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A EUROPEAN NUCLEAR FORCE: PROSPECTS  
AND UTILITY

Paul C. Davis

Research Analysis Corporation  
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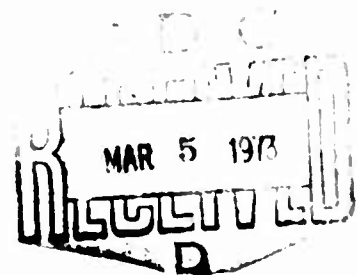
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# A European Nuclear Force: Prospects and Utility

by Paul C. Davis

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13 ABSTRACT The ENF Study examines the feasibility of developing the French and UK strategic nuclear submarine forces into a coordinated European Nuclear Force. It considers feasibility in terms of political, strategic, and technical cooperation. It also evaluates the utility of such a force as an element of NATO and in terms of its potential contribution to US-NATO force planning.		

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FOREWORD

This report was prepared as a background study in support of work carried out for the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, Department of the Army, on "Integrated Strategic and General Purpose Forces Analysis, 1974-1984 (IFORA-II)."

J. ROSS HEVERLY  
Acting Vice President  
Technological Systems

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## A EUROPEAN NUCLEAR FORCE: UTILITY AND PROSPECTS

### SCOPE

As the obstacles to a European Nuclear Force (ENF) are huge, most recent studies of this problem have concentrated upon the prospects and difficulties—the feasibility—of forming a European Nuclear Force; they have dealt only briefly with its value. On the principle that "necessity is the mother of invention," this paper will first examine the necessity or, more exactly, the utility of a European Nuclear Force. Depending upon the degree of its promise and the structure and policies needed to give it utility, we will then focus our examination upon obstacles to its creation and possible ways around them. Finally, we will summarize ways in which it can best serve the NATO mission, in light of its feasibility.

We start with the assumption that French and British nuclear forces are likely to remain independent for the immediate future, limiting the possibilities for a European Nuclear Force. At the same time, we shall keep in mind the possibility that continuation of the two national independent forces may possibly accomplish most, if not all, of the purposes of a European Nuclear Force.

We will consider five possible forms or degrees of cooperation which are, for the most part, additive (cumulatively more complete and more integrated):

- (1) Joint technological development.
- (2) Planned sharing of procurement and force allocation.
- (3) Shared deployment and patrolling, but national control of decisions as to use.
- (4) A joint planning mechanism for all purposes except decisions to fire.

We will also keep in mind a limited number of variants in the structural relationships between an ENF, NATO, France, Britain, and the US.

Topmost among these are:

- (a) The present situation: A US umbrella, a British force with targeting integrated with NATO's but control under the British, and an independent French strategic force.
- (b) The same, except with the French force linked to NATO in the same manner as the British.
- (c) The same, but with the French and British also closely collaborating in technology and R&D.
- (d) Closely coordinated British and French forces which gradually assume more of the NATO responsibility while the US increasingly decouples its strategic forces from NATO.

When we speak of utility we mean utility in the terms of perceived European interests as well as American, and we mean utility in political as well as military terms. Utility must therefore be judged by its contribution to the security of Western Europe as a whole, since we believe that collective security is the only hope of actual security of the several states in Western Europe.

In essence, the need for a European Nuclear Force should be assessed by three overlapping criteria: (1) is it necessary to strengthen deterrence and warfighting; (2) is it necessary to help assure cohesion of the alliance, and (3) is it necessary to satisfy European political desires.

But a brief word first as to the factors giving impetus for an ENF will be helpful. These include the decline in confidence that the US will use its nuclear forces to save Europe when the chips are down; the belief that a diplomatic military balance between Western Europe and Russia is essential to Europe's long-term security and that concerted European nuclear power will help right this balance; fears that Russia and the US will implicitly agree (e.g., via SALT II weapons decisions) not to risk their homelands over Europe; UK belief that her nuclear weapons position will obsolesce and the US may even end its nuclear assistance; and recognition by "Europeans" that a unified Europe, if it is to be a "state," will require the full panoply of the instruments of state power.

Let us now for the moment skip past the difficult problem of getting from here to a full-blown ENF, and concentrate on the utility and disutility of such a force if created.

Of the possible forms an ENF could take, joint technological development and planned allocation between the UK and France of R&D, procurement, and force strengths, though involving intricate practical problems, are in reality details which can be achieved by hard work. Our analysis may ultimately show that these forms of collaboration are as far as an ENF should go. These may, in fact, be a valuable contribution. But far more important to the requirements of integrated NATO force planning are the additional forms of collaboration: coordinated deployment and patrolling, combined or shared strategic doctrine, and joint authority or agreement as to decisions to use. The following discussion focuses mainly on these latter forms of collaboration, which can contribute directly to deterrence or to warfighting.

By somewhat artificially simplifying the analysis, we can treat utilities under the categories of military-strategic and political-psychological. We must keep in mind, however, that either can contribute to or inhibit effectiveness. To the degree that an ENF provides political cement to the defense of Europe or creates worse political problems than it solves, it influences in a major way the military effectiveness of NATO.

The following military analysis is confined to the problem of deterrence and to the problem of controlling the course and form of war should deterrence fail.

#### UTILITY FOR DETERRENCE AND WARFIGHTING

The aspect of deterrence of foremost relevance to an ENF is the problem of credibility. In judging the value of a European Nuclear Force, we must consider not just one, but three problems of credibility: European confidence that the US will respond in a timely way to a Soviet attack; US confidence that the ENF will complement rather than undermine US plans for nuclear response; and the confidence of European nations

(including the UK and France) that the ENF capability will be credible and its use responsive to their interests. Throughout we must also keep in mind two kinds of credibility which may or may not be the same: belief that a force is capable of deterring the Soviet Union, and belief that it will be used precisely when, from the standpoint of their interests, it should be used. Actually, credibility subsumes even more. What is wanted is belief that (a) we will respond according to plan; (b) this means at a time when naught else will save Europe and not before, and (c) it also means in a manner which causes as little destruction to Europe as feasible, yet enough to save Europe from military occupation.

Let us assume that the level of European confidence in the US deterrent remains as low as it is today or declines.

Then, addition of an ENF will render belief that the US would retaliate in a timely way and with as little destruction for Europe as possible, less important to Europeans, who will know that the ENF members or commander will be more likely to base their or his decision only on considerations respecting the preservation of Europe.\* That it will be less important does not mean that the problem of European confidence in the US will disappear. There will remain the question whether the US might strike Russia too soon (before exhausting other means), thus possibly provoking a Russian pre-emptive attack on the US which would necessarily entail a concurrent attack on the UK and France if not on the ENF itself. On the other hand, ENF will be viewed by many as another trip-wire, which can help assure a US strategic response. For once ENF gets into a threat-counterthreat crisis with Russia, either before or during war, the US would almost certainly have to join it to insure control. It is most likely in any event that the US and ENF would at that time stand together in their decision-making, for to do otherwise would risk worse disaster. So much for European confidence in the US umbrella.

What confidence will US leaders have in the ENF? Concern that ENF might delay response or not respond at all will not be a problem for the US, provided the US continues to maintain its full anti-Soviet capability

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\* But as we shall see, this depends on how close a congruence pre-exists between US and ENF plans for use.

despite addition of an ENF, which the US would surely do if it saw ENF not as a means to conserve US strategic forces but simply to enhance European defense solidarity. What would concern the US leadership would be premature use of the ENF, notably if, like the French force de frappe, its doctrine was purely anti-city. (Later, we explore ways to integrate the ENF with US nuclear plans.)

The third area of credibility concerns West European confidence in an ENF. Once an ENF was created, European doubts about its credibility would become a paramount concern. Only by a predetermined timing of retaliation, employing some automatic means for ordering the response might this credibility problem hypothetically be solved. (For example, the automatic linking of ENF weapons launch, to, say the crossing of a crucial phase-line by Warsaw Pact forces.) But sane leaders will never agree to this unless a means exists to reverse, cancel, or postpone the decision; otherwise this would be a deterrence doctrine even more desperate and rigid than is the present French one.

Assuming that ENF has no automatic release doctrine, the core problem will be that nuclear states will not be certain to use the ENF for collective defense purposes, rather than solely for their own national interests. Furthermore, because of the awesomeness and finality of the decision, they will almost certainly construe "national interests" as invoked only by an attack upon their homeland, futile though such actual use would then be. To put the credibility problem concretely, Germany will have doubts that ENF will launch its weapons before Warsaw Pact troops are directly threatening the French border; France will doubt that the UK will approve release until France is already overrun.\* But this does not mean that there will be no confidence in ENF—only that confidence will be neither full nor unwavering. There will be some confidence in an ENF because strong nations do not usually narrowly construe their national interests. France knows that her security depends on the territorial integrity of West Germany, and the UK knows that her security border is not on the Channel. This knowledge provides incentive

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\* The credibility problem for countries of the NATO flanks will be far greater.

and impetus for both countries in peacetime to base their nuclear response plans on preserving the integrity of the NATO forces and on holding a significant part of Germany.

Moreover, there is at least some chance that when the chips are down, France and the UK would at some point respond.

The contrary view is more widely held. Andrew J. Pierre, echoing a common view, has argued that without a single political authority which speaks for NATO Europe, no European nation "... will be prepared to place its survival in the hands of another, since the use of the deterrent could invite the destruction of its homeland. The necessary psychological cohesion, political unity and institutional loyalty are lacking. Only a President of Europe with full authority in a nuclear crisis could endow a European deterrent with credibility."\* This seems a telling argument. But if it is valid, we are hard put to see why these same countries continue to place the authority to use nuclear weapons formally in the hands of the American President constrained only by the ill-defined authority of NATO committees of national representatives.

The answer does not seem to rest simply on the view, once so widely held, that the US has a broader, less parochial view of its national interests and is free from the national jealousies of West European states. Rather, it derives from a very practical consideration. Faced with the impossibility of resolving the dilemma of preserving national sovereignty yet insuring survival, the NATO nations will accept whichever of the various imperfect command arrangements gives the best promise of insuring the coordinated use of all the national nuclear means.

There were additional reasons for placing the main nuclear authority in US hands, to be sure. The US shield was not only the best; it was the only one available. Moreover, US superiority made actual use so improbable as to permit some tolerance of imperfect arrangements for controlling the decision to use.

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\* Andrew J. Pierre, "Nuclear Diplomacy: Britain, France, and America," Foreign Affairs, January 1971, p. 283.

These additional reasons no longer hold. The Soviet achievement of strategic nuclear parity and erosion in the US domestic consensus about our international role have caused a serious decline in the credibility of the US strategic nuclear umbrella.

This decline in credibility of US strategic capabilities will compel many Europeans to consider more seriously than heretofore alternatives or supplements to the US shield such as ENF as a best available compromise. Just as the failure of the European Defense Command compelled Europe to find an alternate basis for a viable NATO, so France and the UK will find it necessary to rethink ENF as a possible means of strengthening existing arrangements. The primary obstacle to creating an ENF will probably be, not the issue of authority—which can only be resolved as an imperfect compromise—but rather over the potential nuclear capabilities of ENF. If the added strength from combining the UK and French nuclear forces seems to Europeans significant, and if they become convinced that the coordination of such a force with US theater nuclear forces will provide an increment of strength which gives a reasonable prospect of insuring successful defense, ENF may well have a future.

European doubts about the credibility of an ENF will put a strain on European defense solidarity, encouraging Russia to seek to divide the European states. But this is hardly different from the situation today. In effect then, there is not likely to be more European confidence that the ENF would respond than there now is that the US will. There would only be more confidence that the ENF would base the decision to respond or not on an evaluation of supreme security interests limited to Western Europe.

So much for the credibility of an ENF to its clients and associates.

Would the ENF improve deterrence in the eyes of Russian leaders? The most important deterrent values may derive from redundancy, the uncertainty factor, and the "desperate when cornered" syndrome.

The US bases its own strategic posture on redundancy because of uncertainties as to command and control, the vulnerability of each element of its strategic forces, the probabilities of each of its several strategic systems effectively operating, and the advantage in complicating the Russian attack calculus. In effect, we take out triple insurance.

An ENF could extend this virtue of redundancy, though only if US and ENF command and control and targeting were coordinated, or at least the Russians believed they were. Redundancy would be meaningful, that is to say, if ENF were closely coupled to the US strategic forces. Here it is important to keep in mind that whether in fact coupling is planned, Russia will almost certainly believe the forces are coupled, and indeed coupling may in reality exist even should the US and ENF not intend or plan it so.

The uncertainty factor does not depend upon such coupling. ENF would complicate Russian attack calculations, even if not coupled or perceived not to be coupled. Not only would Russia have to take account of ENF's separate strategy, conditions of release, and targeting, Russia would have to fear that the ENF might trigger a US response, thus making it risky for Russia to rely upon and exploit the caution of US flexible response. The uncertainty factor would, to be sure, be no more, and possibly less significant than if France continued to maintain an independent nuclear force; but to the degree that ENF's greater nuclear capacity would make it seem less a bluff than the force de frappe, Russia would have to take more seriously the possibility of its release.

It is difficult to say whether an ENF is more likely to act in pure desperation\* (or persuade the Russians it would) than are independent British and French forces. Are two more likely to so behave when acting together than one, each steeling the other against self-doubts and irresolution? Probably desperation use is equally unlikely in either case, but the Russians cannot know. More importantly, ENF could do more damage than independent forces, so the Russians would have to weigh the consequences of a desperation attack more carefully.

Even if the redundancy or "desperation" value of an ENF were only as great as for independent national forces, they would be important when added to utilities of a more political character.

Could the utility of ENF be improved by fitting its plans for use carefully into or at least carefully coordinating them with the plans

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\* A desperation attack is here envisaged as one in which the US and Russia decide not to attack each other, so that Russia would be free to retaliate against the ENF.

stemming from US strategic doctrine? Are there, for example, one or more rungs in the escalation ladder where an ENF could play a logical role so as to improve US/NATO capabilities for a controlled nuclear response? (And if so, would such a role for ENF so weaken its value as a way of asserting European nuclear independence as to invalidate it politically? This question is deferred until discussion of the political utility of the ENF.)

Possibilities within the escalation ladder are demonstrations, a theater nuclear role, and forms of limited strategic retaliation.

ENF could fire shots at relatively unimportant targets to demonstrate the likelihood of imminent escalation should the attack continue. But it would be difficult for the US, much less ENF, to decide to fire demonstration shots. Such shots require early decisions when information as to adversary actions or intent could well be erroneous, and they cross the "firebreak" threshold early with all its import for the difficulties of insuring future restraint. Should the bluff of these shots be called, then initial NATO resort to conventional warfighting could undermine the further deterrent value of nuclear weapons.\* Even should this demonstrative mission seem useful, it would hardly be a sufficient role to justify an ENF.

ENF forces could be allocated for theater missions once the phase of battlefield nuclear war† has been entered, either to deter further Soviet escalation by threatening theater war, or actually to be launched in order to prevent defeat at the battlefield level. Commitment of these weapons for theater-level war merits full discussion.

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\* This could be obviated, but only by abandoning initial conventional warfighting in favor of tactical nuclear war from the outset or by using demonstrations after conventional war had started as an interim deterrent measure (designed to induce Russia to cease the attack), before escalating to battlefield nuclear war.

† Battlefield nuclear war is here used to mean war in which nuclear weapons are used only on military targets which directly affect the engagement of front-line forces, including immediately available reserves and supplies. These targets lie roughly within the area of opposing Field Armies.

A theater mission role for ENF forces raises special problems.\* The need for theater weapons results from the fact that Russia maintains a sizeable IRBM and MRBM force for which there is virtually no NATO equivalent, the last of such weapons having been withdrawn from Italy, the UK, and Turkey in 1963.† This threat is only partly balanced by NATO tactical aircraft, which are vulnerable to first-strike attack and insufficient in number. Because of European political sensibilities to the reintroduction of IRBMs, the remaining option to right this imbalance appears to be fleet ballistic missile submarines with a theater mission, either US or European.‡ One might consider having a European Nuclear Force take on this mission. If such a force could carry out a theater strike mission effectively, then presumably this force could be effectively used to help deter three kinds of Russian actions: (a) from attacking; (b) from using battlefield nuclear weapons§ if she does attack; and (c) if battlefield nuclear weapons are nonetheless used, from escalating the war above the battlefield nuclear level. The deterrent functions of such a force would essentially be accomplished by countering the threat of Russian IRBM-MRBM forces targeted for Europe.

The ENF could not carry out these functions by use in a counterforce role against IRBMs and MRBMs, both for lack of numbers and because of uncertainty that it could strike them before they were launched.

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\* Note that a theater war must include European sanctuaries if it is not to be considered by European leaders a strategic or general war. At least Britain and France would have to be Western European sanctuaries. For the Warsaw Pact, Russian territory and the East European capitals might appropriately be sanctuaries.

† Department of Defense, Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1963, p. 248. (US Government Printing Office: 1964.) The French surface-to-surface missiles in the Massif Central are an exception, though a very vulnerable one. On their utility, see Ian Smart, "Future Conditional: The Prospect for Anglo-French Nuclear Cooperation," Adelphi Papers, No. 78, Institute for Strategic Studies, London, p. 5.

‡ The five POLARIS submarines allocated to SACEUR could contribute to theater-level deterrence and combat, if assigned appropriate missions. On the 1963 creation of a NATO nuclear force and the attendant allocation of these submarines to SACEUR, see William W. Kaufmann, The McNamara Strategy, Harper & Row 1964, pp.126-127.

§ Battlefield nuclear weapons are those of range below about 100 km, and are used to affect the land battle within the Army area directly. Theater-level weapons extend the range to include the entire Warsaw Pact area outside the USSR.

If its deficiency in a counterforce role were but a matter of numbers, one might further augment the ENF by assigning a secondary theater mission to enough of the US-controlled SSBNs to make up the difference.\* But this does not seem justified, since an IRBM-MRBM counterforce attack would be infeasible except by perfect surprise, and to achieve surprise the deterrent value of the force would be negated. Indeed, the force might be provocative. It would seem far more feasible and useful to adopt a strategy of targeting them against vulnerable Warsaw Pact targets, targets crucial either to immediate support of a sustained advance of its land forces or to the national security interests and social and economic viability of one or more satellite nations. Among the former might be forward depots, transfer points for unloading reserve forces, or bridges and highway junctions crucial to the movement of second echelon forces. Targets of the second category would have to be carefully selected so as to reap severe military or political costs for Russia, yet not so important as to constitute intolerable damage to Soviet vital interests.

For a theater role involving these kinds of targeting, a European Nuclear Force comprising the nine British and French SSBNs, supplemented by the five POLARIS submarines under SACEUR's control, could significantly contribute to the interdiction of the Warsaw Pact line of communications. But only the allocation of more US SSBNs or an increase in the French or British construction program could assure fully successful interdiction, in the absence of QRA aircraft. Such increases are unlikely in light of the Soviet unilateral view that such changes would free the USSR from SAL restriction on the number of submarines it could construct.†

\* Pentagon planners are now giving serious thought to the use of POSEIDON weapons in a theater role, according to a recent article by the New York Times' military correspondent in ARMY magazine. (William Beecher, "Over the Threshold," ARMY, July 1972.)

† On this view, see Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Volume 8, No. 25, Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Monday, June 19, 1972, pp. 1041-1042.

Thus, in peacetime Russia would perceive this force as integrated into the US strategy for preventing a land force takeover of Western Europe, yet capable if war comes of being used independently of the US strategic force and on a more limited class of targets. The US could then make a Russian strategic nuclear attack on the British or French homelands cause for US strategic retaliation, as political and military compensation for the diversion of the ENF boats to the theater mission. Thus, the European leadership would have an ENF option which could plausibly deter Russian escalation to theater war, yet one they could exploit by threat with some confidence that attack on their homelands would be deterred by the US strategic force.

It may be argued that such a role is unacceptable to the key European nations (France, Britain, and Germany). But if the US is willing to move rather soon to the battlefield level, this would meet German concerns and in part meet French objections. Moreover, the ENF could retain as a contingent option a strategic retaliatory role for use in event either that an opportunity to contain the war below the theater level did not arise or the ENF leadership at the "moment of truth" came to doubt US will to use its strategic retaliatory force for actively deterring Russia from overrunning Western Europe or attacking the UK and France.

Finally, they could be used as a strategic retaliatory force. Use in limited strategic war, against targets which are not purely counter-value, such as Russian scientific or industrial complexes, or nuclear weapons depots, is not a credible or effective role, because of the small numbers of weapons available. But as a strategic retaliatory force, ENF would have more credibility than the French force de frappe for two reasons: the larger numbers, and its more clear coupling with US plans and strategic doctrine. By emphasizing this role publicly to satisfy Europeans who doubt the US will to use its strategic force to save Europe and emphasizing the theater role to those who do not doubt it but do worry over the imbalance of forces, the value of an ENF might be maximized. The Russians would probably be much more deterred by this double role, especially because of the added theater role, than they are by the small French force with its desperation mission and the British force which is merely a small increment to the US/NATO strategic force.

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Would the US favor or condone a strategic retaliatory role for an ENF, given our strong commitment to a controlled, flexible response? The answer is crucial, for it is difficult to conceive Europeans, notably Britain or Germany, adopting this role without US approval. Putting aside for the moment political reasons, such as facing as an alternative the dissolution of NATO, three considerations might bring the US to accept such an ENF strategic role:

- a. ENF became capable of credibly deterring a Soviet attack on NATO or if this failed, compelling the USSR to limit its attack to battlefield nuclear or conventional war.
- b. It was believed to be a safer alternate than the French force de frappe.
- c. The ENF adopted a doctrine of strategic response such as to allow the US the time and space to play out its flexible response escalation and negotiating steps first. (That is, a doctrine in which ENF would not strike significantly sooner than the US plans to.)

The first of these would be an enormous achievement, freeing the US of the obligation to use its strategic force to save NATO. But such a capability is entirely beyond the means of the UK and France, even if financially aided by other European NATO countries.

Respecting the second, the US would hardly encourage a force development of uncertain character and utility merely because it was safer than the French force. However, this would be a significant secondary consideration, provided a more compelling reason also favored it.

The third reason has much merit, and may be just that compelling reason. It would in reality not be a decoupled force, but the Europeans might believe it to be. It would have the merit of strengthening the deterrence of the USSR through uncertainty. It would not be likely to allow the US to economize on weapons, but it would add redundancy. As such ENF action would be invoked only after the US (acting through NATO) had employed battlefield, and probably theater-level nuclear weapons, it would in essence constitute no more than reinsurance against US failure to invoke the ultimate option. It would, to be sure, be a more

limited strategic threat than that of the US retaliatory force, yet it is not unbelievable that it could threaten sufficiently unacceptable damage upon Russia to dissuade her from attacking Britain and France with strategic weapons in any war short of a US-Russian strategic nuclear war. An ENF strategic retaliatory threat might offer Russia the possibility of a face-saving halt to escalation without a direct confrontation at the strategic level with the US; indeed, the US might even serve as mediator restraining the ENF while Russia and the West European states discuss armistice terms. It is admittedly highly speculative that escalation below the holocaust level could in the event be so nicely kept under control; but, used for purposes of the peacetime public enunciation and practice of deterrence strategy, it could help induce Soviet caution.

The use of ENF in a theater or strategic role would, then, seem to offer its greatest deterrent and escalation-constraining values. But the main justification of such a force would probably be political, an area we now address.

#### POLITICAL VALUE OF AN ENF

The essence of the possible political value of an ENF lies in the widespread conviction of West European leaders that a Western Europe without nuclear arms is outclassed in realizable military potential by Russia, that to correct the balance by full reliance on US nuclear strength places Europe's destiny in good part beyond its control and in uncertain hands, and (really only a corollary of the second) that the US may, consciously or not, sell out the security of Western Europe in order to reach accommodation with Russia on ways to prevent a nuclear exchange between the superpowers. Though this is the essence, it is by no means the whole of the political rationale for an ENF. There are a number of aspects pro and con as to the political utility of an ENF, each of which must somehow be weighed, if a net evaluation of its political utility can be arrived at.

First we must ask whether the solidarity of NATO threatens so seriously to decline (perhaps even to the point of dissolution) as to make the ENF, and perhaps other new measures, essential to arrest this decline.

Second, we must investigate what is really the obverse: is steady progress toward political unification of Western Europe a necessary positive measure, to which an ENF is an important contribution? Indeed, is a unified Europe a prerequisite for an enduring and stable military balance in Europe? Third, do the British and French aspirations to remain nuclear constitute a force so important that these aspirations should be channelled and assisted toward a collaborative or integrated nuclear force? Fourth, is ENF especially useful as a means to settle more lastingly and acceptably the issue of an atomically disarmed Germany? Fifth, what political considerations would bear most upon US acceptance of an ENF?

To see that the solidarity of NATO is today again at a crisis point is far easier than to judge definitively whether irreversible disintegrative forces are about to take hold. We have only to recall Dulles' "agonizing reappraisal" of the mid-fifties, the 1956-1960 concern over a "Europe in disarray" following the 1955 beginning of East bloc military assistance to Egypt and the 1957 Sputnik launching, or the period as NATO approached its 20-year point in 1969 when worry was widespread that the NATO members might drastically revise the Treaty terms, to be reminded that NATO has faced but survived many crises of confidence. Yet there is no deterministic guarantee of NATO's survival; in each crisis, it required new diplomatic initiatives and energies or renewed Soviet intransigence to breathe life back into it. Moreover, NATO has constantly undergone transformations in its underlying strength and no doubt will in the future, so that even if it were not to dissolve, the disparity between political facade and military viability could seriously enlarge.

There is, indeed, a concatenation of current circumstances which might together undermine the political consensus which holds NATO together. The US mood of weariness about foreign commitments interacting with the present Soviet strategy of detente is part of it. It seems virtually certain that the public mood, Congressional will and the Administration philosophy of requiring greater foreign sharing of collective security responsibilities are going to compel some force reduction in Europe. Even if the reduction proves of insignificant scale, it will

reinforce European doubts that the US presence can be permanent. The German Ostpolitik has opened risks, not that Germany is likely to abandon its commitment to NATO, but that Russia may succeed in exploiting the duality and innate inconsistency of the German Ostpolitik and pro-NATO policies as means further to divide the major European states, to bring about a reduction in their force contributions to NATO or to undermine consensus as to its strategic framework. The Russian drive to bring about a European security conference, riding on the recent successful negotiation of new agreements on Berlin and strategic arms limitations, could for at least several years arrest efforts to strengthen NATO. Finally, France needs to be brought back into the military structure of NATO (or at least into closer collaboration with it), for without some fundamental new initiative, France is likely to continue for some years to play a lone security role, placing great strains upon the cohesion of NATO and posing special difficulties for the construction of a truly viable NATO defense strategy. All these difficulties suggest that, although the centripetal forces will not inevitably weaken NATO, it is likely to experience over the next several years still another crisis of confidence calling for imagination and energy to keep the evolution of NATO on a constructive path.

The entry of the United Kingdom into the European Common Market offers an enormously important possibility of arresting the decline of NATO and infusing Western European defense with new vitality. At the same time, it is possible that this event could contribute to the weakening of security, for the UK could become a divisive force if, because of its Commonwealth interests, it proves unable to enter fully into efforts to resolve political issues of Europe-wide concern. There is now a high premium on consummate British diplomacy so to act as to bring new unifying initiatives to Europe in ways which successfully balance the interests and concerns of France, Germany, the lesser NATO nations of Central Europe, and the countries on NATO's northern and southern flanks.

Fortunately, Prime Minister Heath sees European security as at least as vital as its prosperity; and, unlike the Labor Party when in power, is flexible as to whether UK-French nuclear collaboration need necessarily be entirely integrated into NATO. At the same time, there is a strong political faction (perhaps the dominant one) in France which desires

French hegemony or at least fears German dominance in Europe, a faction which will try to play off British against German efforts to advance the solidarity of Western Europe, inevitably inhibiting progress toward closer collaboration in security matters.\* The French prefer cautiously to move on one international issue at a time when what is at stake is a basic change in policy. An ENF force could, for reasons of technical and economic need, be just the issue to take up first.

This brings us naturally to the question of European political unification. Hardly anyone believes that full unification is at all likely in the near future. We have, however, witnessed over 20 years a gradual growth of forces and institutions leading in that direction. Only economic determinists are likely to argue that EEC has made unification inevitable, but certainly EEC plus NATO plus the Soviet threat have brought about a major growth in Europe-wide political consciousness. These steps have made further steps far more credible and perhaps less difficult to take than was ever the case in Europe before.

Both DeGaulle and Michel Debré, his and now Pompidou's Defense Minister, consistently held that until there is a European political conscience and a European political union, a European collective nuclear force is impossible. After DeGaulle died, President Pompidou significantly modified this view. In 1969, he said that "the future of a common European nuclear defense policy lies in an agreement between France and Great Britain." But he qualified this, saying "but it will take time, and Europe must first develop a political conscience." Neither he nor the then Prime Minister, Chaban-Delmas, set political integration as a precondition to negotiations. Pompidou seems to do so as a precondition for agreement, but if negotiations begin seriously then surely agreement could hardly await the full integration of Western Europe. Rather, successful negotiation (if acceptable to Germany) could greatly contribute to, and might even be widely considered essential to political integration.

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\* There are also strong factions of French "Europeans" who could be the salvation of Western Europe's difficulties but who have never been able to hold the center of French domestic power (exemplified by M. Mendes-France's failure at the time of the EDC collapse in 1954).

Whether an ENF is requisite to or contingent upon political integration is crucial in respect to timing. For if an ENF had to wait upon integration it would be too late for France and the UK to face up to and resolve the technical and economic problems in continuing as modern members of the nuclear club. On balance, it appears that new arrangements to strengthen the security of Western Europe are widely recognized as too urgent to wait upon political unification.

Indeed, technical and economic desiderata could resolve the matter of timing: UK and French aspirations to remain nuclear probably provide ENF its most persuasive political rationale inasmuch as decisions related to their collaboration must be taken within the next year or two if these countries are to have viable nuclear forces in the 1980's. There was a time when Britain nearly opted out of the club. That time is past, in good part because of the heavy intellectual and material investment in nuclear know-how, but also because of the irrevocable relegation to second-class status as a political power and technologically modern state which such a decision appears to imply. Britain feels no glory in being a nuclear power, to be sure; for her it is simply a requirement for exerting some influence on Europe's future, a role which could be Britain's last call to renewed greatness. France's leadership has never doubted its nuclear aspirations, which are tied to its somewhat mystic and vague self-image of national grandeur.

France would probably favor only technical collaboration at present, despite British interest in collaborative policy and strategy. Thus, of the five possible forms or degrees of cooperation listed at the beginning of this article, the first two (joint technological development and planned sharing of procurement and force allocation) are the only clearly feasible\* first steps. But these alone are sufficient to give an ENF great political value. Seeing these two countries collaborate in so basic a security field might provide a great lift to the morale of other NATO states,† and could give impetus to their willingness to honor

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\* Fuller discussion of feasibility appears in the next section.

† German attitudes, a special case so dependent on the nature of the other three forms of British-French collaboration, are discussed later.

better their force commitments. What of US views? Technical collaboration alone would strengthen ENF nuclear capabilities significantly, but would not be meaningful for US security policy without the further collaborative steps necessary to an effective deterrent role. Attitudes of US leadership would no doubt remain tentative until the form of these further steps began to take shape; but as the US would hope subsequently to influence the final forms of joint collaboration, there is no strong reason why the US would be likely to oppose such collaboration. Indeed, even technical cooperation might permit Britain to exercise some moderating influence on the extreme French position on nuclear strategic policy. The Soviets would inevitably protest this collaboration as violative of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. And their main serious concern would probably be assurance that the agreement confirmed the continued exclusion of Germany from the nuclear club.

The greatest political utility or disutility of an ENF would come at the fourth stage (a joint planning mechanism for all purposes except decisions to fire). For it is at this stage of UK-French planning that:

- a. Arrangements would have to be made which are both acceptable to Germany and tolerable by Russia.
- b. The arrangements would be sufficiently sensitive to compel the US to take a position clearly in favor or opposed.

Arrangements unsatisfactory in either respect would spell the doom of an ENF.

It is here, at the joint planning phase, that the utility of ENF as an instrument for settling more durably fears of an atomic Germany would come into play. A means to give Germany a voice in determining strategic doctrine would be essential to permit the ENF planning structure to function. For a dissatisfied Germany could take a number of steps to undermine NATO and ENF nuclear plans; moreover, the US would not accept an arrangement not acceptable to Germany. The US might defer its position on the mechanism until it could see how strategic doctrine and plans evolved, but on the issue of German acceptability it would not be likely to postpone forming a policy and acting upon it.

The US could, of course, bring overwhelming influence to bear to scuttle the organization.

It is not likely that an ENF could be the catalyst to settle permanently doubts that Germany will remain atomically disarmed. No one step is likely to do that, unless it is German abandonment of an independent Ostpolitik and of its hopes for reunification. But a proper ENF planning arrangement could drive one more nail in the coffin containing the corpse of German Realpolitik. Germany does not want atomic arms, only its industrial technology. A growing French nuclear-based chauvinism could possibly resurrect German ambitions to dominate Europe, however; measures such as ENF which serve to subordinate the national ambitions of the major Western European powers to the collective sharing of power will help to lay the ghost of an isolated and militarily dangerous Germany.

What of US fears of a European nuclear force not integrated into NATO? Would the US insist as strongly as in the early sixties that such an organization be intimately tied to NATO? Hopefully, France and the US could today both be more flexible on this issue, particularly if the UK and France prove able to develop within the ENF context a specific set of concepts for deterrence and warfighting. As a practical matter, the fourth stage, development of an effective joint planning structure, would not evolve as a formalized system agreed to by the UK and France but unacceptable to others. Rather US and, to a lesser degree, German views would be sought and given, so that either its form would reflect a compromise among these views or UK-French collaboration would not proceed beyond the third stage (shared deployment and patrolling, national control of planning, and decisions as to use).

The fourth stage is most generally conceived as a European Nuclear Planning Group constructed along the lines of the NATO Nuclear Planning Group, except for the absence, of course, of US full participation.\* This would give Germany a voice in its policies and planning. Ian Smart

\* See, for example, Francois Duchene, "A New European Defense Community," Foreign Affairs, Oct 71, pp 79-80; Ian Smart, "Future Conditional: The Prospect for Anglo-French Nuclear Co-operation," Adelphi Paper No. 78, Aug 71, p 42; Andrew J. Pierre, "Nuclear Diplomacy: Britain, France and America," Foreign Affairs, Jan 71, p 299.

argues that Russia would find this unacceptable, having tolerated the NATO Nuclear Planning Group only because the US, which Russia believes willing and able to contain German military power, controls it. Russia might, then, he argues, block Germany's Ostpolitik, posing for Germany the dilemma of opting out of ENF or abandoning its "opening to the East." This Russian concern could perhaps be assuaged by providing the US an observer or advisory role, or by establishing liaison members between the two Nuclear Planning Groups. In any event, Russia has larger interests in Germany's Ostpolitik which might take precedence over her objections to ENF. Moreover, it is hard to conceive how Germany could dominate a nuclear force which is operationally in the hands of Britain and France. Possible Russian irritation does not seem an insuperable barrier.

It is when we come to the last stage (joint authority over threat exploitation or actual use) that the stickiest problems arise. It is hard to conceive authority over the use of these weapons being more than nominally shared. But this is true of any collective nuclear arrangement. The British nuclear Polaris force is committed to NATO with the crucial exception "where Her Majesty's Government may decide that supreme national interests are at stake." Authority to fire US or other British nuclear weapons committed to NATO is understood similarly to be granted to SACEUR only at the pleasure of each government concerned. Too much, therefore, has been made over the limitations of an ENF inherent in the problem of decision-making.

#### FEASIBILITY

The technical feasibility of British-French nuclear collaboration has been thoroughly examined by others, and this author has no essential quarrel with these views, on which widespread consensus exists. We will simply summarize the considerations.\*

\* See, for example, Ian Smart, op. cit., and Andrew J. Pierre, Nuclear Politics, The British Experience with an Independent Strategic Force, Oxford University, 1972, especially Part Four.

There is great complementarity between the French and British technical capabilities, the pooling of which makes sense. The French are superior in missile design and experience, a field Britain abandoned in 1960, have a widely diversified industrial production base, have access to adequate natural uranium sources, and can produce their own enriched uranium. Britain is far ahead in warhead design and in the design and operation of submarines, including their nuclear power plants. Neither has underground testing facilities (France's Pacific atmospheric test site could hardly be used by the British, who adhere to the Partial Test Ban Treaty). Neither has the economic or technical capacity alone to keep abreast of the nuclear system developments which will characterize a first-class nuclear strike force in the 1980's. There are differences in the economic burden of nuclear missile programs each country shares in relation to its total economic capacity, but these are not major.

The greatest barriers to UK-French technical collaboration lie in the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the conditions of US sharing of nuclear know-how with Britain. It is difficult to see how collaboration could include the areas of British superiority unless France adheres to the Test Ban Treaty. But if agreement to collaborate were reached, France probably would no longer need to test in the atmosphere and therefore remain a Treaty "hold-out." Now that France has developed nuclear weapons, it is probably feasible to collaborate within the terms of the NPT, though complicated.

The limitations which the US has set to French access to nuclear know-how are of two kinds:

- a. The Anglo-American Agreement for Co-operation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defense Purposes of 3 July 1958 and the Agreement for Co-operation on Civil Uses of Atomic Energy of 15 June 1955, both of which bar the UK from transferring atomic energy information to a third country without the approval of the US Government and the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy.
- b. The US policy against providing France with similar technical information or equipment.

There is a history which suggests that the US has not really been of one mind in refusing nuclear technology to France. In 1962, two occasions arose when the US came close to admitting France to the nuclear club on equal terms with the UK. The first occurred in the summer, when France sent the Lavaud mission in quest of our most advanced strategic equipment, including some nuclear components. The second was in the wake of the Nassau Conference, when President Kennedy urgently offered DeGaulle Polaris submarines on the same terms as for Britain as well as mutual participation as a member of a triumvirate to control Europe's nuclear strategy.\* In the first instance, the President finally vetoed the military aid, in the second he offered it and DeGaulle refused (since DeGaulle wished to be the only European nuclear power and viewed co-equal participation with the British as tantamount to submission to US strategic domination). There was even a third instance that year. The US had actually decided to provide our nuclear submarine technology to France, but this was supplanted by the Nassau offer of Polaris submarines to be under nominal NATO, but actual French control, as for Britain.

At the time of the Lavaud mission, important figures within the US Government considered denial of such information short-sighted, and actively favored providing France all the technical information and other assistance she required. Among these were General Maxwell Taylor, Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Nitze,† Under-Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric, Director of CIA John McCone, and Secretary of the Treasury Douglas Dillon. The Department of State carried the day against providing what the French wanted, on two grounds: it would not alter DeGaulle's view on NATO, and it would set a precedent making it painful to refuse the same data to Germany. The first of these objections may well disappear under Pompidou, or an alternative ENF arrangement may in the net prove acceptable to the US even if France does not return to NATO.

\* See John Newhouse, DeGaulle and the Anglo-Saxons, Chapters 6 and 8.

† Nitze set a condition that DeGaulle would renew collaboration with NATO, which he doubted DeGaulle would agree to but wished to "smoke out."

The second objection would presumably lose what validity it had within the framework of an ENF;\* moreover, French nuclear know-how has today progressed to the point where Germany has already been so disadvantaged vis-a-vis France. To have provided such data to Germany was never a practical reality in any event.

In 1962, then, much of the Executive Branch opinion favored making France privy to US nuclear "know-how" (though finally overruled by Secretary Rusk and in turn President Kennedy) in conditions which more justified denying this knowledge to the French than do the circumstances and conditions existing today. The mechanics for making such information available (whether directly to France or via modification of policy exceptions to the Anglo-American agreements) are not important for the purposes of this analysis. What is important is that existing US laws and agreements are by no means an insurmountable bar. The real issue would be whether the US perceived the terms of UK-French collaboration and the strategic virtues of an ENF as justifying the changes.

It would appear likely, then, in a period of strategic parity when the US has to calculate more cautiously the circumstances for using a strategic umbrella to cover Europe, that these obstacles could be overcome, though no doubt only after extensive review and in the face of some opposition in Congress, if the US now found the release of such information desirable either in the interest of an ENF or for other reasons.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF A PROSPECTIVE ENF FORCE FOR AMERICAN NATO FORCE PLANNING

Although the prospects for a European Nuclear Force are considered good, there is no assurance that it will come into being. If it does, it will take time. One cannot realistically expect agreement on the first and second stages (joint technological development and planned sharing of procurement and force allocation) in less than 12 to 18 months. Although planning for the next two stages (shared deployment and patrolling, a joint planning mechanism) might proceed concurrently, it could take as much as three or four years to reach this stage.

\* Its validity was even then questionable, since US preferential treatment of the British had already been discriminating against both France and Germany.

Nor can we assume that the ENF planning to follow would necessarily adopt US-developed concepts for its strategic doctrine, although the US has strong leverage to insure this and would certainly use it, given the enormity of the stakes involved.

Therefore, for the immediate future, though possibly only as an interim measure, US strategic planners should consider assigning to a portion of its Fleet Ballistic Missile Force a theater mission designed to offset the Russia-based IRBM-MRBM force targeted on Western Europe. This need not significantly degrade our Poseidon force in its primary role. Nor in wartime need it cause dangerous misinterpretations on the part of Russia.

As to the first, so long as the force is not to be used in an anti-IRBM(-MRBM) counterforce role, the numbers can be kept to perhaps six to ten of our 41-boat force. An interim step might be to assign this mission to the five submarines already allocated to SACEUR.

In order to insure that Russia did not construe a ballistic submarine attack on theater targets as part of an all-out strategic attack, ample measures are at hand. Prior notification, in peacetime or at the onset of war; separate command arrangements for this force; assignment of separate water areas for the two portions of the force; and timely use of the "hot line" are among the means available. If such a force is to be used to deter Russian use of its IRBM-MRBM force, then the deterrent communications which would be sent in moments of crisis or at the onset of war would provide full opportunity to make clear that the US intends selective rather than total use of the Fleet Ballistic Missile Force or the entire strategic force. So much for the interim measures.

As ENF develops, the US could facilitate its assumption of this interim mission (as well as the ENF contingent strategic mission) at various stages. Ideally, technological development and the evaluation of force use doctrine should go hand-in-hand, admittedly not an easy matter since ENF will develop by stages.

Respecting strategic doctrine, the US should stand ready to work closely though informally with Britain and France. US and Russian weapons and doctrine will be evolving, and the ENF strategic doctrine should keep abreast of important changes in both.

If ENF is to have roles which complement US missions but which may also supplant them, it needs to develop a specially designed missile permitting alternate targeting, variable yield, and different forms of target attack (e.g., airburst, shallow or deep penetration, means to limit unwanted fallout effects). This could require new boat or silo design, although technological advances in fields such as miniaturization may permit fitting the new missile to existing silos or at least existing boats.

In the interim phase, the allocation of a US force to a theater mission could raise suspicions among the Europeans that the US will not actively use its strategic forces to preserve Europe, even though by their very existence they serve that purpose in good part. During this phase it may therefore be necessary to maintain an ambiguous policy on use of the strategic force to preserve NATO, while however urging creation of a European Nuclear Force and allocating US FBMs as means of strengthening the credibility of our total deterrence posture.

As ENF develops and NATO-Europe acquires control over this increasingly imposing European force, the US probably should make clear that it welcomes and favors the planned use of the ENF as a means to help contain any war from becoming a theater-wide or general war, and that it accepts Europe's need to reserve to itself the option of a strategic retaliatory attack on Russia should we be unable to agree in the event on the timing or utility of its invocation and use.

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