

CHAPTER 15

NATO: Ambitious Goals, Limited Results

Largely freed from the quagmire of Vietnam, President Richard Nixon declared in a January 1973 press conference that it would be the “Year of Europe.” The administration, National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger noted, had ambitious plans to reinvigorate its relationship with its European allies and establish a new Atlantic Charter. Much damage, however, had been done to alliance unity during Nixon’s first term, and Europeans viewed such grandiloquent pronouncements with skepticism. Despite their own rapprochement with the Eastern bloc, West Europeans had viewed détente and the Nixon Doctrine not as the grand design of master statesmen, but rather as frantic maneuverings forced upon the administration by American weakness. Notwithstanding the administration’s actions and statements to the contrary, the allies feared that Washington sought to reduce U.S. commitments abroad in a manner that could threaten European security. They likewise viewed the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks with suspicion because the negotiations emphasized limits on the superpowers’ strategic nuclear arsenals but neglected those intermediate and battlefield weapons that most threatened Western Europe. The allies also worried that the increased frequency of bilateral talks with the Soviets indicated that Washington aimed to separate its own defenses from those of Europe. This set the stage for European suspicion of, and resistance to, repeated efforts by defense secretaries during Nixon’s second term to revise NATO strategy to reflect a new phase of the Cold War.¹

Concerned about the effects of superpower strategic parity on the U.S. defense posture in Europe, Defense Secretaries Elliot Richardson, James Schlesinger, and Donald Rumsfeld prodded European allies to improve their conventional military capabilities. The three men

sought to preserve the approximately 300,000 U.S. troops stationed in Europe against repeated attempts by Congress to withdraw them. Although Richardson argued to keep a strong troop presence in Europe during his brief tenure, Schlesinger became the primary architect of the drive to bolster NATO's conventional forces during the four years spanned by Nixon and Ford. To improve the alliance's defense posture during economically austere times, Richardson, Schlesinger, and Rumsfeld pursued the establishment of a more streamlined command-and-control apparatus as well as common weapon systems, focusing particularly on tactical fighters, main battle tanks, and airborne command posts. Although the secretaries successfully increased U.S. combat capabilities and made progress toward greater alliance-wide coordination, they ultimately failed to fully persuade European allies to prepare for a long war on their own soil.

The Schlesinger Doctrine Collides with NATO

Schlesinger came to the Pentagon convinced that reworking NATO's strategy and force posture had to be a top priority. The so-called Schlesinger Doctrine would expand the options available to the United States in war, both to enhance deterrence with conventional forces and, should war occur, to prevent it from escalating inexorably toward mutual destruction. In support of his strategy, he aimed to "re-anchor the strategic forces of the United States to the defense of Western Europe." To achieve this feat, the secretary wanted NATO to deploy a force sufficient to resist a nonnuclear attack by the Warsaw Pact for an extended period without resorting to nuclear weapons. He believed nuclear parity between the superpowers, formalized under SALT I, had made obsolete the doctrine of deterrence through mutual assured destruction. This parity, he maintained, had exposed the West's conventional vulnerabilities, as the Kremlin might not find a nuclear response to a conventional attack credible. Faced with destruction, the United

States might decide to cut its losses rather than risk Armageddon by resorting to a strategic nuclear response. However improbable the limited European war scenarios might have been, Schlesinger, a former RAND strategist, did not wish the president to lack options in a crisis other than those that would begin a nuclear war. Nor did he want the Soviets to perceive and exploit such limitations, either politically or militarily. By adopting his strategy, he believed the alliance could lessen the chances of war and give both sides the chance to limit it if it did occur. Unfortunately for the secretary, European allies would prove just as resistant as the Defense Department bureaucracy was to the Schlesinger Doctrine.²

By the beginning of Nixon's second term, conditions that had existed during NATO's formative years had changed. Western Europe's economic revival, the near parity of U.S. and Soviet strategic nuclear forces, and the relaxation of East-West tensions combined to produce, in Henry Kissinger's words, "a dramatic transformation of the psychological climate in the West." Washington's détente with the Soviet Union and West Germany's policy of *Ostpolitik* had caused the American and West European publics to take peace and stability for granted. Congress, moreover, increasingly chafed at maintaining a large American troop presence in prosperous Western Europe even as the Soviets threateningly strengthened their conventional and nuclear forces. U.S. retrenchment, they argued, would effectively encourage the Europeans to assume more of their own defense burdens. Despite Defense Intelligence estimates to the contrary, some members of Congress argued that the Europeans would fill the gaps left by American withdrawals.³

Convinced that the Europeans would not reinforce defenses abandoned by American forces, Schlesinger concluded that unilateral cuts to conventional forces would insensibly imperil NATO's defensive posture and deprive the United State of leverage in the mutual balanced force

reduction negotiations. Rather than encourage the allies to do more, Schlesinger feared unilateral American withdrawals risked leaving European allies feeling abandoned, vulnerable, and inclined to drift toward neutralism. The defense secretary warned Nixon that the United States had already reduced total active troop strength levels by 1.3 million before the end of the Vietnam War, and its defense budget was at the “lowest level since before Pearl Harbor.” Alarmed by the Soviet military buildup and concerned that détente may prove fleeting, the secretary worried about the growing imbalance that favored the East. Cuts should indeed occur, he concluded, but only if the Soviets also reduced their forces.⁴

Considering congressional calls for cuts misguided and politically motivated, the administration had carefully assessed what could improve the alliance’s defensive posture without requiring a greater American commitment. On February 13, 1973, Nixon ordered “a comprehensive study of U.S. strategy, U.S. policy choices and programs supporting the NATO allies.” By mid-May, an interagency group directed by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs concluded that the disappearance of U.S. strategic nuclear superiority made a strong conventional posture more important than ever. The U.S. Joint Staff wanted NATO conventional forces strong enough to resist a major Warsaw Pact assault and to ensure the “nuclear threshold be maintained as high as possible for as long as possible.” NATO allies, in contrast, conceived of conventional defense as “the ability to fight a short, intense war” with the threat of the early use of nuclear weapons as a means of deterring Soviet attack. Divergent U.S. and European estimates of the threat reflected these contrasting strategic preferences. European allies calculated that NATO ground forces had half, or less, of the combat power of the Warsaw Pact, with deficiencies particularly in artillery and antitank weapons. A Pact assault, they projected gloomily, would conquer West Germany in five to seven days. The

allies also estimated that Warsaw Pact tactical aircraft outnumbered NATO planes more than two to one, which would allow the Soviets to win control of the skies within one or two days. Decidedly more optimistic American intelligence estimates and war-gaming analyses, later endorsed by Schlesinger, concluded that NATO's superior pilot training partially offset the numerical disadvantage in aircraft.⁵

Kissinger thought greater coordination and intelligence sharing might help resolve strategy differences within the alliance and thought Schlesinger might help persuade the allies to change course. The allies, for example, might not have fully considered how the advent of strategic nuclear parity made the conventional balance more important. At a May 25 Senior Review Group meeting, Kissinger proposed completing by the year's end "a statement of purpose, a work program for the Atlantic area for the next two or three years." But he cautioned that unity in an alliance riven with divisions would be difficult, likening Allied Command Europe to "the French army in 1940—there are too many weak spots, too many anomalies." Kissinger urged Schlesinger, then serving as director of Central Intelligence and awaiting Senate confirmation to become defense secretary, to attend NATO's Defense Planning Committee in June. Schlesinger could use the forum to press the allies to agree to a shared strategic concept. He told Kissinger that even if not yet confirmed, he could go as the president's special representative.⁶

As Kissinger recognized, persistent alliance divisions often sapped the strength behind statements of unity. Even when the allies appeared to have achieved consensus on strategy, they quickly developed contrasting interpretations that dulled its impact. NATO's strategic concept, Military Committee (MC) 14/3, adopted by the Defense Planning Committee (DPC) in December 1967 had declared the threat of escalation as the alliance's main deterrent and required

credible conventional forces to repel a limited Soviet attack. Still serving as the alliance's primary strategy statement in the early 1970s, the concept stated, if conventional defense failed, NATO would respond with tactical nuclear weapons. Washington would preclude further escalation by threatening nuclear strikes on targets within Soviet territory. U.S. policymakers interpreted the document to mean alliance forces must be sufficient to resist a major attack without losing much territory or resorting to nuclear weapons for 90 days. An ardent advocate of the 90-day doctrine, Schlesinger argued that the deployment of extensive forces and munitions for a long war improved deterrence, as Moscow could not hope to exploit the West's conventional vulnerability, either politically or militarily, and cause a crisis. If conflict did break out, the president would have options other than massive retaliation for responding to a conventional attack in Europe, thereby lessening the chances of an apocalyptic war. The Soviets would thus be uncertain about how precisely the alliance would choose to respond, but certain it would in fact react, and with powerful effect.⁷

European allies, however, viewed preparations for a long war as unnecessary, wasteful, and even dangerously provocative. They might signal to the Kremlin a willingness to limit a conflict to the conventional level, thereby eroding the nuclear deterrent and making war more likely. European policymakers had no desire to fight a war, nuclear or otherwise, as it would devastate their countries. Concluding that the threat of the unthinkable was the best deterrent, they interpreted the MC 14/3 to mean resorting to nuclear weapons within a few days, rather than months, of the outbreak of war. Most troubling to Schlesinger, European allies designed and equipped their conventional forces according to their very different reading of the alliance's strategy. This fundamental disagreement shaped most transatlantic debates about defense requirements during Schlesinger's and Rumsfeld's tenures.⁸

Schlesinger Attempts to Revise NATO Strategy

Schlesinger's first opportunity to shift alliance strategy came when he represented the administration at the June 7, 1973, Defense Planning Committee meeting. "While the weather from the East seems fair," he warned, "we know that it can turn foul with great speed." He lamented that the European allies interpreted MC-14/3 to align with their national priorities rather with the alliance's collective security requirements. He told the ministers that in an era of strategic parity, the alliance's conventional deficiencies might cause the Soviets to doubt NATO resolve and conclude the West would not risk nuclear war to stop them. To enhance deterrence, conventional forces had to be strengthened, alliance coordination improved, and the defense burden shared more evenly on the continent. Yet the situation was far from hopeless. "The total resources available to us are far higher than theirs," he said, "and we are actually spending more on arms than they are." While the Pact led in tanks and total aircraft, Schlesinger argued that the alliance held quantitative and qualitative advantages in antitank weapons, logistic support, and modern tactical aircraft. NATO faced serious but not insurmountable or unaffordable challenges.⁹

The defense secretary urged his West European counterparts to prepare for protracted conventional warfare to deter a Warsaw Pact attack in an era of strategic parity. For alliance aircraft to survive an initial Soviet attack, the secretary concluded, NATO must construct shelters for aircraft based in Europe and for all U.S. aircraft that deployed within 30 days after mobilization began. Schlesinger also stressed the need to centralize command and control of NATO's air assets. It made little sense for NATO tactical air command to be divided between the 2nd and 4th Allied Tactical Air Forces responsible for northern and southern Germany, respectively. If it came, a Soviet armored attack would be rapid and require an equally swift

alliance response that a centralized effort could most effectively guarantee. To further counter Soviet tank numbers, he said, they must increase the density of one- and two-man antitank weapons. Because the alliance planned for defense, allied forces required less mobility than Soviet attackers. With relatively inexpensive antitank weapons, they could blunt a Soviet offensive spearheaded by expensive armor. Finally, he recommended that NATO increase reserve stocks to levels above those of the Warsaw Pact (an estimated 30 days of supply) to avoid rapidly depleting ammunition during a conflict. Together, these achievable measures could swiftly bolster conventional defense.¹⁰

Pressuring the Europeans to share more of the burden for their own defense, Schlesinger warned them that Congress would balk at maintaining a large troop presence in Europe if NATO planned only for a short war. The United States, he said, bore a “disproportionately high” cost for maintaining forces in Europe, adding annually \$400 million to the U.S. budget and \$1.5 billion to the balance of payments deficit. Although deployed U.S. forces provided just 25 percent of NATO’s strength in Central Europe, that figure would rise precipitously after mobilization. Hundreds of U.S. aircraft and thousands of U.S. soldiers stood ready to reinforce NATO and make use of prepositioned equipment. Any reduction of the American commitment would thus grievously erode NATO defenses.¹¹

Schlesinger’s June address bewildered the allies, who had just hours before received a NATO intelligence briefing indicating that Soviet capabilities far exceeded previous estimates. To them, the defense secretary’s push for a more credible conventional defense appeared fanciful. NATO secretary general Joseph Luns informed Secretary of State William Rogers that the defense ministers from West Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Belgium had all disapproved of the speech, concluding it portended an undesirable shift in U.S. policy. As

his predecessors had done with defense secretaries, West German minister of defense Georg Leber indicated to him in July that the Federal Republic of Germany would never accept plans that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. British secretary of state for defense Lord Peter Carrington expressed concerns similar to Leber's. In a stark rebuke, he told Schlesinger in early August that U.S. troops' mere presence deterred Soviet aggression. Schlesinger retorted he preferred "deterrence be based on warfighting capability" instead of assumptions of Soviet intentions. War would likely begin inadvertently, he said, and only if the Soviets detected an alliance weakness. Schlesinger failed to persuade either defense minister that by preparing for a long war, they could avoid it.¹²

To put bureaucratic weight behind his proposals, Schlesinger established a NATO task force on July 5 in the Pentagon, chaired by the newly appointed assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, Robert C. Hill. Later in the month, he approved the task force guidance for the U.S. Mission to NATO to focus first on establishing concrete goals, such as improved conventional defense, and realistic timetables for achieving them. In the long term the mission would identify less perceptible deficiencies. Some nations, for example, emphasized high manning levels for their active units but lacked adequate reserve mobilization and deployment plans.¹³

Schlesinger and his task force faced an uphill fight to persuade Europeans to improve their conventional forces, as European spending priorities and security concerns encouraged an opposite view. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. If it cast the Warsaw Pact as significantly superior, NATO planners would then anticipate early nuclear weapons' use to prevent Western armies from being overrun. Such a view aligned well with the Western European emphasis on deterrence through the threat of massive retaliation and, Schlesinger suspected, with European parliaments' reluctance to spend heavily on conventional forces. Given the Pact's overwhelming superiority according to NATO's estimates, the development of powerful conventional forces could only be achieved at unacceptable cost. Schlesinger thought NATO assessments overstated Warsaw Pact capabilities, featuring unrealistically large numbers of combat-ready units, overly swift mobilization and movement times, and extremely high tactical aircraft sortie rates. In contrast, the Office of the Secretary of Defense rated the alliance's capabilities as closer to the Pact's, and these more bullish evaluations buttressed Schlesinger's arguments for increasing NATO's conventional capability. Schlesinger thought the Europeans purposefully exaggerated the Pact's strength to advance their strategy, relying purely on quantitative measures and ignoring NATO's qualitative advantages. Such an approach resulted in distorted assessments, he argued. He used airpower as an example: In comparison to Warsaw Pact air forces, American pilots had more flying time, their aircraft carried superior avionics, and many were equipped for all-weather operations. With sufficient aircraft shelters for U.S. reinforcements, NATO would have a discernible airpower advantage despite their numerical disadvantage.¹⁴

Briefing his allied counterparts in August 1973, Schlesinger called for an adjustment in wargame scoring to cover qualitative factors like mobility and survivability as well as firepower. The change would give more credit to riflemen, antitank weapons, and mortars, where NATO would lead the Pact after mobilization. Schlesinger identified two threat estimates: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

On September 6 Schlesinger vented his frustrations with the alliance to his NATO task force. Focusing on the conventional balance, Schlesinger said the threat figures of MC-161, NATO's General Intelligence Estimate, were close to U.S. estimates but word choices and threat descriptions altered their meaning. He suspected the allies had devised estimates "tailored to that which is politically palatable and institutionally advantageous" to themselves. For instance, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe projected, imaginatively, that fully manned Warsaw Pact divisions could be made combat-ready in just one day, whereas active CONUS-based U.S. divisions would need 10 days to move. Schlesinger concluded: "We must show results in the NATO Action Program by December.... We cannot afford a NATO-typical, three-year dillydally.... We are making progress on subsidiary tasks like building [aircraft] shelters, but we are achieving relatively little progress on a reassessment of the conventional balance and its implications for a cohesive strategy." Unfortunately for Schlesinger's campaign, events elsewhere in the world would soon strain alliance relations to the breaking point.¹⁶

The Impact of the Middle East War

The oil shock following the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War disrupted Schlesinger's effort to convince European allies that NATO could and should prepare for a long conventional war. Over 60 percent of Western Europe's energy usage came from petroleum—mostly from Middle

Eastern imports. A catastrophic 70 percent rise in oil prices thus set off a severe economic recession in Europe that government spending programs were powerless to stop. For the first time in the post–World War II period, the major economies of Western Europe began to suffer from stagflation, a combination of high inflation (averaging 11.9 percent from 1973 to 1979), and low growth. Weathering the shock better than the rest of Western Europe, West Germany experienced a bearable 4.7 percent inflation from 1973 to 1979. The United Kingdom suffered a 15.6 percent inflation rate average and an astonishing 24 percent rate in 1975. Stagflation dashed the NATO goal, established in 1971, of increasing defense spending by 3 percent annually; just raising defense budgets to match inflation proved difficult.¹⁷

The Arab-Israeli War also seriously strained diplomatic and defense relations between the United States and Europe. Many Europeans thought American policymakers had reaped what they had sown and faulted Washington for acquiescing to Israel’s occupation of Arab territories after the 1967 war. They believed that such acceptance had encouraged radical Arab regimes, bitter with U.S. support of Israel, to turn toward Moscow and against conservative, more cooperative Arab regimes. The U.S. decision to provide military aid to Israel caused further furor in Europe, especially after the Israelis gained the upper hand on the battlefield and shifted from fighting a desperate defensive struggle to a punitive advance aimed at deterring future attacks. Greece and Turkey announced that U.S. bases in their countries could not be used for any purposes involving the Middle East war. Indirectly, London let it be known that U.S. bases in Britain should not be used for war-related airlift and intelligence flights. Washington had to strongly pressure Portugal before the country allowed U.S. aircraft bound for Israel to land in the Azores, an essential mid-Atlantic stopover.¹⁸

The war also caused quarreling between Washington and Bonn. Schlesinger had authorized the movement of tanks and howitzers from U.S. stocks in West Germany to the port of Bremerhaven for transfer to Israeli ships. Bonn had turned a blind eye to the transfer until the German press reported on it. On October 23, the German foreign ministry told the U.S. ambassador that it would no longer allow the use of German ports for war-related transfers. Two days later the German Government publicly announced that “deliveries using West German territory or installations from American depots in West Germany to one of the warring parties cannot be allowed.” At a November 4 press conference, Schlesinger said that if access arrangements could not be agreed upon, “we might have to give consideration to the reduction of supplies and equipment in Germany.” Soon afterward, he and Leber agreed that movements from U.S. depots to German ports would be arranged on a military-to-military basis.¹⁹

Nixon, Kissinger, and Schlesinger were furious with NATO allies for distancing themselves from U.S. policy. On November 6, when Schlesinger arrived in Brussels for a meeting of NATO’s Nuclear Planning Group, Secretary General Luns told him that Europeans did not view the crisis as a NATO matter. “A strategic defeat for the U.S. in the Middle East,” Schlesinger replied, “would have had incalculable consequences for NATO, and NATO nations should have realized that.” He wondered whether NATO would show itself “incompetent to act” if a new crisis erupted one year hence. Several days later in Washington, Schlesinger told British ambassador Lord Cromer that “he did not understand what Europe in general or Britain in particular accomplished by separating themselves from the United States during the Middle Eastern conflict.” Cromer replied curtly, “Who separated from whom? Our policy remained the same.” Not conceding the point, Schlesinger fumed that European actions “only served to underscore the weakness of Europe.”²⁰

Despite the transatlantic strains, Schlesinger continued to press for NATO defense improvements even as the United States unilaterally weakened them by moving war materiel out of Europe to supply Israel during the 1973 October War. Late in November 1973, as the next Defense Planning Committee meeting drew near, Assistant Secretary Hill advised Schlesinger that “Europe’s effort to disassociate itself from the U.S. at a time of Soviet-American strategic confrontation has the Alliance in unprecedented disarray.” Still, Hill predicted the allies would agree to build additional aircraft shelters and they could hope for modest progress in nudging the European allies toward a more optimistic assessment of the conventional balance.²¹

Even modest progress toward agreement about the nature and scope of the NATO–Warsaw Pact military balance proved difficult, however. At the December 7–8 DPC meeting, Schlesinger warned once more that without NATO consensus for a strong conventional posture there was no rational basis for a sizable U.S. presence in Europe. Troops could therefore be “legislated home.” For the next version of MC-161, Schlesinger said he would “strive for a finely balanced, objective assessment—one that reflects Pact weaknesses and vulnerabilities as well as Pact strengths.” The alliance must standardize resources, he informed his colleagues, as the “duplication and proliferation of similar weapon systems results in unnecessary waste of our collective R&D and logistic resources” and stymied alliance forces’ interoperability. The United States was considering one of three short-range air-defense systems being developed by the European allies. For its part, Washington, was even willing to share the airborne warning and control system—“a system developed by the U.S. at an ultimate cost of \$1 billion and containing our most advanced technology.”²²

In the West European view, however, U.S. aid to Israel had substantially eroded NATO’s conventional defense, and Schlesinger’s calls for conventional improvements rang hollow. By

the end of 1975, the U.S. tank inventory in Europe stood at 2,086 versus the 2,778 authorized. While tanks assigned to units stationed in Germany remained steady at 1,698, those pre-positioned for U.S. tank crews that would arrive there in time of crisis fell from 591 to 347 and those in reserve from 498 to 41. Tank shortages required substituting one infantry and one airborne division from the United States in place of one mechanized and one armored division. To Europeans, Schlesinger's criticisms of NATO allies' shortcomings now seemed hypocritical.²³

Pressing Forward, Despite the Headwinds

Although Schlesinger understood that the oil price increase made it difficult for Europeans to contribute more to their own defense as 1973 ended, he remained frustrated with their inexplicably sluggish efforts to bolster their defenses in ways that did not require additional spending. In December, he told the Bundeswehr inspector general, Admiral Armin Zimmermann, that NATO was spending "six to seven years to make adjustments properly accomplished in three to four months." He complained that the problem of having NATO air force deployments weighted toward south central Europe while the primary Soviet threat was in the north should have been remedied a decade earlier. Frustrated, he rather tactlessly characterized the allies' resistance to his call for improved conventional defense as "neurotic" and rated the quality of European defense ministers as "spotty," with at least half of them scared of their parliaments.²⁴

West Germany's economic and military power had placed the country above other allies in the defense secretary's calculations, and the economic crisis only intensified this feeling. The Federal Republic's growing economic strength and sizable army of 12 divisions (four times the

number of British divisions in West Germany) made Bonn a powerful voice in NATO councils. He hoped Washington and Bonn could set examples for other allies to follow and finally make progress toward a stronger conventional posture.²⁵

Schlesinger began to view the German defense minister as his most reliable partner because Leber shared the belief that strong conventional forces were critical for deterrence and, most importantly, because he acted on this belief. Schlesinger developed a good rapport with the former union boss who, Schlesinger's briefing papers reported, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Meeting with Leber in late April 1974,

Schlesinger [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Although he shared Schlesinger's concerns about a decline in allied defense capabilities, Leber wanted to avoid appearing to gang up with the secretary against their European counterparts. The Germans also worried that European allies might view efforts to revise NATO's nuclear policy as an American effort to decouple Western European defense from the U.S. strategic arsenal. They agreed to cautiously press ahead with efforts to convince NATO allies to improve their conventional forces.²⁶

Schlesinger continued to try new means of pushing reluctant Europeans to adopt his preferred strategy of enhancing deterrence by strengthening conventional forces. Addressing the NATO DPC in mid-June 1974, Schlesinger argued that the alliance had all the “ingredients” for a strong conventional defense posture but needed to combine them. As matters stood, variances in strategy, logistics, and deployments made Allied Command Europe little more than a loose coalition of national forces, woefully wanting in mutual support or vision. Schlesinger urged the ministers to address such intra-alliance disharmony along with persistent European pessimism about the conventional balance. He asked his counterparts to collaborate with him in preparing new ministerial guidance that would shape NATO long-term planning and rectify growing conventional force shortcomings caused by years of underinvestment. “History,” he warned, “will not forgive us if we make fundamental mistakes using the cover of domestic politics.”²⁷

Rather than rally around Schlesinger’s call to strengthen conventional forces, the allies went the opposite direction. Because of economic difficulties, the British, Italian, and Dutch governments developed plans for force reductions. The Dutch military would cut personnel from 121,000 in 1970 to 112,000 in 1975. Dutch officials warned the defense secretary, by then irate about the reductions, that if his criticism of European allies became too sharp, “serious counter-effects” could surface in the Netherlands. Schlesinger brushed off European domestic political concerns and told Dutch ambassador Baron Rijnhard Bernhard van Lynden that downward adjustments were becoming a “contagious disease.” Only West Germany—not coincidentally, the country best weathering the economic crisis—continued making conventional improvements that satisfied the defense secretary, even as the new government of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (who took office in May 1974) questioned some aspects of Schlesinger’s approach. Although the

Germans agreed with the necessity of a strong conventional posture for deterrence, they strongly disagreed with Schlesinger's continued insistence on preparing the alliance to fight a long war.²⁸

On December 10, 1974, Schlesinger pressed the allies yet again to adopt his views. He presented a draft NATO policy to them for review. The document stressed that the alliance must preserve "a perceptible conventional balance" within the framework of MC 14/3; maintain the triad of nonnuclear, tactical nuclear, and strategic nuclear weapons; improve effectiveness through greater funding; pursue rationalization and standardization throughout the alliance; and attain a logistics capability that could outlast what the Pact could assemble on short notice. He asked that his draft serve as the framework for a new ministerial guidance. "We are not wedded to our words," he said, "though we are to many of our concepts."²⁹

On May 23, 1975, the Defense Planning Committee incorporated some of Schlesinger's proposals into a new Long-Range Defense Concept, an underwhelming consensus statement about how NATO would respond to growing Soviet power over the long term. Conventional forces, the document stated, should be sufficient to repel a limited attack and, in case of a major attack, inflict serious enough losses on the invaders to persuade enemy leaders to cease. The threat posed by NATO's tactical nuclear weapons should prevent an attacker from resorting to nuclear weapons to support a faltering invasion. Because of long development times for sophisticated weapons as well as the increased burden that high personnel and equipment costs placed on nations grappling with a severe economic crisis, the concept heavily emphasized inter-allied cooperation and the establishment of "rigorous" defense priorities. The concept acknowledged a balanced force structure, with a focus on conventional capabilities, would require "some modest annual increase" in real defense spending. Yet, the document added, specific increases would depend on a nation's "current force contribution, its present efforts and

its economic strength.” With this last phrase, the alliance implicitly abandoned the annual three percent real-growth goal that Schlesinger had pushed. The alliance committed itself to maintaining existing forces and routinely modernizing major equipment. Schlesinger’s goal to achieve a statement that affirmed the need for increased force contributions remained unmet. Yet the Long-Range Defense Concept acknowledged that NATO urgently needed more inter-allied cooperation in rationalization and standardization of armaments—all matters important to the defense secretary.³⁰

How well the new concept would serve U.S. purposes remained unclear. Its exposition of NATO strategy followed closely the wording of MC-14/3. As with MC-14/3, the Europeans could interpret the concept to conform to their own priorities. The call for modest increases, for example, permitted members to vary their contributions in accordance with their economic strength—poorer nations could boost spending less than their wealthier counterparts did. The emphasis on maintaining and improving conventional capabilities was followed, moreover, by the qualifier, “NATO has already achieved a large measure of success in this regard.” Thus, the concept may be viewed as supporting both European and American views.³¹

Schlesinger’s vision for preparing for a long conventional war, which he had pursued since the June 1973 DPC meeting, found little support among his NATO counterparts and was never formally adopted by the alliance. His efforts to shift alliance strategy had run headlong into two European political realities: Europeans did not want to fight a world war III on their soil and allied governments were more fearful of provoking the ire of voters than they were of irritating the U.S. secretary of defense.

U. S. Congress and NATO

Schlesinger's repeated warnings to West Europeans that Congress could force military withdrawals from the continent were not idle threats. During his first term, Nixon had successfully fended off numerous bipartisan congressional efforts to cut U.S. troops levels in Europe. Post-Vietnam congressional interest in reducing U.S. military spending, however, revived efforts to reduce the number of U.S. troops stationed in Europe at the beginning of Nixon's second term. Dollar devaluations in the aftermath of Nixon's 1971 termination of the convertibility of U.S. dollars for gold and the consequent collapse of the Bretton Woods system had improved the commercial U.S. balance-of-payments account but increased the military deficit. The weaker dollar forced U.S. military personnel and their dependents to spend more overseas to buy the same goods and services. Senate Appropriations Committee chairman John McClellan admonished Richardson in March 1973 when he presented the DoD's FY 1974 budget: "We are always picking up the tab" for maintaining high troop levels in Europe. McClellan claimed that the Europeans had failed to increase their defense spending when they could afford to do so.³²

Richardson rebutted McClellan's argument that moving troops from Europe to the continental United States would result in substantial savings. He informed McClellan that so long as defense of Western Europe remained U.S. policy, bringing one mechanized division home would cost far more than maintaining one in Europe. Such a division would need "24 additional C-5 aircraft equivalents" to stand ready to transport division personnel back to Europe in an emergency. The purchase of these transports would cost \$720 million. The housing for the troops in the United States would cost an additional \$450 million, and \$320 million would be needed to preposition equipment for one division in Europe. Thus, Washington would need to

spend \$1.51 billion, a one-time expenditure, to allow the division to provide a comparable military value to what it already provided in Europe for just \$50 million. When additional annual costs of \$145 million for operation, maintenance, and excises to return the division to Europe were included, the cost over a 10-year period for relocating a division would reach \$251 million more annually than leaving the troops in Europe. McClellan remained skeptical.³³

The House's unwillingness to approve withdrawals in the end protected the administration's efforts to preserve a strong troop presence in Europe. But growing momentum for cuts in the Senate concerned Schlesinger. On July 31, 1973, the House rejected by a 163–242 vote a proposal to reduce Army and Air Force personnel stationed overseas by 100,000. Throughout most of August, Schlesinger repeatedly and publicly chastised members of Congress for demanding defense cuts in the wake of the Vietnam War: “We are into—well into—I think, the period of the post-war follies.... It is now fashionable, as it has been fashionable before, to attempt to dismantle the defense establishment of the United States.” After concluding that public scolding would prove counterproductive, he changed tactics in September and pursued what the Associated Press called “quiet missionary work.” He personally met with nearly two hundred congressional members in the first three weeks of the month either in their offices individually or in the Pentagon dining room where he hosted many members at once. With charts and graphs, he lectured them on why cuts would imperil U.S. security. Despite his efforts, Schlesinger warned Deputy National Security Adviser Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft in mid-September that it was his “gut feeling that deployments will be cut.” Perhaps, the defense secretary pondered aloud, units could be sent to Germany temporarily unaccompanied by dependents.³⁴

The secretary's fears appeared justified when the Senate narrowly approved an amendment sponsored by Senator Mike Mansfield to fund a \$21 billion military procurement authorization bill on September 26 that required a draconian 40 percent (or 190,000 personnel) overseas cut over three years. The administration responded with an immediate and vigorous lobbying effort. Schlesinger met with several senators to attempt to persuade them into changing their votes. Four senators switched, leading to the amendment's defeat hours later. The next day, Senators Hubert Humphrey and Alan Cranston (D-CA) proposed a 22.5 percent cut, or 110,000 personnel, to occur by the end of 1975. Asia and the Western Pacific, and not Europe, Humphrey said, would be "the logical places for us to begin sensible troop cuts." The administration lobbied against the Humphrey-Cranston proposal with less intensity and less success and, as Johnston had predicted, the amendment passed the Senate, 48 to 36.³⁵

The outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War stalled the congressional drive to force cuts. On October 11, 1973, five days after the conflict began, House and Senate conferees on the authorization bill dropped the Humphrey-Cranston amendment. Senators Henry Jackson and Sam Nunn sponsored instead an amendment that both chambers approved overwhelmingly. Jackson-Nunn contained the spirit of cuts but gave the defense secretary greater leverage to avoid them. It required troop withdrawals to occur in proportion to the deployment-related balance of payments deficit that Europeans had failed to offset. Thus, a 10 percent shortfall would trigger a 10 percent U.S. troop withdrawal. Jackson-Nunn set a May 16, 1975, deadline for offsetting the FY 1974 deficit in full. Europe's failure to meet it would trigger proportionate withdrawals by November 16, 1975. According to Jackson's staff, the amendment would require precise figures about troop costs, but was less imprecise about how to offset those expenditures.

The administration would thus have better flexibility if it appeared that implementation would require a disastrously large withdrawal.³⁶

Schlesinger viewed Jackson-Nunn as a mixed blessing. The amendment forestalled the large-scale troop withdrawals that he was trying to avoid, but it also reduced his negotiating leverage for offsets within NATO. While Congress had not mandated unilateral troop withdrawals, by taking away the flexibility to threaten large withdrawals, Schlesinger feared, Jackson-Nunn weakened U.S. leverage in both negotiating offset agreements with Bonn and demanding force improvements from the allies. Thus, defense officials found themselves hamstrung when Helmut Schmidt, West Germany's finance minister and former defense minister, told U.S. officials in Europe in late 1973 that the presence of U.S. troops in Europe was as important to America's security as it was to Europe's. If Americans did not think so, Schmidt said, they should withdraw their troops. By U.S. calculations, a full offset would total \$3.3 billion over two years. The Germans, at that point, were offering only \$1.04 billion.³⁷

The rigidity of Jackson-Nunn limited U.S. negotiators' options as they sought to extend the West German offset payments. This arrangement had been a bilateral issue since the John F. Kennedy administration when Bonn had agreed to purchase vast amounts of U.S. military equipment to offset the cost of basing troop on West German territory. Such payments—over \$10 billion cumulatively—had continued into the mid-1970s. On March 19, 1974, the United States and West Germany signed a \$2.2 billion offset agreement covering July 1, 1973, through June 30, 1975, a figure slightly higher than the previous agreement. However, the Germans refused to consider further offset arrangements beyond 1975. After becoming chancellor in May in a coalition of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Free Democratic Party (FDP), Helmut Schmidt would move to end the payments.³⁸

Even after Jackson-Nunn went into effect, congressional pressure to withdraw U.S. forces remained strong. In May 1974 Schlesinger helped defeat an amendment introduced by House Majority Leader Tip O’Neill to reduce troops abroad by 100,000 within 18 months by persuasively arguing it would cause catastrophic damage to NATO’s defense posture. After the O’Neill amendment’s defeat, Senator Sam Nunn redirected the discussion of cuts toward support personnel stationed in Europe as a way to satisfy both Congress and the administration. Schlesinger opposed Nunn’s initial amendment to the FY 1975 DoD Authorization for Appropriations Act that would reduce Army support units in Europe by 20 percent by June 30, 1975, and use saved resources to deploy new combat units. On June 26 Schlesinger wrote to Senate Armed Services Committee chair Senator John Stennis that “it would reduce Army support forces to a level below that which we believe prudent.” He provided a markup to make the legislation “acceptable.” To soften what would be an intolerable blow to Army forces, he recommended expanding the reductions to encompass all the services and changed the percentage requirement to a numerical figure. Rather than a 20 percent reduction, 18,000 would be reduced. He extended the reduction deadline by creating an “intermediate goal of 6,000” by the end of fiscal year 1975 (then set at the end of June). The final version of the bill passed on August 5, 1974, with Schlesinger’s changes, and allowed him to strengthen the U.S. commitment to NATO rather than weaken it.³⁹

Schlesinger had effectively navigated between congressional pressure to remove forces from Europe and West European desires to retain a strong U.S. presence on the continent. He touted the two additional brigades the Army would deploy to Europe under the amendment he had helped shape. Speaking to news reporters in Bonn in November 1974, Schlesinger said “as long as the Europeans do their share those forces will be here.” In May 1975, in accordance with

the Jackson-Nunn amendment, the Ford administration reported to Congress that NATO's European members had met the amendment's terms by offsetting U.S. costs of stationing troops in Europe. After delicate negotiations with Bonn, Washington added two U.S. Army combat brigades to Germany, which substantially increased the U.S. Army's combat strength in Central Europe. Ultimately, Schlesinger successfully threaded the needle by balancing these concerns with Nunn's support. As a result, the U.S. Army's combat presence in Europe returned to pre-Vietnam levels.⁴⁰

Standardization and Rationalization

As their predecessors had, Richardson, Schlesinger, and Rumsfeld pursued rationalization of the alliance's defenses, which U.S. policymakers defined as a more effective use of resources without increased funding, and standardization of weaponry to allow for better resupply, repair, and operational coordination. In October 1973 General Andrew Goodpaster, the supreme allied commander of NATO forces, warned Schlesinger in a letter about the state of NATO air and ground forces: "We are not now able to get, from these powerful and expensive forces, anything like the full scale of effectiveness that they should provide." Goodpaster estimated that the alliance lost 30 to 50 percent of its capability "due to lack of standardization." He asked for Schlesinger's help in promoting aircraft standardization and centralization of tactical air command. NATO's ground defense posture, he lamented, resembled a "layer cake." American, Belgian, German, British, and Dutch forces could not fight effectively in unison to repel a large-scale enemy attack, because their forces each had different weapons and equipment supplied with independent logistical support structures. If war came, there would be "nothing approaching an area logistics system from which these forces could be maintained in large-scale flexible

operations responding rapidly to main enemy concentrations and directions of attack.” In essence, in a large war, Warsaw Pact invaders might meet a disordered menagerie rather than a coherent fighting force.⁴¹

However, NATO had no mechanisms by which to rationalize the allocation of resources, because members worried that the interdependence suggested by rationalization could limit national freedom of action. Technologically ahead of their allies in most areas, Americans were reluctant to participate in projects that required sharing R&D and production. Europeans tended to favor programs that were jointly funded and controlled, accepting the higher costs and complexities of management. In contrast, from 1971 to 1972, Washington promoted interdependent programs, whereby one ally undertook R&D for an item that several countries would produce. Finally, many NATO members “simply do not believe that we [the U.S.] are going to standardize with the rest of NATO, unless they buy our stuff,” as Leonard Sullivan, the assistant defense secretary for program analysis and evaluation, reported to Congress on April 25, 1975. Schlesinger and his staff invested great effort in promoting rationalization and standardization. Yet fiscal and political pressures within each nation made it impossible for the alliance to assess objectively and then adopt the best weapon system. Laborious negotiations thus usually required compromises or tradeoffs, which still did not always yield the desired results.⁴²

From mid-1975 onward, Pentagon officials redirected their focus away from alliance strategy toward military hardware. Improved technical interoperability, Schlesinger hoped, would build up the alliance’s conventional military posture, even if the defense ministers failed to adequately embrace his overall strategic vision. Thus, Schlesinger promoted new policies and procedures to advance standardization. He searched for a new alliance mechanism that would focus on cost effectiveness, force structures, and mid- to long-range planning rather than the end

products of research and development. Instead of trying to compete across the board, he believed Europeans should concentrate on areas where the American defense industry was inefficient. He judged the United States to be bad at developing guns and ammunition, not very good at tanks, and terrible at shipbuilding, but unmatched in its aircraft industry. If NATO could acquire common armored personnel carriers, tanks, trucks, and guns, Schlesinger believed that most standardization problems would be solved. Instead of establishing targets for reciprocal purchasing, which he deemed much too difficult politically, Schlesinger wanted to identify areas of exchange, such as swapping American F-16s for European armored personnel carriers.⁴³

On July 24 Schlesinger directed the Joint Chiefs of Staff, military services, and OSD components to develop a comprehensive plan for promoting rationalization and standardization. Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) Robert Ellsworth oversaw the work of the DoD Rationalization/Standardization Steering Group. In mid-October the group recommended issuing a policy statement about standardizing weapon systems, easing legal provisions that favored U.S. firms over European ones, and promoting common training. It was clear, Ellsworth advised Schlesinger, that “significant acceleration of NATO rationalization and standardization requires your continued strong active personal support—on [Capitol] Hill, within the Department, throughout the Executive Branch, and with U.S. industry.” Parts of the proposal, such as “recommendations to ease restrictions favoring domestic sources,” would likely encounter significant resistance in Congress and U.S. industry. On November 8, in one of his last acts as secretary, Schlesinger endorsed the group’s recommendations, signing a charter that distributed among DoD components the functional responsibilities for promoting rationalization and standardization.⁴⁴

A common overall approach, however, remained elusive in practice. The British, beset with economic troubles, wanted to promote reciprocal procurement in which they would gain as much as they gave. On September 24, 1975, the U.S. and U.K. governments entered into a Memorandum of Understanding Relating to the Principles Governing Cooperation related to standardization initiatives. The French declared themselves also willing to participate “actively and immediately” in standardization initiatives and proposed that the “Big Four” National Armaments Ministers (U.S., U.K., France, and Germany) join the MOU for considering such initiatives. Schlesinger did not directly oppose this proposal, instead telling his French counterpart that the “design community” wielded too much influence over the selection of weapon systems. Because the North Atlantic Council had launched itself into this arena, Schlesinger said, they must avoid offending sensibilities of the other 11 allies. The German Government, at this point, was divided over how to approach standardization. Since unity between Washington and Bonn often was the prerequisite for progress within the alliance, this division proved a major obstacle.⁴⁵

Had all the initiatives Schlesinger promoted been carried to prompt completion, the improvement for Allied Command Europe could have been dramatic. National pride and politics, revolving around the preservation of jobs and industries, inevitably conditioned decision-making on both sides of the Atlantic. Although the pace was uneven and results were mixed, Schlesinger’s efforts laid the groundwork for later improvements.

For the Pentagon, a new airborne command post represented precisely the sort of standardization project that NATO ought to pursue. Schlesinger believed improved command and control could multiply the benefits from reorganized air assets in combat. Selling this concept to NATO allies was a daunting effort, however, that lasted through the terms of

Schlesinger and Rumsfeld. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Director Defense Research & Engineering Malcolm Currie, who succeeded John S. Foster in June 1973, told Schlesinger that his office was “developing a conceptually stripped-down version of the AWACS that could interface with allied ground and airborne equipment.”⁴⁶

After the potential benefits of AWACS became clearer, the defense secretary pondered how to persuade his counterparts to purchase the aircraft. Currie suggested that in exchange for NATO buying AWACS, the United States should demonstrate good faith by purchasing low-altitude air defense systems like Britain’s Rapier or the Franco-German Roland II. Concluding that these systems would save the Pentagon’s R&D funds for a similar system, Schlesinger agreed. He told his NATO task force that they “should stop asking if we can develop a better system because the answer will always be yes.” In the interest of standardizing weapons, lowering costs, and maintaining alliance harmony, though, he believed the U.S. military might have to accept weapon systems with fewer capabilities. By October 1973, the Americans stood ready to collaborate with allies in procuring, maintaining, and operating an AWACS force, but the Europeans were unwilling to divert funds allocated to aircraft purchases to “‘ancillary’ aircraft equipment.” Instead, to free up funds for AWACS, they argued U.S. officials should consider cutting the number of aircraft shelters from 100 percent of alliance aerial forces to just 70 percent. Schlesinger, who wanted both the shelters and AWACS, refused to compromise, and the allies remained at an impasse.⁴⁷

Schlesinger continued to view the AWACS program as the most promising means of having the Europeans share a greater cost burden for defense and rapidly improve NATO’s defense posture. NATO and national studies invariably found the airborne command centers critical to the alliance’s conventional defense. In April 1975 NATO’s Conference of National

Armaments Directors created a project office to manage contract definition studies that would lead to a production decision. Washington proposed that NATO procure 32 AWACS aircraft. The United States would purchase, own, and operate “a proportionate share” but commit these aircraft fulltime to a NATO command. Congressional support would likely dissipate, however, unless allies shouldered some costs. The British appeared willing to pay a share in exchange for an American purchase of their Improved Harrier, a multirole vertical takeoff and landing aircraft. Other allies, however, largely stayed away from making commitments. By late November 1975 Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Portugal, Italy, and Norway had decided against participating in the program, claiming they would have to delay or cancel their own high-priority projects.⁴⁸

West Germany’s position on AWACS therefore became pivotal. On December 8, Ellsworth warned Leber that Congress might limit the total program to 12 aircraft unless Germany and Britain immediately pledged \$4 million each for long-lead items. Leber responded that AWACS must garner broader European support to receive the German parliament’s assent. Ellsworth stressed that Bonn and London both must pay \$4 million within 60 days and commit to that sum before the Defense Planning Committee met the following day to allow Secretary General Luns to obtain an agreement in principle from the ministers. Otherwise, AWACS would come off the agenda to avoid an embarrassing rejection from the allies that would lead to congressional backlash. Leber softened his position, saying he would provide a letter committing the German Government to fund \$4 million for preliminary studies on AWACS, subject to parliamentary approval, which could not come before February 1976, and without prejudice to future decisions. The British also informally pledged \$4 million, which satisfied Congress and persuaded the DPC to approve long-lead funding for AWACS. A December 16 letter from Leber

to Rumsfeld indicated that launching a NATO-wide AWACS program remained far from certain: “My consent to participate in the financing of the long-lead items does not constitute assent to the entire project.” “The Germans,” he said, “would require wide multinational support.”⁴⁹

Tepid support from the United Kingdom and West Germany failed to allay broader European concerns about funding AWACS. The Danes, for instance, argued that the aircraft would do little to boost detection of a Soviet assault across the Baltic, as picket radars provided nearly as much coverage. Danish military officials thought the Warsaw Pact would train pilots to target and destroy early warning aircraft. The Norwegians also voiced concerns about aircraft vulnerability. Taking a different tact, the Italians suggested the alliance invest more in offensive weaponry than in airborne surveillance. After touring allied capitals in April 1976 with a team of military officers who delivered briefings on the aircraft’s capabilities, Deputy Assistant Secretary (ISA) Roger E. Shields characterized most European criticism about capability or vulnerability as being “in the nature of a stalking horse.” As Shields reported to Ellsworth, the Europeans hoped to divert attention from their unwillingness to allocate funds. The team’s briefings had roundly refuted the Europeans’ supposed technical concerns but failed to persuade them to support the aircraft.⁵⁰

By then, U.S. officials also realized that the success of the entire effort rested with Bonn, which continued to equivocate and delay. Rumsfeld had informed Leber in a February 1976 letter that the United States would commit additional funds once the Germans were prepared to do so, and that Washington and Bonn must establish a joint fund by December. More than three months later, Leber responded to Rumsfeld, reiterating that the Federal Republic required “broad multinational support,” and stating, “a final decision on the German participation cannot be

expected before December, and will not likely be made until the spring of 1977.” Without a firm production commitment before the end of 1976, Rumsfeld feared London would likely yield to domestic pressure and shift AWACS funds to its own Nimrod aircraft, designed mainly for maritime reconnaissance. The Schmidt government of West Germany, however, faced what would prove to be a tightly contested October 3 election. The chancellor’s SPD/FDP coalition prevailed, but just barely.⁵¹

By October 1976 pressure had mounted within the Pentagon for a positive decision on AWACS at NATO’s December DPC meeting. JCS Chairman General Brown urged Rumsfeld to stress to Leber that British backing might falter without German advocacy for AWACS, and to remind the defense minister that AWACS was “the first program in many years that represents a quantum jump in NATO’s defensive capabilities.” Late in October, after conferring with his British and German counterparts, Currie urged Rumsfeld to insist on Leber’s formal support and explain that Bonn would otherwise be blamed for failing to win alliance approval for the program.⁵²

Rumsfeld’s negotiating leverage evaporated, however, following Gerald Ford’s defeat by Jimmy Carter in the 1976 presidential election. Just before the DPC met in early December, Rumsfeld wrote to Leber that “firm statements of intent by your representative” would determine AWACS’s fate. But this arm-twisting effort by a lame-duck defense secretary failed. Leber was ill, and the German Government saw little reason to help pay for a fleet that Washington would fund anyway. On December 8, the DPC decided that “high-level experts would convene in early January and expeditiously examine financial aspects of the AWACS program.” The British went forward with their Nimrod. The Ford administration thus left the question of alliance funding for AWACS to the Carter administration.⁵³

The XM-1 Tank

As Schlesinger called upon NATO allies to do more to strengthen conventional forces, the United States military found itself in the precarious position of lacking a main battle tank capable of surviving the impact of enemy high-explosive antitank (HEAT) projectiles. The development of next-generation tanks was one of the most important, but also the most contentious issues between NATO allies. In 1973 the United States had approximately 9,000 medium tanks overall, while NATO allies in the Central Region had approximately 8,000. PA&E estimated that these tanks faced between 50,000 and 60,000 Warsaw Pact tanks. Yet the U.S. M60 tanks (55 percent of the U.S. total) and their European equivalents outclassed approximately 75 percent of the Warsaw Pact tanks. The Soviets' enormous quantitative advantage in armor, however, caused Pentagon planners to view a new tank program as a high priority. A standard tank throughout the alliance would enhance the interoperability of NATO forces because the forces could use the same ammunition, fuel, and replacement parts. Agreement on the benefits of a standard new tank was easy, but achieving it was impossibly difficult. The tank had become a symbol of national prestige. A loss of national control over tank design and production would weaken a nation's production base, and with it the loss of jobs and votes. A successful tank meant sales could recoup some design and production costs.⁵⁴

The XM-1 originated out of a failed standardization effort. In January 1970 Congress killed the MBT-70 program, a joint venture between the United States and West Germany to design and build a next-generation main battle tank. The program, which had begun in 1963, resulted in a tank with exorbitantly expensive production costs. By terminating the program, Washington had spent \$300 million without a single operational tank to show for the money. Deputy Defense Secretary David Packard reoriented the U.S. tank program to produce a less

expensive tank that retained the effectiveness of the MBT-70. Although the production cost of the result, the XM-803, was 30 percent below the MBT-70, Congress also ended its production in December 1971 because it remained expensive and excessively complex. Upon ending the XM-803, Congress authorized funds for a new competitive prototype development program. After a Defense Systems Acquisition Review Council study in late 1972, Deputy Secretary Kenneth Rush approved the new XM-1 program in January 1973.⁵⁵

The program aimed to develop and procure 3,300 tanks by 1990 to replace the approximately 1,100 obsolete M48 tanks (first produced in the early 1950s) and 2,200 aging M60s (first produced in the early 1960s) that were then in operation. The new tank would take advantage of the British-developed Chobham armor, which used new spaced-plate armor technology resistant to kinetic energy penetrators and shaped charges. The Army also sought to integrate advanced night-fighting technology, fuel and ammunition compartmentalization, firing stabilization, and speed. In June 1973 the Army signed contracts with Chrysler and General Motors, for \$68 million and \$87 million respectively, to develop competing prototypes for the tank, then known as the XM-1. However, the U.S. tank project found itself in an intra-alliance competition with West Germany's Leopard 2 program, which already had prototypes undergoing engineering tests. The issue would test the limits of Schlesinger's desire to standardize a main battle tank for NATO.⁵⁶

In an August 20, 1973 letter, West German defense minister Leber urged Schlesinger to merge the American project with his country's Leopard 2 program. However, the Americans had found the Leopard 2 too expensive, its armor inferior, and its fire control poorer relative to the XM-1 design. Leber argued that further testing might reveal that the Leopard 2 met many of the U.S. Army requirements and "Americanization" of the Leopard 2 might improve the tank's

combat power turning the tank into one “our armies could accept and adopt.” At a time when Schlesinger was calling for an upgrade in conventional defense and weapons standardization across NATO, the secretary could not afford to dismiss outright Leber’s efforts to enter the Leopard 2 into competition with XM-1 contractors GM and Chrysler. The modifications, after all, would strengthen West Germany’s conventional forces.⁵⁷

Yet there were several reasons besides the tank’s combat worthiness for Schlesinger to exclude the Germans in the design process and bar a modified Leopard 2 as a contender for the standard main battle tank. On September 14 director of PA&E Leonard Sullivan warned the secretary that the experience with the “joint US/FRG development of the MBT-70 was a disaster,” and the United States should not risk repeating this mistake by bringing the Germans into the design process. The alternative was also unacceptable because the procurement of a German-designed and produced tank would devastate the U.S. production base: “In effect this country would lose its capability to design and produce the unique components needed in a tank. To regain this capability could take several years.” Buying from the Germans would also dramatically raise the already large balance of payments deficit to the FRG. Although production of the Leopard 2 in the United States might mitigate economic problems, it would “require negotiations between several hundred U.S. firms and their German counterparts to secure licensing rights for the multitude of subsystems involved.” These arguments resonated with the defense secretary.⁵⁸

Committed to NATO standardization but unwilling to risk repeating the MBT-70 debacle, Schlesinger wrote Leber on September 23, 1973, downplaying the idea of merging the two programs or considering the German tank as an alternative. Instead, he suggested testing the American, British, and German tank guns side-by-side and examining how Leopard 2

subsystems might be applied to the XM-1. He added that U.S. Army leaders had pressed for a separate program because they felt technological improvements allowed for better ballistic protection, fire control, and night-vision capabilities than found in the Leopard 2 design. Yet the secretary avoided shutting the door entirely on the West German tank. He said that the XM-1 program was carefully evaluating whether to include Leopard 2 subsystems and that the Germans should do the same with XM-1 components, a move that would contribute to standardization and perhaps lead to “a final evaluation that one of the tanks could meet the needs of both of our armies.” The Germans interpreted the statement as meaning that they still had a chance to win the whole ballgame. What Schlesinger meant, though, was if the Leopard 2 remained inferior in the final analysis, the FRG should simply accept the XM-1 as the NATO standard.⁵⁹

In late October 1973, DDR&E Currie and ASD (Installations & Logistics) Arthur Mendolia personally inspected the designs and reported being impressed by British hull and gun development. But they rated the Leopard 2 as “clearly the world’s best existing tank.” (Testing of XM-1 prototypes would not be conducted until over two years later, in February 1976.) Representatives from the three countries began the process of selecting a common gun and ammunition. After reviewing the Army’s XM-1 as well as evaluations of the Leopard 2, however, Schlesinger concluded the United States could produce a better, less expensive tank. In December 1974, the U.S. and West German governments completed a MOU that provided for comparative evaluation of the XM-1 and a modified Leopard 2. The goal was no longer maximum standardization but a less demanding “harmonization” of components. In essence, they would seek to use the same systems where possible while keeping the overall designs

unique. The two nations' programs, for instance, would consider using the same main gun for their new tanks.⁶⁰

Leber, however, continued to hope that the Leopard 2 could beat the XM-1 in competition and become the NATO standard. To standardize some aspects of NATO tank design, in May 1975, Leber suggested expanding trilateral cooperation on tank armament to the tank programs themselves. The British were not enthusiastic, viewing such an offer as an attempt to stifle their own program. Moreover, the Americans planned to mount rifled 105-mm guns on XM-1s while Germans opted for smoothbore 120-mm guns on Leopard 2s. The two guns would require different ammunition.⁶¹

The gun barrel issue continued to plague broader efforts to standardize alliance tank production. In late April 1976 Leber informed Rumsfeld that he continued to seek a full and fair competition between the XM-1 and the Leopard 2. Although they did not inform Leber directly, defense officials now saw little likelihood of accepting the German design for U.S. production. When Rumsfeld and Leber met in mid-June, and again three weeks later, the defense secretary defined their more limited goal as choosing a common gun barrel and ammunition. The Pentagon would adopt a 120-mm gun and ammunition if the others could agree on the type. France and Germany had chosen a smoothbore, which was better suited to firing High Explosive Anti-Tank (HEAT) rounds, but the British continued working on a rifled barrel that used grooves in the barrel to spin and stabilize each shell.⁶²

Although the DoD opted to produce its own tank, Rumsfeld had not yet decided on the design. On July 20, Army officials urged the defense secretary to promptly choose between the Chrysler and GM designs, but a quick decision was problematic. Army leaders wanted the GM proposal to include tried and true diesel engines, while Clements and Currie favored Chrysler's

gas turbine engine that provided more horsepower but consumed fuel faster. Rumsfeld resented being pressured to choose on short notice, preferring more time to weigh the competing designs. Clements and Currie also argued for an extension to work on hybrid turrets that could accommodate both 120-mm and 105-mm guns. Planning to evaluate the proposals himself and demonstrate that he alone would make the decisions, Rumsfeld deferred until mid-November.⁶³

Debates over engines in the United States mirrored transatlantic debates over gun types. On August 3, Rumsfeld and Leber approved an addendum to the 1974 MOU, stating that the two countries would agree on a 120-mm gun configuration by January 15, 1977. Concurrently, to mollify the British, U.S. officials agreed to test a British rifled 120-mm gun and its new ammunition. On November 12, Rumsfeld chose the Chrysler design for the XM-1. It would have a gas turbine engine, a 105-mm gun, and a turret capable of upgrading to a 120-mm gun. Late in December, however, Rumsfeld informed Leber that congressional demands for further study left him with “no reasonable alternative” other than to postpone the January 15 deadline for agreeing on a 120-mm gun design, leaving the issue to the Carter administration.⁶⁴

The F-16

U.S. efforts to standardize alliance tactical fighters were far more successful. Belgium, Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands had formed a consortium in 1974 to select a high-performance, multipurpose aircraft that would replace their aging F-104 Starfighters. During a visit to the United States in June 1974, Norwegian, Danish, and Dutch defense officials told their OSD counterparts that they preferred the technically superior U.S. F-16 over the French Mirage, the other aircraft under consideration. At the time, the F-16 was one of the two planes the Air Force was considering building under its Lightweight Fighter program (see chapter 14). The Belgians, however, wanted the Mirage mainly because of their close ties with France. In a critical move to

make the American program more attractive, Washington offered to share fighter production with the consortium. U.S. negotiators agreed that of all aircraft produced under the program, 10 percent of the lightweight fighters would be built for the U.S. Air Force, 40 percent of those planned for European air forces, and 15 percent of the expected third country sales would all be built in Europe.⁶⁵

Although this production-sharing offer made the American plane more attractive, the West European consortium members wanted assurances from Schlesinger on U.S. commitment to the program. Schlesinger met with the defense ministers of the four nations on September 13, 1974. Belgian minister of national defense Paul Vanden Boeynants insisted on firm commitments that the United States would buy one of the two planes then under Air Force consideration—ultimately it would be the F-16. Schlesinger assured the ministers that the Air Force planned to buy over 1,000 fighters and deploy them to Europe in large numbers. The Europeans also wanted assurances that Congress would not derail the program. The secretary emphasized that strong support for the lightweight fighter existed in Congress. Vanden Boeynants accepted these assurances and announced he was satisfied with the U.S. commitment to the program.⁶⁶

In January 1975 the U.S. Air Force picked the F-16 as its next generation, lightweight tactical fighter. Schlesinger applied pressure through German defense minister Leber, who, at the defense secretary's request, contacted Dutch minister of defense Hendrikus Vredeling in February to lobby for the F-16. Leber relayed back some of Vredeling's concerns and urged Schlesinger to be patient with Vredeling who was working to gain domestic political support for the F-16 from his left-leaning government. Schlesinger began building a relationship with the Dutch defense minister at a March 1975 meeting, where he supplied him with F-16 data designed

to help Vredeling counter Dutch parliamentary arguments against the sale. The secretary's efforts paid off in April when Vredeling threatened to resign to counter a move by Dutch politicians to leave the consortium. Schlesinger also worked with Norwegian minister of defense Alv Jakob Fostervoll to encourage the Dutch and Belgians to pick the F-16. In this instance, Schlesinger's sensitivity to West European domestic politics saved the effort.⁶⁷

By late May, the Norwegians, Dutch, and Danes supported the F-16 and were close to announcing their decision, but the Belgians continued to hold out in hopes that the French might improve their Mirage offer. At this point, President Ford stepped in. During a trip to Europe, he met with Belgian prime minister Leo Tindemans who told Ford that embracing the F-16 would topple his government. Ford responded that the U.S. planned to deploy 250 F-16s to Europe and noted that the other three nations appeared to be on board.⁶⁸

The Belgians correctly calculated, however, that their reluctance gave them leverage, and Belgian defense minister Boeynants met with Schlesinger on June 2. The secretary agreed to several Belgian requests: Belgium would promptly receive F-16-related contracts; the European F-16 program office would be located in Brussels; and the Pentagon would consider buying Belgian machine guns for the U.S. Army. Armed with these assurances, Boeynants secured his government's approval, and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. Schlesinger's personal involvement in selling the F-16 to NATO helped persuade the consortium to choose it. Rather than resort to public chastisement, Schlesinger collaborated closely with his alliance counterparts and demonstrated a sensitivity to their domestic political concerns.⁶⁹

Roland II Missile System

Despite the appearance of some willingness to consider European systems, in the end most of the major weapon systems Washington advocated were American systems. The United States did take a small step toward making standardization reciprocal in January 1975 when DoD chose the Franco-German Roland II missile system, a short-range air defense system, over U.S. and British competitors. But friction soon developed after DoD announced the selection because the U.S. Army had signed a contract with the Hughes Aircraft Company to design and produce a modified version of the Roland II. And before that contract, Hughes and the Boeing Company had concluded a licensing agreement with the Euromissile Company, which Washington interpreted to mean that U.S. sales to third countries would be denied only for clear security or political reasons—not economic reasons. Norway showed interest in purchasing a modified U.S. version of Roland II, as did several other countries. The U.S. version could be placed on tracked vehicles to allow them to be stationed in rugged terrain. Furious at the U.S. interpretation of the Euromissile licensing agreement and embittered by the Mirage's loss to the F-16, the French gained German support in seeking to veto a U.S. sale. At a trilateral meeting, French and German officials told Currie that the "US selection of the Franco-German Roland II for standardization in NATO does not mean that the US will take their world markets in the process." Schlesinger accepted Currie's recommendation "to back off and resolve the issue generally in favor of the European position," lest he derail the larger push toward standardization. In the process, Currie recommended that Washington seek "the greatest political benefit and the greatest impetus to our thrusts in cooperation." In August, Currie attempted to accomplish exactly that when he negotiated a way out of the impasse with his French and German counterparts. The results, he reported, were "very favorable" to the United States, allowing the U.S. sale to Norway on the

condition that Euromissile supplied the missiles. The three men also established a “principle of partnership” to explore a joint sales effort, common sale prices, and joint funding for improvements throughout a system’s life cycle. Ultimately, however, contracting problems and rising costs limited the U.S. Army’s Roland II purchase to a meager 600 missiles.⁷⁰

Although appealing in theory, standardizing NATO weapons was difficult in practice. Few governments wanted to surrender defense industry jobs and depend on a foreign nation for tanks—symbols of national military prestige. Doctrinal and organizational differences between military services further undermined efforts to develop standard weapons. The Pentagon’s pursuit of standardized weapons thus achieved only limited success, with the F-16 standing out amid the more modest gains of partial standardization under Rumsfeld’s term. Fortunately, NATO never had to subject its interoperability deficiencies to a conventional war with the Warsaw Pact.

Nuclear Assistance for the United Kingdom and France

Early in the Cold War U.S. presidents and their defense secretaries had grappled with the question of whether to assist allies in developing independent nuclear arsenals capable of striking the Soviet Union or Warsaw Pact armies. Would nuclear weapons enhance deterrence or threaten peace? An ally might initiate a nuclear war or, in a crisis, the Soviets might opt to neutralize a smaller nuclear power, reasoning that they could easily destroy such a small arsenal to prevent a second strike. President Dwight D. Eisenhower concluded that the benefits of nuclear cooperation with the United Kingdom outweighed the dangers. In 1958 Eisenhower persuaded Congress, then alarmed by the Soviets’ successful launch of *Sputnik*, to amend the Atomic Energy Act of 1946 to allow the United States to share nuclear weapons designs and

development information (labeled “Restricted Data” by statute) with Britain. After signing a series of nuclear cooperation agreements with London, Washington provided the British with the technology necessary to develop a strategic nuclear force based around submarine-launched Polaris missiles. The 1958 amendment, however, did not allow sharing of Restricted Data with France. During the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara had viewed nuclear assistance to Britain and France far more skeptically. “Weak nuclear capabilities,” McNamara said at Athens in May 1962, “operating independently, are expensive, prone to obsolescence, and lacking in credibility as a deterrent.” He feared that smaller, independent nuclear arsenals could drag the United States unwillingly into a nuclear conflict, so he refused any assistance to the French nuclear program, the *force de frappe*. Nixon reversed course, and with Kissinger sought to leverage British and French nuclear assistance to improve the U.S. diplomatic position in Western Europe and enhance NATO’s nuclear deterrent.⁷¹

Unlike McNamara, Schlesinger concluded that, in an era of strategic parity, the contributions made to deterrence by aiding the development of allies’ independent arsenals outweighed the risks. The Kremlin, he reasoned, would be faced with greater uncertainty about whether or not Washington’s allies might use nuclear weapons in response to a Soviet attack even if the United States itself might aim to keep the war conventional. Because of this, he supported strengthening British deterrence. Schlesinger also backed Nixon and Kissinger’s strategy to use nuclear assistance as a means of weakening French resistance to American policy goals and gradually luring them into a de facto reentry into the military alliance. Washington’s superior nuclear weapons expertise along with the size and diversity of its arsenal gave U.S. policymakers considerable leverage in dealing with their counterparts on nuclear weapons issues but using it to achieve specific policy goals proved challenging. Moreover, because Britain

remained a full member of NATO while France had withdrawn from the alliance's military command in 1966, the nature of American nuclear assistance to each varied. While Britain received extensive assistance in maintaining its nuclear forces, France was given modest, and far more clandestine, technical aid.⁷²

In 1970, with the British less confident that their aging deterrent force could penetrate the antiballistic missile system protecting Moscow, London faced a choice of either buying Poseidon missiles from the Americans and fitting them with a British version of a multiple independently targeted reentry vehicle or going ahead with the British national Polaris improvement program, codenamed Super Antelope. The British Government asked Washington for assistance with Super Antelope. In 1971 Nixon approved U.S. assistance for the project through the definition phase without necessarily committing the United States to providing further aid. One year later, though, London asked for help with the next phase. Specifically, they asked the United States to allot space in U.S. facilities for underground testing, allow flight testing of warheads on U.S. ranges, and permit the use of U.S. simulation facilities to test weapon effects and the separation of reentry vehicles from the system. Again, Washington agreed. In August 1972 Patrick Nairne from the U.K. Ministry of Defense conferred with U.S. officials, including Schlesinger, who was then serving as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. Schlesinger outlined three options. First, the United States could give full support to Super Antelope, answering British questions and acting as technical support. Second, the United States could provide the design of the Poseidon reentry vehicle and hardening of its shell, which the British would manufacture themselves. Third, the British could receive technical information and assistance about converting submarines from carrying Polaris missiles to Poseidon missiles and buy either Poseidon or Trident missiles. These options, he added, were not necessarily exclusive. Nairne

said British experts were far from sure that using Poseidon was a viable option. Schlesinger replied that outfitting Polaris missiles with Poseidon's reentry vehicles (Mark IIIs able to carry as many as 14 warheads) would provide a substantial capability to penetrate Soviet defenses.⁷³

Successive British governments had worked with the United States to maintain an independent nuclear deterrent. The British nuclear force was fully integrated into the NATO command, but, under the 1962 Nassau Agreement, London could take full control over the submarines if it decided "that supreme national interests are at stake" enabling British nuclear forces to fulfill the dual roles of contributing to NATO's overall nuclear operations plan and serving as a national deterrent that could strike at Soviet cities if Moscow threatened the United Kingdom. U.S. policymakers concluded that Soviet antiballistic missile defenses around Moscow, which relied on an extensive radar system and nuclear weapons to destroy incoming missiles, threatened Britain's ability to successfully strike the Soviet capital with its existing arsenal. American experts concluded that the "soft and slow" British reentry vehicles would "have poor capability" against the Soviet ABM-1 Galosh system, a nuclear tipped surface-to-air missiles system. To penetrate these defenses London faced the choice of acquiring U.S. Poseidon missiles, possibly equipped with multiple-independent reentry vehicles or upgrading their Polaris stockpile through Super Antelope, which would harden reentry vehicles to survive Soviet nuclear ABM explosions and fratricide (the premature destruction of follow-up warheads caused by the nuclear blast of the initial warhead detonations). It would also rely on decoys to allow the Polaris missiles to penetrate the Moscow ABM system.⁷⁴

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. In response to a January 1973 request from Secretary Laird just before he left office, DDR&E and ISA [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].⁷⁵

Having studied British strategic modernization efforts carefully while AEC chairman, Schlesinger had a far less sanguine view of Super Antelope than Laird. He thought it might not work. It required British submarines to launch from a shorter range, which made them vulnerable to Soviet attack. When Schlesinger took office, Washington was denying the British Poseidon-related information until they decided between either improving their Polaris force or purchasing U.S. Poseidon missiles. Either option would require significant U.S. technical assistance. The Nixon administration, however, decided not to sell MIRVed Poseidon missiles to the United Kingdom because of the likely political and diplomatic backlash that would follow. Soviets and domestic critics could credibly accuse the administration of undermining SALT by substantially improving the strategic capabilities of an ally. Schlesinger suggested instead that the British purchase a de-MIRVed version of Poseidon, which, he estimated, would cost between \$500 million and \$620 million, though they should “plan on \$700 million.” The process of removing warheads while allowing Poseidon to operate as intended would increase the weapon’s overall procurement cost. The British concluded that Schlesinger’s estimate was wildly optimistic and estimated the actual cost at \$1 billion, approximately twice as much as a MIRVed Poseidon. Phillip Odeen on Kissinger’s NSC staff found the British assessment more realistic than Schlesinger’s numbers. In a conversation with Sir Burke Trend, British secretary to the cabinet,

Kissinger said that if the British made a formal request to procure a MIRVed Poseidon from the United States, the odds of getting congressional approval for it were “50-50,” though Nixon wanted to sell the weapon. If requested, he said the administration would fight for the weapon’s sale to go through and urged the British to work out with Schlesinger the cost details of a de-MIRVed Poseidon. “I am told you are leaning now toward Super Antelope,” he said. “We frankly think that is a mistake. But it is the easiest for us. So, we won’t tout you off it!”⁷⁶

In October, British Prime Minister Edward Heath’s cabinet doubted that the U.S. Congress would approve a MIRVed Poseidon sale and concluded Britain could not afford to pay double for the modified Poseidon, especially with the British economy reeling from the oil shocks of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. London went forward with the Polaris modernization program, which was renamed Chevaline. London’s decision arrived at a tense moment in transatlantic relations because the British and French governments had publicly distanced themselves from U.S. military aid to Israel during the Middle East war. Nixon, Kissinger, and Schlesinger were furious with London when Prime Minister Heath formally notified the president on January 8, 1974. According to notes from Schlesinger’s military assistant, General John Wickham, Kissinger told the defense secretary to “take them out of [the] Poseidon program.” “Done,” Schlesinger replied. The Pentagon barred the British from attending further meetings concerning Poseidon.⁷⁷

Despite the administration’s fury over the British position on the Middle East, DoD continued to provide technical assistance for the Polaris upgrades. Although Schlesinger believed the British choice for Polaris modernization had been a poor one, he allowed the signing of a contract to provide U.S. assistance for reentry vehicles, anticipating the British would reciprocate by approving a U.S. request to expand facilities on Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. They did.

In November 1974, after an election returned the Labor party to power, Prime Minister Harold Wilson and his cabinet debated whether to retain the Polaris/Chevaline force as Britain's nuclear deterrent. Kissinger and Schlesinger had both conceded the importance of Britain's contribution. Wilson told his cabinet colleagues that if they mothballed their nuclear force, they would leave France as the only European member of NATO with a nuclear capability, which would upset the rest of Europe, West Germany especially. Consequently, Chevaline survived; Britain's first improved Polaris missiles entered service at sea in 1982.⁷⁸

Nuclear cooperation with France suffered far more impediments than was the case with the United Kingdom. France had withdrawn from the NATO integrated military command in 1966. Unlike the British whose weapons were integrated into NATO plans, the French maintained independent control over the missile targeting of a small nuclear triad, at least when compared to the vast and diverse Soviet and American arsenals. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].⁷⁹

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Schlesinger agreed, could reap maximum advantages by assisting the French, but stringing the assistance out over years to test the extent to which it caused the French to provide political concessions.⁸³

As cooperation expanded, Kissinger sought to keep information about the program out of official State channels and would set the policy agenda for the French connection under his authority as national security adviser. At an August 9 meeting, Kissinger told Schlesinger he aimed to make the French defense minister “drool” at a meeting planned for later in the month. “I will brutalize Galley,” he said, by leading the French “on without giving up anything—we want to get a handle on them without [them] knowing it.” Allowing underground tests at U.S. sites would be one means, Kissinger said at an August 17 lunch in San Clemente, but that would have to be approved by the president. Schlesinger said Washington could provide the French with diagnostic equipment for their tests: “We could give them something here which wouldn’t cost much.” Nuclear cooperation with France would remain limited. Schlesinger believed that Galley recognized that without U.S. assistance French nuclear forces would be obsolete by around 1982 or 1983. Kissinger told Schlesinger and others that the program sought to improve the U.S. position diplomatically with European allies. “This is a totally cynical enterprise,” he admitted. He hoped to use the nuclear program to break up European opposition to U.S. policy. He said he must be “fully cold-blooded” with the French by telling them that they had “an overall strategic urgent problem and we could help them overcome it” without actually offering any concrete assistance. “We must break up the Europeans,” he said, “And the French are essential.” Schlesinger, who thought the only thing that united Europeans had been resistance to his efforts at remolding NATO strategy, supported Kissinger’s plan.⁸⁴

When Kissinger met with Galley on August 31, 1973, on the patio of the national security adviser's "Western White House" office in San Clemente, the French defense minister asked for help in choosing a trigger for fusion warheads. U.S. officials advised him that American assistance might take the form of negative guidance—helping the French to select a trigger by telling them what not to do. "It can be like a seminar," Kissinger said, and "you can say you have three possibilities and we can tell you, 'That's wrong; that's complicated,' etc." By providing deductive guidance the administration could skirt the Atomic Energy Act's or the Non-Proliferation Treaty's (NPT) restrictions on the transfer of nuclear weapon design information to foreign nations. The French were developing a land-based S-3 missile, which they hoped to outfit with MIRV capability. An American team would help assess the feasibility of a spaced-release, single target reentry vehicle but nothing more. He explained to the French defense minister that he would maintain overall control of the program: "We have a weird governmental setup—I am maintaining supervision of this in my capacity as Assistant to the President, not in State." (Kissinger would not be confirmed as secretary of state until September 22.) The program would be run out of the Pentagon, but "we [meaning Kissinger and his staff] will pass it on to defense." Responding to French ministerial delegate for armaments Jean Blancard's question about the American defense secretary's role in the program, Kissinger said, "He is bureaucratically in charge, under the authority of the president, which I exercise. The basic policy questions I am responsible for. But once policy is set, the majority of exchanges will be conducted by the secretary of defense. If any policy question comes up, refer it to me." He promised to pass any communications on to Schlesinger.⁸⁵

During breakfast at the Pentagon in early September, Kissinger told Schlesinger "the French talks went well. The French have good ideas about MIRV.... The real quid pro quo is the

basic orientation of French policy. Galley said he understood but it would take them time.”

Schlesinger and Kissinger understood that once released, technical knowledge could not be taken back. Over time, Washington would learn much about the French program’s limitations and the French would gain the knowledge to substantially improve their nuclear forces—just not too quickly, lest the leverage to gradually redirect French policy slip away.⁸⁶

To continue to lead the French on, dragging out negotiations while avoiding a complete breach with the Atomic Energy Act or NPT, at a September 4, 1973 Pentagon meeting, Schlesinger told Galley that though they must pay careful attention to the restrictions on assistance imposed by the Atomic Energy Act, the “constraints of NPT are obscure.” Despite the legal and treaty constraints, he said “we can probably give ‘negative guidance’ without running into the legal issue, but it is a delicate matter.” French questions would be reported to the national security adviser. Once U.S. policymakers learned of French difficulties, they would consider how quickly or extensively to provide solutions to the French. The discussion, however, created some misunderstanding. Schlesinger told Galley:

The degree to which we can assist in true MIRV development had not yet been determined, because it requires Presidential guidance. We have no authority for all-out assistance. However, he thought we would be allowed to assist by examining the proposed S-3 (1980) MIRV program to determine if it were soundly constructed and to assess the likelihood of it being accomplished on schedule.⁸⁷

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].⁸⁸

The potential hazards posed by France’s independent arsenal continued to worry Schlesinger. In a separate meeting with Galley, with a large group attending, Schlesinger pressed

the French defense minister on issues important to NATO's defense and deterrent posture.

Hoping that the promises of further nuclear cooperation would give him leverage, he emphasized the need for the French and Americans to develop "contingency plans for use of line-of-communication facilities through France." Galley said he could not envision circumstances that would require the use of the facilities. As for Schlesinger's arguments in favor of preparing for a long war, Galley responded: "It is possible that within 6 to 12 hours, or maybe 24 hours, French forces would be in contact with invading Soviet troops. We would use nuclear weapons at that time. It is more important that the Soviets believe this than for your Congress to be persuaded."

The independence of the French arsenal rendered dubious Schlesinger's notions of limiting a war with the Warsaw Pact to the conventional level, since the French, in a conflict, could theoretically decide the defense of France required the use of nuclear weapons once the enemy had penetrated the Federal Republic's eastern border. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].⁸⁹

Harsh French criticism of U.S. aid to Israel during the October 1973 war provided the most vivid indication that the assistance program had failed to reorient overall French policy. Kissinger told the French ambassador that the Europeans had "behaved not as friends but as

hostile powers.” [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. 90

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ford replied politely that discussions should continue and the conversation turned to other topics.

Kissinger added that French public criticism over the Middle East war during the Pompidou administration had caused nuclear cooperation to stall. “France was telling our allies, ‘You cooperate and you are taken for granted; we don’t and are rewarded’ We never asked for a quid pro quo for our cooperation, but we couldn’t move under such constant criticism.”

Nevertheless, Kissinger said, if “France has a nuclear force, it should be a good one, and it is senseless for you to spend billions learning what the Soviets already know.” The two sides agreed to push forward with nuclear cooperation. Ford and Giscard also agreed to settle claims related to Operation Fast Relocation (FRELOC)—the relocation of U.S. troops from France in 1967—for \$100 million.⁹¹

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In the aftermath of this meeting, Ford authorized continued limited cooperation. On June 23, 1975, through NSDM 299, he directed that discussions with the French about cooperation over nuclear safety expand to include assistance with underground testing to encourage them to end atmospheric testing. The president, however, decided against allowing the testing of any French explosive device at a U.S. testing site. He further decided to widen the assistance permitted under NSDM 103 to cover the new generation of French missiles, particularly the M-4 submarine launched ballistic missile. Other areas of assistance could include basic missile design, guidance, propellants, reliability, and the hardening of reentry vehicles and missiles against nuclear effects. Critically, though, he forbade the sharing of any information applicable to MIRV development.⁹³

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 94

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 95

Even more cautious than his predecessor, Rumsfeld foresaw problems in expanding nuclear cooperation with France. Writing to Ford on May 13, 1976, the secretary sought to derail

expanded cooperation with France stemming from NSDM 299 by calling for a policy review.

Once the review was completed, Rumsfeld advised, DoD should proceed “in a deliberate manner with increased caution at a slow pace”:

If it is in the best interests of a strong Alliance to have France move toward closer military cooperation, then restraint in providing US help may offer incentive for that movement.

Visible assistance to France, an inactive member of the Atlantic Community, could prove a harmful example to other NATO members....”

The advisability of our aiding French nuclear capability may, in itself, be questionable particularly in view of on-going arms control negotiations. The independent nature of the French strategy and their apparent reliance on a “trip-wire” strategy give rise to worrisome questions about initiation of nuclear conflict.⁹⁶

Meeting with Ford four days later, Kissinger disparaged Rumsfeld’s memorandum as “a cover-your-ass operation. I think you should have the review—principals only—to protect yourself, but you are pretty well committed to the policy at Martinique.” Ford decided to stand by the NSDM 299 decisions. The NSC had received subsequent French complaints, however, that DoD was ignoring their requests to move forward with cooperation. An official from Defense Research and Engineering did visit Paris, effectively restarting Franco-American discussions. Nonetheless, on November 1, Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) Eugene McAuliffe advised Rumsfeld to complete the policy review before reopening talks about the Soviet ability to counter French nuclear forces. McAuliffe reminded the secretary that cooperation had been justified as a lever for moving France into a better relationship with NATO, but he wrote that U.S. gains “may or may not be related in whole or in part to the program.” The French had settled claims for the cost of relocating U.S. forces and prepared wartime contingency plans for cooperating with Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). It was unclear to the Americans whether these goals had been achieved because of the assistance program or because of the changeover in the French

Overall, Richardson, Schlesinger, and Rumsfeld made modest progress in reinvigorating the U.S. commitment to NATO but failed to turn it into a military alliance that could mount a well-coordinated, sustained conventional defense of Western Europe. “We cannot afford a NATO-typical, three-year dillydally,” Schlesinger had said in 1973. Yet Schlesinger’s effort to align NATO strategy with his vision of an extended conventional war in Europe found little support in European capitals. All too aware of the devastation caused by two world wars and cash-strapped by stagflation, NATO’s European members successfully resisted American efforts to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons by improving NATO’s conventional forces. Although Schlesinger forged a close partnership with Georg Leber and succeeded in getting West Germany to modestly increase its conventional posture, other allies did not follow suit. Convinced that a threat of swift nuclear escalation remained the surest deterrent to Soviet aggression, no European ally was willing to stockpile anything near what 90 days of conventional combat would require. For U.S. officials, frustration seemed the one constant.

Those improvements that Schlesinger and Rumsfeld did achieve stemmed from their successful recognition of and responsiveness to instances when domestic political concerns, in the United States or Europe, aligned with their objectives. The secretaries’ repeated attempts to shift overall NATO policy through policy statements proved far less effective. The deployment of two new U.S. Army brigades to Europe came about because of the Nunn Amendment, which relieved congressional pressure to withdraw U.S. forces from Europe. Schlesinger responded to the opportunity adroitly and increased the U.S. military commitment to NATO. Schlesinger and Rumsfeld both relied on close relations with West Germany minister of defense Leber to move these units into position by 1977. Leber was also a key partner in NATO standardization that led to the successful F-16 sale as well as tank gun standardization. Leber’s absence from the

AWACS discussion at a critical juncture played a role in Rumsfeld's inability to secure European support for the plane.

Nonetheless, these finite successes showed the limits of the possible. Whenever the defense secretaries tried to move the alliance through grand pronouncements or charters, they found their initiatives resisted, ignored, and even mocked. They were far more successful when they patiently engaged in the kind of complex, plodding bilateral negotiations that often unfold between advanced democracies—talks that lead to imperfect outcomes—but tend to yield superior results over the long term, more so than the seemingly simpler but one-sided negotiations that begin with inflexible demands. Briefing the DPC in November 1976, SACEUR General Alexander Haig argued the “plain truth” is that “our current force posture is increasingly inadequate to support a credible deterrent or mount a successful defense.” However, hindsight does not bear out his assessment—it appears that constant adjustments between U.S. pressure to spend more and West European tendency to economize resulted in an affordable, adequate deterrent over the long term.⁹⁹

Endnotes

1. Kaplan, *NATO and the United States*, 114–116. Matthias Dembinski, “Differences on Arms Control in German-American Relations,” in Detlef Junker, ed. *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945–1990, A Handbook*, vol. 2, 1968–1990 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 140; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 152.
2. Schlesinger Interview, 12 Jul 1990, OSD/HO, 12 (quote); 28 May 1991, OSD/HO, 31–32; Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 360–365.
3. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 152 (quote). At an October 1973 White House meeting, Schlesinger warned Nixon that the Soviets were expanding their budget by 3 percent annually. Memcon, 4 Oct 1973, *FRUS 1973–1976*, 35:120 (doc 25); Defense Intelligence Estimate, Implications of Adverse Trends and Developments within NATO, 30 Jul 1973, folder nato-092jun–dec1973, box 74, Acc 330-78-0001, OSD Records, WNRC.
4. Nixon warned Republican leaders about unilaterally reducing American force levels prior to the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction negotiations: “Now, if the Congress before that says, ‘Oh, we’re going to reduce our forces by 200,000,’ what does that mean? All incentive they must reduce theirs is lost and you increase the threat of war. But more important, you increase the threat of blackmail on their part of their weaker Europeans. You destroy the balance.” Conversation among President Nixon and Republican Congressional Leaders, 20 Mar 1973, *FRUS 1973–1976*, 35:39–43 (doc 13); memcon, Cabinet Room, 4 Oct 1973, *FRUS 1973–1976*, 35:120 (doc 25) (Schlesinger quote on Defense budget).
5. NSSM 168 to SecState et al., “U.S. NATO Policies and Programs,” 13 Feb 1973, 33 (doc 7) (quote); NSC, “Analytical Summary NSSM–168–NATO Strategy,” 66–78 (doc 16): both in *FRUS 1969–1976*, vol. E-15, pt. 2, *Documents on Western Europe, 1973–1976*, ed. Kathleen Rasmussen (Washington DC: GPO, 2014).
6. “NSSM 168-Part I”; Defense Program Review Committee/Senior Review Group, Washington, 25 May 1973 83–88 (quotes, 84 and 88) (doc 18); NSSM 183 to SecState et al., “Principles for a Declaration on Atlantic Relations,” undated, 62–63 (doc 14); msg, WH31875, Nixon to British Prime Minister Heath, 26 Jul 1973, 114–116 (doc 26); msg, Nixon to West German Chancellor Brandt, 31 Jul 1973, 134–135 (doc 28); all in *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2; Kaplan, *NATO and the United States*, 116–117. Nixon would formalize Schlesinger’s appointment as special representative in ltr, Nixon to Schlesinger, 5 Jun 1973, folder NATO 334 DPC 1973, box 76, Acc 330-78-0001. Kissinger and his staff would carefully review Schlesinger’s remarks to ensure they aligned with the administration’s Year of Europe plan.
7. James Schlesinger, Report to Congress on the FY 1975 Defense Budget and FY 1975–1979 Defense Program, 4 Mar 1974,” *Schlesinger Public Statements 1974*, 4:1194–1200.
8. Defense Intelligence Estimate, Implications of Adverse Trends and Developments within NATO, folder nato-092jun–dec1973, box 74, Acc 330-78-0001. See also Dembinski, “Differences on Arms Control in German-American Relations” in Junker, *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945–A Handbook*, 140; Poole, *Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1965–1968*, 119–120; “Executive Summary, NSSM 168-Part I.” Summing up the administration’s frustration with European insistence on massive retaliation doctrine, Kissinger said at an August 1973 nuclear strategy meeting: “To deprive ourselves of options paralyzes us. In 1914 the Belgians did not insist that the UK destroy itself.” Minutes, Verification Panel Meeting, 9 Aug 1973, *FRUS 1973–1976*, 35:100.
9. The DPC met in Brussels biannually to review alliance strategy. Schlesinger attended as the president’s special representative and secretary of defense-designate. The alliance, an earlier draft of the speech had

stated, had a population 54 percent greater than the Warsaw Pact, and its members' collective gross national product was three times larger. The alliance spent 35 percent more on defense than the Pact and had 18 percent more "men under arms" (the draft did not specify which troops he included in this statistic). "Remarks by Secretary of Defense-Designate James R. Schlesinger at NATO Defense Planning Committee Ministerial Meeting," Brussels, 7 Jun 1973, folder NATO 334 DPC 1973, box 76, Acc 330-78-0001.

10. Ibid.; David J. Stein, "The Development of NATO Tactical Air Doctrine, 1970–1985," Dec 1987, RAND, R-3385-AF, 27–28, [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/reports/2009,R3385.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/reports/2009/R3385.pdf).

11. Ltr, Nixon to Schlesinger, 5 Jun 1973; "Remarks by Secretary of Defense-Designate James R. Schlesinger at NATO Defense Planning Committee Ministerial Meeting, Brussels, 7 June 1973," folder NATO 334 DPC 1973, box 76, Acc 330-78-0001. See also Schlesinger, "NATO: An Important Conventional Capability," *Defense Management Journal*, 27 Jul 1973 in *Schlesinger Public Statements 1973*, 3:743–746.

12. Cable, U.S. Embassy Copenhagen to SecState, 14 Jun 1973, folder NATO 334 DPC 1973, box 76, Acc 330-78-0001; memcon, "Visit of MOD Leber, 17 July 1973," pt. 2, 6, folder Germany 091.112 (Jul-Dec) 1973, box 67, Acc 330-78-0001 (quote). On the morning of his June 7 DPC speech, Schlesinger warned Leber that Congress might end the U.S. commitment to Europe if the balance-of-payments drain did not stop. Leber told him that West Germany did more than other allies and said that, contrary to congressional financial concerns, defense expenditures made up only a small part of the overall U.S. deficit. Schlesinger agreed that congressional critics were exaggerating spending concerns but were exploiting the issue effectively. "Memorandum of Conversation between Schlesinger, SecDef Designate, and Minister of Defense Leber," 0800-0900 hours, Thursday, 7 June 1973," folder Germany 300-399, 1973, box 67, Acc 330-78-0001; *Schlesinger Public Statements 1973*, 1:82; MG Wickham Notebooks, entry for 1 Aug 1973, box T-4, Schlesinger Papers (quote). "The Soviets will not attack if we cover the spectrum," Schlesinger said. NATO was "not hopelessly inferior" to the Pact, he maintained, and his team stressed the superiority of the OSD/Army estimate of a Pact-NATO ratio of 53 to 44 divisions over the SHAPE estimate of 67 to 25. Because the alliance was not badly outnumbered, Schlesinger believed that with improvements, the alliance could plausibly mount a conventional defense against the pact. Lord Carrington responded that if the U.S. and SHAPE estimates remained "miles away," then Washington must be sensitive to European politics and focus on deterrence—"not who wins the war or how long it is." Memcon, SecDef Meeting with Lord Carrington, 1 Aug 1973, 2, 3, 11, folder NATO 320.2 (5 Oct 73) 1973, box 75, Acc 330-78-0001, OSD Records, WNRC.

13. "NATO Action Program," 25 Jun 1973, attached to memo, SecDef for DDR&E et al., 5 Jul 1973, subj: NATO; draft msg SecState to US Mission NATO, 3–4, with handwritten notation "signed 7/26"; memo, ASD(ISA) Robert Hill for SecDef, 24 Jul 1973, subj: DoD NATO Action Program; memo, SecState for US Mission NATO, 20 Jul 1973, subj: Follow-up to DPC Ministerial: all in folder NATO 092 (Jun-Dec) 1973, box 74, Acc 330-78-0001.

14. Ltr, Maj. Gen. Daniel O. Graham to Robert J. Murray, 26 Dec 1973, folder Germany 300-399, 1973, box 67, Acc 330-78-0001; Schlesinger interview, 28 May 1991, 45–47.

15. "A Briefing on NATO and Warsaw Pact Conventional Forces as Presented to Allied Ministers of Defense by the U.S. Secretary of Defense," F-4, F-9, F-12, Aug 1973, folder NATO 320.2 (Aug-Sep) 1973, box 75, Acc 330-78-0001.

16. Memo for record, 10 Sep 1973, subj: Meeting of NATO Task Force with Secretary of Defense on 6 Sep 1973, (quote), folder NATO 092 (Jun-Dec 73), box 74, Acc 330-78-0001.

17. Tony Judt, *Postwar*, 455–456; Daniel J. Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 156; "News

Summary and Index,” “Inflation Slows Growth of West’s Military Budgets, but Effect is Not So Damaging as U.S. Feared”: both in *New York Times*, 30 Dec 1974, 1, 7.

18. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 708-711; ltr, Portuguese Prime Minister Caetano to Nixon, 19 Oct 1973, *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2:448–449 (doc 127).

19. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 712–714; *Schlesinger Public Statements 1973*, 3:790; MFR by Charles E. Penland, 12 Nov 1973, folder Israel 091.3 (Nov) 1973, box 69, Acc 330-78-0001.

20. Memcon, “Bilateral Between SecDef and NATO Secretary General Luns,” 6 Nov 1973, folder NATO 123 1973, box 74, Acc 330-78-0001; memcon, “SecDef Meeting with Lord Cromer,” 15 Nov 1973, *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2:731 (quotes) (doc 227). West Europeans also complained about receiving tardy notification of the DefCon III alert for U.S. forces described in chapter 8. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 711–714, 872–873.

21. Chapter 7 describes the “confrontation” of October 24–25. Memo, ASD(ISA) for SecDef, 29 Nov 1973, subj: DPC Meeting Overview (quote), folder NATO 334 DPC 1973, box 76, Acc 330-78-0001.

22. Thanks to Schlesinger, the DPC meeting of December 7–8 followed a different format that allowed a free exchange of views, enabling him to forcefully advocate NATO improvements. Seeing no value in a day spent listening to ministers read prepared statements, he had threatened to boycott the meeting unless things changed. The ministers agreed and permitted the closed morning session to become a freewheeling discussion, which thereafter became a regular feature of DPC meetings. MC-161/73, recently approved by the NATO Military Committee, differed sharply with Schlesinger’s August briefing. “Meeting between SecDef and Generals Jones and Eade,” 6 Dec 1973, folder EUCOM 1973, box 66, Acc 330-78-0001. Schlesinger conferred with General George Eade, USAF, deputy CINC, U.S. European Command, and General David Jones, CINC, U.S. Air Forces, Europe. At Brussels, early in December, Schlesinger spoke with senior U.S. officers who shared his view that NATO’s conventional capability though wanting, could be made adequate. Deputy USCINCEUR General George Eade told Schlesinger that Israel’s battlefield performance, in which American supplied tanks had performed better than Soviet armor, showed that NATO did not have to match the Warsaw Pact “tube-for-tube, tank-for-tank.” Memcon, Meeting between SecDef and Generals Jones and Eade, 6 Dec 1973, folder Eucom 1973, box 66; msg, U.S. Mission NATO 4466 to SecState, 221600Z Sep 1973; ltr, William B. Prendergast, U.S. Mission to NATO, to SecDef, 18 Dec 1973; “Remarks of Secretary of Defense Schlesinger Presented for the Record at the Defense Planning Committee Meeting, NATO, December 7, 1973,” folder NATO 334 DPC 1973, box 76: all in Acc 330-78-0001.

23. The impact was seen in U.S. responses to the Defense Planning Questionnaires. This cut would reduce the tempo at which SACEUR could receive mechanized and armored units, lightening the mix that would be available to him 30 days after a war mobilization began. “Point Paper for SecDef/MOD FRG Leber Meeting,” folder Europe 333 (1 Oct 75), box 63; memo, ASD(ISA) for SecDef, 3 Sep 1975, subj: Release of the U.S. Reply to the 1975 NATO DPQ, folder ANZUS 1975, box 74: both in Acc 330-78-0058, OSD Records, WNRC.

24. Memcon, “SecDef Meeting with FRG General Inspector Zimmermann,” 14 Dec 1973, folder Germany 091.112 (Jan-May) 1974, box 62, Acc 330-78-0011, OSD Records, WNRC.

25. France had withdrawn from NATO’s military command structure in 1966 though privately French leaders assured Washington their forces would be available to defeat a Soviet attack. The secretary met with German military and civilian officials more frequently than with those of any other ally, cultivating particularly his collaboration with Leber. BG Taylor Notebooks, entry for 29 Apr 1974. Nixon, Kissinger, and later Ford shared Schlesinger’s perspective about the shifting power dynamics in Western Europe caused by the emergence of the Federal Republic as the leading power in Western Europe, but the changeover in the German chancellorship from Willy Brandt to Helmut Schmidt proved critical for more harmonious relations between Bonn and Washington. Nixon and Kissinger had never trusted Brandt’s

Ostpolitik and had a low opinion of him personally. In a February 3, 1973 Oval Office conversation, Nixon had asked, “What is the situation on Brandt’s throat?” “Unfortunately, it’s not malignant,” Kissinger responded. “He is a dolt,” they both agreed. Douglas Brinkley and Luke Nichter, *The Nixon Tapes: 1973* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015), 40. Although Kissinger would later record his “ambivalent” feelings toward Brandt, he found Schmidt a “cherished friend” and “the most erudite of Germany’s postwar leaders.” Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 610. Ford and Schmidt would enjoy a similarly close friendship, which further strengthened the partnership between Leber and Schlesinger. Schmidt devoted an entire chapter of his memoir to describing his friendship with Ford. He wrote that “during his presidency the United States—from Bonn’s point of view—became an increasingly reliable and dependable partner and NATO leader.” Helmut Schmidt, *Men and Powers: A Political Retrospective* (New York: Random House, 1987), 166. In his memoir, Ford wrote: “Relations between the U.S. and West Germany were excellent throughout my administration, primarily because Schmidt and I got along so well. As we became better acquainted, we called each other by our first names, we joked with each other, and saw eye to eye on almost everything.” Ford, *A Time to Heal*, 221.

26. CIA Profile, Georg Leber, 12 Jul 1973 (quote), folder Germany 091.112 (17 Jul 1973), box 67, Acc 330-78-0001. Although Schlesinger thought that Central Army Group could then likely hold against any Pact thrust, he was particularly worried about Northern Army Group (NORTHAG), where twice as many partners made coordination harder and the availability of reserves was far less satisfactory. The secretary speculated about either directing more reinforcements from the United States to NORTHAG or expanding U.S. responsibilities in the south to allow more German units to shift northward. The defense minister agreed. NATO, he said, first must ascertain the opponent’s strategic objective. A credible Soviet military plan, he thought, would be to seize Western Europe’s industrial capacity intact, as dominance over much of Eurasia would give them a predominant global position. The Soviets would find little strategic use in a European wasteland. Memcon, Schlesinger and Leber, 17 Apr 1974, folder Germany 091.112 (Jan-May) 1974; msg, Bonn 07060 to SecState, 2 May 1974, folder Germany 333-1974: both in box 62, Acc 330-78-0011.

27. Draft, “Remarks of SecDef Schlesinger Presented for the Record at DPC Meeting, June 14, 1974” (quote) folder NATO 334 DPC (Jan-Sep) 1974, box 70, Acc 330-78-0011.

28. Msg, SecState to U.S. Mission NATO, 3 Jul 1974, folder Netherlands-1974, box 71, Acc 330-78-0011; Duffield, *Power Rules*, 234. In early November 1974 in what was billed as the first official visit by a defense secretary to the Federal Republic since NATO’s formation, Schlesinger congratulated Leber and the other top Ministry of Defense officials on the creation of three additional army brigades. Leber worried, however, that the Warsaw Pact might interpret a new emphasis on conventional force improvements as an alliance strategic shift that might portend the decoupling of conventional from nuclear capabilities. He warned that the Federal Republic and other Europeans would find a 3 percent annual spending increase politically untenable, especially as they battled with the economic crisis. Dismissing this concern, the defense secretary stressed that “both qualitatively and quantitatively the Alliance’s conventional-force deficit is its most serious problem.” Memcon, “Meeting Between SecDef and MOD Georg Leber (Open Session) (4 November 1974),” folder Germany 091.112 (Jun-Dec) 1974, box 62, Acc 330-78-0011. See also Memcon, “Meeting Between SecDef and MOD Georg Leber (Open Session) (4 November 1974),” *FRUS, 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2, 2nd, rev. ed. (doc. 64). Schlesinger stressed that only a powerful conventional posture would cause the Soviets to hold the West “in awe.” Contrary to European allies’ exaggerated fears, he said, the Soviets did not view their own position as overwhelming. They were uncertain about the reliability of their East European satellites, Schlesinger argued, and, were all too aware of their military’s vulnerabilities. “The USSR,” he added, “remembers German forces at the gates of Moscow, and those recollections cannot help but exert a deterrent effect on the Soviet leadership.” Aware that the Germans remained uncertain about the role that nuclear weapons played in his calculations, Schlesinger told them that his campaign to improve conventional defense was for the Europeans’ benefit. Although tactical nuclear weapons still served as useful deterrents during

normal times, he said, “in periods of crisis, we must be able to demonstrate to the East that the West has capabilities it won’t hesitate to use.” In response, one German officer “laughingly” remarked that the defense secretary wanted the Schlesinger Doctrine to become NATO doctrine. The Germans remained unconvinced. Memcon, “Meeting Between SecDef and MOD Georg Leber (Open Session),” folder Germany 091.112 (Jun-Dec) 1974, box 62, Acc 330-78-0011.

29. “Statement of SecDef Schlesinger for the Record at the DPC Meeting, 10 December 1974” (quote), 5 Dec 1974, folder NATO 334 DPC (rec’d 13 Dec 74), box 70, Acc 330-78-0011.

30. *NATO Facts and Figures* (Brussels: NATO Information Service, Jan 1976), 344–349.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*, 345. For more on what would become the Nixon Shock of August 1971 and its effects, see Daniel Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed*, 99–130. Senator Mike Mansfield (D-MT), the Senate majority leader, led many of these unsuccessful efforts. Hunt, *Melvin Laird and the Foundation of the Post-Vietnam Military*, 327; SCA, *Department of Defense Appropriations, FY 1974: Hearings*, 93rd Cong., 1st sess., pt. 1, 129 (quote).

33. SCA, *DoD Appropriations, FY 1974*, 116–118. In July, Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-OR) asked what savings would be realized for every 50,000 troops brought home and deactivated. OSD made a fuller review of numbers running from 15,000 to 150,000. Rebasing 50,000 men in CONUS but providing for their rapid return, Hatfield was advised, would cost \$1.5 billion with no annual savings thereafter. If those 50,000 were brought home and released, the cost of return would be \$90 million and the annual savings \$980 million. For 150,000, the cost would come to \$300 million and the savings to \$2.9 billion. But the reply to Senator Hatfield—an identical letter went to Senator McClellan—stressed how withdrawals would reduce the capability for forward defense during the critical early phase of an emergency. Ltr, Hatfield to ASD(LA) John Marsh, 9 Jul 1973; ltr, DepASD (European and NATO Affairs) Bergold to Hatfield, 6 Oct 1973, folder NATO 320.2 (Jul) 1973, box 75, Acc 330-78-0001; ltr, ASD(Compt.) McClary to McClellan, 28 Sep 1973, printed in SCA, *DoD Appropriations, FY 1974*, pt. 1, 1209–1212.

34. Schlesinger made his “post-war follies” remarks at a swearing-in ceremony for Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. George S. Brown. See James Schlesinger, “Remarks at Swearing-in Ceremony, 1 Aug 1973,” *Schlesinger Public Statements 1973*, 2:559 (quote); Orr Kelly, “Hill ‘Follies’ Hit By Schlesinger,” *Washington Star-News*, 1 Aug 1973, 7; Joseph Volz, “Defense Boss Hits Congress’ Budget Paring,” *New York News*, 2 Aug 1973, 7; “Schlesinger Tries Quiet Persuasion to Avert Defense Budget Slashes,” Associated Press, *Washington Post*, 28 Sep 1973 (quote), 2; MG Wickham Notebooks, entry for 17 Sep 1973, box T-4, Schlesinger Papers; *New York Times*, 28 Sep 1973, 1, 12.

35. Senator Bennett Johnston (D-La.), who Schlesinger had met with in his office, said: “He made a very powerful case that 40 per cent was too much. But I will vote for the Humphrey amendment, which is 22 ½ per cent. I think we’ll get that passed.” *New York Times*, 28 Sep 1973 (quote), 1, 12; MG Wickham Notebooks, entry for 17 Sep 1973, box T-4, Schlesinger Papers.

36. “Overseas Troop Cut Dropped from Bill,” *New York Times*, 12 Oct 1973, 46; “Jackson-Nunn Amendment,” folder NATO 123 1973, box 74, Acc 330-78-0001; memcon, “Jackson-Nunn Amendment—Meeting with Members of Sen. Jackson’s Staff,” 19 Mar 1974, 4, folder NATO 123 1974, box 68, Acc 330-78-0011.

37. Msg, Bonn 15708 to SecState, 301830Z Oct 73, Tab C to memo, Acting ASD(ISA) for SecDef, 1 Nov 1973, subj: Offset and Burdensharing Negotiations, folder Germany 123 1973, box 67, Acc 330-78-0001.

38. See Francis J. Gavin, “The Gold Battles within the Cold War: American Monetary Policy and the Defense of Europe, 1960–1965,” *Diplomatic History*, 26, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 61–92. The *New York Times* reported that Schmidt had previously considered American negotiating tactics “blackmail.” He told

a friend in 1973, "Either we pay or the Administration withdraws troops. It can only end badly." Craig Whitney, "Bonn Opposing Outlay to U.S for Troops," *New York Times*, 26 Jun 1975, 14; "U.S.-FRG Offset Agreement," 25 Apr 1974, folder Germany 123 1974; memo, USecState for Economic Affairs to SecDef et al., 19 Feb 1974, subj: German Offset and Jackson-Nunn, folder Germany 000.1-299 1974: both in box 62, Acc 330-78-0011; memo, Ellsworth for Schlesinger, 17 Jul 1975, subj: FRG Offset Negotiations, folder Germany 000.1-299 1975, box 64, Acc 330-78-0058; Schmidt, *Men and Powers*, 176-177.

39. Deputy ASD (European and NATO Affairs) Harry Bergold warned European officials that the victory could prove fleeting. Schlesinger had won converts by providing Congress with examples of higher European defense budgets and capital investment. Without such examples, the outcome might be different the following year. German officials, Bergold reported, accepted this argument, but the British indicated that they could do little to avoid large defense cuts that would affect their contribution to NATO. Circular Letter, Representative O'Neill to House Colleagues, 17 May 1974; memo, DASD(ISA) Bergold for MG Wickham, 23 May 1974: both in folder NATO 320.2 (May) 1974, box 69, Acc 330-78-0011. The British argument was made by Minister, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Richard Sykes, who, Bergold reported, "seemed to think there was very little that could be done to avoid a sizable UK defense cut which would affect UK forces assigned to NATO." Memo for record, "Meeting with Sen. Nunn and Senate Staff on NATO-Related Issues, ... 14 December 1973," folder NATO 320.2 (Oct-Dec) 1973, box 74, Acc 330-78-0001; Report of Senator Nunn to Senate Armed Services Committee, "Policy, Troops, and the NATO Alliance," 90th Cong., 2nd sess., 2 Apr 1974, 9; ltr, SecDef to Sen. John Stennis, 26 Jun 1974, folder NATO 320.2 (Jun-Jul) 1974, box 69; "An Extract, Public Law 93-365, H.R. 14592, August 5, 1974," folder NATO (Oct-Dec) 1974, box 68: both in Acc 330-78-0011. Concurrently, Senator McClellan asked for detailed figures on what savings could be achieved by reducing and inactivating 15,000, 25,000, or 50,000 troops. Schlesinger supplied the figures (by 1977, \$221.2, \$374.5, and \$784.4 million, respectively) but restated his conviction that unilateral withdrawals would be "most ill-advised at this time." Ltrs, McClellan to SecDef, 25 Jul 1974; and SecDef to McClellan, 30 Jul 1974, folder (Jul) 1974, box 69, Acc 330-78-0011.

40. Schlesinger told reporters at a November press conference in Bonn that the new units would return the U.S. Army's strength in Europe to 1966 levels, before troops had been withdrawn from Europe during the Johnson administration's escalation of the Vietnam War. Interview with newsmen, 4 Nov 1974 (quote), *Schlesinger Public Statements 1974*, 9:2920, 2923-2924, 2925 (quote); Phil Williams, *The Senate and U.S. Troops in Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 252-255; Phil Williams and Scott Sagan, "Congressional Demands for American Troop Withdrawals from Western Europe: The Past as Prologue," *The RUSI Journal* 121, no. 3 (1976): 52-56; memo, SecArmy for SecDef, 2 Jan 1975, subj: Army Plan to Increase Combat Capabilities through FY 76 and ltr, SecDef to Defense Minister Leber, 13 Feb 1975, both in folder NATO 320.2 (Sep-Oct) 1975, box 72, Acc 330-78-0058; memo, SecDef for CJCS, 25 Nov 1975, subj: NORTHAG Brigade Stationing, folder NATO 320.2 (Nov) 1975, box 73, Acc 330-78-0058; memcon, "Meeting between Secretary Rumsfeld and Minister of Defense Georg Leber," 21 Jan 1976, folder Germany 300-399 1976, box 69, Acc 330-79-0049, OSD Records, WNRC; ltr, SecDef to Leber, 30 Jul 1976; memo, Acting ASD(ISA) for DepSecDef Ellsworth, 16 Nov 1976, subj: Your Meeting with Walter Leisler-Kiep, folder Germany 091.112 1976, box 69, Acc 330-79-0049.

41. Memo, DDR&E Malcolm Currie for SecDef, 31 Oct 1973, subj: Meeting in Europe, 22-26 October 1973, 3, folder Europe 092.3 1973, box 66, Acc 330-78-0001. The figure of 30 to 50 percent is quoted in "A Report to the Congress on the Standardization of Military Equipment in NATO and Other Related Actions," 25 Apr 1975, folder NATO 320.2 (Apr) 1975, box 73, Acc 330-78-0058.

42. Memo, ASD(PA&E) for SecDef, 28 May 1974, subj: NATO Rationalization Potential, folder NATO 320.2 NATO (May) 1974, box 69, Acc 330-78-0011; "Report to Congress on Standardization," 7, 10, 37; House Committee on the Budget, *Force Structure and Long-Range Projections: Hearings*, 94th Cong., 1st sess., 10 Jul 1975, 38 (quote).

43. Schlesinger viewed NATO's Council of National Armaments Directors, the alliance's senior committee with the responsibility of promoting armaments cooperation among member nations, as incapable of organizing and controlling new programs because its members, being science and technology oriented, would become overly enthralled with the latest armaments. Memcon, "Meeting Between SecDef and Secretary of State for Defence Roy Mason (22 May 1975)," 4 Jun 1975, folder UK 1975 Part 1, box 81, Acc 330-78-0058; Duffield, *Power Rules*, 198; memcon, "Meeting with Ambassador Elliot Richardson," 25 May 1975, folder U.K. 091.112 1975," box 81, Acc 330-78-0058. West Germans, like the Soviets, deployed armored fighting vehicles; the U.S. M-113 served basically as transportation.
44. Memo, SecDef for SecArmy et al., 24 Jul 1975; memo, ASD(ISA) for SecDef, 17 Oct 1975; memo, SecDef to SecArmy et al., 8 Nov 1975: all in folder NATO 400 1975, box 75, Acc 330-78-0058.
45. Memo, ASD(ISA) for SecDef, 3 Mar 1975; ltr, DefMin Mason to SecDef, 8 May 1975; Memorandum of Understanding, 24 Sep 1975, attached to memo, DepSecDef for SecArmy et al., 21 Nov 1975: all in folder UK 1975, box 81, Acc 330-78-0058; msg, Laurence Legere to DDR&E, 011825Z Oct 1975, folder NATO 400 1975, box 75; msgs, Bonn 2920 to State, and 171547Z Sep 1975, folder Germany 300-399 1975, box 64: both in Acc 330-78-0058.
46. Secretary of the Air Force John L. McLucas wrote to Clements: "Our quantitative analysis shows that the AWACS is survivable and is the most cost-effective alternative for improvement of surveillance warning, command, and control in NATO. Of particular importance is the capability of the AWACS to provide surveillance of mobilization patters of Warsaw Pact forces, thus reinforcing the fundamental concept of strategic warning in NATO strategy and adding to the strength of our deterrent posture in Europe." Memo, McLucas for Clements, 15 Aug 1973, subj: Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) Study for DSARC IIB, folder 413.77 awacs3650 15 Aug 1973, box 53; Office of the Director of Defense Program Analysis and Evaluation, "Saber Scan-Tactical," vol. 3, app. 2: "Technical Description of the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) E 3A," 16 July 1973, folder 413.77 awacsx-3650 15 Aug 1973, box 53; memo, DDR&E Foster for SecDef, 4 Apr 1973, subj: European Trip Report, 19-22 March 1973, folder Europe 092.3 1973, box 66; "Meeting of NATO Task Force with Secretary of Defense," 10 Sep 1973, 4, folder NATO 40-900 1973, box 77: all in Acc 330-78-0001.
47. "Meeting of NATO Task Force with Secretary of Defense," 10 Sep 1973, 4 (quote); memo, DDR&E for SecDef, 31 Oct 1973, subj: Meeting in Europe, 22-26 October 1973, folder NATO 40-900 1973, box 77, Acc 330-78-0001.
48. Currie wrote that these aircraft "would be in addition to whatever AWACS force the US procures in order to meet its non-NATO requirements." Memo, DDR&E for SecDef, 8 Jan 1975, folder NATO 400-499 1975; memo, DDR&E for SecDef, 23 Sep 1975, 3-4, folder NATO 400, box 75; msg, US Mission NATO 4870 to SecState, 261500Z Nov 1975, folder NATO 400-499 1975, box 75: all in Acc 330-78-0058.
49. Memcon, "US/FRG Bilateral," 8 Dec 1975, folder Germany 337 (13 Jun 75), box 64; msg, US Mission NATO 5154 to SecState, 091815Z Dec 1975, folder NATO 400-499, box 75; ltr, Leber to SecDef, 22 Dec 1975, folder NATO 400-499, box 75: all in Acc 330-78-0058.
50. Memo, DASD(ISA) Shields for DepSecDef Ellsworth, 30 Apr 1976, subj: ISA/USAF NATO AEW Trip Report (quote) box 77, Acc 330-79-0049.
51. Memo, DASD(ISA) Shields for DepSecDef Ellsworth, 30 Apr 1976, subj: ISA/USAF NATO AEW Trip Report; ltrs, SecDef to Leber, 19 Feb 1976; and Leber to SecDef, 25 May 1976: all in folder NATO 400-450 1976, box 77, Acc 330-79-0049.
52. Memo, ASD(ISA), DDR&E, CJCS, and SecAF for SecDef, 8 Oct 1976, subj: NATO AEW Program; memo, CJCS Brown for SecDef, 8 Oct 1976; memo, DDR&E for SecDef, 1 Nov 1976, subj: NATO AWACS: all in folder NATO 400-450 1976, box 77, Acc 330-79-0049.

53. Ltr, SecDef to Leber, 2 Dec 1976 (quote), folder NATO 334 DPC 1976; memo, ASD(ISA) for DepSecDef Clements, 20 Dec 1976, folder NATO 400-450 1976: all in box 77, Acc 330-79-0049. Subsequently, 34 AWACS were built for U.S. use and another 18 were produced for NATO under cost-sharing arrangements.
54. David M.O. Miller, *The Cold War: A Military History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 261; memo, Director, PA&E for Schlesinger, 14 Sep 1973, attachment The Army Tank Program, folder 451.6 1973, box 53, Acc 330-78-0001.
55. See Miller, *The Cold War: A Military History*, 266. Leonard Sullivan, director of PA&E wrote to Schlesinger, "In recent years Army performance in tank development programs has generally been poor. They spent \$300 million on the MBT-70/XM-803, and were forced to abandon it by Congress." Memo, Director, PA&E for Schlesinger, 14 Sep 1973, attachment The Army Tank Program, folder 451.6 1973, box 53, Acc 330-78-0001.
56. Chrysler won the M48 contract in 1950, the first M48 pilot tank was built in 1951, and mass production of the tank began in April 1952. Elliott V. Converse III, *Rearming for the Cold War, 1945-1960* (Washington, D.C.: OSD/HO, 2012), 183; Miller, *The Cold War: A Military History*, 266; memo, Director, PA&E for Schlesinger, 14 Sep 1973, attachment The Army Tank Program, folder 451.6 1973, box 53, Acc 330-78-0001.
57. Ltrs, Leber to SecDef, 20 Aug 1973; ltr, Schlesinger to Leber, 28 Sep 1973: both in folder NATO 400-900, box 77, Acc 330-78-0001.
58. Memo, Director, PA&E for Schlesinger, 14 Sep 1973, attachment "The Army Tank Program," folder 451.6 1973, box 53, Acc 330-78-0001.
59. Ltr, Schlesinger to Leber, 28 Sep 1973, folder NATO 400-900, box 77, Acc 330-78-0001.
60. Memo, DDR&E Currie for SecDef, 31 Oct 1973, subj: Meeting in Europe, 22–26 October 1973 (quote); ltrs, Leber to SecDef, 20 Aug 1973; SecDef to Leber, 28 Sep 1973; and Leber to SecDef, 12 Nov 1973: all in folder NATO 400-900, box 77, Acc 330-78-0001; "Modified Leopard II Tank in the US XM-1 Program," n.d., folder Europe 333 1975, box 63; memo, SecArmy for SecDef, 12 Mar 1975, subj: International Tank Cooperation, folder NATO 400-450 1975, box 75: both in Acc 330-78-0058.
61. News Release, OASD(PA), 22 Jul 1976, "Extension of M-1 Tank Validation Phase"; "US-FRG Tank Commonality," attached to memo, SecDef to Pres, 13 Jul 1976, subj: Your Meeting with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, folder Germany 091.112 1976, box 69, Acc 330-79-0049; Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 220–221; Miller, *The Cold War: A Military History*, 266–274.
62. Ltr, Leber to SecDef, 26 Apr 1976, folder NATO 451.6 (Jan-Jul) 1976, box 78; memcon, "Bilateral Meeting between Secretary Rumsfeld and MOD Leber on 11 June 1976," folder "Germany 300-399 1976," box 69; memcon, "Meeting between Secretary Rumsfeld and MOD Leber, 2 July 1976," folder Germany 091.112 1976, box 69; msg, Bonn 12388 to SecState, 221730Z Jul 1976, folder NATO 400 1976, box 77: all in Acc 330-79-0049.
63. Rumsfeld, interview by Alfred Goldberg and Roger Trask, 12 Jul 1994, OSD/HO, 36–37.
64. Ltr, Rep. Samuel Stratton to SecDef, 17 Sep 1976; ltr, SecDef to Rep. Stratton, 21 Sep 1976: both in folder NATO 451.6 (Aug-Sep) 1976; Info Paper, attached to memo, ASD(ISA) to SecDef, 3 Dec 1976, subj: Status of the 120mm Tank Gun Program, folder NATO 451.6 (22 Sep-Dec) 1976: both in box 78; msg, SecState 65639 to Bonn, 132023Z Nov 1976; msg, SecDef 6060 to Bonn, 282320Z Dec 1976: both in folder NATO 451.6 (22 Sep-Dec), box 78: all in Acc 330-79-0049. The British ended collaboration with Germany and produced their own tank with a 120-mm rifled gun. In contrast the U.S. M-1A1s, fielded in the early 1980s carried German 120-mm smoothbores.
65. Ingemar Dorfer, *Arms Deal: The Selling of the F-16* (New York: Praeger, 1983), 12, 17, 20.

66. Memo, Ellsworth for Schlesinger, 13 Sep 1974; memo, Ellsworth for Schlesinger, 11 Sep 1974; Minutes, 23 Sep 1974, 9, 20, 23 attached to memo, Clements for Dutch Minister of Defense Hendrikus Vredeling, 19 Sep 1974: all in folder NATO 452 (Sep) 1974, box 70, Acc 330-78-0011.

67. “Telcon between Dr. Stutzle, private secretary to MOD Leber and General Wickham,” 1343 hours, 18 Feb 1975, attached to memo, Wickham for Ellsworth, 20 Feb 1975; OASD(ISA), Briefing Book for Vredeling Meeting, 10 Mar 1975; msg, American Embassy, The Hague, to SecState, 111537Z, 11 Apr 1975: all in folder NATO 452 (Jan-May) 1975, box 75; memcon, Schlesinger, Vredeling, folder N 1975, box 72; memcon, Schlesinger, Norwegian Minister of Defense Jakob Fostervoll, 24 Mar 1975; memcon, Schlesinger and Fostervoll, 23 May 1975: all in folder Norway 1975, box 76: all in Acc 330-78-0058; Dorfer, *Arms Deal*, 111.

68. Dorfer, *Arms Deal*, 30; memcon, Ford, Prime Minister of Belgium Leo Tindemans, 28 May 1975, National Security Adviser’s Memoranda of Conversation, Ford Library, www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0314/1553089.pdf, accessed 23 May 2024.

69. The Pentagon did not purchase Belgian machine guns. Dorfer, *Arms Deal*, 151–153; memo, Ellsworth for Schlesinger, 2 Jun 1975; memcon, Schlesinger, Vanden Boeynants, 2 Jun 1975: both in folder Belgium 1975, box 61; ltr, Schlesinger to Vanden Boeynants, 2 Jun 1975; [REDACTED] both in folder NATO 452 (Jun-Dec) 1975, box 75: all in Acc 330-78-0058

70. Memo, Currie for SecDef, 10 June 1975, subj: Trip to Europe 4–8 June 1975 (quote), folder NATO 400-499, box 75; “Fact Sheet Roland II,” 7 Jul 1975, folder Norway 1975, box 76; memo, DDR&E to SecDef et al., 21 Aug 1975, subj: Roland Negotiations (quote), folder NATO 400-499 1975, box 75: all in Acc 330-78-0058.

71. Princeton University political scientist Richard H. Ullman wrote, “For Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, the existence of small, vulnerable ‘third-country forces would invite a Soviet first strike in time of crisis. If they were launched first, they could trigger a Soviet response that might easily precipitate a U.S.–Soviet nuclear war.” Ullman, “The Covert French Connection,” *Foreign Policy*, 75 (Summer 1989): 3-33. The Nixon administration’s aid to the French nuclear program would remain a secret until 1989. That year, writing for *Foreign Policy* magazine, based on interviews with over 100 participants in the program who spoke on the condition of anonymity, Ullman revealed that the development of the French strategic force in the 1970s and later owed much to U.S. assistance. Ibid. For an excellent article on U.S. nuclear assistance to the French with numerous links to critical documents, see William Burr, “U.S. Secret Assistance to the French Nuclear Program, 1969–1976: From ‘Fourth Country’ to Strategic Partner, 12 Jul 2011,” Wilson Center, Nuclear Proliferation International History Project, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/us-secret-assistance-to-the-french-nuclear-program-1969-1975-fourth-country-to-strategic#2>.

72. Ullman, “The Covert French Connection.”

73. NSSM 123, 17 Apr 1971; Response to NSSDM 123, 2 Jul 1971; NSDM 124, 29 Jul 1971; memo, Hyland for Kissinger, 26 Jul 1972; memcon, Kissinger, Schlesinger, Patrick Nairne, 10 Aug 1972: all in *FRUS 1969–1976*, vol. 41, *Western Europe; NATO, 1969–1972*, ed. David S. Patterson (Washington, DC: GPO, 2012), 1014 (doc 340), 1017–1021 (docs 344–345), 1030–1031 (doc 352), 1035–1039 (doc 353); Peter Hennessy, *Cabinets and the Bomb* (Oxford: Oxford University Press/British Academy, 2007), 256.

74. Memo, Acting ASD(ISA) Eagleburger for Richardson, 29 Jan 1973, subj: Issues Regarding U.S.–UK Nuclear Cooperation. The United States had sold the Polaris to the British, but the British provided the warheads. The British also built their own nuclear submarines. Memo, Kissinger for Nixon, 17 Aug 1973

(quote), *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2, 2nd, rev. ed. (doc 219); memo, Kissinger for Ford, “Wilson Visit” (n.d.), *Declassified Documents Reference System (DDRS)*. Ullman, “The French Connection,” 8, 25. Quote from, “Joint Statement Following Discussions with Prime Minister Macmillan–The Nassau Agreement,” 21 Dec 1962, The American Presidency Project,”

www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=9063; MG Wickham Notebook, entries for 10 and 17 Aug 1973, box T-4, Schlesinger Papers; memcon, Kissinger, Schlesinger et al., 17 Aug 1973, *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2:955–957 (doc 312).

75. Memo, Acting ASD(ISA) Eagleburger for Richardson, 29 Jan 1973, subj: Issues Regarding U.S.–UK Nuclear Cooperation; ltr, Richardson for Kissinger, 1 Feb 1973: both in folder UK 471.94 1975, box 4, Acc 330-78-0059.

76. Memo, Philip Odeen for Kissinger, 26 Jul 1973, subj: Modernization of the UK SLBM Force, *FRUS, 1969–1973*, E-15, pt. 2:720–721 (doc. 223). Kissinger quote found in memcon, Kissinger, Trend, et. al, 30 Jul 1973, *FRUS, 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2, 117–118 (doc 27).

77. Lawrence S. Kaplan et al., *The McNamara Ascendancy* (Washington, DC: OSD/HO, 2006), 383, 403; “Defense: Polaris Sales,” 6 Apr 1963, folder 899 1976, box 84, Acc 330-79-0049; Hennessy, *Cabinets and the Bomb*, 14, 218, 256, 258, 257, 274–276. The chevaline, an animal found in South Africa, resembled a large antelope. *Ibid.*, 278; MG Wickham Notebook, entries for 12 and 13 Nov 1973 and 2 and 8 (quote) Jan 1974, box T-4, Schlesinger Papers

78. In November 1974, after an election returned the Labor party to power, Prime Minister Harold Wilson and his cabinet debated whether to retain the Polaris/Chevaline force as Britain’s nuclear deterrent. In bilateral discussions with U.K. officials, Kissinger and Schlesinger had recently conceded the importance of Britain’s contribution, and Wilson reminded his cabinet colleagues that leaving France as the only European member of NATO with a nuclear capability would upset other allies, West Germany especially. Consequently, Chevaline survived; Britain’s first Improved Polaris missiles would enter service at sea in 1982. Msg WH40189, Scowcroft to Kissinger, 16 Jan 1974, *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2:735–736 (doc 229); MG Wickham Notebook, entries for 8 and 17 Jan 1974, box T-5, Schlesinger Collection; Hennessy, *Cabinets and the Bomb*, 18, 310–315; MG Wickham Notebook, entries for 8 and 17 Jan 1974, box T-5, Schlesinger Collection; Hennessy, *Cabinets and the Bomb*, 310–315, 18.

79. Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 306–309. Miller, *The Cold War*, 141–144; Kaplan, *The Bomb*, 78. In May 1973, DoD reported, in response to NSSM 175 that France’s nuclear forces [REDACTED]. NSSM 175, pt. 1, attached to memo, Richardson for Kissinger, 11 May 1973, folder France 471.61 box 5, Acc 330-78-0002, OSD Records, WNRC.

80. Excerpts from MemCon, Maurin and Moorer, 26 Apr 1973, 12 Sep 1973, folder: France 091.112, box 67, Acc 330-78-0001.

81. Msg 3198, State to Paris Embassy, 1 Jan 1963, *FRUS 1961–1963*, vol. 13, *Western Europe and Canada*, ed. Charles S. Sampson, James E. Miller (Washington, DC: GPO, 1994), 743–750 (doc 262); NSAM 294, 20 Apr 1964, *FRUS 1964–1968*, vol. 12, *Western Europe*, ed. James E. Miller (Washington, DC: GPO, 2001), 50–51 (doc 30); NSDM 103, 29 Mar 1971; memo, Sonnenfeldt for Kissinger, 8 Apr 1971: both in *FRUS 1969–1976*, 41:555–557 (doc 154), 559 (doc 155); Hennessy, *Cabinets and the Bomb*, 320; William Burr, “U.S. Secret Assistance to the French Nuclear Program, 1969–1975: From ‘Fourth Country’ to Strategic Partner,” Wilson Center, 12 Jul 2011.

82. Memo, Laird for Nixon, 23 Jan 1973, *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, Pt. 2, 929–933; memo, Kissinger for Richardson, 9 Mar 1973, (quote), *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, 933–934; Letter, Richardson to Galley, 16 Apr 1973, Memo for the record, ASD (Atomic Energy) Carl Walske, 17 Apr 1973, folder France 471.61, box 5, Acc 330-78-0002.

-
83. MG Wickham Notebook, entry for 17 Aug 1973, box T-4, Schlesinger Papers. Fully declassified memorandum of conversation available in MemCon, Schlesinger meeting with Galley, 25 Sep 1973 (quote), *FRUS, 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2: 971-974 (doc 315.)
84. Memcon, “French Nuclear Discussion,” 9 Aug 1973 (quote), Wilson Center, Digital Archive: International History Declassified, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113224>. MG Wickham Notebook, entries for 10 and 17 Aug 1973, box T-4, Schlesinger Papers; memcon, Kissinger, Schlesinger et al., 17 Aug 1973, *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, Pt. 2:955–957 (doc 312); memcon, “French Nuclear Discussion,” 17 Aug 1973 (quote), Wilson Center, Digital Archive: International History Declassified, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113224>.
85. Memcon, “French Security and Nuclear Program,” (quotes) Digital National Security Archive collection: Kissinger Telephone Conversations: Supplement I, 1969–1977, 17 Aug 1973, accession number KC00224.
86. Memcon, Kissinger and Schlesinger, 5 Sep 1973, 8:00 a.m., Wilson Center, Digital Archive: International History Declassified, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/memorandum-conversation-kissinger-and-schlesinger>.
87. Memo for record, Deputy Director, Office of Strategic and Space Systems John B. Walsh, 26 Sep 1973: both in *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2:957–970 (doc 313), 976–978 (doc 316).
88. Memo, George R. Barse for Wickham, 25 Sep 1973, folder: France 471.94 1973, box 5, Acc 330-78-0002; memcon, French Minister of Defense Robert Galley, Kissinger et al., 31 Aug 1973; memo for record, Walsh, 26 Sep 1973: both in *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2:957–970 (doc 313), 976–978 (doc 316); memo, John Foster for Schlesinger, n.d. [Sep 1973], w/attached untitled memo for record, folder France 471.61 1973, box 5, Acc 330-78-0002; MG Wickham Notebook, entries for 5 and 25 Sep 1973, box T-4, Schlesinger Papers; [REDACTED].
89. Fully declassified memorandum of conversation available in memcon, Schlesinger meeting with Galley, 25 Sep 1973 (quote), *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2: 971-974 (doc 315); memcon, Schlesinger and Leber, 29 Apr 1974 (quote), folder Germany 091.112 (Jan–May 1974), Acc 330-78-0011; NSSM 175, pt. 1, attached to memo, Richardson for Kissinger, 11 May 1973, folder France 471.61 box 5, Acc 330-78-0002.
90. Kissinger quote found in memo, SecState to U.S. Embassy in France, “Kosciusko-Morizet Call on Secretary,” 26 October 1973, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB98/octwar-75>. [REDACTED]. Sanitized version in *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2:984–987 (doc 320) (quote, 985); [REDACTED].
91. [REDACTED]; memcon, Ford, French President Valery Giscard d’Estaing, 15 Dec 1974, National Security Adviser’s Memoranda of Conversation, Ford Library, www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0314/1552888.pdf, accessed 23 May 2024.
92. [REDACTED], Capt. James C. Hay, 24 Mar 1975, folder France 471.61 1975, box 3, Acc 330-78-0059.

93. NSDM 299, 23 Jun 1975; memo, Ford for Schlesinger, 23 Jun 1975: both in *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2:1016–1017 (doc 330), 1017–1019 (doc 331).

94. [REDACTED]; memo, Wickham for Scowcroft, 13 Aug 1975; memo, Scowcroft for Wickham, 15 Sep 1975: both in folder France 471.61 1975, box 3, Acc 330-78-0059.]

95. [REDACTED]; memo, Wickham for Scowcroft, 13 Nov 1975, folder France 471.61 1975, box 3, Acc 330-78-0059.

96 Memo, Rumsfeld for Ford, 13 May 1976, *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2:1029-1030 (doc 336)

97. Memo, Rumsfeld for Ford, 13 May 1976; memo, ASD(ISA) McAuliffe for Rumsfeld, 1 Nov 1976: both in *FRUS 1969–1976*, E-15, pt. 2:1029-1030 (doc 336) (Kissinger quote, n1), 1041–1043 (doc 341).

98. [REDACTED]

99. Msg, US Mission NATO 6507 to SecDef and SecState, 291115Z Nov 1976 (quote), folder NATO 334 DPC 1976, box 77, Acc 330-79-0049.