusion; it dodges the issue...we must fear that it will ultimately yield to the pressure of the SPD leftwingers under the leadership of Wehner."¹⁴⁴

Wehner and other members of the SPD left were extensively criticized by the CDU/CSU during the defense debates. Franz Josef Strauss said that the SPD floorleader was trying "to push the SPD more and more toward self-Finlandization."¹⁴⁵

Alois Mertes stated that Wehner was--along with Egon Bahr and Willy Brandt--an unwitting agent of Soviet policy toward the Western alliance. He said in an interview on Deutschlandfunk that,

The Soviets do not expect a withdrawal of the Federal Republic of Germany from the Western alliance...But what the Soviets are trying to achieve is that we, remaining in NATO, exercise our good offices in the alliance to attain greater Western receptiveness to Soviet concepts...with the Federal Republic not turning neutral and formally withdrawing from the alliance but, in substance, pursuing a policy which ultimately meets Soviet interests...[Wehner] is so concerned that the fruit of detente,... might be jeopardized that he feels we should make allowances for Soviet ideas.¹⁴⁶

Walther Kiep, a member of the CDU presidium, reported that Wehner's influence was viewed with alarm in Washington:

All I can tell you from my recent visit to Washington is that the clear position of the foreign minister (on relations with the Soviet Union), which I might call the Wehner syndrome, has come across clearly there... as far as what Herbert Wehner stated, there is only alarm in Washington. They wonder anxiously whether this might be the beginning of a change of priorities in German politics.¹⁴⁷

The position of the CDU/CSU on the Soviet military build-up and on detente, then, was based on considerable suspicion of Soviet motives and intentions. CDU/CSU analysts were convinced that the Kremlin continued to work toward objectives in Europe that had been established at the end of the Second World War; the elimination of the United States as a European power, and the enhancement of their own power in Europe. CDU/CSU analysts acknowledged that these Soviet goals were being sought with new methods. Detente and the willingness to negotiate, however, were in their eyes, not a fundamental change in goals, but a cover for pursuit of the old objectives. Therefore, they saw Herbert Wehner and other vocal supporters of detente as unwitting agents of Soviet policies. These West German politicians, according to CDU/CSU commentators, were used by clever Soviet leaders for their own ends. CDU/CSU politicians also contended that the SPD left wing was reducing the room for maneuver of the Federal Government and jeopardizing the stability of the Atlantic Alliance.

Although this analysis of the SPD was clearly partisan, it seems to have had some substance. During both the ERW and

LRTNF decisions, the SPD party Congresses had passed resolutions making it difficult for Schmidt's government to participate in nuclear weapons deployment in Europe. This, added to a natural inclination to keep Germany as nuclear-free as possible, meant that the Schmidt government was indeed hesitant on nuclear weapons.

The CDU/CSU position on LRTNF modernization was, in spite of this analysis, not always as firmly for improvements as might have been expected. Perhaps CDU/CSU politicians did not want to be too outspoken for fear of offending other European allies. In any case, while they called for modernization of long-range theater nuclear capabilities, they sometimes down-played the role West Germany should have in the decision.

Dr. Wörner in February 1979 declared that any LRTNF decision should be made in the NATO context. He explicitly rejected the idea that a decision on deployment of LRTNF could be made bilaterally between the Federal Republic and the United States. In an interview on Radio Free Berlin, he said,

It is an explicit subject of a NATO decision. I would like to put it more correctly by saying a decision of the American President. This is not a matter of German nuclear arms. We do not want any nuclear arms; we do not have any and this is the way it should be.¹⁴⁸

In some ways, this position sounded like that Chancellor Schmidt took on the issue. CDU/CSU politicians, however,

believed that the Federal Government should support publicly a decision in favor of LRTNF modernization. Wörner continued, "The American President is playing the leading role, but the Federal Government must say clearly what it is prepared to do. It must support the stationing of such American arms in Europe."¹⁴⁹

CDU/CSU leaders very much wanted the United States to assume responsibility for the LRTNF decision. They seem to have recognized that the West German electorate was unwilling to allow its own government to take a strong stand on the issue. On the other hand, they seem to have thought that West Germans would willingly follow an American lead. Dr. Zimmerman's speech during the March Bundestag debate constituted an appeal to the United States to

...take decisions, first, on the preservation of the balance in the intercontinental strategic sphere--I am thinking here of MX and Trident--second, on bringing about a semblance of balance in the Eurostrategic area--I am thinking here of Pershing 2 and ground launched Cruise Missiles--third, on restoring the balance on the battlefield. In this area new technologies as well as the neutron weapons would have to be taken into consideration in order to offset the three-fold Soviet tank superiority.¹⁵⁰

In July 1979, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung reported that Alois Mertes also feared that American leadership was faltering. He was reported to have said that the credibility of the American security guarantee for Europe is not based solely on power but primarily on the confidence of the

Europeans in the American President's ability to act as a political leader.¹⁵¹ In a statement released on 18 June 1979, CDU Chairman Helmut Kohl concurred, noting that,

Psychological and political stability in Western Europe, including the Federal Republic of Germany, depends strongly on the people continuing to regard the nuclear protection of the United States as credible... If the impression gained foothold among the German and West European public that the global-strategic and the Europe-related continental-strategic power ratio is shifting to the disadvantage of the United States and the Atlantic Alliance, this might release tendencies toward a political understanding with the Soviet world power, something which the CDU has unequivocally opposed for decades...¹⁵²

The CDU/CSU, thus found it essential that the United States take the lead in developing LRTNF. Some CDU/CSU politicians hesitated to call on the United States directly, but they made it clear that they expected the Carter Administration to fulfill its role as the strongest of the NATO allies.

Many of these CDU/CSU observers of the European strategic scene thought LRTNF were valuable weapons because of their use as means of keeping the Soviet Union from becoming a sanctuary in a European war. Perhaps more interesting, some defense observers advocated LRTNF as a means of gaining more robust escalation options for NATO.

In the fall of 1977, Manfred Wörner wrote in Strategic Review that,

...the territory of the USSR cannot be allowed, in theory or in practice, to become a sanctuary in the nuclear phase

of a conflict in Europe. The Soviet Union cannot be invited to contemplate a war limited exclusively to Western Europe, or even to German territory. Moscow must at all times be forced to reckon with the full ladder of escalation.¹⁵³

Wörner was also concerned that the NATO stockpile of long-range theater nuclear weapons should be secure, modern and useful on the battlefield. Wörner indicated that it was critical for the success of deterrence whether NATO could realistically mount a ground defense in the Federal Republic. But, NATO would also have to "replace the manned delivery systems--especially those assigned to nuclear interdiction and strike missions--with unmanned vehicles like cruise missiles." This would render it clear, through the placement of tactical nuclear weapons and corresponding declaratory policies, that "escalation in the event of a conflict does not have strict limits, but instead extends to the possible use of U.S. strategic nuclear systems."¹⁵⁴

Wörner's analysis was shared and expanded by Uwe Nerlich in the Winter 1980 Washington Quarterly. Both battlefield use and escalatory options of TNFs were the subjects of Nerlich's article. He agreed with Wörner that

...modernizing TNFs is of marginal importance, unless NATO has enough conventional sustaining power to take, eventually, the Kissinger advice the Soviet Union appears to have taken many years ago: 'The purpose of the conventional forces would be to create optimum conditions for the use of tactical nuclear weapons.' ...NATO will have to prepare initial-use options with

some conceivable coercive bargaining impact....NATO must not allow the Soviet Union to get too confident about its ability to control the escalatory processes, but rather must regain some escalatory options and deny the Soviet Union some incentives to preempt.¹⁵⁵

Nerlich feared, however, that long-range theater nuclear capabilities--capabilities that should grant escalatory options--would not be integrated into a doctrine for the employment of theater nuclear forces. Even the Nuclear Planning Group has not produced targeting doctrine agreed upon by all NATO members. Thus, "There is growing understanding in NATO that new long range theater capabilities will be required for implementing limited employment options, including those that effectively link SIOP-and NOP...But NATO has no agreed-on doctrine yet for how to utilize such options under what circumstance."¹⁵⁶

The CDU/CSU position on LRTNF may be summarized as one of support for the modernization proposals that emerged from the NPG and the other NATO channels. CDU/CSU leaders tended to believe that such weapons should be part of an integrated effort to maintain deterrence at all military levels in the European theater. They also believed, however, that the United States should take the leadership role in developing and deploying the LRTNF. At the same time they accused the SPD of weakness on the issue. They blamed Schmidt for being overly influenced by the left wing of his party.

The disarmament wing of the Social Democrats took virtually the opposite view from that of the CDU/CSU on almost every point at issue in the LRTNF debate. They contended that the Soviet military build-up was either miniscule or non-existent. They feared that Western efforts at arms improvements would spell disaster for detente. They saw modernization of the long-range nuclear capability only as a bargaining chip in arms limitation negotiations. For this reason they advocated deployment of LRTNF only if such negotiations failed.

Herbert Wehner's assessment of the Soviet military as a defensive organization has already been briefly mentioned. In an interview on Hamburg television in February 1979, he expanded on this theme. He said that Soviet arms were not designed to carry out operations of the sort the Wehrmacht executed in September 1939. Instead they were designed to secure the territories of the Warsaw Pact and prevent efforts toward national independence; "What they probably want to achieve, primarily with their tanks, is the security of what is sometimes referred to as their empire."¹⁵⁷

Horst Ehmke, an SPD Bundestag member, supported Wehner's position during the Bundestag defense debates in March 1979. He said,

The Soviet Union did not have any atomic weapons at the beginning of the arms race, while the United States possessed a monopoly. Criticism cannot be leveled at the Soviet Union for attempting to achieve parity. These attempts to improve were restricted by the Kissinger detente overtures.¹⁵⁸

Alfons Pawelczyk, another SPD Bundestag member closely associated with the Schmidt government's disarmament policies, criticized the CDU/CSU position on medium-range weapons as resting on "First, exaggeration (of the Soviet threat); second, reunification of Germany; third, armament before arms control negotiations. We cannot agree to any of these."¹⁵⁹

The left wing of the SPD, then, either denied that a Soviet arms build-up existed, or asserted that such arms build-up as did occur was only defensive. They feared, however, that exaggerated estimates of the Soviet military potential would destroy detente. Die Welt accounted for Wehner's analysis of the LRTNF issue as follows,

Wehner is not very interested in the missiles, but he realized that...armament by NATO in the sector of medium-range missiles would be bound to destroy the picture of the peaceable Soviet Union, that this would deprive the concept of detente of its credibility and thus do away with the original ideological basis of the Social-Liberal coalition.¹⁶⁰

In the eyes of this faction of the SPD, detente had brought peace to Europe. During the Bundestag debates on LRTNF, Wehner said that the security of the Federal Republic resided in treaties with the West--even in military integration with the West. But, this was only part of German security, "Because a man can best stand, but cannot move on only one leg; it was necessary, to find a second leg--the treaties with the East."¹⁶¹

Ehmke also contended that 'relaxation' was the objective of the Soviet Union. He asked in the Bundestag,

Whether the Soviet Union will continue to be motivated to participate in detente. I am of the opinion that this motivation will continue and that this is the critical factor in the success of detente. As President Carter has said, the Soviet Union--like Western nations--wants to protect itself, to have its security recognized, and to expand its influence as far as practicable. This is the way of the world; it serves no purpose to whine about it.¹⁶²

This view of the Soviet Union as a great power acting as any great power does in the international political arena, was at the opposite pole from that of the CDU/CSU. While the left faction of the SPD saw Soviet intentions as benign and peaceful, the CDU/CSU believed the Soviets were using detente as a cover for expansion of its military forces and influence. The disarmament faction of the SPD--because of its view of Soviet intentions--insisted that security for Europe could be achieved in a general, over-all balance between the East and the West.

Pawelczyk believed that since Soviet motives were not to dominate the world, but rather to establish a place for itself as a great power, an over-all balance was both possible and desirable. Thus, stability was not just a matter of military forces, but concerned a broad spectrum of political, economic and military affairs. In May 1979, he wrote that,

Stability will be achieved only if parity in the entire sphere of politics is sought. NATO has interests in security policy, the Warsaw Pact needs economic cooperation on a long-term basis. Both bases might serve for developing an understanding...Influential forces in the West are afraid that

they might extend arms assistance by granting economic assistance; the East is concerned that increasing cooperation might have the effect of infiltration.¹⁶³

In order to ensure an overall balance Pawelczyk believed that LRTNF modernization should only be undertaken in conjunction with arms control negotiations. During the Bundestag arms debate, he said,

We have a plan to improve both weapons and material that is completely worked out, and in part implemented...But I want to ask you not simply to concentrate on this part of our policy. Along with the steps we have taken in defense-policy we have also emphasized arms control policy.¹⁶⁴

Since the Soviet threat was not as great as some claimed, and since a stable European balance could only be achieved through negotiation, many in the arms control faction of the SPD believed that the only use of plans for modernized LRTNF was as a bargaining chip in arms control negotiations.

Pawelczyk again;

We must guard against too quick a deployment of new arms. Experience teaches that it is difficult to cancel deployment once systems have been issued to the forces. Instead of that, we should make every political effort to equalize regional imbalances. Only when this does not succeed must--and shall--we react in the defense and political spheres. In other words, we do not want to arm in order to disarm.¹⁶⁵

Horst Ehmke was of the same opinion as Pawelczyk. In a round table discussion with leaders of the CDU and FDP on Bonn

television in February, Ehmke had said that the Federal Republic should first seek negotiated Euro-strategic arms levels with the Soviet Union. "Should they prove abortive, one would then have to consider how to balance Soviet superiority in medium-range missiles."¹⁶⁶

Ehmke also objected to the form modernized LRTNF would take. He did not like GLCM or Pershing 2 based in West Germany. Instead, he thought it might be better to have NATO medium range nuclear weapons based in submarines. This idea, he noted during the LRTNF debate in the Bundestag, had been put forward by Theo Sommer and Christoph Bertram. He said,

The advantage of ground launched medium range missiles is that they are more accurate than missiles based on submarines. On the other hand the SS-20 because it is mobile cannot be hit anyway. At the same time the vulnerability of medium range missiles to a first strike is far greater than that of submarines.¹⁶⁷

The disarmament wing of the SPD thus wanted the threat of LRTNF only to force the Soviet Union to the bargaining table. As a result, little consideration was given to what kind of LRTNF would be most useful or how many would be needed in the military situation confronting NATO. Ehmke seemed to be the only member of the group that gave the matter any thought at all. His conclusion was that medium range missiles should not be based on German soil but rather in the sea. Ehmke seems to have thought that this would make a Soviet attack on the Federal Republic less likely.

The last section of this part will examine the role of the Schmidt government in the LRTNF debate. Members of the government--the coalition of the SPD and FDP parties--were clearly concerned by the build-up of Soviet arms. They were apprehensive about the fact that strategic nuclear parity meant greater significance for the imbalance in the European theater. They reacted to this imbalance by advocating negotiations to reduce theater nuclear arms and by welcoming LRTNF as a means of strengthening ties between Europe and the strategic forces of the United States.

The previous part of this paper has already described much of the Schmidt government's stand on LRTNF. Although the coalition acknowledged the build-up of weapons by the Soviets, they found it very difficult to move in the direction of weapons deployment. It was the domestic political consideration--the pressure from the left wing of the party--that dominated the moves of the coalition.

The coalition was anxious that the difficulties and failure of the ERW episode should not be repeated. The government wanted a decision for LRTNF modernization--although in conjunction with arms control proposals. Foreign Minister Genscher told Die Welt in July 1979 that the Alliance would appear to be directionless and without will if a modernization decision was not taken within the year. He emphasized that the ERW fiasco should not recur. He said, "Under no circumstances can another debate of the type and psychological impact as that

experienced with the neutron weapon be allowed to occur." For Genscher the LRTNF decision was both politically and militarily necessary. He told Die Welt,

The Federal Government is convinced that the modernization is both militarily and politically absolutely necessary. This is a result of the technical obsolescence of our present weapons systems; it is also a result of the qualitatively new threat from the SS 20 and the Backfire; it is finally also the result of the fact that the question of the Euro-strategic balance will enter a new, indeed altered and more significant, dimension after the conclusion of SALT II.¹⁶⁸

Hans Apel declared in March 1979 that the Federal Republic was concerned about the progressive enhancement of the military potential of the Warsaw Pact. He stated, however, that he did not think peace was in any danger.¹⁶⁹ Apel did believe that the Soviet Union would move offensively against Europe in the event of a war. He said in a widely reported interview on Westdeutscher Rundfunk,

If we take a look at the firm data...then we will find that the Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact, have more in quantity and quality than is required for the defense of their own territories. And in all the exercises, which we also carry out, the Soviet Union demonstrates that it will resort to an offensive strategy in the event of a military conflict.¹⁷⁰

At a meeting of Bundeswehr commanders in early May 1979 on the North Sea island of Borkum, Apel expanded on the offensive possibilities open to the Soviet Union. Not only did the threat exist in Europe, he said, but also "We are watching with concern the global range of Soviet military

might, because it can threaten our sensitive supply routes from overseas."¹⁷¹

The Soviet Union had also built up its theater nuclear arsenal, according to Apel:

The Soviet Union has always had medium-range missiles and we actually never had an equivalent to put up against them. This did not pose a problem because these were siloed missiles. They could be pinpointed and, if necessary, neutralized by our own weapons. Thus, what is new is not the medium-range missiles but the mobility the transportability, the capacity of being reloaded; we do not have anything to put up against that at the moment.¹⁷²

Apel also noted that the Backfire bomber added even further to the increased theater potential of the USSR.

This analysis of Soviet theater forces was supported by Hans Dietrich Genscher, the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic and Chairman of the Free Democrats. In a speech to the party convention in Münster in April 1979, he said that,

Presently there exists an approximate parity in intercontinental weapons of the United States and the Soviet Union. As regards nuclear weapons in Europe, there still exists approximate parity on the whole between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in the categories of up to a range of 1,000 kilometers. On the other hand, the East has been definitely superior for a long time and to a clearly increasing degree in the field of medium range missiles threatening Europe directly, weapons of a range of between 1,000 and 5,000 kilometers.¹⁷³

Genscher also believed that Soviet intentions were offensively oriented. At the same party congress he stated:

The policy of the Soviet Union, on the other hand, is aimed at gaining zones of influence and exporting its system. This is in line with the expansive goals pursued by it with any, including military, means, thereby violating the principle of detente...The policy of supremacy no longer has a future, though the idea of safeguarding one's own interests by way of power politics by no means is dead yet. 174

Chancellor Schmidt, as has already been mentioned, was also apprehensive about the growing power of the Soviet Union in Europe. During the Bundestag debate on LRTNF, however, he downplayed the problem. Instead of emphasizing that the Soviet threat was growing, he noted that,

Military balance is not necessarily totally an arithmetic or mathematical identity between all forces or weapons. Military balance must be perceived in far more comprehensive terms...I will say it again, when it comes to the successful securing of peace, a policy of equality cannot in any way be reduced to the military dimension. 175

Thus, during the debate on long range theater nuclear weapons, Schmidt managed to avoid the issue of whether the Soviets were superior in medium range weapons. Although some in the SPD and FDP believed that the Soviets were building their military power for political purposes, they come to considerably different conclusions about how to react than had the CDU/CSU.

In April 1979, after describing the Soviet military threat, Foreign Minister Genscher told his party,

...not the preservation of military superiority, rearmament and predominance

but only peace policy, disarmament, equivalency, partnership and a just balancing of interests on the basis of equality, independence, self-determination and human rights have a future.

...contradictions on principle are not being resolved by detente policy, but it must be aimed at dismantling causes of conflict, preventing the emergence of new conflicts and mitigating unavoidable conflicts in a peaceful way.¹⁷⁶

In other words, the Coalition reacted to the increased Soviet military threat in Europe by calling for increased detente and increased arms control negotiations. This was perhaps in part a response to the demands of the disarmament wing of the SPD. In order to keep the party together the government may have refrained somewhat from advocating an improvement in theater nuclear weapons. The FDP members of the coalition did not seem to object to the power of the SPD's left wing. Although they may have had to make concessions on the LRTNF issue for the sake of SPD unity, their position as a sort of counter-balance to the disarmament group may have had other rewards. Certainly, FDP power in the government has far exceeded that to which it is entitled as a result of its electoral base. In short, the Schmidt government during the LRTNF decision-making process can be portrayed as a sort of balancing act, with Schmidt himself as the fulcrum. The emphasis on negotiation was more than simply an attempt to reduce the Soviet European threat in the face of declining American reliability: it was also an attempt to keep the government in a stable balance.

This exercise by the Schmidt government was aided by their interpretation of the function of nuclear weapons. They viewed them not so much as battlefield weapons, but as deterrence enhancers. Hans Apel said in May 1979 that,

All our military preparation is to demonstrate that the beginning of war will be the end for all involved, for the attackers as well as the defenders. Preserving peace in Europe successfully for 30 years has meant pointing out to the other side that every risk he might take would be too high for him. The same applies to modernizing nuclear forces in Europe. This modernization must visibly demonstrate that using these arms as a threat and maybe using them in a selective way would create such a great risk that it would not be sensible to even consider it.¹⁷⁷

According to Chancellor Schmidt it was the policy of deterrence and detente that had brought peace to Europe. During the LRTNF debate in the Bundestag, he said,

In spite of the largest stockpile of military material, Europe is the most secure continent in the world, if I may be permitted to exclude Australia. This would in no way be obvious when one remembers the situation during the Berlin crisis at the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties... Europe now actually finds itself with a proper consciousness of a growing and all-encompassing mutual security.¹⁷⁸

This, then, is the substance of the debate in the Federal Republic on LRTNF. The CDU/CSU made the most cogent arguments for deployment of LRTNF. They also, however, seemed afraid of offending their European allies by advocating the new weapons too strongly. Thus, they wanted American leadership

on the matter. The disarmament wing of the SPD believed that Soviet military strength was exaggerated. They argued that legitimate Soviet great-power and security interests must be recognized in the context of detente. They believed that negotiations on LRTNF would work out an accommodation between the East and the West. The December 1979 Party Congress even witnessed statements by the disarmament wing indicating the hope that LRTNF would never be deployed. Although the government seemed to agree to some extent with the CDU/CSU assessment of the Soviet military build-up, it was impelled to move in the direction of further negotiation rather than deployment of LRTNF. In short, while the December decision was viewed on this side of the Atlantic as a resolution to deploy Pershing 2 and GLCM, in the Federal Republic it was seen as an overture to arms negotiation.

VII. CONCLUSION

The year after the December 1979 LRTNF decision was marked by declining confidence in detente and the arms control process. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the difficulties between workers and the Communist Party in Poland made 1980 a year in which hopes for continued relaxation between East and West dimmed. In the winter of 1980 Christoph Bertram explained why the climate for arms control had turned frigid: "Successful arms control requires a favorable international climate, domestic support, and credible instruments. The present situation is lacking all three."¹⁷⁹

At the time of the NPG meeting in Bodø, Norway on June 4-5, 1980, prospects for negotiations on LRTNF seemed limited. The Soviet Union had rejected two offers from NATO--both of which the Federal Republic had taken an active part in drafting. While the British and Italians had completed their basing plans for LRTNF in time for the meeting, the West Germans had deferred such decisions. They were not prepared to discuss specifics of LRTNF siting in the Federal Republic.

In spite of the chilled arms control atmosphere, and in spite of concerns about increased Soviet military capabilities, the Schmidt government worked hard to establish negotiations on LRTNF. On June 30 and July 1, Chancellor Schmidt met with Secretary Brezhnev in Moscow.

During the visit, Brezhnev adopted a conciliatory tone. In a speech during Schmidt's visit he denied that the Soviet Union was expanding its theater nuclear forces: on the contrary, he said they were declining.

I categorically state that the number of medium-range nuclear delivery weapons on the territory of the European portion of the Soviet Union has not been increased by even one missile, or one airplane, over the past ten years...the number of launchers of medium-range missiles and also the yield of the nuclear charges of these missiles, have also been somewhat reduced. The number of medium-range bombers has also been reduced.¹⁸⁰

When he returned from Moscow, Schmidt reported that negotiations on LRTNF were likely in the near future. He reported to the Bundestag that,

At this point, however, General Secretary Brezhnev submitted a new and constructive proposal. He stated that the Soviet Union was prepared to initiate bilateral talks on LRTNF limitation with the United States even before the ratification of SALT II.

In those talks, he said, the LRTNF of both sides would have to be dealt with taking into consideration all factors having a bearing on the strategic situation in this field. He made it clear that the so-called forward-based systems would have to be included...

However, he added that agreements resulting from such talks could not, in his view, enter into force until SALT II had been ratified and enacted.¹⁸¹

This 'new and constructive proposal' of Brezhnev's, however, was not as great a concession as it might appear at first

glance. Although the Soviet position dropped the insistence that NATO suspend implementation of the December 1979 decision before negotiations, the forward based systems issue and the matter of SALT II ratification were still outstanding.

This epilogue to the ERW and LRTNF debates demonstrates that the forces at work in West German politics during the ERW and LRTNF debates continue to influence the course of the Federal Republic's policy. During the two debates the CDU/CSU opposition supported production and deployment of both types of nuclear systems. The left wing of the SPD consistently opposed both ERW and LRTNF decision. There were, however, changes in the approach of the Schmidt government on the two issues. The positions of the various factions in West German politics will also influence the future course of American policy on the theater nuclear issue.

The representatives of the CDU/CSU such as Manfred Wörner who commented extensively on the ERW and LRTNF issues have expressed consistent views over the years of the debate. Wörner has been a strong supporter of both ERW and LRTNF. He advocates a nuclear capability in Europe that could be used to fight on the European battlefield. At the same time, he believes that in-theater nuclear forces should also have the ability to strike the Soviet Union. In his view, a Soviet sanctuary should never be allowed in a European war.

Wörner and his CDU/CSU colleagues have argued that this two-pronged approach would enhance deterrence in Europe.

They believe that the combination of a modernized nuclear capability against a ground attack as well as the LRTNF capability against the Soviet Union would be the most credible deterrent, partly because it might effectively link the Federal Republic with the strategic nuclear forces of the United States.

The left wing of the SPD, represented by men such as Egon Bahr and Herbert Wehner, has also taken a consistent stand during the ERW and LRTNF debates. They are, however, opposed to any modernization of theater nuclear weapons. They seem convinced that the threat from the Soviet Union is not substantial. Wehner has even contended that deployment of the SS 20 was a defensive move on the part of the Soviet Union. They argue that deployment of modernized nuclear weapons would destroy the gains of detente and restrict the continued flow of 'human contacts'.

The SPD left wing thus virtually denies the necessity for any in-theater nuclear capability. Even the SALT agreements--which caused the government uneasiness for fear that the American guarantee had been weakened--seemed to have little impact on SPD left-wing thinking. They remain opposed to any form of theater nuclear modernization, even as a tool for negotiating a theater force balance.

The left-wing argument that theater nuclear force modernization would cause a drop in the political temperature which

would in turn freeze the development of human contacts has been important to West German electoral politics. The left wing SPD belief that reduction of visits between East and West Germany would harm SPD electoral possibilities was not without substance. There can be little doubt that voters in Germany find travel between East and West one of the major accomplishments of the last ten years. The expectation that voters would react negatively toward the SPD should detente fail was therefore not unreasonable.

The Arguments of the SPD left wing gained considerable support during the SPD congresses in 1977 and 1979 during which the ERW and LRTNF issues were discussed. During both Parteitagen the left wing introduced resolutions that denounced the introduction of modernized nuclear weapons on the soil of the Federal Republic. Although these resolutions were not adopted, they did have considerable influence over the final form of the resolution on the ERW and LRTNF issues. This influence of the left-wing was often decisive in the internal workings of the Party: Wehner headed the commission that drafted the resolution on LRTNF.

Clearly, therefore, the SPD and FDP members who made up the government have had to take into account the left wing of the SPD when policy on ERW and LRTNF was made. Yet the Schmidt government's approach to the LRTNF problem differed subtly from its position on ERW. While the Schmidt government had maintained a strict public neutrality on ERW, it

found it easier to publicly support LRTNF. Although it is likely that Schmidt was in favor of ERW production and deployment and may have communicated this to President Carter, the public stand taken by Schmidt was not a strong defense of the weapon system. In contrast, while Schmidt's government maintained that the LRTNF production decision was still up to the United States, it actively supported the deployment in Europe of nuclear weapons that could strike the Soviet Union. In fact, members of the government and Bundestag spoke more and more frequently of the Soviet threat and the altered theater balance as a result of SALT.

There are three important reasons for this change in the government's approach to theater nuclear force modernization. First, the manner in which the issue was brought into public debate and the coupling of the modernization proposal with an arms control proposal. Second, the failure of ERW made it important to come to some agreement on LRTNF. Finally, the LRTNF seemed to the West German government to re-inforce the link between Europe and the strategic forces of the United States more explicitly than did ERW. In fact, ERW could be portrayed as likely to de-couple the American strategic nuclear guarantee.

Enhanced radiation warhead technology had been available for nearly two decades before it became the subject of public debate. Contrary to the pronouncements of some American

Senators, it was in fact discussed in NATO military councils and within both the West German and U.S. governments. When the story broke in the press in the spring of 1977, however, neither the government of the Federal Republic nor the Carter Administration was prepared for the controversy it created. Carter was unable to elicit from European allies what he considered sufficient support. In part because of the speed with which events moved and in part because of Carter's inflexibility, Schmidt was unable to forge a compromise within his party that would allow him to advocate ERW openly.

The LRTNF decision developed much more slowly than had that on ERW. Intense examination of the issues took place in NATO, in the Bundestag and other government circles over the course of several years. The long-term negotiations and consultations that took place between allies and within governments and parties on the issue made crucial compromises possible. While the fore-shortened time-scale in which the ERW issue was debated made it difficult for the Federal Republic to adopt anything other than a neutral stance, the longer period of the LRTNF debate gave the slow wheels of government the opportunity to turn.

One of the most important of these compromises was the combining of arms control proposals with the modernization package. This was, of course, not merely for the benefit of the left-wing of the SPD: other NATO European nations also

have to contend with a noisy anti-nuclear lobby. The combination of nuclear modernization with an arms control effort, along with the government's emphasis on increased Soviet threat, served the interests of the SPD left wing while allowing modernization to proceed.

At the same time, the failure of the United States to produce ERW and the failure of the Federal Republic and other NATO allies to agree to deploy the weapon, increased the political necessity for an agreement on LRTNF. Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher felt especially keenly the pressure for a alliance-wide decision on LRTNF. In other words, the ERW failure had made it all the more important that an LRTNF agreement be reached and modernization occur. Without such a decision, the ability of the Alliance to act in concert on difficult issues--indeed even the ability of the Alliance to maintain an effective military organization--would be open to serious question. In other words, the ERW failure itself had an important influence over the atmosphere in which negotiations on LRTNF took place. Leaders in the West German government felt more pressure to establish an agreement on LRTNF than they had on ERW.

Finally, the nature of the weapons themselves also influenced the actions of the SPD-FDP government. Since his speech to the IISS in London in October 1977, Schmidt had been publicly concerned with the growth of Soviet "Euro-strategic" power. He contended that SALT - in equalizing central

strategic forces - increased the relative advantage of the Soviet Union in Europe, since the United States had always committed such strategic forces to the defense of Europe.

Schmidt's concern with the possible loss of the American strategic umbrella apparently made him more interested in LRTNF than ERW. While ERW provided an effective capability on the European battlefield--and thus might contribute to deterrence in Europe--they could not alter the impact of SALT on the Euro-strategic nuclear balance. LRTNF, on the other hand, with their ability to strike the Soviet homeland, would help to reduce what might from a West German perspective be an unfavorable impact of SALT. LRTNF would also help to forge a stronger link between the forces in Europe and the American strategic nuclear arsenal. Deployment of LRTNF in Europe would mean that a nuclear war would be more difficult to confine to the continent. Schmidt seems to have considered this linkage a more powerful deterrent than a battlefield nuclear capability.

The response of the government of the Federal Republic to LRTNF, then, was at least in part motivated by strategic developments outside of West Germany. The particular form of the response to LRTNF as well as to ERW was dominated by internal political factors. Those internal political factors dictate that an SPD-FDP coalition government cannot support theater nuclear modernization outside of an arms control context.

Fundamental modernization cannot be pursued without serious efforts at arms control as well. Thus, Schmidt was politically required to travel to Moscow if he wanted to see the deployment of LRTNF.

These enduring factors in West German party politics clearly have important implications for future American policy on nuclear modernization in Europe. Chancellor Schmidt's room for maneuver has been further reduced as a result of SPD left-wing success in the October 1980 elections. This means that American policy-makers cannot expect West German leaders of this party coalition (SPD-FDP) to publicly support theater nuclear modernization simply because such modernization might be militarily desirable on either the strategic or tactical level. The response is likely to be similar to that given to ERW that is, unwillingness to take a supportive position publicly unless or until the decision can be taken in an alliance-wide context and in an arms control context. The framework developed during the LRTNF episode therefore seems to provide a system that is as effective as is presently possible. If this is indeed the case, the United States can not expect rapid movement by West Germany on actual deployment of any land-based theater nuclear weapons.

In February 1980, Theo Sommer wrote in Die Zeit that "watchful waiting should be sufficient response to the invasion of Afghanistan." Even after the Polish crisis it

is likely that decision makers both within the SPD and in the government of the Federal Republic will want to continue the watch. They are unlikely to want to introduce new proposals for theater nuclear weapons; they are even unlikely to want to prepare substantially for the deployment of the LRTNF on which NATO has already agreed.

In order to overcome this reluctance, it has been suggested that weapons systems other than land-based types be introduced to Europe. It has been suggested that such systems would not only be less vulnerable but also politically more acceptable since they would not provide a target on the territory of the Federal Republic itself.

While it is far beyond the scope of this paper to examine the technical merits of such systems, it seems clear from the two episodes examined here that such a solution would not escape the difficulties encountered by ERW and LRTNF. Agreements to deploy any sort of theater nuclear weapons will have to be accompanied by arms control proposals. Negotiations comparable to SALT will have to take place before deployment. Even fears that SALT has made the United States less reliable and even the shocks detente has received are unlikely to substantially change the political equation in the Federal Republic.

In short, the left wing of the SPD found it impossible to support any form of nuclear modernization in Europe, while

the CDU/CSU opposition regularly called for improved nuclear capabilities. The CDU/CSU supported the modernization of both battlefield nuclear weapons and weapons systems capable of striking the Soviet Union. The coalition government under Schmidt found it easier to support LRTNF than ERW. This support for LRTNF came at least in part because the coalition feared that SALT had altered the nuclear balance in Europe and made the American connection less secure. At the same time, however, the position of the government was constrained by significant forces in the left wing of the party. The SPD left made it difficult for the government to support any form of nuclear modernization. The compromise established in the SPD allowed the government to support nuclear modernization only if arms control efforts were pursued concurrently.

The October 1980 elections returned the SPD-FDP government to power and ensured a continuation of the political situation outlined here. Chancellor Schmidt will be faced with a left wing in his own party that has been and may be increasingly difficult to control. In the meantime the CDU/CSU opposition since the crises in Afghanistan and Poland--and increased tensions between East and West Germany--has become convinced that detente in Europe has come to an end. It may, therefore, be ever more difficult for Schmidt to continue the compromise on LRTNF or to effect new compromises on equally divisive issues.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER I

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