

U.S.-European Nonproliferation Perspectives

A Transatlantic Conversation

A Report of the CSIS International Security Program
and Europe Program

AUTHORS

Camille Grand
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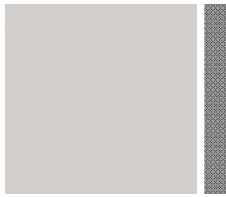
Center for Strategic and International Studies

1800 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006

Tel: (202) 775-3119

Fax: (202) 775-3199

Web: www.csis.org



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1

INTRODUCTION

The arrival of the Obama administration has brought significant hope to a transatlantic partnership that has been both ailing and adrift for the better part of the last two decades. Since the fall of the Berlin wall, the two sides of the Atlantic have struggled to identify a new common project and create the tools and institutions needed to address common challenges. To their credit, they have transformed their militaries, integrated new members into Western institutions such as the European Union and NATO, deepened economic ties, developed new partnerships, and acquired new capabilities. But they have also had a number of ugly and public disputes over the nature and severity of the threats they face as well as the means necessary to combat such threats.

Although Europe and the United States have sparred over a wide range of issues in recent years, none has created as much friction and resentment as the Iraq war. Iraq highlighted an array of transatlantic differences. First, the two sides of the Atlantic possessed conflicting intelligence assessments, making it impossible to reach consensus on whether or not Iraq actually had acquired weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Second, those who believed that Iraq did possess weapons of mass destruction could not agree on the potential dangers of a WMD-armed Iraq and whether or not preemptive strikes were justified. The fact that no single European view emerged only added complexity to the heated transatlantic debates. What resulted was one of the most dramatic transatlantic splits in the history of the relationship, with a small group of European countries eventually joining the United States in the Iraq war and another group of European countries sitting on the sidelines in vocal protest. The days where Europe and the United States joined forces to form a united front against a common enemy seemed to be long past. Talk of a “transatlantic divorce” ran rampant.

Now, several years after the dark days of 2002 and 2003, the transatlantic partners are working toward renewal. Although Iraq remains a stain on their relationship, Europe and the United States have come to realize that, however vast their differences might be, they remain indispensable partners to each other. Sure, the United States is the sole superpower, but recent operations in the Middle East have shown the limits of its world-class military. Yes, Europe is a beacon of soft power, but halting Iran’s nuclear ambitions has proven to be an almost insurmountable challenge even for Europe’s most skilled diplomats. The question before the two partners today, particularly in light of the newfound optimism tied to the change in administration in Washington, is how to capitalize on their comparative strengths to address an increasingly long list of common challenges. One of the most pressing challenges on that list is nuclear proliferation, both to states and subnational groups. Both Europe and the United States have recently expressed a renewed

interest in strengthening transatlantic cooperation in this area. But can and will the two partners manage to overcome their continuing differences?

In an effort to shed light on those differences, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) commissioned a series of essays on European perspectives on nonproliferation. The collection that follows seeks to serve as a starting point for a new, shared understanding of the threat. It begins not with a look at the official positions of states with regard to nonproliferation initiatives, but instead aims to help experts and interested observers understand some of the underlying historical, political, and cultural bases on which national views in Europe on nuclear threats are founded. Unable to solicit contributions from every member of the European Union or NATO, CSIS selected a representative mix of countries—some with nuclear weapons, some without. An effort was also made to include long-standing members of the alliance as well as new additions. Furthermore, because of the growing role played by the European Union itself, a contribution was solicited from an expert on the European Union to better understand how this emerging institutional player sees the proliferation issue and what impact on the broader debate it might have in the years to come.

For the U.S. government and the American public, the prospect of a nuclear attack—from terrorists or from another country—is seen as a real and growing danger. The recently completed work of the congressionally chartered Commission on the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism illustrated this sentiment starkly in the first line of its executive summary, which states, “The Commission believes that unless the world community acts decisively and with great urgency, it is more likely than not that a weapon of mass destruction will be used in a terrorist attack somewhere in the world by the end of 2013.”¹ Although experts, officials, and the public might disagree about the inevitability of such an event, there is a broad sense that the United States and its interests worldwide are jeopardized by the spread of nuclear weapons and that the use of such a device against U.S. interests is more than plausible. These concerns have led to an equally broad consensus that much more can and should be done to prevent such an event from taking place.

Whether the threat is acute and growing or not, this perception—based on a variety of factors including the legacy of the 9/11 attacks, the United States’ Cold War nuclear standoff with the Soviet Union, and the U.S. role in the world, as well as the resonance of nuclear issues in the news media and in TV and movie themes—is real and has significant implications for the conduct of U.S. policy. More importantly, for the purposes of this volume, the fact that the United States sees the risk of proliferation as a grave threat and that some of its key allies in Europe do not has interesting roots and important implications for transatlantic cooperation on efforts to deal with the spread of unconventional weapons.

¹ Bob Graham et al., *World at Risk: The Report of the Commission on the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism* (New York: Vintage, 2008), xv.

It comes as no surprise that many European countries and populations see the danger of proliferation in a different light than do many U.S. officials or experts. Although some countries in Europe are well versed in and acutely aware of the risks of a nuclear attack, other states see the risk of such prospects as remote at best, to the extent they think about such dangers at all. Some states in Europe believe that a nuclear attack against them is possible, while others believe the prospect so remote as to be insignificant as a security concern. These differences are both natural and understandable. Different countries play different roles in their regions and in the world and, as such, have different threat perceptions. The historical experiences of countries during the Cold War or with terrorism play key roles in determining their views on proliferation, but so too do their longer histories and experiences.

Each country, of course, will determine how to dedicate its resources and energies in dealing with its perceived security situation. But improved management of the Atlantic alliance appears to require more attention be paid to the differing views on the subject of proliferation—both state and subnational—and its implications for national, continental, and alliance security. Although the differences of national opinion within the alliance over Iran are much smaller than those leading up to the Iraq war, different views on both whether Iran will pursue nuclear weapons and what it means if they do should be addressed now and calmly as opposed to in a crisis.

These papers help show an interesting range of views on the issue of nuclear weapons and proliferation and shed light on some of the attitudes that underpin national policies on key issues. For example, Marcin Zaborowski's paper notes that Poland's government was willing to pursue a joint missile defense program with the United States out of a desire to solidify the alliance, but not out of any specific concern regarding either ballistic missile proliferation or Iran's nuclear ambitions. Poland's support for the Proliferation Security Initiative, likewise, is derived from a desire to improve its security ties with the United States and not out of any specific national concern about the nuclear black market. The casual observer might look at Poland's participation in these two efforts and assume that the government and the population is aware of and concerned about the risks of proliferation, when in fact this appears to have little or no bearing on Warsaw's nonproliferation policies.

Some themes are more predictable, such as France's strong and unwavering reliance on nuclear weapons (and nuclear energy) outlined in Camille's Grand's contribution. Mark Smith's piece on UK nonproliferation policy helps illustrate, however, that a variety of views exist in Europe, even among the only two nuclear weapon states, as to the role of nuclear weapons and their impact on the effort to prevent proliferation. These two pieces also expose differences in the two countries' willingness to publicly engage in the return of the abolition debates.² In this case, France seems to possess a much higher degree of discomfort with the inherent contradiction in promising to modernize nuclear forces while endorsing the abolition rhetoric.

² Triggered in part by the piece written by George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, and Sam Nunn, "A World Free of Nuclear Weapons," *Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2007.

Outside of government policy, these papers also highlight important differences in the nongovernmental organization (NGO) communities across Europe, which can have a major impact on public opinion. The United Kingdom and Germany have a rather rich tradition of NGOs promoting nuclear disarmament. By contrast, virtually no such NGOs exist in France. As a result, French antinuclear advocates have never been able to create the same grassroots movements that were once found and still exist in neighboring countries.

These contributions in no way represent the full range of views on nuclear weapons and proliferation issues within the alliance, but they do help to illustrate that there is a range, as well as to help begin identifying what factors can and do have an influence on the attention that nations and populations give the proliferation issues. Some, also, help connect how these unique perspectives influence national decisions on issues relating to efforts to stem or respond to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. By illustrating these factors, CSIS hopes to encourage other analysts and officials to dig deeper into the national perspectives within the NATO alliance and other transatlantic forums. By understanding the national attitudes behind the policies, policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic may be better able to shape constructive policy solutions to common problems and threats, as well as to better digest when cooperation in some areas is not possible without resort to painful and far-reaching recriminations.

From an U.S. perspective, there is near total consensus that the threat of a nuclear attack—from either a subnational group or from a state (accidentally or intended)—is the gravest threat facing the United States. This is not to say that a nuclear attack is considered likely, but it is seen as both possible and as having unparalleled implications for the country. America's prominence in the world, the stated desire and proven ability of terror groups to strike U.S. targets, the desire for such groups to “outdo” the 9/11 attacks, and the widespread and growing availability of nuclear capabilities and materials all reinforce these concerns. Beyond these, there is also a long-standing U.S. policy concern about the implications of horizontal proliferation for global security and stability. Even before the completion of the Manhattan project in 1945, U.S. officials worried that the spread of nuclear weapon capabilities to other countries would pose a threat to U.S. interests. Over the course of the next 60 years, these concerns grew as U.S. alliances and responsibilities around the world continued to increase. There was a clear recognition that the spread of nuclear weapons to additional states might not only trigger a wider nuclear conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union but could also affect the United States' ability to protect its growing vital interests overseas. U.S. support for the formation of the International Atomic Energy Agency in 1957, the negotiation and implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the full range of international nonproliferation measures are examples of how these concerns have driven U.S. diplomatic action. The decision to liberate Kuwait from Iraq in 1991 as well as the 2003 invasion of Iraq were also justified, at different levels, by the risk of proliferation.

In the wake of the Cold War, concerns about a direct nuclear exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union, and later Russia, diminished precipitously, but nuclear concerns emerged in other areas. The public accepted official declarations that the nuclear nightmare had vanished with the end of the Soviet Union, even as experts recognized that the risk of nuclear leakage from

the former Soviet states increased the danger of proliferation significantly. The fear that smaller states—including North Korea, Iraq, Iran, and Libya—might acquire nuclear capabilities has grown as a concern in the U.S. threat scenario in the wake of the Soviet collapse, even though they were minor concerns in the Cold War.

Now, added to the danger of nuclear terrorism, these concerns have expanded in the public mindset. Although nuclear issues do not command the same intensity of attention they did during the Cold War, the public's fear of a nuclear event is high and fed by a seemingly endless supply of potential threat scenarios from both the media and entertainment. Action movies, TV-based miniseries, investigative reports on magazine news programs, as well as the very real and needed direct reporting on security issues in the media are all adding to a sense of angst and concern in the broader public about nuclear threats.

Thus, almost 20 years after the end of the Cold War, there appears a remarkable consensus among both the public and the government that nuclear weapons pose the gravest threat to U.S. security. The reasons for this consensus are multiple. Surely, the political construct of the war on terror streaming back to the September 11 attacks has a major role to play, but the threat of a nuclear horror is nothing new to Americans. A generation of children grew up with duck and roll exercises in the 1950s and 1960s, and even through the 1980s Americans were on a daily basis forced to wrestle with nuclear issues in the context of the Cold War standoff with Russia. Newspapers carried front-page articles on nuclear testing campaigns in the United States and the Soviet Union as well as reports of arms control talks in Geneva and elsewhere. U.S.-Soviet summits were the stuff of high drama and almost always focused on the complex and terrifying management of the delicate balance of terror embodied in the nuclear arsenals of both countries.

Due to their differing experiences both then and now, the two sides of the transatlantic alliance have divergent but important perspectives on the nature of nuclear threats. This volume seeks to explore the varying vantage points in a vital effort to find common ground as the alliance progresses under new leadership into a new century.

2

FRANCE, NUCLEAR WEAPONS, AND NONPROLIFERATION

Camille Grand

Among the nuclear weapon states (NWS), French nuclear policies are unique and rest on the “French nuclear exception,”¹ which involves several key features:

- Strong political and public support for continuing current national nuclear policy;
- A medium-power nuclear policy deeply rooted in history emphasizing independence and nuclear sufficiency; and
- An evolving and ambivalent approach to nuclear disarmament combined with a proactive commitment to nonproliferation.

Current French Nuclear Policy

A Reaffirmed National Nuclear Deterrence Policy

French nuclear policy has always been closely associated with French presidents, sometimes described as the “French nuclear monarchy,”² which gives a unique and unbalanced role to the president in security affairs. The decision to use nuclear weapons belongs solely to the *président de la république*. President François Mitterrand bluntly summarized this last principle by stating in 1983 that “*la dissuasion, c’est moi.*”

The 2007 election of Nicolas Sarkozy presented an interesting opportunity to test the key principles of French nuclear policy after President Jacques Chirac’s 12-year term in office. As France lacks formal nuclear documents in the U.S. mold, it has been a tradition since Charles de Gaulle for a newly elected president to express his nuclear views in a formal speech.

¹ On French nuclear policy, see the most recent and comprehensive study by Bruno Tertrais, *La France et la Dissuasion Nucléaire: Concept, Moyens, Avenir* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 2007).

² This expression was first coined by Samy Cohen in *La Monarchie Nucléaire* (Paris: Hachette, 1986).

Nicolas Sarkozy kept tradition and in March 2008 delivered a major nuclear speech in Cherbourg, where French nuclear submarines are built.³ The speech is one of a series of presidential statements since the late 1950s that have laid out to the public French nuclear doctrine.

The Cherbourg speech remains fully in the tradition of the French nuclear doctrine and offers no major shifts, stressing that the role of the president is to “ensure that France, its territory, its people and its republican institutions are secure in all circumstances. . . . Nuclear deterrence is the ultimate guarantee of that.”⁴

President Sarkozy’s speech reaffirms the core principles that have long been at the heart of French nuclear policy. The following long extract of the Cherbourg speech offers a better summary than any paraphrasing:⁵

France no longer runs the risk of an invasion. There are, however, other threats to our security. Certain nuclear stockpiles keep on growing. Nuclear, biological and chemical proliferation continue, along with the proliferation of ballistic and cruise missiles.

Today we must all be mindful of the fact that the nuclear missiles of even distant powers can reach Europe in less than half an hour. Currently only the great powers have such means. But other countries, in Asia and the Middle East, are vigorously developing ballistic capabilities.

I am thinking in particular of Iran. Iran is increasing the range of its missiles, while grave suspicions surround its nuclear program. It is indeed Europe’s security that is at stake. In the face of proliferation, the international community must remain united and resolute. Because we want peace, we must show no weakness to those who violate international norms. But all those who respect them are entitled to fair access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

But we must also be prepared to confront other risks beside proliferation. The imagination of our potential aggressors is boundless when it comes to exploiting the vulnerabilities of Western societies. And tomorrow, technological breakthroughs may create new threats. That is why we are so attached to our nuclear deterrent. It is strictly defensive. The use of nuclear weapons would clearly be conceivable only in extreme circumstances of legitimate defense, a right enshrined in the UN Charter.

Our nuclear deterrence protects us from any aggression against our vital interests emanating from a state—wherever it may come from and whatever form it may take. Our vital interests, of course, include the elements that constitute our identity and our existence as a nation-state, as well as the free exercise of our sovereignty. My responsibility, as Head of State, is to assess their limit at all times, for in a changing world, they cannot remain static.

³ The full text of the speech delivered in Cherbourg on March 21, 2008, is available at http://www.elysee.fr/documents/index.php?mode=view&lang=fr&cat_id=7&press_id=1203.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

All those who would threaten our vital interests would expose themselves to severe retaliation by France resulting in damages unacceptable to them, out of proportion with their objectives. Their centers of political, economic and military power would be targeted on a priority basis.

It cannot be ruled out that an adversary might miscalculate the delimitation of our vital interests or our determination to safeguard them. In the framework of nuclear deterrence, it would be possible, in that event, to send a nuclear warning that would underscore our resolve. That would be aimed at reestablishing deterrence.

The speech did more than fall squarely within in the French nuclear tradition, but it also corrected some misperceptions left after the last Chirac nuclear speech⁶ that raised some unusual—and to a large extent unfair—controversies by mentioning the role of nuclear weapons in the context of terrorism, or by giving what was seen by some as an overextended definition of vital French interests. The new definition of French policy enshrines a modern vision of nuclear dissuasion that follows a narrow definition of deterrence. The French deterrent relies primarily on strategic assets to threaten the adversary’s “centers” with unacceptable damages. The U.S. tradition would call it “deterrence by (threat of) punishment.” Even though France no longer follows a counter-value targeting strategy of massive retaliation, the focus is to target the adversary’s “center of political, economic and military power” in order to deter actions that run counter to the interests of France.

Nuclear deterrence enters into play only if French “vital interests” are threatened and the definition of these vital interests (*intérêts vitaux*) is kept deliberately imprecise. President Mitterrand said that “deterrence is designed to avoid war, not to win it,”⁷ and this sentiment remains the cornerstone of French strategic thinking. To fulfill this mission, France only needs a limited nuclear capability that follows the principle of “reasonable sufficiency” (*suffisance raisonnable*).

Following the presidential Cherbourg speech, the 2008 *livre blanc sur la Défense et la Sécurité Nationale* (Defense and National Security White Paper, the first one since 1994) confirmed these key principles and the French intention to preserve the long-term credibility of French nuclear forces, including the continued modernization of both the sea-based (SLBM) and air-based nuclear components and maintaining updated communication (C³) systems.⁸ Starting in 2010, a new M51 SLBM will become operational on the four ballistic missile submarines. In 2009, a new

⁶ Speech of President Jacques Chirac during his visit the nuclear forces at Landivisau—Ile Longue, January 19, 2006, known as the Ile Longue Speech, http://www.elysee.fr/elysee/elysee.fr/francais_archives/interventions/discours_et_declarations/2006/janvier/allocution_du_president_de_la_republique_lors_de_s_a_visite_aux_forces_aeriennes_et_oceanique_strategiques-landivisau-l_ile_longue-finistere.38406.html.

⁷ See the speech on the French deterrence policy by François Mitterrand at Elysée Palace, May 5, 1994.

⁸ See “Dissuader” in *Défense et Sécurité Nationale: Le Livre Blanc* (Paris: Odile Jacob, June 2008), pp. 169–175, http://www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr/information/les_dossiers_actualites_19/livre_blanc_sur_defense_875/livre_blanc_1337/livre_blanc_1340/.

airborne missile—the *Air-Sol Moyenne Portée Amélioré* (ASPMA)—will also be made available for the air force and the navy. (France is the only nuclear weapon state that still fields nuclear forces on its aircraft carrier.)

The Cherbourg speech also covered arms control and disarmament issues extensively. For the first time since 1991, the French president tabled a comprehensive French plan for multilateral nuclear disarmament (see below for details). This diplomatic move was taken in response to criticism about a perceived French conservative stance with regard to disarmament and, bearing in mind the international agenda (NPT 2010), as a way to promote the French priorities for disarmament that lacked visibility, to say the least.

Unilateral and Multilateral Arms Control Efforts since the End of the Cold War⁹

Despite its strong and enduring commitment to its nuclear possession, France had taken a long list of unilateral steps toward nuclear disarmament in the wake of the Cold War. Altogether, from 1990 to 2008, France unilaterally completed an almost 50 percent reduction of its nuclear arsenal to less than 300 total warheads. These cuts started with the decision not to replace the retired 30 *Mirage IV-P* medium-range bombers, which was followed by the dismantling of the *Plateau d'Albion* 18 S-3D missiles (intermediate-range ballistic missiles with a strategic role) in September 1997 and of the 30 short-range *Hadès* missiles. The number of French ballistic nuclear-powered submarines (SSBNs) was reduced from six to four, with only three SLBM missile batches purchased for four SSBNs. President Sarkozy added to these steps in his Cherbourg speech by announcing a further one-third reduction of France's airborne nuclear component.

Even though some of these reductions were also motivated by budgetary constraints, they reversed the general trend in French nuclear policy. Until 1991, the French nuclear arsenal had been growing in size and capacity.

France also sees itself as a champion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), even though France opposed nuclear test limitations for many decades. Even though (or because)¹⁰ France resumed nuclear testing after a moratorium and conducted six tests in the fall and winter of 1995 to 1996, in August 1995, France became the first NWS to support the “zero-yield option” in the CTBT negotiations. This announcement, followed closely by the United States' support for the “zero” option, was a clear breakthrough in the CTBT negotiations. France was among the first signatories of the CTBT in September 1996 and swiftly ratified the pact. It has taken the further

⁹ For a comprehensive presentation of French nonproliferation and arms control policies, see the official booklet distributed during the 2005 NPT review conference: *Fighting Proliferation, Promoting Arms Control and Disarmament: France's Contribution* (Paris: Impression Opale, 2005), http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/maitrise_armement.pdf.

¹⁰ See Thérèse Delpech, “France's Last Tests: A Catalyst for New Policies,” *Nonproliferation Review* 3, no. 1 (Fall 1995).

and unmatched step of closing and dismantling its test site, thereby becoming one of only two nuclear weapon states—with the United Kingdom¹¹—without a national test site available.

Since 1997, France has also strongly supported the early start of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) and advocated negotiations for an agreement in the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament (CD) for years. It has supported the “Shannon mandate”¹² and displayed flexibility to allow negotiations to begin. This policy in favor of an FMCT is consistent with France’s unilateral moratorium on the production of fissile material for weapons and its unique decision to dismantle its former production facilities (Pierrelatte and Marcoule). Both have been opened to international visits¹³ in a unique transparency measure.

France also provided nuclear security assurances, both positive and negative, in an April 6, 1995, letter to the UN secretary-general and in a statement to the CD on the same day. On negative security assurances, France clarified in 1995 the first security assurances given in 1982: “France reaffirms that it will not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the NPT, except in the case of an invasion or any other attack on France, its territory, its armed forces or other troops, or against its allies or a State toward which it has a security commitment, carried out or sustained by such a State in alliance or association with a nuclear-weapon State.”¹⁴ This declaration harmonized the French position with previous statements made by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia.

France also provides security assurances through nuclear weapon-free zones (NWFZ). Paris has signed and ratified both protocols of the Latin American Tlatelolco Treaty. After its last nuclear test campaign, France signed the three protocols of the South Pacific Rarotonga Treaty (on March 8, 1996), together with the United States and the United Kingdom. A few days later, France signed, without any reservations, protocols I, II, and III (as France has some territories in the African NWFZ) of the African Pelindaba Treaty at the Cairo signing ceremony on April 11, 1996. Together with other NWS, it has also been engaged in, at times difficult, negotiations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and with Central Asian states to create the conditions allowing its full participation to the Bangkok Treaty establishing the Southeast Asian NWFZ and the Central Asian NWFZ.

¹¹ The United Kingdom has relied for many decades on U.S. testing facilities.

¹² Named for the Canadian ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Gerald Shannon.

¹³ All CD permanent representatives were invited to these facilities on September 16, 2008; for more on this visit, see <http://www.delegfrance-cd-geneve.org/spip.php?article327>.

¹⁴ Letter to the UN secretary-general, April 6, 1995.

France and Nuclear Weapons: A 50-Year Love Story

The French Nuclear Exception¹⁵

The enduring and broad-based commitment to its nuclear arsenal is a French specialty among the Western democracies. Whereas the U.S. and UK nuclear holdings are the subject of routine and sometimes heated internal debate and division, the French nuclear consensus has faced no major opposition since the 1970s when the major political parties declared themselves in favor of the national deterrence policy. Since then, it has also enjoyed broad public support, as has the national reliance on nuclear energy for a major proportion of its electricity demands.

All major political parties support the continuation of the nuclear policy, and only minor opposition parties including the Greens, the Communists, and the far-left (representing altogether less than 10 percent of the votes) are openly opposed to nuclear weapons. Importantly, however, these groups did not make their nuclear opposition an issue during their participation in a leftist socialist-led coalition from 1997 to 2002. As compared to the United Kingdom, the leftist tradition of opposition to nuclear weapons and support for unilateral disarmament has been extremely weak in France and has been completely marginalized within the socialist party (the current main opposition bloc) since the early 1980s.¹⁶ Those who support elimination of nuclear weapons are extremely isolated. Former Socialist prime minister Michel Rocard is the only leading political figure to have, and in a very prudent manner, supported an abolitionist thesis.

This unique position is deeply rooted in the origins of the French nuclear program. When France made a clear decision to go nuclear in the mid-1950s, it was a former great power losing its influence. Its decision to pursue a stand-alone nuclear option was, more than anything, the choice of a medium power facing new threats to its independence and influence at a time when the outstanding weight and potential of atomic weapons in international security was already obvious, and at a time when disarmament and nonproliferation pressures practically did not exist.

U.S. political scientists often argue that France acquired nuclear weapons for the prestige conferred by these weapons.¹⁷ France is described as a typical example of a country that followed

¹⁵ See the following on the historical background of the French approach to nuclear weapons: Camille Grand, "A French Nuclear Exception?" Occasional Paper No. 38, Henry L. Stimson Center, Washington, D.C., January 1998, <http://www.stimson.org/wmd/pdf/grand.pdf>.

¹⁶ President Mitterrand, for instance, gave decisive support to the deployment of the Pershing-2 missiles in a 1983 speech before the German Bundestag, at a time when most of the European left was campaigning against the Euro missiles.

¹⁷ For good examples of this view, see two early, but comprehensive, studies of the French nuclear policy: Wilfrid Kohl, *French Nuclear Diplomacy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971); and Wolf Mendl, *Deterrence and Persuasion: French Nuclear Armament in the Context of National Policy, 1945–1969* (New York: Praeger, 1970). For an interesting view of French strategic culture, see Philip Gordon, *A Certain Idea of France: French Security Policy and the Gaullist Legacy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

the “norms model” in choosing to acquire nuclear weapons.¹⁸ According to this model, French acquisition was motivated by a desire to maintain its great power status as its colonial empire was vanishing. Many statements by General de Gaulle could tend to confirm this view. The famous discussion with President Dwight Eisenhower in 1959, recalled in de Gaulle’s memoirs, is a good example: “A France without responsibility would be unworthy of herself, especially in the eyes of Frenchmen. ... It is for this reason too that she intends to provide herself with an atomic armament. Only in this way can our defense and foreign policy be independent, which we prize above everything else.”¹⁹

French perspectives are more qualified. While the “status” conveyed by nuclear weapons may have played a part in the decision, France’s quest for security should be seen as a more prominent factor. As a historically significant European and world power, France did want to maintain this status, and nuclear weapons acquisition was viewed as essential to that end. But the political value of nuclear weapons for France cannot be reduced to the symbolic dimension (the prestige) conferred by them.

Other major factors in this decision were rooted in contemporary French history. Nuclear weapons gave—or at least have long been perceived to give—France an answer to an often underestimated legacy of France’s twentieth century experiences. In World War I, France was invaded, and 1.4 million soldiers were killed from a total population of 40 million.²⁰ In World War II, France was not only militarily defeated but also occupied, divided, and humiliated and came close to the abyss as a nation. The nuclear choice was a “never again” answer to these memories.²¹ Many of the political leaders who lived through both wars from de Gaulle²² to Mitterrand have been clear about this, but it has gone further that a generational issue to become part of national mindset anchored in recent history.

Thus, the nuclear choice has much deeper roots than a simple quest for grandeur would suggest. The perception that nuclear weapons were unique for an autonomous defense policy and as an unchallenged war-prevention asset made them the right answer for France then and now. They

¹⁸ See Scott D. Sagan, “Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?” *International Security* 21, no. 3 (Winter 1996/97): 54–86.

¹⁹ Quoted in Sagan, “Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?” For the original text, refer to Charles de Gaulle, *Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1917), p. 209.

²⁰ See Elisabeth Kier, “Culture and Military Doctrine, France between the Wars,” *International Security* 19, no. 4 (Spring 1995).

²¹ On the historical roots of the French nuclear doctrine through an analysis of its key military strategists, see François Géré, “Quatre Généraux et l’Apocalypse: Ailleret, Beaufré, Gallois, Poirier,” *Stratégique* (January 1992), which offers a first look at the officers who developed this doctrine.

²² More than de Gaulle’s memoirs, his private dialogs with his long-time minister Alain Peyrefitte are very revealing about this key element of French nuclear history. See Alain Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, 3 vols., (Paris: Gallimard, 1994–2000).

provided an unsurpassed and cost-efficient answer to these challenges and to a large extent continue to do so.

Strong and Lasting Public Support

At the root of the French nuclear exception is the strength of public support for its nuclear policies. Year after year, polls demonstrate this support, which is essentially unchanged since the end of the Cold War. To the question, “can France insure its defense without nuclear deterrence?” more than 60 percent respond no (with 30 percent saying yes). Moreover, more than 40 percent support the view that the deterrent should be modernized, when 35 percent argue it should stay as it is and only 16 percent favor reductions, although these figures tend to change more over time. There are certain ambiguities in the popular support for the deterrence policy. For instance, about 50 percent argue that France is protected from aggression by nuclear weapons, while 43 percent fear the risk of being wiped out in a nuclear exchange. Regardless, France’s public support for nuclear possession is unique in Europe.²³

Sociologists and political experts suggest a range of reasons for these views: trust in the government when it comes to strategic choices, strong bipartisan political support for decades, lack of a strong antinuclear culture even to oppose nuclear energy, and last but not least a shared belief that French independence and security has benefited from the possession of nuclear weapons, all of which added to the lasting memories of the world wars.

There are very few nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) promoting nuclear disarmament in France, and they get very little public support. For instance, even during the 1995 resumption of nuclear testing, even though a majority of the French did not favor the decision, and although there were a few thousand people demonstrating against it, antinuclear activists never became a true grassroots movement as they have in Germany or in the United Kingdom. Altogether, since the 1970s, military nuclear policy has remained mostly a nonissue in the French public because of that unique form of nuclear consensus.

How Does France Approach Today’s Nonproliferation Challenges?

A Top Priority: Resolving the Iranian Crisis

Today, after the leading role that France played by the EU-3 approach to Iran in 2003,²⁴ much of France’s attention is given to the diplomatic crisis over Iran’s nuclear activities. In the aftermath

²³ All figures extracted from *Les Français et la Défense, 15 Ans de Sondages 1991–2006*, Dicot, Ministère de la Défense, December 2007.

²⁴ The foreign ministers of France, the United Kingdom, and Germany led a diplomatic initiative toward Iran over its nuclear program in 2003.

of the 2003 Iraq war, France sought to demonstrate that diplomatic efforts could be an effective curb against proliferation—in contrast to the U.S. strategy of regime change. Since then, France together with the United Kingdom and Germany (and later in close coordination with the United States, Russia, and China) has played a central role in seeking to convince Iran to abandon its dangerous nuclear activities.

More than occupying space on the diplomatic agenda, the risk of a nuclear Iran also occupies an important place in French nuclear thought. The Cherbourg speech devoted a paragraph to Iran in the context of deterrence, stating that “Iran is increasing the range of its missiles, while grave suspicions surround its nuclear program. It is indeed Europe’s security that is at stake. In the face of proliferation, the international community must remain united and resolute. Because we want peace, we must show no weakness to those who violate international norms.”

The core belief of the French leadership is that the single largest threat to the nonproliferation regime is the noncompliance cases of Iran and North Korea and that any hope of preserving the regime requires solutions to these crises. A failure to do so could otherwise unravel the regime and risk further proliferation.

This focus on Iran and the possible implications of a nuclear Iran both regionally and for the nonproliferation regime helps explain why France has some skepticism with regard to some issues on the disarmament and nonproliferation agenda. To put it bluntly, the lack of consensus on the CD agenda or even the lack of progress in U.S.-Russia disarmament talks are perceived as second-rank issues compared to the Iranian crisis and its longer-term implications. French diplomacy does not believe that progress on disarmament would make a significant difference with regard to proliferation crisis, and it should not be ignored that what is seen as the “golden age” of nuclear reductions (1987–1997) coincides with an acceleration of Iranian, Libyan, or North Korean efforts to seek the bomb. French experts also question the side benefit of gaining support from nonaligned players through a more progressive disarmament agenda. This support was not missing at key moments during the Iranian crisis, and these countries are fully aware of the strategic consequences of a nuclear Iran, even if they sometimes use this rhetorical argument to promote their own disarmament agenda.

French Proposals for Nuclear Arms Control, Disarmament

This priority given to Iran does not eliminate the need to take steps in the direction of disarmament, but it suggests a clear and strong view about France’s priorities. It is quite possible that this relative weight can lead to controversy within the European Union or the United Nations, or in particular with those countries more favorable to a traditional disarmament agenda.

Anticipating this potential, the Cherbourg speech innovated by covering disarmament extensively and putting forward a set of initiatives, including:

- A review of how low French nuclear forces might go while maintaining “strict sufficiency”;

- A one-third reduction in France’s airborne nuclear weapons, missiles, and aircraft;
- Increased transparency over its nuclear holdings, including an announcement that after steps are implemented, France will possess fewer than 300 nuclear warheads, or half of the Cold War peak;
- A declaration that French weapons are not routinely targeted on any specific country;
- A decision to invite international experts to observe the dismantlement of fissile material production sites at Pierrelatte and Marcoule;
- A call for negotiation to begin on a global ban on short- and medium-range surface-to-surface missiles; and
- A call for all states to implement the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

The speech also called on all of the nuclear powers to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, “beginning with China and the United States”; and for all nuclear states to dismantle their nuclear test sites in a transparent manner. The president also called for negotiation to move forward on an FMCT and for states to establish a moratorium on the production of such materials.

As comments by Bruno Tertrais underline: “The subtext of the Sarkozy speech could be summarized as follows: while remaining conservative on basic principles, France has a policy of nuclear restraint, and challenges the other nuclear weapon-States to adopt the same attitude.”²⁵

The speech did not offer major conceptual breakthroughs or a long-term vision, except for the call for a multilateral treaty banning short- and intermediate-range surface-to-surface missiles and a new French openness to transparency, but it intended to put the ball back into the court of those that have not ratified the CTBT (the United States and China) and those who have not stopped producing fissile material for weapons (China). The speech also demonstrated that outside the rhetoric of abolition, there is an unfinished nuclear disarmament agenda that France intended to push forward even if it did not please some of its close allies.

During the French EU presidency (the second half of 2008), this initiative had an interesting follow-up as the European Union endorsed the French plan that was presented in the EU speech delivered in the UN General Assembly First Committee debates²⁶ on behalf of European Union’s 27 members, with 6 more countries²⁷ associating themselves with this statement.

²⁵ See Bruno Tertrais, “France and Nuclear Disarmament: The Meaning of the Sarkozy Speech,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., May 1, 2008, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=20090&prog=zgp&proj=znpp>.

²⁶ See the full statement in French and English, Eric Danon, “General Statement,” 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly First Committee, October 6, 2008, http://www.delegfrance-cd-geneve.org/IMG/pdf/General-bilingue2_pdf.pdf.

²⁷ Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Ukraine, and Moldova.

Abolition: The Last of the Mohicans?

The newly energized abolition debates have had a limited impact in France, even within expert circles. What was true for the previous round of this debate (circa 1995–1999) seems reconfirmed: France does not take the abolitionist perspective seriously and questions the ultimate objective of such efforts. This helps explain the French aversion to anything that could seem to endorse the total elimination of nuclear weapons by a certain date.

During the 2000 NPT conference, France resisted the adoption of the “13 steps” related to the ultimate objective of eliminating nuclear weapons and has since been challenging the most common interpretation of this document. It has systematically displayed a preference for the document adopted during the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and always emphasizes the importance of putting nuclear disarmament in the context of general and complete disarmament, defending an orthodox reading of Article VI of the NPT.²⁸

This opposition, however, should not be caricatured as the posture of a “nuclear addict.” As described above, French nuclear disarmament policy is evolving. It is neither a flat refusal of any form of disarmament nor a last battle to protect an asset associated with French grandeur.

But France’s aversion to the more ambitious agenda is based on its assessment that in today’s world France might be safer with nuclear weapons than without them, at least until the feasibility and the security benefits of total nuclear elimination are demonstrated. In world of WMD and missile proliferation, and of nuclear buildup or modernization in both Russia and China, France is clearly reluctant to abandon what is perceived and often described as an “insurance policy.”

A second element coming into play is a form of French Cartesianism that refuses to endorse the abolition rhetoric while at the same time pursuing the modernization of its nuclear forces. This is in contrast to the apparently paradoxical British case, which included the Trident decision in the same package as the famous Beckett speech.

France’s conservative position has been criticized in some circles but should be understood as showing a robust doctrinal link between disarmament and security. From a French perspective, disarmament is not a goal in itself grounded on moral values; it should produce more security. Any disarmament measures should be tested against that single benchmark. If French, European, and international security are improved by a specific objective, then it is worth pursuing. If the security benefits are doubtful, caution should prevail. The last 50 years of French disarmament diplomacy can be read through that very basic principle. This should not be assessed as a purely conservative or selfish policy, as France has actively supported the ban of chemical and biological weapons, and many steps in the field of nuclear disarmament, and is quite ready to accept heavy constraints on its national policy if the world is safer ultimately.

²⁸ For an analysis of this approach see Bruno Tertrais, “The Last to Disarm? The Future of France’s Nuclear Weapons,” *Nonproliferation Review* 14, no. 2 (July 2007).

Lastly, it is worthwhile to note the much stronger French interest in minimum deterrence arrangements, which are consistent with France's historical aversion to the arms race. In other words, France would probably be more ready to engage in talks involving deeper cuts, including in its own arsenal, focused on reinforcing minimum deterrence than in any project targeted at zero nuclear weapons.

NATO, the European Union, and Nuclear Weapons

Since Charles de Gaulle, French nuclear policy has been developed as a national policy, and France has therefore played a limited role in the NATO nuclear debate. As a result, it has never achieved its traditional objective of opening a true discussion on the security benefits of a European deterrent beyond the close cooperation with the United Kingdom. Given the strong antinuclear positions existing within the European Union, this overall approach is unlikely to change.

Western Nuclear Weapons and the Security of Europe

France's core belief remains that nuclear weapons play a significant role in European security both with regard to potential threats coming from major powers and to the risks associated with WMD proliferation in the Middle East. The Sarkozy speech of 2008 reiterated the 1995 French offer to begin a European dialogue on the benefits of deterrence and its contribution to European security.

This helps explain the French reaction to moves by NATO allies (such as Germany or Norway) to push forward a NATO nuclear disarmament agenda. This is all the more true within the European Union where countries with strong antinuclear traditions such as Sweden, Ireland, and Austria coexist with two nuclear weapon states. This has not, however, prevented the European Union from playing an increasingly active role in international nonproliferation and disarmament forums and France from supporting that evolution.²⁹

The current French rapprochement with NATO military structures stops short of participation in NATO's Nuclear Planning Group, which has been for decades the symbol of a nuclear alignment to become acceptable. France nevertheless supports the view that the remaining U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe should not be scrapped and that the current minimalistic posture of NATO should be preserved if only as an insurance for the future.

The current debate on how to handle a more assertive Russia could reopen debates about the U.S. extended deterrent and the role of British and French nuclear weapons, which has been put aside for years.

²⁹ On the case for an ambitious European nuclear nonproliferation policy in spite of differences, see Camille Grand, *The European Union and the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*, Chaillot Paper, no. 37 (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, 2000), <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/cp037e.pdf>.

Even though no NATO ally has displayed any interest in such a debate, it can't be ruled out that the combination of three factors will impose such a debate on them:

- Tensions with Russia in the post-Georgia war period can't be excluded and will raise the issue of how Russia can best be deterred from further adventurism;
- The doctrinal link between missile defense projects in Europe and extended deterrence has not been thought through yet;
- The current air-delivered weapon systems of NATO-assigned U.S. nuclear weapons are getting old, and a decision to replace or scrap them will have to be made in the coming decade in a context in which no new generation aircraft outside France or the United States has been designed or modified to be nuclear capable. France has no direct stake in that debate but will certainly take its share if it was to occur.

Conclusion: Priorities and Solutions for the Way Ahead

France's approach to contemporary nonproliferation challenges tends to focus on short-term concrete objectives rather than setting up an ambitious agenda for the twenty-first century.

The following list of 10 priorities would build a solid basis for a renewed transatlantic partnership on nonproliferation through an enhanced dialogue on the pending nonproliferation issues:

1. Solving the Iranian crisis should be the first priority; the ability of the international community to peacefully resolve this crisis and put a halt to Iranian military nuclear ambitions is central for the future viability of the nonproliferation regime. A nuclear-armed Iran means a major crisis for the regime and a dramatically changed strategic landscape that would make the rest of the nonproliferation and disarmament agenda irrelevant.
2. Providing an approach that combines the aspiration of many in the NPT to have access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and the need for robust nonproliferation guarantees in the context of the current nuclear renaissance is a task that goes beyond the nonproliferation regime and contributes to the need to address climate change, evolving energy markets, and the need for economic development.
3. Discussing the terms of a renewed consensus with regard to nonproliferation and disarmament: the lack of agreement on long-term objectives, such as abolition by a certain date, should not be used to prohibit concrete steps consolidating the regime; the entry into force of the CTBT and the early start and conclusion of the FMCT negotiation have been on hold for too long.
4. Opening discussions first in the P3 (United States, France, and the United Kingdom) format and then in the P5 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council) on concrete and realistic measures to reduce nuclear dangers starting with increased transparency on stockpiles, doctrines, and policies and following with in-depth discussions on the role of

nuclear weapons in the coming decades and the best ways to insure security and stability in a rapidly evolving strategic environment.

5. Revisiting the nonnuclear nonproliferation challenges. Not enough political attention has been devoted to chemical and biological weapons, with both fields facing rapid technological evolution that could bypass the existing and already weak international instruments. The existence of clandestine biological or chemical weapons among signatories of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is likely and could if discovered too late create major threats or at least major distrust in multilateral regimes.
6. Addressing the specific challenge posed by missile proliferation. Missiles as the preferred mean of delivery of WMD have not been high on the agenda: proposals to foster The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOB) or plans for a multilateral instrument prohibiting certain categories of missiles should be discussed thoroughly and pushed forward.
7. Reviewing missile defense projects in a transatlantic format. It is now widely agreed that missile defense can play a role, but not enough time has been devoted to how to insert it successfully in an international effort aimed at convincing missile proliferators that they are taking the wrong track.
8. Engaging in a serious debate over the role of extended deterrence and NATO's nuclear policy in a rapidly evolving strategic landscape.
9. Preparing for the WMD challenges posed by non-state actors both in terms of practical responses (consequence management) and of developing new tools to prevent (or at least limit) the risk of a major event from happening.
10. Preparing the NPT 2010 with a robust transatlantic agenda on the balance between the three pillars of the NPT (nonproliferation, disarmament, and peaceful nuclear cooperation) and the challenges facing the regime. This endeavor should be a joint effort of the European Union (which has become a key player in the NPT framework) and the United States. The collective effort to insure the success of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference should serve as an example.

3

THE EVOLUTION OF GERMANY'S NONPROLIFERATION POLICY

Stefan Kornelius

Introduction

In pursuing a robust nonproliferation policy, Germany enjoys both a significant strength but also a serious weakness. On the positive side, Germany is a nonnuclear weapon state with a strong pacifist track record, as well as being a major economic power. Berlin also commands a massive engineering base very much in demand globally for sophisticated industrial projects and machinery development, including by suspected proliferators and nuclear wannabes. These factors give Germany leverage in global nonproliferation efforts and provide it with a strong voice in global nonproliferation negotiations. With a strong nonproliferation history and no hidden agenda, German officials are able to effectively press other countries to comply with international norms and procedures and to help ensure that sensitive materials are used only for approved purposes with full transparency. Germany's overall foreign policy agenda, rooted as it is in multilateralism and an aversion to the use of force, makes it a good power broker at the nuclear negotiation table.

However, German policy has been, at times, inconsistent and lacking in certain areas. Nonproliferation is, in a sense, an attempt to undermine the potential military power of states seeking to increase their strength through the acquisition of nuclear capabilities. To be successful in this effort, one has to be willing to use more than economic pressure or incentives. But Germany is extremely cautious in applying force. Since bullying is not part of Germany's repertoire, Berlin frequently finds it difficult to employ hard talk, political punishment, economic sanctions, or the threat of military force, to say nothing of actually engaging in the use of such force. For reasons deeply buried in the German historical conscience, there is a national consensus in seeking to abstain from what is considered the "dirty work" of international relations.

Although applying hard power is not easy for Germans, incentivizing states with trade benefits and the use of soft power talk hasn't proven entirely successful either. Thus, it is interesting to see how in dealing with Iran over the past several years, Germany has developed a new set of nonproliferation tools, most notably its effort to pursue the Multilateral Enrichment Sanctuary Project, which seeks to guarantee an internationalized fuel trade system while controlling the spread of enrichment technology to new states, such as Iran.

Although Germany might not be at the heart of upcoming major new international initiatives, including the possible pursuit of nuclear disarmament or even deep reductions by the United States and Russia, due to its unique position, Germany has earned the reputation of an honest broker that can be helpful in facilitating a bargain between a new U.S. administration and Iran and in playing a key role in other nonproliferation efforts.

Germany's Path to Multilateralism

To understand Germany's multilateralist attitude one has to dig deep in its history. Since the European state-building period of the early nineteenth century and particularly Chancellor Otto von Bismarck's wars of unification, the country's position in the middle of a bellicose continent has proved troublesome. Being Europe's strongest and most powerful nation led to anti-hegemonic reflexes by Germany's neighbors. Bismarck tried to counter these moves by setting up an elaborated system of alliances and secret treaties. This network of dependencies kept Europe's major power in balance and isolated France. However, its fragile construction didn't last and finally led to World War I.

Germany only overcame its geographical fate after World War II with its rapprochement with France that slowly led to a new body, now evolved into the European Union—a highly sophisticated supranational entity designed to regulate and deescalate potential conflicts among member states. In a way, the European Union is Germany's multilateralist insurance policy. In the 50 years of its existence, Germany has developed a new set of foreign political tools. They all follow a “dialectic idea,” as former foreign minister Joschka Fischer once called it, to pursue its interests without being seen as dominant. With this approach, Germany got used to making economic trade-offs as foreign political tools. Thus issues of vital interest were frequently settled with the check book.

In proliferation issues, Germany follows today's dominant trends and fully pursues the agenda that the European Union has set out in its Strategy Against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, decided in December 2003. This strategy was adopted in the wake of the war against Iraq and Europe's experience fighting the regime change–driven approach of the Bush administration. The strategy calls for multilateralism in all nonproliferation matters, citing the international treaty system as the legal basis for the European Union's efforts. The document calls weapons of mass destruction (WMD) “a growing threat to peace and security” and concludes: “In addition to preventive measures (multilateral treaties and export control regimes), there are, where appropriate, coercive measures under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and international law (sanctions ... and the use of force).”¹

¹ European Council, summary of *EU Strategy Against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, December 10, 2003, <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l33234.htm>.

For Germany, this last sentence has opened the path to a more aggressive policy in pursuing nonproliferation goals because it gives cover from a critical audience at home and places all action within a multilateralist framework. It is, however, unclear that Germany will actually walk down that path.

History and Political Roots

In its postwar history, Germany has resisted the option of pursuing a nuclear weapon program of its own. Apart from a brief interlude in the late 1950s when former defense secretary and former nuclear energy secretary Franz Josef Straub tried to lure the country into its own pursuit of unconventional weapons, there has been no serious German desire for such capabilities. Although Germany has not formally repudiated these options in the same way Japan did in 1971, the country enjoys the status as an entrenched nonweapon state worldwide, as well as in the biological and chemical fields. Germany also is a compliant member of all major nonproliferation treaties and norms.

However, until the early 1990s, Germany was a less than vigorous steward of its export control rules and technology, especially in the area of dual-use goods. German industry got caught in several instances supplying essential technology for chemical, biological, and even nuclear facilities in countries such as Libya, Iraq, Pakistan, and Iran. Germany, despite its public posture, was seen as a proliferation problem, which led to a major shift in German behavior in the 1990s.

After the German industry was discovered to have been a major source for Iraqi nuclear efforts before 1991, German policy underwent a significant change. The country adopted a leading role in a number of nonproliferation initiatives, especially in negotiating the Additional Protocol to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguard Agreement and actively participated in the negotiations on the Chemical and Biological Weapons Convention. Although the government allowed for industry experts to participate in the respective talks, the weight of the issues shifted significantly. WMD issues were finally seen less as industry and export issues but as political and security priorities with obvious political implications.

In that context, the leading role of the Foreign Office in shaping policy became more and more visible. Influence over sensitive trade issues was redistributed away from the Ministry for Research and Technology and the Ministry for Trade toward the Foreign Office. A long-standing bureaucracy struggle for power and influence was finally decided. In Germany's first Red-Green coalition under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, Joschka Fischer took over as foreign minister, the first Green ever at the helm of the Foreign Office. Disarmament and nonproliferation suddenly became key foreign political tools and were taken out of the context of previous thinking that used to follow NATO's lead and logic.

This shift came at the very time that the German nuclear industry was losing ground on the international market. Key companies were unable to introduce new technologies as the country was pursuing a newly adopted moratorium on the use of civil nuclear power instituted under the Red-Green coalition of Schröder (1996–2005). This remains German policy to this very day,

despite warning about potential energy shortages, due to its populist appeal and the influence of antinuclear forces in German domestic politics.

The post–1991 Gulf War shift led the government to adopt a more vigorous set of export control laws, setting new standards in licensing dual-use items and export control. Enhanced compliance with these strong rules has helped ensure that Germany is among the world’s most responsible states regarding control of dual-use technologies and has allowed it to capture a more constructive reputation within the international nonproliferation system.

In the broader sense, Germany’s nonproliferation policies of the 1990s and 2000s were marked by two events—one internal and one external. Internally, the strong antinuclear movement forced a change in the country’s policies on both nuclear energy and nonproliferation. Internationally, however, the collapse of the bipolar system and the demise of the Soviet Union meant that the extended nuclear umbrella that helped assure German security through the Cold War years no longer seemed necessary. To many, the nuclear umbrella provided by NATO became an anachronism. Nuclear energy and weapons were out of fashion.

Nuclear deterrence played a defining role in Germany’s Cold War history, in the end even being instrumental in reuniting the country. NATO’s double-track decision of 1979 (to deploy a new generation of intermediate nuclear delivery systems while negotiating the complete elimination of such a system with the Soviet Union) wore out the chancellorship of Helmut Schmidt and helped Helmut Kohl get elected. It triggered a strong divide in the German public and even changed the party system, by transforming the Greens from a fringe environmental and pacifist group into a credible political force. It was no surprise that the Germans, who dislike strong political polarization, were glad when after the fall of the Berlin Wall the immediate nuclear threat disappeared. There no longer seemed a need to address the country’s long-lasting dilemma of how to be a nonnuclear state while seeking shelter under the nuclear umbrella of an alliance.

Just as Germans enjoyed the fruits of nuclear deterrence in the Cold War without really having to identify with the logic of using a nuclear force, the country now finds itself without really having to feel the dangers posed by nuclear terrorism and WMD proliferation. Unlike America after 9/11, Germans have not been materially confronted with a sense of urgency regarding nuclear terrorism, the dangers of a dirty bomb, or the strategic impact of a nuclear-armed Iran. Surveys on transatlantic perceptions regularly show vast differences in assessing the dangers of proliferation, nuclear terrorism, and the general problems of WMD; Americans see a much higher risk than their German or European counterparts.

Iran as a Case Study

The role that Germany has played in the negotiating process with Iran is a useful illustration of the country’s approach on nuclear issues. When Iran was found, in 2002, to have been pursuing a long-term secret nuclear program outside of IAEA safeguards, Germany was in a strong position to engage the government in Tehran, and Germany’s foreign minister was one of three (along with counterparts from the United Kingdom and France) to jointly visit Tehran in 2003. The goal

of the high-level approach was to diffuse growing tensions and seek a negotiated settlement to the issue of Iran's illicit nuclear program. Although progress has been slow, the framework of the P5 + 1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany) was set through this initial diplomatic entrée.

Having enjoyed workable and even good relations with Iran, even after the Islamic revolution, Germany was one of the few nations with robust diplomatic and economic ties with Tehran. After its rather unsuccessful policy of "critical dialogue" (1992–1997), in 2002 the European Union had started a policy aimed at establishing trade and cooperation structures with Iran and giving Tehran a perspective of World Trade Organization (WTO) membership.

In October 2003, the EU3 (Germany, France, Great Britain) secured an agreement with Iran in which Tehran promised to join the additional protocol to the NPT. One year later both parties signed even another agreement in which Iran would suspend their enrichment program, under IAEA monitoring. In return, Iran again offered the negotiation of trade and cooperation agreements and political backing in its efforts to join the WTO. However, both agreements were of little avail. The Iranian parliament didn't ratify the additional protocol, and Tehran resumed its enrichment activities in 2005.

Since the 2003 mission, Germany has continued to fine-tune its nonproliferation policy. Represented by a few players, most importantly the political director in the foreign office, the country has engaged in an enduring diplomatic exchange with Iran and—most of all—worked to keep a fragile international framework with all permanent members of the UN Security Council in place. Though very slow moving, the alliance to force Iran into compliance with NPT rule has been sustained, helping to justify Germany's commitment to multilateralism on security and nonproliferation issues.

The German government continues to understand and play its role as a bridge builder with both Tehran and among the P5, and especially Russia and China. China's decision to play a more active role in the negotiations has helped indicate to Iran the commitment of the P5 + 1 to remain united. By its actions, Beijing sent the message to Iran that it would not provide an escape route if pressure would mount in the Security Council. China's stand was facilitated with the help of the German Foreign Office, whose political director enjoys good relations with Beijing after serving there as an ambassador from 2004 to 2007.

Germany's negotiating role has undergone different phases, with the most remarkable coming after the EU3 proposed a long-term agreement on August 5, 2005, spelled out in a 34-page complex arrangement of give and take including economic incentives, political benefits, and offers to assist in the development of peaceful nuclear energy. However, this approach has produced little fruit to date, in large part because of a lack of direct U.S. involvement.

In looking back on the shortcomings of the initial process, the German Foreign Office has now settled on a different approach, refraining from detailed proposals and focusing instead on more general language to draw Iran into a real negotiation process. The foreign representative of the

European Union was pushed into the driver's seat for those negotiations to present a more unified European position and to prevent nations to be played off against one another. Germany, due to its historical ties with Iran, would have been in a comfortable negotiating position, but it always had to be mindful of Iranian attempts to split the European group and has endorsed the role played by the European in the form of the high representative for foreign and security policy, Javier Solana.

In support of the Iran negotiations, Germany has also developed a proposal to held undermine the argument that Iran needs a nationally based enrichment program to support a nuclear power program with peaceful intent. To this end, Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier has put forth a proposal to establish a Multilateral Enrichment Sanctuary Project (MESP). Growing out the original complex proposal made to Iran of 2005 on the subject of fuel assurance, and building on the Multinational Arrangement (MNA) concept initiated by IAEA director Mohamed ElBaradei, Steinmeier called for the establishment of an international enrichment center to be controlled by the IAEA.

The concept proposes one or several multilateral enrichment companies operating under market conditions. The as yet identified or built plants would be internationally operated and equally owned by interested states and based on neutral territory in "multilateral enrichment sanctuaries" administered by the IAEA. Key would be the idea to control the transfer of sensitive enrichment technology while granting all interested states access to enriched fuel for civilian use. The German government has already asked the Max Planck Institute for legal expertise on the construction of such entities under international law. Written proposals have been presented to the IAEA.

Conclusion

As the Bush administration drew to a close, Germany applauded its decision to more fully support and participate in engagement with Iran. Former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice's signature under a new letter of proposal to Tehran and former under secretary Nicholas Burns' participation at a high-level meeting with Iranian representatives in Geneva in 2008 was warmly welcomed in Berlin. This response reflects Germany's understanding that the tensions with Iran have strong political overtones but that they are solvable with a more active political role by the United States. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that there is much anticipation for the new U.S. administration of Barack Obama. But it would be wrong to expect Germany to quickly answer the call to pursue a more ambitious and global nonproliferation approach.

It is only thanks to its historical ties that Germany was able to take a prominent role in dealing with Iran. Its limited nonproliferation role elsewhere is obvious, however, when it comes to North Korea, where there is no real German weight to be felt. The renewed attention to nuclear abolition brings with it quite another set of problems for Germany. Even though nuclear disarmament is a key pillar in German foreign and security policy, any fresh attempt to deal with the issue in real terms will leave Germany as a nonweapon state out of the most important political processes over the next years. Even worse for the Berlin perspective, this policy doesn't fit in with the central aim

of German foreign policy to let the European Union deal with core issues. Instead of the European Union taking a leading role, however, an old Cold War group of nations will try to find new ways of arranging and controlling nuclear forces. Germany, as a strong proponent for disarmament, may find itself in stark opposition to France and Britain, which have both emphasized the importance of their national arsenals.

4

POLAND'S NONPROLIFERATION STRATEGY

FOLLOWING THE LEADER

Marcin Zaborowski

Introduction

Although Poland is a relatively new member of NATO and only joined the European Union in 2004, it is already seen as a state that “makes a difference” with distinctive foreign and security policies. Of the new entrants to NATO and the European Union, Poland is the largest, as well as the most vocal and self-confident. By European standards, Warsaw has sizeable armed forces and, as demonstrated in the cases of Iraq, Afghanistan, and more recently, the Democratic Republic of Congo, it is willing to send them abroad to carry out combat or peacekeeping duties—even in controversial situations. Owing to its history and its current frontline position on the easternmost border of the European Union, Poland also seeks to act as a bridge between the West and the former Soviet republics, in particular by attempting to energize the European Union’s policies toward Ukraine, Belarus, and Georgia.

However, while pursuing these objectives, Poland remains one of the poorest members of the European Union and has a population keen to reap the perceived economic and social benefits of membership in the union. Yet even with a well-defined set of regional interests, Poland’s global strategy can be defined by its willingness to follow the lead of the United States and reconciling its Atlanticism with its European credentials.

This is especially true in the realm of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation issues, which have not registered in Poland as first-order threats and are often seen as a responsibility of the United States. For example, both Iran and North Korea are considered remote powers that do not threaten Poland. A potential terror threat remains a remote, even exotic, consideration for the Poles. The country has no history of terror activities, and it has no meaningful Middle Eastern or North African minority.

It is true that Poland was one of the strongest supporters of the United States’ decision to invade Iraq and subsequently became one of the biggest contributors of troops to the occupation and stabilization force. However, contrary to other U.S. allies, like the United Kingdom and Spain,

Iraq's alleged possession of WMD was almost absent from the Polish Iraq debate.¹ The key rationale for Poland's decision to join the invasion was to demonstrate to Washington that Poland was a reliable ally and, as such, worthy of America's investment in Poland's security. This argument continues to underpin Poland's security thinking, and crucially, it is also apparent in its nonproliferation strategy.

Factors Shaping Poland's Nonproliferation Strategy

Nonproliferation is an element of Poland's formal security concepts. In its most recent security strategy document, published in September 2007, Polish leaders note the deteriorating security environment in the Middle East, the danger posed by Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism, and Iran's nuclear ambitions. The strategy also states that Poland seeks to prevent the proliferation of WMD and supports regulating arms and dual-use technology exports. Poland also supports the strict application of the existing arms control and disarmament agreements,² the latter point being a clear allusion to Russia's failure to respect its obligations under the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty.

However, disarmament and nonproliferation issues are clearly far down the list of Poland's security priorities and are seen in Poland as less important than, for example, energy security or the containment of a resurgent Russia. More surprisingly, there is little indication that awareness of the issue's importance is likely to grow in the future—barring a serious WMD event in or near Poland. For example, the Ministry of Defense main policy document on Poland's security environment and its armed forces in 2030 speaks casually about the threat of WMD. The issue is identified among future threats, but it is discussed only in one paragraph and blocked together with other secondary challenges such as migration, natural disasters, and economic inequalities.³

Poland's security thinking is based on two underlying assumptions. First, that the United States is an indispensable element in global security and will retain its primacy for the foreseeable future. The second assumption is that NATO is and will remain the cornerstone of European security and that NATO will be complemented by the European Union, whose international role may eventually evolve into a confederation of states in 20 to 30 years.⁴ And notably, unlike many west European nations, Poland does not have a problem with the notion of U.S. hegemony; in fact, Poland supports it as a way of guaranteeing its security.

¹ Kerry Longhurst and Marcin Zaborowski, *The New Atlanticist: Poland's Foreign and Security Policy Priorities* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007).

² Chancellery of the Prime Minister, *Strategia Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [National security strategy for the Republic of Poland] (Warszawa: Wrzesien, 2007), pp. 6 and 14.

³ *Wizja Sił Zbrojnych RP-2030* [Vision of the armed forces of the Republic of Poland in 2030] (Warszawa: Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, Maj 2008).

⁴ As indeed stated in the 2030 vision document quoted above; see point 3.

With such assumptions being central to Poland's security thinking, combined with its relative immaturity as an independent security actor, it should come as no surprise that Warsaw has yet to develop its own nonproliferation strategy and instead relies on the United States' lead. The importance of these assumptions can best be understood when seen against the historical and geopolitical background of Poland's security thinking.

Key Drivers of Poland's Security Thinking

During the two decades of its existence, the Third Polish Republic has witnessed a revolutionary change in its foreign and security environment. When the first non-Communist government came to power in the autumn of 1989, Poland was still a member of the Warsaw Pact; there were more than 40,000 Soviet troops stationed on its territory; and its relations with West Germany remained poisoned by the unresolved dispute over the Odra/Nysa border. By 2004, Poland was a member of both NATO and the European Union, and a unified Germany was perhaps Warsaw's closest ally in Europe. Most important, after joining NATO in 1999, Poland was seen as one of the most pro-Western and pro-American states in Europe. This radical change in Poland's strategic orientation is the subject of a durable domestic consensus in Poland shaped by historically determined cultural and strategic factors, most notably Poland's traumatic experience in World War II.

During World War II, around 6 million Poles (at least half of them of the Jewish origin)—more than one-fifth of the entire population—lost their lives. In 1939, Poland was abandoned by the security guarantors, France and the United Kingdom, and at the war's end, the Western allies agreed that eastern Poland would be permanently incorporated into the Soviet Union (although Warsaw would be compensated in the West, at the expense of Germany). Moreover, postwar Poland was to remain firmly within the Soviet sphere of influence. Although Poland had opposed the Nazis and its troops had fought in all major battles of the war, there was no sense of victory among the Poles when the war ended. The country was depopulated and almost all of its borders redrawn; huge numbers of refugees headed westward from those areas incorporated into the Soviet Union. Perhaps most important, Poland was destined to become a Communist dictatorship—one that was controlled by the Soviet Union and had little sovereignty in domestic affairs and none whatsoever in foreign policy.

All these factors left an indelible impression on Polish security culture. Three developments, in particular, shaped Polish perceptions of international relations. First, the crushing defeat of the Polish forces in September 1939 and the collapse of the Warsaw uprising in August 1944 created a pessimistic assessment of Poland's ability to defend itself. Second, the Western European appeasement of Nazi Germany and the way in which Poland was abandoned by France and the United Kingdom engendered a very skeptical view of Western Europe and, specifically, of its ability to guarantee security and stability on the Continent. Third, the West's agreement to the permanent annexation of eastern Poland and the de facto consent of the United Kingdom and the United States to the extension of the Soviet sphere of influence to Central and Eastern Europe at

Yalta illustrated the degree to which the “great powers” excluded Poland from crucial decisions affecting its interests. Thus, in Poland, Yalta became synonymous with the concept of betrayal.

These factors have created serious doubt in Poland about its ability to defend itself and about Western Europe’s commitments to Poland’s assistance. The origins of Polish foreign policy’s predisposition toward Atlanticism can be identified here; indeed, during the postwar years the independence-minded opposition in Poland and abroad advocated an Atlanticist dimension to Polish foreign policy. While it was inevitable that the United States would be blamed, along with the United Kingdom, for endorsing the Yalta agreement, Washington itself was not blamed for the appeasement policy. In addition, because the United States was not obliged to assist Poland during the Nazi-Soviet assault in September 1939, faith in Washington fared better than sentiments toward London and Paris. Most important, the United States was viewed during the Cold War as the only power willing and able to oppose the Soviet Union and restrain Germany.⁵

By the end of the Cold War, it was clear that a post-communist Poland would be firmly Atlanticist, no matter which party governed. That indeed has been the case, as demonstrated by Poland’s often uncritical support for America’s foreign policy, most notably in Iraq. This also means that Poland’s global strategy, including its position on nonproliferation, basically amounts to “following the (American) leader.”

Polish Views on Today’s Nonproliferation Challenges

Despite the relatively low profile of the nonproliferation/WMD debate, Warsaw has been associated with two major but not uncontroversial proliferation-related initiatives in recent years: the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and the United States’ European-based missile defense system. Poland hosted the launch of the PSI during President George W. Bush’s visit to Krakow in May 2003. The PSI was conceived of and launched following an incident where 15 Scud missiles were found on board a North Korean freighter bound for Yemen. The ship and cargo were allowed to continue on their way when it became clear that international law did not allow the shipment to be confiscated. Consequently, PSI members have worked to legally allow the interdiction of banned weapons and weapon technology in transit. Poland was one of the initial 15 signatories of the arrangement, and it remains one of its most active participants. So far, Poland has organized three interdiction exercises including Safe Borders in 2004 in Wroclaw, (together with the Czech Republic); Bohemian Guard in 2005 in Ostrava, Czech Republic; and a joint maritime exercise in 2006 of Poland, Russia, and Denmark, which was held in the Baltic Sea.⁶

⁵ Longhurst and Zaborowski, *The New Atlanticist*.

⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Poland, <http://www.psi.msz.gov.pl/files/doc/PSIgeneralInfowww1.pdf?PHPSESSID=33dae30b7b8a088d8147b2eae54a175a>.

Although widely supported in the United States, PSI was associated with the neoconservatives in the Bush administration, including John Bolton, former undersecretary of state. The fact that it was launched by President Bush in Krakow with President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland standing next to him sealed the perception of Poland as one of the core members of the pro-U.S. camp. At the same time, however, it was not clear why Poland was viewed as a vital member of the new system, because Poland's naval fleet is relatively small and its major area of operation, the Baltic Sea, is not a major route for the transfer of illegal weapon materials. The choreography suggests that Presidents Bush and Kwasniewski were both motivated by political considerations as opposed to technical ones.

Even more controversially, in August 2008, Poland signed an agreement with the United States to host missile defense interceptors in its territory. The deal was deeply contested in Poland and it remains internationally charged. The main U.S. justification for the system is to protect the U.S. homeland and that of its allies against Iranian missile attacks. But Iran does not pose a direct threat to Poland, and basing U.S. missiles could put Poland at risk from other countries, including Russia, who has angrily denounced the deployments as a threat to its strategic interests. These factors have raised serious questions in Polish minds about the agreement to accept the missiles. As a result, the Polish government has required that the deal be accompanied by an agreement committing the United States to Poland's security and also that the United States contribute to the enhancement of Poland's air defenses by stationing Patriot missiles (and eventually selling them) in Poland. So in the broader context, the agreement has created conflicting results. For the United States, missile defense in Poland is about deterring Iran and not about the Russia at all. For Poles, the deal was worth it as long as it addressed Poland's traditional vulnerability to Russia and enhanced the United States' commitment to the defense of Poland, beyond NATO's article 5.

In July 2008, U.S.-Polish negotiations over the deal broke down and it looked likely that any agreement would be pushed beyond the U.S. elections in November. However, on August 6 the Russian-Georgian war broke out, changing perspectives in Poland and the United States. The Polish government came to the conclusion that even if the deal remained imperfect, a U.S. military presence on Polish territory would enhance its security in the face of a resurgent Russia. At the same time, the United States made it easier for Poland to accept the deal by improving its offer to meet some of Poland's additional conditions. In particular, a declaration was included that committed the United States to Poland's security and to military cooperation, and an agreement was reached to station a battery of Patriot missiles on Polish territory.⁷

Although the deal may be revised by the Obama administration, the negotiations to date have shown once again that for Poland, nonproliferation is not a primary issue and that Warsaw is willing to be flexible on nonproliferation policy in order to achieve other goals that benefit

⁷ For details of the deal, see Beata Górka-Winter, "Porozumienie Polski i Stanow Zjednoczonych w Sprawie Obrony Przeciwrakietowej" [Polish and U.S. agreement on missile defense], *Biuletyn* 38 (506), Sierpnia 22, 2008, http://www.pism.pl/biuletyny/files/20080822_506.pdf.

Poland's security and reduce its sense of regional vulnerability. This attitude permeates Poland's nonproliferation policy, including its stance toward Iran, North Korea, or the broader issue of nuclear terrorism. In all these areas, Poland has sided with the United States, but not in a way directly related to Poland's own threat perception. The Polish government fully supports Washington's position on Iran, and recently conducted opinion polls show that Poles were the only population where the majority favored military options if Iran moves toward acquiring nuclear weapons.⁸ It is fully possible that Poland would agree to be part of an international decision to use military force against Iran.

Surprisingly, for a state that once was part of a potential theater of a nuclear East-West confrontation, there is little debate in Poland about the pros and cons of the value of nuclear weapons or the wisdom of seeking their elimination, as put forward by the "gang of four" proposal arguing for pursuit of a nuclear-free world.⁹ It appears that one of the reasons for this gap is the legacy of Cold War misinformation and censorship in Poland. A vast majority of the Poles were never aware that their country was a potential nuclear battlefield between NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. During the Cold War, there was no public discussion about the presence of Soviet nuclear weapons in Poland. The fact that Poland was targeted by the West's nuclear arsenal was made public for the first time by Defense Minister Radek Sikorski in 2005, but at a point so far removed from the Cold War, the issue failed to spark any real public interest.

It is quite possible to predict, however, that should the Obama administration pursue the goal of abolition that Polish and U.S. attitudes might diverge. For Poland, as with other new members of NATO, a proposal for complete nuclear elimination would likely be interpreted as a move toward unilateral disarmament in the face of a resurgent Russia. Poles would be very skeptical of the intention of Russia and other powers to follow the example of the United States. At the very least, intense discussions about how the United States and NATO would be able to guarantee Polish security in the light of deep cuts and nuclear elimination would be required.

Conclusions

Poland is a growing but young regional power. It is the biggest and most powerful state in the ex-Communist block, and its security policy is perhaps the most expansive of that group. This means that Poland has clearly defined interests in the region and pursues consistent policies toward its eastern neighbors, Ukraine, Belarus, and Georgia, whose self-determination Poland strongly supports. Poland's policy toward Russia remains based on suspicion and caution, although in recent years Warsaw has seemed to offer a more forthcoming attitude toward Moscow.

⁸ Piotr Pacewicz, "Nasz Prezydent Obama" [Our president Obama], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, October 20, 2008, http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,5828315,Nasz_prezydent_Obama.html.

⁹ George P. Schultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, and Sam Nunn, "A World Free of Nuclear Weapons," *Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2007.

After centuries of hostilities, Poland has reconciled with Germany, now its closest partner in Western Europe. Poland is now also an established member of both NATO and the European Union, and its voice and influence in both of these organizations matter. If one looks at where Poland was 20 years ago and where it is now, it is clear that remarkable progress has been achieved. Poland is clearly not a global player and lacks a global perspective, but the process of opening up strategic thinking beyond its concerns in Eastern Europe has begun. The Polish military has been involved in missions in the faraway corners of the world, including Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and this undoubtedly has had an impact on the development of the strategic perspective in the country, but it remains a slow process. In addition, as argued here, Poland takes part in those overseas missions seemingly not because its direct interests are involved but rather because it is an ally of the United States and a member of the European Union.

Poland's nonproliferation strategy remains underdeveloped and as for now boils down to following the lead of the United States, a stance that is consistent with Poland's strategic culture and is accepted by public opinion. This will continue to be the case as long as Poland does not develop a foreign policy that goes beyond the issues of its NATO and EU membership and its regional focus. The Ministry of Defense vision document for 2030 does not seem to envisage that Poland would need a more independent perspective on global issues in the next 20 years.¹⁰ Then again, who would have guessed 20 years ago that Poland would be where it is today. It is perhaps inevitable that in the years to come, Poland's strategic thinking, including its perspective on nonproliferation, will become more sophisticated.

¹⁰ *Wizja Sił Zbrojnych RP-2030*.

5

THE UNITED KINGDOM AND NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION

*Mark Smith*¹

The British position² on nuclear proliferation, and indeed on nuclear weapons generally, is uniquely complex and full of differing and sometimes competing priorities. It has been a nuclear-armed state for well over half a century (and a participant in the nuclear weapon enterprise from the very outset), but its current program has been and continues to be heavily intertwined with that of another nuclear state, the United States. The nature of its nuclear program means that every couple of decades or so, London must undergo a reevaluation of whether to remain a nuclear-armed state, and therefore (alone among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council) it must regularly redefine and even rejustify its policy. Yet at the same time, as a *de jure* nuclear weapon state (NWS) under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Britain is also required to work toward nuclear disarmament, a commitment that it takes seriously and is now at the center of British nuclear weapon policies.

Yet despite this peculiarity, the British position on nonproliferation and nuclear weapons has been noticeably consistent. Its rationale for maintaining its nuclear status has remained fundamentally the same over the decades: considerations of deterrence, the alliance with the United States, and some more vague ideas about status have all been prominent. The commitments of Article VI to the NPT, and at the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences, have made for occasional discomfort, but rarely, if ever, has there been a serious possibility of Britain relinquishing its nuclear status. Lately, however, evidence of a shift in that position has become apparent, but whether this will translate into genuine progress is questionable absent a global process of disarmament.

Through the early years of the nuclear age, Britain had fought an adversary it could not defeat alone (Germany) and then confronted one that could overwhelm it (the Soviet Union). These formative experiences, especially the experience of fighting Germany alone and without allies, produced a rather instinctive predilection for nuclear status. This means that changes in strategic circumstances, such as those that took place after 1989 and after the 9/11 attacks in the United States, have not produced changes in London's approach to its nuclear status. Rather, that nuclear

¹ The views in the article are the authors' own and do not represent those of Wilton Park.

² For the purposes of this paper, the term "British position" denotes that of the government.

status has been trimmed and modified to fit the new circumstances. Britain does not necessarily need a reason to maintain its nuclear status but instead will require reasons—pressing ones—to abandon it.

Introduction: Current Nuclear Policies

The formal British position on nuclear weapons and proliferation can be stated quite simply: Britain plans to maintain its status as a nuclear weapon state for the foreseeable future but still remains committed to the implementation of the NPT's Article VI. Furthermore, it is opposed to further nuclear proliferation and erosion of the NPT process. For outside observers, these sit far from easily alongside each other, but British policy has been consistent in claiming commitment to all of them. More specifically, it rejects the charge that there is any inconsistency between its stance on countering proliferation and its own possession of nuclear weapons.

A recent formal statement of the British position was published in 2007, during the latest round of United Kingdom's existential nuclear review.³ In deciding to remain a nuclear state, the paper stipulated three threat categories for which a nuclear deterrent was required. These were the possible reemergence of a direct threat to the United Kingdom or its allies; a limited nuclear threat to vital interests; and the transfer of nuclear weapons or material to a non-state actor, with the deterrent meant to threaten the supplying state rather than the subnational group.⁴ The paper stopped short of identifying threats by name (although it is hardly difficult to think of some), and Michael Quinlan has referred to this construct as deterrence “to whom it may concern.”⁵

The 2007 decision committed Britain to maintain nuclear weapons until 2050, unless a new decision was made to relinquish it before then. In a spirited but probably optimistic bid to head off inevitable accusations that this was contrary to Britain's NPT Article VI responsibilities, the paper listed Britain's disarmament achievements, including a 50 percent reduction in warhead numbers over 10 years to “less than 160”; the fact that the United Kingdom, uniquely, has only a single nuclear weapons system; its ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1998; and its cessation of fissile material production for weapons in 1995 and subsequent efforts to pursue a negotiated Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). The statement went further by

³ UK Secretary of State for Defence and Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, *The Future of the United Kingdom's Independent Deterrent* (London: HMSO, 2006), <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm69/6994/6994.asp>.

⁴ The 2008 National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom stated that although “no state currently has both the intent and the capability” to pose a direct nuclear threat, such a threat could not be ruled out in the future. See UK Prime Minister, *The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom: Security in an Interdependent World* (London: HMSO, 2008), http://interactive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/documents/security/national_security_strategy.pdf.

⁵ Michael Quinlan, “The Future of United Kingdom Nuclear Weapons,” *International Affairs* 82, no. 4 (July 2006).

pointing out that renewal of an existing capability was not prohibited by the NPT, which also contained no “timetable” for nuclear disarmament.

These last points may have been a necessarily defensive plea from a state that had just committed itself to another 43 years of NWS status, but it also reflected a sense that major strides toward NPT compliance had gone unacknowledged. It also reflected a growing unease in the UK security community at the way Article VI had become a source of deadlock at NPT preparatory and review conferences, the last two of which have combined to produce a new set of initiatives detailed below.

Factors That Shape National Policies and Perspectives

In assessing Britain’s nuclear status, it’s important to understand the factors that shape the importance the United Kingdom places on its nuclear possession. Key among these factors are: a belief that nuclear weapons in the hands of others still represents the most dire military threat to national security; and an iron conviction that the only dependably effective response to such threats is itself nuclear.

But what thinking underpins this perception? In answering this question, it is useful to remember two points: British policy is pragmatic rather than idealistic, and it is bipartisan rather than ideological. British foreign policy in general has a reputation for pragmatism and a suspicion of grand strategic visions. This is not to say that British policy is devoid of principle, but rather that it tends to emphasize workability over grand design. In terms of arms control and nonproliferation, this means that these priorities as international policies lie less in their status as “good things” than in the assumptions they allow for strategic planning. This is for reasons that Robert Kagan, among others, would recognize: Britain’s ability to affect great power relations at the strategic level is very limited, but it nonetheless has an interest in stability. It therefore looks for strategic relations to be managed and trammled by dependable means, which gives a natural support for international arms control. Repeated declarations of support for the U.S.-Russia nuclear arms control framework, for example, bear testament to this preference.⁶

On the United Kingdom’s nuclear status, the same pragmatic character surfaces. Michael Clarke put this well in arguing that the underlying aim of British diplomacy is that “as a useful player in whatever the strategic aim turns out to be, the country will emerge as one of the more comfortable

⁶ To give some recent examples, the National Security Strategy promised, “we will continue to encourage the United States and Russia to see their current bilateral discussions as an opportunity for further [nuclear] reductions.” And in 2008, Foreign Secretary David Miliband wrote that U.S.-Russia agreement on “substantial further reductions in their nuclear arsenals” was a necessary step toward global elimination of nuclear weapons. See David Miliband, “A World without Nuclear Weapons,” *Guardian* (Manchester), December 8, 2008.

status quo powers in any new order.”⁷ A trawl through the British National Archives or the secondary literature will reveal a recurrent perception that nuclear weapons remain a key totem of global status but also show a Cold War sense (that perhaps has yet to dissipate) that such weapons conferred an influence on U.S. and NATO strategy that would otherwise be hard to obtain.

The second factor is that British nuclear policy tends to be bipartisan rather than ideological. That is to say, it is unlikely that a change in government control will produce a significant change in British nuclear policy. This is true of defense policy in general, but especially so on nuclear issues. Whatever may be said while in Opposition, policy when in power has followed a fairly stable and predictable trajectory. Britain’s nuclear policy is therefore something of an orthodoxy in government, the scale of the parliamentary opposition on the Trident vote notwithstanding.⁸ Public opinion is rather more ambivalent: a 2005 survey conducted by MORI and Greenpeace found that, on balance, most people were opposed to renewal of Trident.⁹ Public opposition is consistently stronger in Scotland, which is likely to create significant difficulties for British nuclear policy in the event of Scottish independence, since the Trident submarines are based in Scotland.

Unraveling the deeper, more psychological underpinnings for Britain’s nuclear habits is a more difficult exercise. However, it should always be borne in mind that the decision to opt for a British nuclear capability was taken at the close of World War II. Memories of 1939 and of facing a formidable enemy without significant allies were fresh, as were those of the extraordinary devastation wreaked by strategic bombing. It would be nigh incomprehensible if these experiences had not impacted the British political psyche in such a way as to leave a lasting, if not indelible, sense that this had been the last occasion when Britain could be in similar circumstances and prevail unless it had the ultimate weapon.

It is important to stress that the destructiveness of the war was the lesser factor in the subsequent drive to produce a British atomic and then thermonuclear weapon (decisions taken in times of serious and sometimes borderline catastrophic economic difficulty). More influential was the experience of enemies that could not be defeated by British military power: fending off adversaries now required something qualitatively stronger than Britain could muster in conventional terms. The awareness of diminished international power after 1945 is a regular feature in intragovernment debates about nuclear weapons, and also the rapid decision to pursue a British weapons program: a glance through the history of the postwar period shows a striking lack of

⁷ See Michael Clarke, “French and British Security: Mirror Images in a Globalized World,” *International Affairs* 76, no. 4 (December 2000): 725–740.

⁸ The parliamentary vote in March 2007 had 409 in favor and 161 against. Fully 88 of the latter were Labour Party MPs voting against their government, and 95 Labour MPs had voted for an unsuccessful motion to delay the decision.

⁹ The survey showed 46 percent against to 44 percent in favor, with the figures shifting to 54 percent and 33 percent respectively when the question included a statement that the cost of Trident was “the equivalent of building around 1,100 schools.” The latter figure, I would argue, was the result of a rather loaded question. For a full analysis, see <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/content/british-attitudes-on-nuclear-weapons.ashx>.

dissenting voices about whether or not Britain ought to have nuclear weapons.¹⁰ Alongside the enemy-based rationale is that equally strong ally-based one: a key reason Britain wanted nuclear weapons was a deep belief that they would grant leverage and influence over the strategy of the indispensable ally, the United States.

Policies toward Today's Nonproliferation Challenges

Generally speaking, Britain has regarded actual horizontal proliferation as the most significant challenge for the nuclear nonproliferation regime, and progress on disarmament and access to nuclear energy for peaceful uses have come in a joint, and rather distant, second place. Nuclear threats, either new or reemerged, remain the key publicly stated rationale for Britain's nuclear status. Lately, however, a more creatively holistic approach linking nuclear energy and nonproliferation has been evident. Although the United Kingdom continues to play a key role in addressing issues such as nuclear terrorism and Iran's noncompliance with its obligations, London has invested considerable energy on the difficult subject of nuclear energy by putting forward its proposal for an "enrichment bond." This concept was passed to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in May 2007 and raised the possibility of a sort of three-party arrangement in which supplier states would guarantee access to recipient states for enrichment services by national providers, in exchange for meeting commitments limiting the spread of national enrichment and reprocessing capabilities as determined by the IAEA.¹¹ The proposal was aimed at trying to reconcile the growing international interest in nuclear energy (the so-called nuclear renaissance) with traditional British concern about horizontal proliferation fueled by the spread of sensitive nuclear fuel cycle facilities.

Britain's expansion of its nonproliferation priorities to include the questions of disarmament has recently become apparent. The 2008 National Security Strategy invoked the 2006 assessment that a direct nuclear threat to the United Kingdom could not be ruled out over the next half-century as the reason for continuing with NWS status. However, it also stated that proliferation undermined the UK objective of multilateral disarmament and pledged that in the run-up to the 2010 NPT Review, the United Kingdom would "lead the international effort to accelerate disarmament among possessor states."¹²

Following on from the revived interest in nuclear disarmament in the United States, British policy reached a milestone with a speech by then-Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett to the Carnegie

¹⁰ See, for example, John Baylis, *Ambiguity and Deterrence: British Nuclear Strategy, 1945–1964* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

¹¹ See "A Voluntary Scheme for Reliable Access to Nuclear Fuel," letter from the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the IAEA concerning enrichment bonds, May 30, 2007, <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infcircs/2007/infcirc707.pdf>.

¹² UK Prime Minister, *The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom*, p. 30.

nonproliferation conference in June 2007.¹³ In the wake of the UK decision to pursue a new generation of Trident submarines, it is tempting to see her remarks in support of nuclear disarmament as a bit of necessary back and fill. Although that was necessary, it would be a mistake to view Beckett's speech solely in that context: it was in fact a serious push to do some serious work on how to work the global nuclear numbers down to zero.

Although she referenced the *Wall Street Journal* article by four senior American statesmen,¹⁴ Secretary Beckett's point of departure was the recent difficulties experienced in the NPT Preparatory and Review Committees, which she related to growing dissatisfaction with progress on Article VI. Beckett was quite clear that this could not be allowed to continue if the NPT was to remain healthy, and she explicitly linked the disarmament and nonproliferation pillars of the NPT by stating that "efforts on non-proliferation will be dangerously undermined if others believe that the terms of the grand bargain have changed, that the NWS have abandoned any commitment to disarmament." The logic, which she shared with the *Wall Street Journal* authors, was that holding the line on proliferation was going to be contingent on progress toward disarmament.

Thus, the salient points of the speech included a plea for ratification and entry into force of the CTBT; a pledge that the United Kingdom was ready to engage other permanent members of the UN Security Council on transparency and confidence-building measures on nuclear reductions to create a more favorable global climate for nuclear disarmament; a study to be conducted by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies into the political conditions necessary for disarmament;¹⁵ and finally, a new commitment to explore the technical conditions required for verifying disarmament. The latter focused on warhead verification, or how to be certain that warheads are actually being eliminated without giving away sensitive information.

Secretary Beckett's groundbreaking speech was followed by a February 2008 speech to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) by British defence secretary Des Browne. Having pointed out, accurately, that it was rare for a defence minister to address the CD, he built on Beckett's remarks about the technical challenges for verifying warhead disarmament. Specifically, he unveiled a project run by the British Atomic Weapons Establishment and the government of Norway to develop technologies that "strike the right balance between protecting security and proliferation considerations, and at the same time providing international access and verification."¹⁶ The goal of the work, in other words, was to determine how a non-NWS like Norway can be satisfied that a warhead has been dismantled without a NWS like Britain revealing or risking sensitive

¹³ Beckett's heartfelt speech can be read in transcript at <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/keynote.pdf>. The conference Web site also has a video of the presentation.

¹⁴ George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, and Sam Nunn, "A World Free of Nuclear Weapons," *Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2007.

¹⁵ Now published as George Perkovich and James M. Acton, *Abolishing Nuclear Weapons*, Adelphi Papers, no. 396 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2008).

¹⁶ The text of Brown's speech is available at <http://www.acronym.org.uk/docs/0802/doc04.htm>.

information that could lead to future proliferation. More ambitiously than this, Browne also proposed a “meeting of the labs”—a conference among weapons laboratories from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (P5) to meet before the 2010 NPT Review to discuss these technical challenges.

These statements were followed by a transatlantic echo of the arguments put forward by the “four horsemen” in their *Wall Street Journal* article. In a letter to the *Times* (London) three former foreign secretaries representing the three main British political parties (Sir Malcolm Rifkind of the Conservative, Lord Robertson of Labour, and Lord Owen of the Liberal Democrats) argued the case for backing Kissinger, Shultz, Perry, and Nunn on nuclear disarmament: “Substantial progress toward a dramatic reduction in the world’s nuclear weapons is possible. The ultimate aspiration should be to have a world free of nuclear weapons. It will take time, but with political will and improvements in monitoring, the goal is achievable. We must act before it is too late, and we can begin by supporting the campaign in America for a non-nuclear weapons world.” Just over six months later, three retired senior members of the British military argued forcefully that replacing Trident had been expensive, pointless, and possibly counterproductive. However, Sir Malcolm Rifkind, one of the authors of the June 2008 article, distanced himself from the three by stating clearly that he was arguing for multilateral disarmament, not a unilateral move by Britain.¹⁷ This was much closer to the governmental position, and Beckett hinted at this in a telling remark in her speech: “when it will be useful to include in any negotiations the 1 percent of the world’s nuclear weapons that belong to the UK, we will willingly do so.”

There has, therefore, been a clear change in the ideational weather, so to speak, around nuclear disarmament in Britain. One might expect that this might be where the bipartisan nature of British nuclear policy breaks down. The British Labour Party has always had a pro-disarmament lobby in its ranks, while no such body exists in the Conservative Party (not even in the hawkish sense of being pro-disarmament on the grounds that it frees up the use of conventional power). In 2008, Shadow Foreign Secretary William Hague made a speech to the International Institute for Strategy Studies on nuclear security, which hinted at a willingness to think about disarmament and even called for a P5 conference before the 2010 NPT Review Conference to talk about nuclear reduction. But he was far more concerned about horizontal proliferation than about disarmament, stating that “no amount of nuclear disarmament will protect us from the dangers of nuclear weapons without a more comprehensive approach to nuclear proliferation.”¹⁸

¹⁷ See Douglas Hurd et al., “Start Worrying and Learn to Ditch the Bomb,” *Times* (London), June 30, 2008; and Field Marshal Lord Bramall et al., “UK Does Not Need a Nuclear Deterrent,” *Times* (London), January 16, 2009.

¹⁸ The transcript and video of Hague’s speech are available at <http://www.iiss.org.uk/recent-key-addresses/william-hague-address-jul-08>.

View of Transatlantic Nuclear Issues

As a key NATO member, the United Kingdom places great store by the alliance and its cohesion. While this is true on nuclear issues, as well as on other policy matters, it is also quite likely that UK policy will follow the lead of the United States here, even if private reservations are expressed about some issues including what some see as overenthusiastic support for NATO enlargement. The deteriorating relationship with Russia over issues such as missile defense and the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty is another cause for growing unease in the United Kingdom and the alliance. Russia was clearly in mind behind the reference made during the Trident decision to the “reemergence” of a major nuclear threat to the United Kingdom, and although such an eventuality may be a long way over the horizon, it is much easier to see now than just a few years ago.

In that context, the future of the U.S.-Russia arms control relationship has also loomed large in British strategic thinking of late. There are a number of factors in this, with the most obvious being the sense that the ability of Russia and the United States to agree on nuclear numbers is a good bellwether of the general state of relations. Another is that, because the United Kingdom takes much of its cue for how to think about its nuclear needs and nuclear future from the existing and potential nuclear powers in the world, an agreed framework between Russia and the United States allows for concrete assumptions to be made about future trends.

The stronger (both politically and legally) this framework is, the better: the more firmly the two sides are bound into clearly defined numbers, the harder it is later to withdraw, and the more dependable the numbers therefore are. Britain is thus likely to place great emphasis on the post-Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) framework being legally binding and verifiable. Put bluntly, the START model is better than SORT, and SORT is better than nothing. The exception to that rule was that the SORT agreement focused strongly on warheads rather than delivery systems. This has the advantage of being more dependable in terms of assessing numbers, but it also has an added advantage that the British at least are attaching growing importance to: it allows a clear line drawn between what’s happening in the arms control framework and the issue of disarmament and NPT Article VI. The United Kingdom is attracted to the idea of portraying U.S.-Russia nuclear reductions less in terms of dismantling the Cold War framework and more in terms of Article VI fulfillment.

Conclusions

Britain’s attachment to nuclear weapons, in political and strategic terms, runs very deep indeed. Many or most of the rationales for nuclear possession are open ended (unspecified hypothetical nuclear threats that “cannot be ruled out,” national status, influence on allied strategy), which makes it hard to see how the United Kingdom would relinquish nuclear weapons any time soon. The open-ended nature of the rationales also means that it is not much of an oversimplification to say that Britain does not need reasons to keep these weapons but rather needs reasons—very compelling ones—to relinquish them.

The only two things that might change this are a rethink of the rationale behind Trident that concluded that it was in fact redundant (unlikely), or more probably a growing international and multinational process of disarmament that requires UK participation. The conditions that might precipitate the latter have been alluded to recently. An interesting aspect of Des Browne's remarks to the CD, and a small but significant difference to Margaret Beckett's speech, was that his point of departure for discussing nuclear disarmament was not Article VI, but the preamble to the NPT. This stipulates the desire of signatories for "the easing of international tension and the strengthening of trust between States in order to facilitate the cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons, the liquidation of all their existing stockpiles, and the elimination from national arsenals of nuclear weapons." This was, truth to tell, probably closer to the British government's position—that disarmament will be a product of dramatically changed conditions rather than an independent process—than that of the foreign secretary's invocation of Article VI.

The government has recently issued a Policy Information Paper that sets out what those conditions might be, along with some near-term steps that can be taken to create them, in February 2009.¹⁹ The three key conditions identified were, firstly, "watertight means" to prevent proliferation, through much stronger and more vigorous action against proliferators and proliferation-resistant nuclear energy. Secondly, verifiably minimum nuclear arsenals must be the norm among the nuclear-armed states with no scope for redevelopment, via substantial U.S.-Russia reductions followed by the other nuclear powers, entry into force of the CTBT, and firm progress on an FMCT. Thirdly, once these minimum arsenals are in place, a way to make the tricky journey from small numbers to zero without jeopardizing security must be found, something that the United Kingdom is working on.

Looking further ahead, the paper acknowledged the changes in the international political environment that would need to take place before global zero becomes feasible: in particular, international collective security architecture would need to be considerably more robust than is currently the case. This change in the framework of international relations was, is, and will likely remain decisive in determining what London regards as possible in nuclear abolition.

¹⁹ UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), *Lifting the Nuclear Shadow: Creating the Conditions for Abolishing Nuclear Weapons*, Policy Information Paper (London: FCO, February 2009), <http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/pdf1/nuclear-paper>.

6

THE EUROPEAN UNION'S ROLE IN NONPROLIFERATION

Tomas Valasek

Unlike the other essays in this volume, this paper deals not with a country or a government but with an institution, the European Union. The European Union is a unique construct with much of its security policy still decided by national capitals. But the very existence of the European Union creates considerable pressures on nations to coordinate their positions. This holds true for proliferation matters, as it does for other security issues. Moreover, as the European Commission administers a common pool of EU funds, it has taken on an active role in seeking to address proliferation. In these efforts, however, the member states of the European Union and the collective EU bodies “co-exist in a strange relationship somewhere between complementarity, competition, parallelism and sometimes even contradiction.”¹

The European Union's interest in nonproliferation started with its creation but initially focused on Europe itself. The very purpose for building today's European Union was to reduce the risk of conflict on the Continent, which in the 1950s, also meant reducing the danger of a nuclear arms race among European countries. So the treaties that created the original European communities also built the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) to provide assurances that member states would use atomic energy only for peaceful purposes.² To this day, the EURATOM supply agency has exclusive right to conclude contracts for the supply of ores and fissile materials from inside the European Union or from outside.

Over the years, the European Union expanded its nonproliferation efforts in two great leaps: in the 1990s it launched threat reduction activities in the former Soviet Union and joined the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO).³ Brussels' role in nonproliferation grew yet

¹Kathrin Hohl, Harald Muller, and Annette Schaper, *EU Cooperative Threat Reduction Activities in Russia*, Chaillot Paper, no. 61 (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, June 2003), <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/cp061e.pdf>.

²Harald Muller, “European Nuclear Nonproliferation after the NPT Extension: Achievements, Shortcomings and Needs,” in *Europe and the Challenge of Proliferation*, ed. Paul Cornish, Peter van Ham, and Joachim Krause, Chaillot Paper, no. 24 (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, May 1996), <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/cp024e.pdf>.

³KEDO is a multilateral body created to provide energy assistance to North Korea under the 1994 U.S.–North Korean Agreed Framework. For several years it supplied energy to the country and started building

further in 2003, when the European Union adopted two key policy documents to guide its future efforts. The European Security Strategy (ESS) named the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) the greatest single threat to the European Union. The related EU Strategy against Proliferation of WMD subsequently established “effective multilateralism” as the European Union’s guiding approach to nonproliferation. Just as importantly, in 2003, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany (EU3) launched their nuclear diplomacy with Iran (although, at least initially, it was far from clear whether this was an European Union or multinational initiative; see “From Words to Actions” below for more).

Until 2003, Europe’s two nuclear weapon states, France and the United Kingdom, strove to keep the European Union’s involvement in WMD matters (with the exceptions above) relatively limited. France in particular blocked several attempts in the 1980s (prior to France’s accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—NPT) to frame a common EU nonproliferation policy. Many other small governments were content to let the bigger states deal with proliferation, sensing no direct threat. But two events changed the Europeans’ minds. First, the September 11 attacks focused the attention of Europe on the prospect of catastrophic terrorism and the risk that terror groups might one day use weapons of mass destruction against the Continent. Keeping those weapons—particularly nuclear weapons—out of the hands of terrorists had overnight become a priority for many EU governments, not just those possessing nuclear weapons.

The Iraq war, and European opposition to it, was the second factor that pushed the European Union toward collective action. Although some European governments supported the war, most—including those who for various reasons sided with Washington—were greatly concerned about the destabilizing consequences of the United States using force against an ambiguous possible future WMD threat (which, in the end, turned out to be nonexistent). The Iraq war seemingly jeopardized both the just war principle and the nuclear nonproliferation regime, the NPT.

Europeans collectively felt compelled to formulate an alternative to preemption/prevention as practiced by President George W. Bush. After all, the broader WMD threat was real, and if preemptive/preventive war was not the answer, another approach was needed. The European Union’s response was “effective multilateralism”—a combination of global diplomatic pressure, some coercive measures (like sanctions), and lots of carrots (like offers of security guarantees and free nuclear technology for peaceful uses).

The European Union’s nonproliferation policy has since been shaped by two prerogatives: that terrorists should not get their hands on weapons of mass destruction, but equally, that WMD threats should be addressed through international law-based, and preferably nonviolent, methods.

two light-water reactors in North Korea. It suspended most of its activity in 2003 after Pyongyang abrogated the Agreed Framework.

This emphasis on the specific means of combating proliferation has somewhat frustrated Europe's nonproliferation dialogue with Washington since 2003.

A Uniquely European Approach to Nonproliferation?

The European Union's two guiding documents, the ESS and the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, describe the basic tenets of an "effective multilateralist" approach as follows:

- address the root causes of proliferation, alleviating security concerns that drive countries to acquire WMD in the first place;
- strengthen multilateral treaties like the NPT by improving detection and assisting with compliance, reinforce export control regimes, and devise new treaties like the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty; and
- where political measures fail, apply coercive action (sanctions, selective or global, interceptions of shipments and, as appropriate, the use of force) through the United Nations.

To put its principles to practice, the European Union has created or employed several new institutional tools in recent years including the following:

- the EU Situation Center (SitCent) has been created to monitor WMD proliferation (as well as potential crisis regions or terrorism) and to furnish the EU Council with strategic intelligence-based assessments;
- the EU high representative for common foreign policy, Javier Solana, appointed a personal representative for nonproliferation of WMD (currently Annalisa Giannella, an Italian diplomat) to coordinate, help implement, and further develop the EU WMD strategy; and
- the European Commission set up a new program for threat reduction, the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Co-operation (INSC), with a budget of 524 million between 2007 and 2013.

These tools, none of which existed in 2003, have served to implement and expand the European Union's approach to nonproliferation.

From Words to Action

The European Union's efforts over the past five years have focused on proving that diplomatic approaches to nonproliferation work. The union made progress in four key areas:

1. **Iran negotiations.** Since October 2003, the EU3 governments have led a diplomatic push to end Iran's nuclear program. Initially, the EU3 countries did not obtain a formal mandate

from the rest of the European Union, so they did not negotiate on behalf of the European Union but did so only “with support of the EU.” This led to some unease in Europe. A number of member states complained; not so much about the thrust of the Franco-German-British diplomacy as much as about their failure to seek a proper tasking from the European Union. Eventually, pragmatism prevailed over procedures. In 2004, the EU high representative for foreign policy, Javier Solana, joined the talks and gave the effort a formal EU role, and he has been the European Union’s formal voice in these negotiations ever since.

The EU diplomacy scored some early successes but has sputtered in recent years. In October 2003, the three governments reached a deal with Iran in which Tehran promised to declare past nuclear activities and improve cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In November 2004, the European diplomats got Iran to agree to a temporary suspension of its nuclear activities. These successes were seen as a major milestone for the EU alternative to preemption/prevention, but the freeze only held temporarily, and in January 2006, Iran resumed its efforts to enrich uranium. Since then, the three European states as part of the P5 + 1 construct⁴ imposed three rounds of sanctions while seeking to continue negotiations with the participation of Ambassador Solana. In June 2008, Solana delivered a new comprehensive deal to Iran on behalf of P5 + 1, offering extensive help with peaceful nuclear programs and other forms of cooperation (so far to no avail).

At its launch in 2003, the European Union’s nuclear diplomacy with Iran served two purposes: besides the obvious one (to stop Iran’s enrichment program), it was also meant to establish the European Union as a proponent of nonmilitary approaches to nonproliferation (in contrast to the United States, which had just gone to war over Iraq’s suspected WMD program). Five years later, the first goal remains while the second one has evolved. The EU and U.S. positions on the use of diplomacy in nonproliferation appear to have converged, and they may continue to do so. So rather than comparing its policies to those of the previous U.S. administration, the European Union today is busy trying to enlist Washington’s support for its Iran diplomacy (see “From European to Transatlantic Approaches?” below for more).

2. **Nonproliferation clauses.** Following the 2003 adoption of the EU strategy for nonproliferation, the EU has begun inserting special “nonproliferation” clauses in all its agreements with third-party countries. Like the Iran talks, this idea grew out of the European Union’s post–September 11 desire to strengthen its diplomatic efforts against WMD proliferation. The use of the association agreements is an ingenious idea—the agreements are broad documents that regulate, among other things, outside countries’ access to lucrative EU markets. So the European Union is, in effect, seeking to use its economic leverage—the desire by third parties to reach EU consumers—to force outside governments to help strengthen nonproliferation regimes. For example, the proposed (but not yet signed) 2004 EU-Syria association agreement obligates both parties “to promote jointly the signature, ratification

⁴ The P5 + 1 group includes the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany.

and implementation by all Mediterranean partners of all nonproliferation instruments, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).”⁵

3. **Threat reduction.** This is a “legacy” project from before 2003, but it remains an important part of EU nonproliferation policy. In the early 1990s, the collapse of the Soviet Union brought with it concerns about the control over the former super power’s nuclear arsenals in the former Soviet republics of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine. The European Union (then the European Community, EC) joined the United States and others in launching cooperative threat reduction (CTR) programs aimed at keeping the former Soviet nuclear technology and know-how in safe hands. The European Community, and later the European Union, provided 800 million worth of nuclear safety activities between 1991 and 2001 through the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) program.⁶ The EU common funds have contribute to, for example, the construction of facilities for spent nuclear fuel storage and radioactive waste management from the naval facility at Andreeva Bay in Russia and financed the withdrawal of radioactive fuel from a former naval base in Gremikha.⁷ It has also funded salaries to stop brain drain of WMD scientists through support to the science centers in Moscow and Ukraine and paid for the infrastructure to destroy chemical weapons in Russia.

In 2002, the European Union formally joined the G-8’s Global Partnership against the Proliferation of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. By 2007, the European Union rolled its CTR activities into the aforementioned Instrument for Nuclear Safety Co-operation. Nuclear safety was a logical choice for EU action given the lingering impact of the Chernobyl disaster and its affect (real and perceived) in Europe.

4. **Nuclear disarmament.** By far, the disarmament question is the most difficult aspect of the European Union’s WMD agenda and one where divisions among the two nuclear powers, France and the United Kingdom, and other EU member states, have kept the European Union from effective action. On the positive side, it has been able to frame common positions for the 2000 and 2005 NPT Review Conferences. However, those positions have had to steer clear of addressing disarmament, per se. Where debate on the subject arises, it is often divisive. “The EU cannot collectively agree on the role of the 13 disarmament steps agreed to at the 2000

⁵ Commission on the European Communities, proposal for a Council decision, COM(2004) 808, December 17, 2004, http://www.bilaterals.org/IMG/pdf/com2004_0808en01.pdf.

⁶ Hohl, Muller, and Schaper, *EU Cooperative Threat Reduction Activities in Russia*.

⁷ “Report on the G8 Global Partnership,” Hokkaido Toyako Summit, July 2008, http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/summit/2008/doc/pdf/0708_12_en.pdf.

Review Conference,” wrote Gerrard Quille and Oliver Meier in 2005.⁸ “Although some EU member states, such as the Netherlands, still call them the ‘benchmark for progress toward nuclear disarmament,’ France opposes references to them even in the agenda of the conference.”⁹ As a result of French (and to lesser extent, British) reluctance to discuss disarmament openly, the European Union’s common positions for NPT review conferences have been very general, an amalgam of views “of the nuclear weapon states, the non-nuclear-weapon states, the anti-nuclear-weapon states, etc,” as Annalisa Giannella, personal representative on nonproliferation of WMD to Javier Solana, said.¹⁰

But the renewed focus on nuclear disarmament in the United States gave new life to efforts to form a strong EU stance on the subject. With the 2010 NPT Review fast approaching, EU officials are cautiously urging the French and the British to take a clearer position on disarmament; one that may allow the European Union as such to take a more proactive role during the 2010 NPT Review.

Is Multilateralism an Effective Tool for Nonproliferation?

Of the European Union’s contributions to nonproliferation, the concept of “effective multilateralism” is perhaps the most innovative. How has it withstood the test of time? EU officials believe that they have succeeded in putting diplomatic approaches back to the forefront of Western action against proliferators. And as one U.S. observer noted, the EU governments showed “concord, clarity and tactical flexibility. ... Tenacity succeeded in gaining Washington tacit backing for their efforts.”¹¹ (In 2005, the United States endorsed the EU3-led talks with Iran, although with conditions.)

Critics will rightly point out that Iran has continued to enrich uranium despite the talks (and one senior EU official described EU diplomacy as “a process success and an outcome failure”).¹² But that in itself does not mean that effective multilateralism is defunct or useless. Its proponents do not suggest that diplomacy can solve all proliferation challenges; the premise behind effective multilateralism is that diplomatic tools need to be tried first and tried vigorously and that nonviolent coercive measures come next, and only after these options are exhausted should other steps under international law come into play. The European Union’s own actions on Iran have

⁸ Oliver Meier and Gerrard Quille, “Testing Time for Europe’s Nonproliferation Strategy,” *Arms Control Today* (May 2005), <http://www.armscontrol.org/print/1811>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Annalisa Giannella, interview by Oliver Meier, *Arms Control Today* (July 26, 2005), http://www.armscontrol.org/interviews/20050726_Giannella.

¹¹ Michael Brenner, “CFSP: The Iran Test,” (working paper, February 2008).

¹² Author’s interview, Paris, May 2008.

followed a similar progression: it tried diplomacy first, tried again when it at first failed, and then resorted to UN Security Council sanctions.

The obvious question is what comes next. In the case of Iran, the prospect of use of force receded as the George W. Bush presidency came to a close. The European Union will be relieved because the prospect of military strikes against Iran would have revealed serious internal differences in Europe. Germany in particular would find it hard to fathom the use of force for a variety of reasons, and Germany's opposition would make it impossible for the European Union to take a collective stance. But the European Union should acknowledge that although effective multilateralism, when properly applied, makes military action less likely, it never makes war completely unthinkable.

The European Union's insertion of nonproliferation clauses in third-party agreements has come too recently for a full verdict to be made on its effectiveness. Attempts to date to apply the clause have exposed differences among EU member states on how much to push third parties to tighten their export control provisions and sign up to arms control treaties.¹³ The nonproliferation clause in the agreement with Syria was deemed too weak by some EU member states; yet it proved too much for Syria, so the agreement remains unsigned. The European Union will clearly have even more difficulty applying the clauses to the semiofficial nuclear powers like India or Pakistan. The clauses should, in theory, impose identical obligations on all EU counterparts—but can the Union force Pakistan or India to adopt the NPT (which is one of the provisions in the European Union's nonproliferation clause)?

From European to Transatlantic Approaches?

The election of Barack Obama will likely lead the European Union to put less emphasis on finding uniquely European approaches to nonproliferation and to return to a more stringent cooperation with the United States. The new generation of leaders that has come to power in Europe since 2003 (Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy) is far more pragmatic about, and more keen on, working with the United States. The November 2008 U.S. presidential election completes the generational change from the divisive early 2000s and provides yet another impulse for closer transatlantic cooperation. Moreover, U.S. nonproliferation views—even under President Bush—have evolved, and there is less daylight between Washington and Brussels today than was the case five years ago. All these changes are transforming the European security discourse—for example, the European Union's discussions in 2008 on updates to the European Security Strategy featured very few comparisons between U.S. and European approaches; the emphasis has been clearly on cooperation.

¹³ For an excellent overview on how the nonproliferation clauses work, see Gerrard Quille, "A New Transatlantic Approach? A View from Europe," in *Coercive Arms Control—Toward a New Paradigm*, ed. Christopher Daase and Oliver Meier (working paper, Munich, 2009).

Still, divisions remain. The use of force is still controversial in Europe. The 2008 Transatlantic Trends survey found that only 21 percent of Europeans think that the West should consider using force against Iran's nuclear facilities, compared to 49 percent of Americans.¹⁴ Were the United States or any other country to strike Iran, Europeans would almost certainly disagree among one another, as some EU governments would side with the public opinion while others would take a more strategic view.

The prospects for the European Union adopting a unified policy on nuclear disarmament also remain low. France in particular seems focused on positioning itself as a provider of nuclear deterrence to the whole of Europe,¹⁵ and it seems very unlikely to strongly endorse the goal of disarmament as currently formulated. The EU governments are holding early talks in the hopes of forging a common position for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, but given that both France and the United Kingdom have recently taken decisions to modernize their nuclear arsenals, the European Union seems ill-prepared to take major steps toward disarmament.

The future of the European Union's threat reduction efforts in Russia could suffer in the wake of the Georgia war. The war left EU-Russia relations very tense; in August 2008, the European Union has put off signing a new partnership and cooperation agreement to signal its displeasure with Moscow's actions. U.S. officials, for their part, say they have seen little impact on the CTR projects they have in place in Russia,¹⁶ and there is no evidence so far that EU-led projects have been affected. But the financial crisis and the spectacular falls on the Russian stock market in autumn 2008 have further tested Russia's relations with the West. Russia's foreign policy for the next few years, warned the Centre for European Reform, "is likely to be aggressive ... [and Russia] is likely to maintain an unco-operative stance on issues such as Iran, nonproliferation, counter-terrorism and European security."¹⁷ If so, it remains to be seen whether the European Union can successfully continue its CTR programs in Russia under these adverse conditions.

¹⁴Transatlantic Trends, *Transatlantic Trends: Key Findings 2008* (Washington, D.C.: German Marshall Fund, September 2008), http://www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/doc/2008_English_Key.pdf.

¹⁵See, for example: Steven Erlanger, "Sarkozy Defends France's Nuclear Arsenal," *International Herald Tribune*, March 21, 2008, <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/03/21/europe/france.php>.

¹⁶Daniel Arnaudo, "Threat Reduction Programs Continue Despite Rifts," *Arms Control Today* (October 2008), http://armscontrol.org/act/2008_10/threatreduction.

¹⁷"Beyond Banking: What the Financial Crisis Means for the EU," Policy Brief, Centre for European Reform, London, October 2008, http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/pb_fin_crisis_23oct08.pdf.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Camille Grand became the director of the Foundation for Strategic Research in Paris in September 2008. Prior to that, he held several key positions within the French Foreign and Defense Ministries, including as deputy director for multilateral and disarmament affairs within the Directorate for Strategic, Security, and Disarmament Affairs of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2006–2008); assistant diplomatic adviser to the minister of defense (2002–2006); and operations manager with the Strategic Affairs Department of the Ministry of Defense (1999–2002). Previously, he was a researcher with the European Union Institute of Security Studies (1998–1999) and with the Institute of International Relations and Strategy (1994–1998). Grand has taught at Sciences Po Paris since 1998 and at the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) since 2006.

Stefan Kornelius is the foreign editor of *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Germany's largest quality daily. In his columns and commentaries, he focuses on transatlantic and security issues. In his reporting career, Kornelius has worked as deputy bureau chief in Berlin, as bureau chief in Washington, D.C., during the Clinton administration, and as a correspondent from then-capital Bonn, West German. Kornelius holds a master's degree in government from the London School of Economics. He has also studied at Bonn University, attended journalism school in Hamburg, and cofounded a special interest magazine for journalists, *Medium Magazin*.

Mark Smith is program director for defence and security at Wilton Park, an academically independent agency of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, where he runs a program of meetings with a special focus on nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons issues. Prior to arriving at Wilton Park, he was a research fellow at Swansea University and a lecturer in international security at Southampton University. For five years he was a research fellow at the Mountbatten Centre for International Studies, also at Southampton. Principal areas of study include arms control, missile proliferation, British nuclear history, and NATO during the Cold War.

Tomas Valasek is director of foreign policy and defence at the Centre for European Reform, a private London-based think tank. Previously, he served as policy director and head of the security and defence policy division at the Slovak Ministry of Defence. Before joining the government, Valasek founded and directed the Brussels office of the World Security Institute (formerly the Center for Defense Information—CDI), a Washington-based defense think tank (2002–2006). From 1996 to 2002, he worked as senior European analyst in CDI's Washington office.

Marcin Zaborowski is a senior fellow at the European Union Institute for Security Studies in Paris where he deals with transatlantic relations, U.S. foreign policy, EU enlargement, and East Asia. Marcin has a doctorate in European politics and a master's in international studies from the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. He was a lecturer in international relations and European politics at Aston University, United Kingdom, from 2001 to 2005, and coordinator and director of the Transatlantic Programme at the Centre for International Relations in Warsaw, Poland, from 2002 to 2004. Marcin is the author of *Germany, Poland and Europe* (Manchester University Press, 2004) and coauthor (with Kerry Longhurst) of *The New Atlanticist: Poland's Foreign and Security Policy Priorities* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006).