

CSBA

Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

ARMING AMERICA'S ALLIES

HISTORICAL LESSONS FOR
IMPLEMENTING A POST-INF TREATY
MISSILE STRATEGY



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ABOUT THE CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND BUDGETARY ASSESSMENTS (CSBA)

The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments is an independent, nonpartisan policy research institute established to promote innovative thinking and debate about national security strategy and investment options. CSBA's analysis focuses on key questions related to existing and emerging threats to U.S. national security, and its goal is to enable policymakers to make informed decisions on matters of strategy, security policy, and resource allocation.

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Cover Graphic: Cover design by James Mersol. Foreground: Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev sign the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty on December 8, 1987 (courtesy of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library); background: a Pershing II battlefield support missile is fired at White Sands Missile Test Range in 1982 (courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration NARA).

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Executive Summary

In the aftermath of the U.S. withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in 2019, then-Secretary of Defense Mark Esper indicated that he believed it would be useful to deploy conventional intermediate-range ballistic missiles in the Indo-Pacific region. But it is not yet clear that allied or partner governments in either this region or in Europe would be willing to host such capabilities on their territory.

These systems, in fact, should be considered much less controversial than the nuclear deployments that the United States undertook in the Cold War. Having said that, however, it is difficult to completely disentangle conventional missile deployments from nuclear weapons capabilities, not because of U.S. intent but because these systems are inherently dual-capable.

The United States' historical experience with the deployment of controversial military capabilities on the territory of its allies, including missiles in both Europe and Asia, provides us with an opportunity to draw some lessons about the policy and diplomatic challenges involved. Examining that experience can allow us to derive a better understanding of alliance management, capability development, and political leadership to inform the current debate about medium and intermediate-range missile capabilities. Moreover, the historical record shows that exogenous shocks to the international system can lead to rapid changes in threat perceptions and the broader security outlook of allies. Having capabilities in hand to deploy and manage allied political concerns in a deft and skillful manner can make possible in the future things that are considered impossible today.

NATO, for example, was not born a nuclear alliance but became one in the wake of multiple strategic and political shocks, including the Berlin blockade, the Soviet nuclear test in late 1949, the outbreak of the Korean War in June, and the clear failure of European members of the Alliance, still recovering from a devastating war, to generate sufficient conventional military power to deter Soviet aggression.

American policymakers undertook a large military buildup and faced the prospect of a large ongoing conventional force presence in Europe. The Eisenhower Administration instead sought to offset Soviet conventional power with an asymmetric deployment of relatively less expensive nuclear forces as the United States moved from an era of nuclear scarcity to one

of nuclear plenty. Winning allied assent to the deployment was not assured but became a major, game-changing Cold War accomplishment of the Eisenhower Administration.

This first phase of nuclear deployment to the United Kingdom, which consisted of bombers using British airbases, was initially accomplished based on informal, military-to-military understandings which, over a decade, gave way to more formal understandings and quite close collaboration between the U.S. and UK governments. The Soviet nuclear test and, especially, the outbreak of the Korean War gave greater urgency to policymakers' deliberations and a review of U.S. national security concluded that a rapid build-up of both conventional and nuclear capabilities would be necessary in order to defend Europe. It soon became apparent, however, that Europe, on its own, would not be capable of meeting the goals for conventional forces that NATO had set for itself in the so-called "Lisbon Goals" of 1952. The Eisenhower Administration's policy review in 1953 concluded that, for the foreseeable future, only the United States could provide the nuclear forces to balance Soviet conventional military power and deter a major war. This would require bases on foreign soil a very delicate diplomatic problem that would command the attention of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. He laid out U.S. thinking to NATO Defense Ministers in April 1954 emphasizing the importance of deterrence and war prevention. Although the United States provided the basic military capabilities including gravity bombs, nuclear artillery, and missiles it also provided the conceptual framework that the alliance ultimately adopted as its own, but allied voices were also important, particularly those of British strategists. Ultimately, Dulles had to persuade the allies that a long-term insurance policy of deterrence would be cheaper than a war provoked by Russian perceptions of western weakness. U.S. investments in developing both nuclear weapons and their means of delivery created ready-made options that facilitated host nation decisions to accept basing of U.S. systems on their territory.

Much as the United States found itself deploying nuclear weapons capabilities to Europe in the 1950s, a series of politico-military crises in East Asia prompted the United States to introduce similar cutting-edge military capabilities in the region. Eisenhower and Dulles needed to thread a policy needle in East Asia in the aftermath of the Korean armistice and the end of France's war in Indochina. The two American leaders hoped to reinforce the U.S. deterrent posture in the region and to prevent any additional efforts at territorial aggrandizement by communist forces in the Far East without running the risk of committing the United States to another land war in Asia. The Korean armistice was followed quickly by a series of disconcerting crises in Asia that policymakers feared would raise questions about U.S. credibility with its allies in both the Far East and Europe. Contention over the offshore Islands of Dachen, Quemoy, and Matsu, took on a symbolic importance well beyond their intrinsic strategic value. Less than a year and a half after the Korean Armistice and just months after the Geneva Conference, the PRC began shelling the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu, igniting almost a decade of on and off again crises.

Initial ambiguity about U.S. willingness to defend the offshore islands gave way to more assertive policies by Eisenhower and Dulles, including a Joint Resolution of Congress that

authorized the use of force to Taiwan and other areas under Taipei's control. The prospect that the use of nuclear weapons would be necessary during the 1954-55 crisis was seen as a possibility at the outset and became an increasing concern for Eisenhower and Dulles as the crisis progressed. As the crisis settled down, United States Pacific Command pursued the deployment of nuclear-capable MATADOR cruise missiles (initially without their nuclear warheads). U.S. officials believed that the missiles would provide both a deterrent effect and be able to attack important targets on the Chinese mainland if deterrence failed. Their presence on the island provided enhanced credibility for the U.S. extended deterrence guarantee for Taiwan in the ensuing 1958 crisis over the offshore islands.

After the Korean Armistice, the United States concluded a Mutual Security Treaty with South Korea (that served as a model for the treaty with the Republic of China), and the United States deployed a "trip-wire" force while also providing training and equipment to the South Korean military. The post-Armistice relationship between the Eisenhower Administration and the Republic of Korea (ROK) was extremely fraught. American officials worried that South Korean President Syngman Rhee might attempt to forceful reunification of the Peninsula, dragging the United States into a renewed military conflict. American policymakers were also interested in reinforcing their ability to deter aggression by North Korea while at the same time reducing defense expenditures and security assistance costs for support of ROK forces in keeping with President Eisenhower's "New Look" strategy. A few years after the conclusion of the Mutual Security Treaty, Pentagon officials concluded that this would require the "modernization" of U.S. military forces, including the introduction of nuclear weapons. This was controversial to say the least. After a year of intense interagency debate, President Eisenhower directed the deployment of nuclear weapons to the territory of the ROK in 1958. Allied views were again, as in the case of Europe, crucial but the U.S., in East Asia, was heavily motivated to demonstrate its commitment to defend allies and extend U.S. nuclear deterrence to them. This fit the Eisenhower Administration's "New Look" strategy and was facilitated by the availability of short and medium-range missiles.

Strategic dilemmas about the coordination of a joint allied response to an adversary's missile deployments were clearly on display when NATO made its "Dual-Track" decision to deploy in 1979. Soviet deployment of SS-20 intermediate range missiles threatened NATO territory and alliance cohesion. In fact, NATO partners initially evinced more concern about the deployments than did officials in Washington. German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt worried that the deployments would intimidate Europeans, undermine U.S. credibility and foster a spirit of neutralism. Schmidt ultimately persuaded Carter and NATO adopted a strategy of deployment coupled with an offer of arms control negotiations. This decision was ultimately ratified by the Reagan Administration and ultimately led to the negotiations that produced the INF Treaty in 1988—the first arms control agreement to ban an entire category of weapons. Many of the concerns that influenced U.S. and allied decision-making during this period, including the credibility of U.S. defense guarantees and internal divisions within NATO, parallel issues that Washington faces in contemporary Asia and Europe.

The historical record of controversial weapons deployments in Europe and Asia during the Cold War suggests that:

1. Allied buy-in and leadership is crucial.
2. Deployments must fit into a broader strategy with a clear role for allies.
3. If you build it, they will come—having capabilities available for deployment is vital.
4. Missile deployments prove a strong sign of U.S. commitment.
5. Having institutional mechanism and careful coordination with allies is necessary. And
6. Alliance management is like gardening requiring both persistence and creativity.

Dealing with the current missile imbalances in Europe and the Indo-Pacific will require the kind of persistent and skillful diplomacy that the United States demonstrated on multiple occasions during the Cold War. Reviewing the record suggests U.S. leaders who articulate clear strategies, invest in capabilities that can be deployed, and worked diligently with international partners can develop a strong allied deterrent posture that effectively support long-term strategic competition.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In the aftermath of the U.S. withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in 2019, then-Secretary of Defense Mark Esper indicated that he believed it would be useful to deploy conventional intermediate-range ballistic missiles in the Indo-Pacific region. As he notes in his memoir, his statement caught the attention of the People's Republic of China (PRC) leadership in Beijing. It also, however, elicited initial statements from allied leaders, including in Australia, indicating minimal enthusiasm for the idea of hosting U.S. ballistic missiles, despite the fact that he was talking about the development by the U.S. and its allies of conventional ballistic missiles and their deployment in East Asia.¹ Prominent critics argued that:

It remains to be seen whether the Pentagon could find a place to base intermediate-range missiles in East Asia outside the U.S. territory of Guam. Despite concerns about China's growing military power and more assertive behavior in the region, allies such as Australia, Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines aren't exactly rushing to host them. Following Esper's comments, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison stated that basing intermediate-range missiles has "not been asked of us," is "not being considered," and has "not been put to us." "I think I can rule a line under that," he added. And a South Korean defense ministry spokesperson said, "We have not internally reviewed the issue [of basing U.S. intermediate-range missiles] and have no plan to do so."²

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- 1 Mark T. Esper, *A Sacred Oath: Memoirs of A Secretary of Defense During Extraordinary Times* (New York: William Morrow, New York) pp. 736–737, eBook version; Idrees Ali, "U.S. Defense Secretary Says He Favors Placing Missiles in Asia," Reuters, August 3, 2019.
 - 2 Tom Countryman and Kingston Rief, "Intermediate-Range Missiles Are the Wrong Weapon for Today's Security Challenges," *War on the Rocks*, August, 13, 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/08/intermediate-range-missiles-are-the-wrong-weapon-for-todays-security-challenges/>.

Moreover, a recent RAND study has also concluded that the “likely receptivity to hosting such systems is very low as long as current domestic political conditions and regional security trends hold.”³

These systems, in fact, should be considered much less controversial than the nuclear deployments that the United States undertook in the Cold War. Having said that, however, it is difficult to completely disentangle conventional missile deployments from nuclear weapons capabilities, not because of U.S. intent but because these systems are inherently dual-capable. That is certainly true of the PRC’s deployments of medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles as well as Russia’s deployments of SS-26 short-range ballistic missiles to Kaliningrad (and its development of capabilities that violated the INF Treaty’s range limits). Although the United States is currently developing conventional intermediate-range missiles—and we are not currently advocating nuclear deployments in the Rings of Fire companion report—the fact remains that Chinese and Russian systems are either already nuclear-capable or could be put to use as nuclear delivery systems. Moreover, Russian and China will undoubtedly object (indeed, one can already hear such objections) to any U.S. deployments of missile capabilities on the grounds that they are dual-capable. This reality guarantees that such deployments will arouse domestic political controversy in both the United States and prospective host nations.⁴

The United States’ historical experience with the deployment of controversial military capabilities on the territory of its allies, including missiles in both Europe and Asia, provides us with an opportunity to draw some lessons about the policy and diplomatic challenges involved. No historical analogy is perfect, and the fact that the Cold War experience was largely, but not solely, a question of nuclear weapons means that one must be even more circumspect than normal in attempting to draw useful “lessons from the past.” Nonetheless, as Mark Twain is reputed to have said, “history doesn’t repeat itself, but it rhymes.” Although the deployment of conventional missiles should be less controversial than the nuclear capabilities of the Cold War era, revisiting those earlier episodes is still valuable. After all, the initial introduction of those capabilities took place over the first decade or so of the last time the United States was engaged in a great power competition, and the final deployment of capabilities to Europe came at the tail end of that competition and indeed contributed to the end of the Cold War itself. Examining that experience can allow us to derive a better understanding of alliance management, capability development, and political leadership to inform

3 Jeffrey W. Hornung, *Ground-Based Intermediate Range Missiles in the Indo-Pacific*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2022), p. v.

4 “Russia Deploys Iskander Nuclear-Capable Missiles to Kaliningrad:RIA,” *Reuters*, February 5, 2018, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-nato-missiles/russia-deploys-iskander-nuclear-capable-missiles-to-kaliningrad-ria-idUSKBN1FP21Y>; Alexander Marrow and Mark Trevelyan, “Russia Says It May Be Forced to Deploy Mid-Range Missiles to Europe,” *Reuters*, December 13, 2021, available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/russia-says-lack-nato-security-guarantees-would-lead-confrontation-ria-2021-12-13/>; Alan Yuhas, “China Warns U.S. Against Sending Missiles to Asia Amid Fears of an Arms Race,” *The New York Times*, August 6, 2019, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/06/world/asia/china-us-nuclear-missiles.html>.

the current debate about medium and intermediate-range missile capabilities. Moreover, the historical record shows that exogenous shocks to the international system can lead to rapid changes in threat perceptions and the broader security outlook of allies. Having capabilities in hand to deploy and manage allied political concerns in a deft and skillful manner can make possible in the future things that are considered impossible today.⁵

This report consists of four chapters that constitute mini-case studies of U.S. deployment of controversial military capabilities (including both nuclear weapons and their means of delivery) to allied territory in both Europe and East Asia during the Cold War.

The first chapter revisits the question of how NATO became a nuclear alliance with forward-deployed nuclear weapons systems throughout Europe, expanding from no weapons to some 3,000 over the course of five years.

The second chapter examines how two of the U.S. bilateral security alliances in East Asia allowed for the deployment of both ballistic missiles and associated nuclear warheads during roughly the same period of time that the NATO alliance was becoming a multilateral nuclear alliance.

The fourth chapter revisits the better-known story of the 1979 NATO Double-Track Decision and INF deployments in the early 1980s that ultimately led to the conclusions of the INF Treaty in 1987.

Finally, the conclusion seeks to draw some relevant diplomatic and politico-military lessons from the historical cases that can inform policymakers' considerations about today's geopolitical environment in the Indo-Pacific and Europe.

5 For classic works urging the use, with appropriate cautions, of historical cases see Ernest R. May and Richard Neustadt, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers*, (New York: The Free Press, 1986); Ernest R. May, *"Lessons" of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); for a recent study that looks more broadly at the Cold War experience to derive lessons for great power competition see Hal Brands, *The Twilight Struggle: What the Cold War Teaches Us about Great-Power Rivalry Today*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022).

CHAPTER 2

NATO Becomes a Nuclear Alliance

NATO was not born a nuclear alliance but became one in the wake of multiple strategic and political shocks, including Stalin's blockade of Berlin, the detonation of a nuclear device by the Soviet Union in late 1949, the eruption of the Korean War in June 1950, and the clear failure of the European members of the Alliance (who were reconstructing their shattered economies and societies) to generate the conventional military power that most observers believed would be necessary to deter Soviet aggression. American policymakers were forced to engage in a large military buildup and contemplate a large-scale and expensive conventional military presence in Europe. The Eisenhower Administration instead sought to offset Soviet conventional power with an asymmetric deployment of relatively less expensive nuclear forces as the United States moved from an era of nuclear scarcity to one of nuclear plenty as economies of scale and more efficient production of nuclear weapons enabled the United States to offer a capability that it could deploy on allied territory. Winning allied assent to the deployment was not assured but became a major, game-changing Cold War accomplishment of the Eisenhower Administration.⁶

After the Second World War, the United States briefly possessed a nuclear monopoly that initially bred complacency among national security leaders. As historian Melvyn Leffler has noted, "modest estimates of the Soviets' ability to wage war against the United States generated the widespread assumption that the Soviets would refrain from military aggression and seek to avoid war."⁷ The U.S. nuclear arsenal remained small, and although several early war planning exercises suggested that a U.S. air atomic offensive would not suffice to defeat the Soviet Union in a war in Europe, U.S. officials believed that the fact of the U.S

6 The strategic background is sketched out in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 87–96.

7 Melvyn P. Leffler, "The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945-1948," *American Historical Review*, 89:2, p. 349

monopoly would be sufficient to deter the USSR even as concerns mounted about Soviet policy in 1947 and early 1948. This complacency was shattered by the Soviet blockade of the western sector of Berlin in June 1948. As part of the U.S. response to the Soviet moves, B-29 aircraft—which were notionally meant to carry nuclear weapons—were deployed to the United Kingdom (although the aircraft were not carrying nuclear weapons, nor had they undergone the modifications which would have allowed them to do so). It was the first use of deployment of weapons systems as an implied nuclear threat; although it was primarily a bluff, it prompted the National Security Council to consider, for the first time, how the use of nuclear weapons in conflict would be managed. NSC 30 established the President as the national command authority when it determined that “The decision as to the employment of atomic weapons in the event of war is to be made by the Chief Executive when he considers such decision to be required.”⁸

This first phase of nuclear deployment to the United Kingdom, which consisted of bombers using British airbases, was initially accomplished on the basis of informal, military-to-military understandings which, over a decade, gave way to more formal understandings and quite close collaboration between U.S. and U.K. governments, although there has been some controversy about how much British civilian leaders were aware of the specific undertakings and whether or not Britain gave up any role in nuclear decision-making.⁹

The Berlin crisis had barely been resolved when a series of geopolitical shocks once again revised U.S. strategic thinking. The Soviets tested a nuclear weapon in the late summer of 1949, the Kuomintang government in China fell and Mao Tse-Tung declared the People’s Republic of China in October 1949, and in June 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. The impact of the Soviet atomic test had prompted a review of U.S. national security policy led by Paul Nitze of the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff. The resulting document, NSC 68, called for a rapid buildup of U.S. conventional and nuclear capabilities. After some initial hesitations over the budgetary implications, the crisis of the Korean War impelled Truman to sign off on a tripling of defense spending and an expansion of U.S. nuclear capabilities.¹⁰

Although Secretary of State Dean Acheson had notably not included South Korea inside the U.S. Defense Perimeter in early 1950, the United States had strong motivations to defend it. U.S. commitments to Europe had only recently been enshrined in the North Atlantic Treaty, a sharp departure from more than 100 years of U.S. traditional wariness of formal alliances,

8 For evidence that policymakers believed the monopoly would be enduring see Gregg Herken, “A Most Deadly Illusion”: The Atomic Secret and American Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1945–1950,” *Pacific Historical Review*, 49:1, pp. 51–76; Scott Sagan, *Moving Targets: Nuclear Strategy and National Security*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989) pp. 15–17; Text of NSC 30 is located at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v01p2/d42>.

9 For the details on this see Ken Young, “U.S. ‘Atomic Capability’ and the British Bases in the Early Cold War,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 42:1, pp 117–146; Ken Young, “No Blank Cheque: Anglo-American (Mis)Understandings and the Use of English Airbases,” *Journal of Military History*, 71:4, pp. 1133–1167; Ken Young, “A Most Special Relationship: The Origins of Anglo-American Nuclear Strike Planning,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 9:2, pp. 5–31.

10 Hal Brands, *The Twilight Struggle*, pp. 21–23; Samuel F. Wells Jr., *Fearing the Worst: How Korea Transformed The Cold War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), pp. 81–197, 472–490.

which raised doubts about U.S. reliability. Meanwhile U.S. officials were concerned that the Soviets would use the hostilities on the Korean Peninsula to distract the United States from Soviet activity in Western Europe. Some historians and political scientists have argued the Korean War was really a war to protect NATO.¹¹ As Samuel Wells notes,

during the war in Korea, Dean Acheson kept the government focused on the priority of rebuilding the defenses and increasing the security of Western Europe... He orchestrated the transformation of the Alliance from a loose organization for political reassurance into a functioning defensive Alliance with an international staff led by an American as supreme commander and dedicated forces, including six divisions of US troops stationed in Europe.... he brought about the admission of Greece and Turkey to NATO and the acquisition of basing rights for Strategic Air Command bombers in Europe, Turkey, and North Africa.¹²

Access to these bases would be crucial for carrying out the atomic air offensive that military planners believed would be necessary to fight and win a war against the Soviet Union.¹³

The end of the Korean War coincided with a renewed concern for the security of Europe as it became clear that Europe would not be able to generate sufficient conventional combat power to meet the obligations that they had set for themselves in NATO under the so-called “Lisbon Goals” adopted in early 1952. Moreover, U.S. nuclear weapons would be needed to offset Soviet conventional advantages in a potential European war. These concerns about putting NATO on a sound footing for the long-term coincided with U.S. internal deliberations on developing what President Eisenhower termed a strategy for the “long haul” that would not undermine the health of the U.S. economy and turn the nation into a garrison state. Eisenhower called for a review of U.S. national security strategy as he looked past the end of the Korean War and sought to put the nation’s defenses on a sustainable fiscal footing in the face of the inflation that had followed the Truman buildup and the Korean War. The review also coincided with the creation of new nuclear capabilities that initially appeared to be useful for limited nuclear use on the battlefield. The review concluded with the elaboration of the Eisenhower’s Administration’s “New Look” defense policy (based on the notion of “massive retaliation” by U.S. nuclear forces against Soviet aggression) and the subsequent

11 Walter LaFeber, “NATO and the Korean War: A Context,” *Diplomatic History*, 13:4, pp.461–477; Robert Jervis, “The Impact of the Korean War on the Cold War,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 24:4, pp. 563–593

12 Acheson role is described by Wells, *Fearing the Worst*, pp. 480–481;

13 On military bases Leffler, “The American Conception of National Security,” p. 372–372; Michael J. Cohen, “From ‘Cold’ to ‘Hot’ War: Allied Strategic and Military Interests in the Middle East After the Second World War,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 43:5, pp. 725–748.

adoption by NATO of a “New Approach” to defense, predicated on first use of nuclear weapons to blunt a Soviet conventional assault on Europe.¹⁴

Even before the Eisenhower Administration had entered office, NATO, with a strong push by the UK, had been moving in the direction of predicating its defense on nuclear weapons. Ike himself had made it clear before he departed as Supreme Allied Commander for NATO to run for President that if new nuclear capabilities for battlefield use were available, he intended to use them in his planning for war. In late 1952, NATO formally recognized that it might need to incorporate nuclear weapons into its war plans when the Military Committee adopted strategic guidance MC 14/1, noting that:

All types of weapons, without exception, might be used by either side. It has been assessed by sources with knowledge of weapons of mass destruction that, although by the period 1953–54 their effect on the conduct of war will not dictate a need to reduce current NATO force goals, greater availability of such weapons and increased delivery capability during the period 1954–56 may then necessitate re-evaluation of the requirements for a successful defense of the NATO area.¹⁵

Luckily, although the 1952 Presidential election might have disrupted the process, Eisenhower’s election ensured a great deal of continuity in thinking and policy on the role of nuclear weapons in transatlantic relations. Indeed, part of Ike’s motivation for running was to ensure continued U.S. support for the alliance and an enduring transatlantic strategy.¹⁶

Eisenhower, who had begun the process of developing NATO’s strategy before leaving Europe, arranged to change the nation’s military leadership as President, and put in place processes both at home and at NATO that came back together with adoption of MC48 by NATO in 1954. The underpinning of the strategy, as summed up by Marc Trachtenberg, was

14 For background on Eisenhower’s policy review see Robert Bowie and Richard Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Aaron Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America’s Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy*, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Saki Dockrill, *Eisenhower’s New-Look National Security Policy*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996); David C. Elliot, “Project Vista and Nuclear Weapons in Europe,” *International Security*, 11:1, pp.163–183; Michael O. Wheeler, “NATO Nuclear Strategy, 1949–1990,” in Gustav Schmidt, *A History of NATO: The First Fifty Years*, Vol. 3, (New York: Palgrave, 2001) pp. 121–139, Gregory W. Pedlow, “The Evolution of NATO Strategy, 1949–1969,” pp. xi–xv in Pedlow, ed., *NATO Strategy Documents, 1949–1969*, located at <https://www.nato.int/archives/strategy.htm>.

15 The text of MC 14/1 can be found at <https://www.nato.int/docu/stratdoc/eng/a521209a.pdf>.

16 William B. Pickett, *Eisenhower Decides to Run: Presidential Politics and Cold War Strategy* (Chicago: Ivan Dee, 2008), the story of NATO’s nuclearization has been well told by Marc Trachtenberg, “A Wasting Asset: American Strategy and the Shifting Nuclear Balance, 1949–1954,” and “The Nuclearization of NATO and U.S.–West European Relations,” in Trachtenberg, *History and Strategy*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp.100–152 and 153–169 respectively; Trachtenberg’s essay “The Making of the Western Defense System: France, the United States and MC48,” in Trachtenberg, *The Cold War and After: History, Theory and the Logic of International Politics*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012) pp. 142–153 is particularly good on the French role. The most thorough account is the unpublished Harvard PhD dissertation by Robert Allen Wampler. “Ambiguous Legacy: The United States, Great Britain and the Foundations of NATO Strategy, 1948–1957.” Order No. 9132059, Harvard University, 1991. <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/ambiguous-legacy-united-states-great-britain/docview/303930124/se-2?accountid=11752>.

“that Europe could be defended, even with numerically inferior forces, provided a massive air attack was launched at the outset of the war.”¹⁷ The “Solarium” review of U.S. policy was completed in 1953, with the adoption of NSC 162/2 in October 1953 which concluded that “within the free world, only the United States can provide and maintain, for a period of years to come, the atomic capability to counterbalance Soviet atomic power. Thus, sufficient atomic weapons and effective means of delivery are indispensable for U.S security.” But the document stressed that the United States required allies to be able to execute this strategy.

The effective use of U.S. strategic air power against the USSR will require overseas bases on foreign territory for some years to come. Such bases will continue indefinitely to be an important additional element of U.S. strategic air capability and to be essential to the conduct of the military operations on the Eurasian continent in case of general war. The availability of such bases and their use by the United States in case of need will depend, in most cases on the consent and cooperation of the nations where they are located. Such nations will assume the risks entailed only if convinced that their own security will thereby be best served.

The importance of getting the allies on board was particularly ticklish since discussion of atomic weapons use could be politically difficult for allies. It was, wrote Paul Nitze, in early 1953 a subject of the “utmost delicacy.”¹⁸

Such concerns put a high premium on Secretary of State John Foster Dulles’s efforts to socialize these ideas with the European Allies. This was an undertaking that began with his report to a closed session of the allied Foreign Ministers on April 23, 1954, where he welcomed the opportunity to clarify U.S thinking on the role of nuclear weapons in the “free world system of defense against the Soviet Union.” Dulles began by emphasizing that the “primary purpose of the United States.... was to deter aggression and prevent the outbreak of war.” He went on to argue that offsetting “the great concentration of military power within the Soviet bloc” could only be accomplished with “the integration of effective atomic means within our overall capability.” Dulles was explicit that “we and our allies have placed great reliance upon new weapons to compensate in part for the numerical disparity between NATO and Soviet forces.” Dulles stressed that the U.S. would consult closely with allies and “to cooperate with them fully...that is the essence of collective security.” In December, the North Atlantic Council approved MC48, which, as Dulles reported to President Eisenhower, codified that “if an all-out Soviet attack occurred, whether atomic or otherwise, the NATO response would be a defense employing atomic weapons.” That fundamental NATO strategy of using nuclear weapons to repel massive conventional aggression in Europe has remained in place until this day.¹⁹

17 Trachtenberg, “The Nuclearization of NATO,” p. 162

18 NSC 162/2 in *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, 1952–1054, Vol II, Part 1, National Security Affairs, (Washington D.C: Government Printing Office, 1984) p. 583; Nitze’s comment is on page 203of the same FRUS volume.

19 Dulles’s remarks to the North Atlantic council in *Foreign Relations of the United States, (FRUS)* 1952–1954 Vol. V, Part 1, Western European Security, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1983) pp. 509–514 and his report to Eisenhower, p. 561. The text of MC 48 can be found at <https://www.nato.int/docu/stratdoc/eng/a541122a.pdf>.

As Marc Trachtenberg has noted, “if the Americans dominated the process” of developing MC48, “that does not mean that the European accepted it reluctantly. One can almost say the opposite.”²⁰ The U.S. provided the basic military capabilities—gravity bombs and soon nuclear artillery—and ultimately framed the concepts adopted by the alliance, but the role of other allies was also important at the critical juncture when NATO became a nuclear alliance. British strategic thinking in some ways prefigured but certainly paralleled the approaches that evolved from the Eisenhower policy review of 1953. Chief Air Marshall Sir John Slessor articulated those views and proselytized them with American officials. There is little doubt that the British influenced but did not determine the outcome of U.S. deliberations and helped make the sale for reliance on U.S.-provided nuclear weapons inside NATO. The French also largely shared the assumptions that underpinned the NATO “new approach.” U.S. decisions to increase the nuclear arsenal’s size and develop nuclear artillery and short-range rocket launched systems enabled the allies to reach a consensus on nuclear strategy and build political cohesion in the alliance.²¹ The nuclearization of Europe followed the adoption of MC48 with nuclear weapons deployed not only to Britain but to West Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Turkey, and Greece so that by the end of the decade, there were some 3,000 U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe. The initial deployments to the UK and FRG in 1954-55 were composed of gravity bombs, artillery shells for 280 mm guns, solid propellant Honest John rockets, and liquid-fueled short-range Corporal ballistic missiles, as well as Matador cruise missiles. As technology matured, developing missiles of both intercontinental (ICBMs) and intermediate ranges (IRBMs) became a priority, despite inter-service rivalries and jockeying over control of programs. After the Suez crisis, the possibility of sharing IRBMs with the United Kingdom seemed a reasonable salve for Britain’s wounded feelings. The Soviet launch of Sputnik turned the prospect of IRBMs for

20 Trachtenberg, “The Making of the Western Defense System: France, the United States and MC48,” p. 146.

21 Wampler, *Ambiguous Legacy*, pp. 293–666. See also John Baylis & Alan Macmillan, “The British Global Strategy Paper of 1952,” *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 16:2, pp. 200–226; Andrew M. Johnston, “Mr. Slessor Goes to Washington: The Influence of the British Global Strategy Paper on the Eisenhower New Look,” *Diplomatic History*, 22:3, pp. 61–98. Beatrice Heuser explicitly argues for the influence of British thinking on “the New Look” in NATO, *Britain, France and the FRG: Nuclear Strategy and Forces for Europe, 1949–2000* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997) pp. 33–38. Public expression of British views can be found in John Slessor, “The Place of the Bomber in British Strategy,” *International Affairs*, 29:3, pp. 302–308 and Air Marshall Sir John Slessor, “Air Power and World Strategy,” *Foreign Affairs*, 33:1, pp. 43–53. Stephen Twigge & Alan Macmillan, “Britain, the United States, and the Development of NATO Strategy, 1950–1964,” *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 19:2, pp. 260–281 provides a very nuanced account of divisions among the British services on the necessary balance between conventional and nuclear forces. The importance of Anglo-American cooperation on these issues to British leaders is sketched out in Jan Melissen, “Prelude to Interdependence: The Anglo-American relationship and the limits of Great Britain’s nuclear policy, 1952–1957,” *Arms Control*, 11:3, pp. 205–231; John Baylis and Kristan Stoddart, *The British Nuclear Experience: The Roles of Beliefs, Culture, and Identity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) pp. 42–59; and Ian Clark and Nicholas J. Wheeler, *The British Origins of Nuclear Strategy 1945–1955*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Simon Moody argues that the undoubted development of political cohesion came at the expense of developing conventional military capabilities and coherent operational concepts, “Enhancing Political Cohesion in NATO during the 1950s or: How it Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the (Tactical) Bomb,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 40:6, pp. 817–838. Also extremely useful in tracing the evolution of British thinking on the conventional-nuclear balance of effort and its influence on the U.S. and alliance is Simon Moody, *Imagining Nuclear War in the British Army, 1945–1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020) pp. 22–89.

other European partners into a more urgent alliance concern. Ultimately Thor IRBMs were deployed to the United Kingdom, and Jupiter IRBMs to Italy and Turkey.²²

One should not exaggerate how easy it was for the Eisenhower Administration to win NATO's commitment to a strategy based on nuclear weapons and then win the acquiescence of allied governments to deploy weapons systems in such large numbers on the European continent. The American and allied achievement is even more impressive because, as Frank Gavin has pointed out, the strategy and deployments that NATO adopted were a radical break with the past and entailed no small amount of risk. Moreover, U.S. policymakers had to overcome enormous obstacles to accomplish their ends. First, domestic legislation (the McMahon Act of 1946) made it enormously complicated for the U.S. government to share basic information about nuclear weapons with allies. Issues of classification made it extremely difficult to discuss nuclear strategy and deployments in public and as noted above discussing these issues in public was enormously sensitive. As Dulles forewarned the alliance in 1954, "it was somewhat unpleasant to discuss the use of atomic weapons" in particular because it "did not lend itself to useful public expression."²³ Inevitably, some citizens of NATO member states (with no small amount of encouragement from Moscow) organized and demonstrated against the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe.²⁴

The United States managed to navigate all these difficulties, primarily by making capabilities available that allies found useful for purposes of deterring the USSR. American policymakers also consulted closely with allies, listening to their concerns and allaying them where they could. Americans pursued difficult and tortuous negotiations with allies to

- 22 Robert S Norris, William M. Arkin, and William Burr, "Where They Were," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 55:6, pp. 26–35; which is based on the declassified *History of the Custody and Deployment of Nuclear Weapons, July 1945–September 1977*, prepared by the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Atomic Energy) February 1978, located at <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/news/19991020/history-of-custody.pdf>; the details on Air Force–Army rivalry over the development IRBMs and ICBMs is told in Michael H. Armacost, *The Politics of Weapons Innovation: The Thor–Jupiter Controversy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969) and Jacob Neufeld, *The Development of Ballistic Missiles in the United States Air Force*, (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1990). The deployment story can be found in Philip Nash, *The Other Missiles of October: Eisenhower, Kennedy and the Jupiters, 1957–1963* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Philip Nash, "Jumping Jupiters: The US search for IRBM Host Countries in NATO, 1957–59," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 6:3, pp. 753–786; Jan Melissen, "The Thor Saga: Anglo-American Nuclear Relations, US IRBM Development and Deployment in Britain, 1955–1959," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 15:2, pp. 172–207; Ian Clark & David Angell, "Britain, the United States and the Control of Nuclear Weapons: The Diplomacy of the Thor Deployment 1956–58," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 2:3, pp. 153–177; Leopoldo Nuti, "Me Too, Please: Italy and the Politics of Nuclear Weapons, 1945–1975," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 4:1, pp. 114–148; Nur Bilge Criss "Strategic Nuclear Missiles in Turkey: The Jupiter Affair, 1959–1963," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 20:3, pp. 97–122.
- 23 Dulles quoted in Timothy Andrews Sayle, *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019) p. 15.
- 24 Francis J. Gavin, "NATO's Radical Response to the Nuclear Revolution," in Ian Shapiro and Adam Tooze, eds., *Charter of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization: Together with Scholarly Commentaries and Essential Historical Documents*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), pp. 177–192; Timothy Andrews Sayle, "A Nuclear Education: the Origins of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 43:6–7, 920–956; For public opposition, see William I. Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe: The Turbulent History of a Divided Continent, 1945–2002*, (New York: Doubleday, 2002) pp.138–139; and Lawrence S. Wittner, *Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), pp. 9–112. Thomas Rid, *Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare*, (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2020).

develop dual-key procedures and created mechanisms for intensive and ongoing consultations. For several years, the United States doggedly pursued proposals for nuclear sharing within the alliance before a consensus developed that the established consultative mechanisms were sufficient to give Europeans a voice in NATO nuclear policymaking:

NATO's dependence on nuclear weapons resulted from "the belief that deterrence had to be based on a plausible defense concept. Forward defense was credible only if NATO compensated for its numerical inferiority in relation to the Soviets by including into its concept the technical superiority of US nuclear power. A commitment to massive retaliation in the case of war made it easier for the United States and for its European partners to compromise on burden sharing. At the same time, given US quantitative and qualitative nuclear superiority, massive retaliation—at least from a US perspective—made more strategic sense in the early 1950s than any other option.²⁵

Despite all the uncertainties and the drawbacks of reliance on massive retaliation with bombers, artillery, and missiles, it managed to deter Soviet aggression in Europe during the Cold War.²⁶

CONCLUSION AND LESSONS

The Eisenhower Administration could not have succeeded in winning the alliance's agreement on massive retaliation as a strategy and the resulting deployment of ballistic missiles, artillery and aircraft as well as their nuclear warheads and munitions if the allies had not seen it in their interest to do so. Moreover, acquiescence by the allies wasn't spontaneous, it required a clear strategy that filled capability gaps and an effort to sell allies on that notion that failure to remedy the shortfalls would undermine NATO's strategy. In the end Dulles had to persuade the allies that an insurance policy of deterrence would be cheaper in the long run than the cost of war provoked by Russian perceptions of western weakness. The fact that the U.S. had made the investments in developing both the nuclear weapons and their means of delivery undoubtedly—creating ready-made options—facilitated host nation decisions to accept basing of U.S. systems on their sovereign territory. Patient, persistent, and flexible diplomacy in the service of alliance management allowed the U.S. to reach creative solutions to the problems and disagreement that inevitably arose along the way.

The basic lessons of the NATO nuclearization case were:

- The need for allied involvement in and agreement on the deployment decisions,

25 Andreas Wenger, "The Politics of Military Planning: Evolution of NATO's Strategy," in Vojtech Mastny, Sven G. Holtsmark, and Andreas Wenger, eds., *War Plans and Alliances in the Cold War: Threat Perceptions in the East and West*, (New York: Routledge, 2006) pp. 165–193, quotation on p. 184.

26 Sayle, "A Nuclear Education"; Ken Young, "A Most Special Relationship: The Origins of Anglo-American Nuclear Strike Planning," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 9:2, pp. 5–31; and Moody, "Enhancing Political Cohesion in NATO." For U.S. pursuit of nuclear sharing, see Marc Trachtenberg, "The Berlin Crisis," in *History and Strategy*, pp. 180–191; Andrew Priest, *Kennedy, Johnson, and NATO: Britain, America and the Dynamics of Alliance, 1962–1968*, (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2006) pp. 93–121; and Brands, *The Twilight Struggle*, pp. 48–75.

- The importance of fitting weapons deployments into a clearly articulated strategy and a persuasive explanation of the capability gaps that the deployments needed to fill for the strategy to be successful,
- The necessity of persuading allies that, in the long run, deterrence was cheaper than war, and
- The value of ready-made options—capabilities developed by the U.S. that were ready for deployment.

All of these takeaways would influence U.S. policymakers who, in short order, were confronted with the challenge of making extended deterrence a workable policy with U.S. bilateral treaty allies in the Far East.

CHAPTER 3

Deployment of Nuclear Weapons to East Asia and South Korea

Much as the United States found itself deploying nuclear weapons capabilities to Europe in the 1950s, a series of politico-military crises in East Asia prompted the United States to introduce similar cutting-edge military capabilities in the region. The deployment of nuclear-capable missiles and associated warheads to Taiwan and permanently stationed nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula offers some interesting parallels and cautionary notes as we consider the contemporary strategic circumstances in the Indo-Pacific region.

During the Korean War, the U.S. government considered using nuclear weapons on several occasions—and may have used nuclear threats to speed the armistice negotiations to an agreement—but never actually deployed nuclear weapons to the Republic of Korea. After the war, the United States sought to shore up its deterrent posture in the Far East, where the PRC continued to threaten the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the threat of North Korean aggression remained a concern despite the successful conclusion of the armistice agreement in 1953. Moreover, the French effort to preserve its colonial position in Vietnam had led to the Geneva Conference in 1954, which ended the seven years of warfare in Southeast Asia, divided the country at the 17th parallel, allowed a communist regime to take root in North Vietnam and called for unification between North and South based on free elections to be held two years later.²⁷

27 The story of the role of nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula during the Korean War is recounted in Nina Tanenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons Since 1945*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 115–154; Roger Dingman, “Atomic Diplomacy during the Korean War,” *International Security*, 13:3, pp. 50–91; Rosemary J. Foot, “Nuclear Coercion and the Ending of the Korean Conflict,” *International Security*, 13:3, pp., 92–112; and James Cable, *The Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina* (Basingstoke, UK: The Macmillan Press, 1986).

Eisenhower and Dulles needed to thread a policy needle in East Asia in the aftermath of the Korean armistice and Indochina settlement. The two American leaders hoped to reinforce the U.S. deterrent posture in the region and to prevent any additional efforts at territorial aggrandizement by communist forces in the Far East without running the risk of the U.S. into another land war in Asia. They also did not want a crisis in the Far East to disrupt the process of bringing Germany into the Atlantic Alliance.

The Korean armistice was followed quickly by a series of disconcerting crises in Asia that policymakers feared would raise questions about U.S. credibility with its allies in both the Far East and Europe. In the first instance, this meant discouraging any effort by the PRC to seize Taiwan while—at the same time—not allowing Chiang Kai-Shek to draw the U.S. into a broader conflict. Throughout this period, there had been contention over the offshore Islands of Dachen, Quemoy, and Matsu, which were extremely close to the coast of mainland China but controlled by the Republic of China government. The islands had negligible strategic significance, but Chiang Kai-Shek valued them because they served as a jumping-off point for harassing operations against the mainland, and since the U.S. continued to value the Nationalist regime, the offshore islands, much as Berlin in Europe, took on a symbolic importance well beyond their intrinsic strategic value. Less than a year and a half after the Korean Armistice and just months after the Geneva Conference, the PRC began shelling the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu, igniting almost a decade of on and off again crises.²⁸

As the early signs of an impending crisis emerged during the Geneva Conference, Secretary Dulles was filled with foreboding. He told his British counterpart, Anthony Eden, “we might be said to be living over a volcano.” At the outset of the crisis, there was a great deal of ambiguity about the degree to which the United States should commit itself to the defense of the offshore islands. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) advocated the potential use of nuclear weapons to defend them, but President Eisenhower was more reserved. Dulles wanted to maintain ambiguity about the defense of the islands. Still, fearful that Chinese territorial gains in East Asia would damage U.S. standing, he supported “a firm policy, including military action, without committing the United States to the long-term defense of the offshore islands.” The crisis waxed and waned into 1955. Dulles and Eisenhower worked patiently with the UN, Congress, and the Nationalist government to manage the crisis. To propitiate concerns from Chiang Kai-Shek, Dulles agreed to negotiate a mutual security Treaty along the lines of the one agreed to with the Republic of Korea. This agreement was something the Nationalist government had been seeking for some time. Dulles, according to historian Warren Cohen, “exploited Chiang’s desire for an alliance to obtain a modicum of control.” When the PRC escalated attacks on the offshore islands in response, Dulles and Eisenhower decided to make the U.S. commitment to defend the islands less ambiguous and, through careful consultation with the bipartisan congressional leadership, won legislative support

28 Roger Buckley, *The United States in the Asia-Pacific Since 1945*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 97–103; Warren I. Cohen, *America’s Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations*, 6th ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), pp. 198–206.

via a Joint Resolution of the Congress that authorized the use of force to defend Taiwan and the Pescadores as well as areas under Taipei's control. Quemoy and Matsu were not mentioned by name, but the legislative language provided the Administration with sufficient policy cover. As Warren Cohen has noted, during the crisis (and its sequel in 1958), the U.S. provided both the logistical support and threats of the use of force (potentially including nuclear weapons) that ultimately gave the PRC pause and led to a return to diplomacy.²⁹

The prospect that the use of nuclear weapons would be necessary during the 1954-55 crisis was seen as a possibility at the outset and became an increasing concern for Eisenhower and Dulles as the crisis progressed. Dulles worried that war over the offshore islands would become a general war with the PRC that would ultimately require nuclear weapons use, which would be consistent with and a demonstration of the Administration's "New Look" defense strategy and the doctrine of massive retaliation. Speculation during internal deliberations about the use of atomic weapons gave way, as the crisis played out, to implicit and some explicit threats to use nuclear weapons in public statements and the movement of nuclear weapons to Okinawa. In fact, at one point, Eisenhower urged Dulles to mention the possible use of nuclear weapons to resolve the crisis in one of his public reports to the nation on his diplomacy in the Far East. As Appu K. Soman has pointed out, however, these threats proved to be a "double-edged sword" since Dulles worried that both international and domestic public opinion would recoil at the prospect of using such weapons to defend the militarily insignificant offshore islands. The United States, however, now had a treaty commitment to defend Taiwan, and the fate of the islands loomed large in the psychology of Chiang Kai-Shek and the ROC leadership in Taipei.³⁰

As the crisis settled down, United States Pacific Command pursued the deployment of nuclear-capable MATADOR cruise missiles (initially without their nuclear warheads). The

29 Ronald W. Pruessen, "Over the Volcano: The United States and the Taiwan Crisis, 1954-1955," in Robert S. Ross and Jiang Changbin, eds., *Re-Examining the Cold War: U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 77-105; Robert Accinelli, "Eisenhower, Congress, and the 1954-55 Offshore Island Crisis," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 20:2, pp. 329-348; Appu K. Soman, *Double-Edged Sword: Nuclear Diplomacy in Unequal Conflicts: The United States and China, 1950-1958*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000), pp. 115-164; and Cohen, *America's Response to China*, pp. 202-203.

30 For Dulles's initial speculation on the potential use of nuclear weapons at the outset of the crisis see the speaking note he drafted for use at NSC meetings in *FRUS*, 1952-1954, Vol. XIV, China and Japan, Part 1, p. 511; Soman, *Double-Edged Sword*, pp. 115-164; and H. W. Brands Jr., "Testing Massive Retaliation: Credibility and Crisis Management in the Taiwan Strait," *International Security*, 12:4, pp. 124-151. The threats are catalogued in Richard Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1987), p. 54-62. On Eisenhower urging Dulles to speak directly about possible nuclear weapons use see Robert Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment: United States Policy Toward Taiwan, 1950-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 211-212. For accounts that see the Eisenhower Administration's policy as recklessly pushing the crisis to the brink of nuclear disaster that only luck redeemed see Gordon Chang, "To the Nuclear Brink: Eisenhower, Dulles, and the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis," *International Security*, 12:4, pp. 96-123; Gordon H. Chang and He Di, "The Absence of War in the U.S.-China Confrontation over Quemoy and Matsu, 1954-1955: Contingency, Luck, Deterrence," *American Historical Review*, 98:5, pp. 1500-1524. An account that stresses Eisenhower's leadership and rejection of extreme solutions see Bennet C. Rushkoff, "Eisenhower, Dulles and the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis, 1954-1955," *Political Science Quarterly*, 96:3, pp 465-480; Norris, Arkin and Burr, "Where They Were," p. 30.

MATADORS, according to the U.S. Embassy in Taipei, “would have substantial psychological value as deterrent to Communist invasion plans” and “would provide effective means counter-attack mainland airfields in event of Communist strikes on Taiwan.” The State Department believed that the deployment “would serve as a reminder other nations that the United States is determined to stand by its commitments to the Government of the Republic of China. This would hearten our Asian Allies in their resistance to Communist expansion and would aid in the achievement of our policy objectives in the region.” During the Taiwan Straits crisis in 1958, the presence of these missiles made the U.S. extended deterrent guarantee for Taiwan far more credible than it had been in the earlier 1954 crisis.³¹

The presence of the MATADORS was particularly useful since, in the wake of the Soviet Sputnik launch in 1957, President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles were especially loath to give the appearance of appeasing the PRC when and if a second crisis over the offshore Islands erupted. U.S. decision-makers hoped to signal their intent to defend Taiwan to “repel” any Chinese probe. As the *New York Times* reported, the deployment of the MATADORS was “adding to rather than creating a new ‘atomic punch’ for U.S. military forces in the Far East.” Because they were dual use, they provided an additional capability for U.S. forces to retaliate against PRC attacks. A joint U.S.-ROK-ROC exercise that included the MATADOR units sent an especially powerful signal. At the end of the day, the Eisenhower Administration’s effort at nuclear deterrence appears to have been successful, at least in part, because visible capabilities had been deployed to back up U.S. deterrent threats. The success, however, may have also triggered the PRC’s determination to develop its own nuclear weapons.³²

Deployment of nuclear weapons to South Korea

After the Armistice, to remove any ambiguity about the U.S. defense commitment to South Korea, the two sides concluded a Mutual Security Treaty (that served as a model for the treaty with the Republic of China), and the United States deployed combat forces to serve as a “trip-wire” force while also providing training and equipment to South Korea’s military forces. The post-Armistice relationship between the Eisenhower Administration and the South Korean government in Seoul was extremely fraught. American officials were gravely concerned that South Korean President Syngman Rhee would attempt to reunify the Peninsula by force, thereby violating the Armistice agreement and dragging the United States into a renewed military conflict. American policymakers were also interested in

31 For the deployment of MATADOR missiles see *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955–1957*, Vol. III, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986), pp. 283–284, 356–357, 406–407, 425, 458, 490, 493–495, 522–523, quotations on pp. 356, 406. Appu K. Soman, “‘Who’s Daddy’ in the Taiwan Strait? The Offshore Islands Crisis of 1958,” *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 3:4, pp. 373–398; Soman, *Doubled-Edged Sword*, pp.165–201; Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance*, pp.68–79.

32 George C. Eliades, “Once More unto the Breach: Eisenhower, Dulles, and Public Opinion during the Offshore Islands Crisis of 1958,” *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 2:4, pp. 343–367, *New York Times*, May 7, 1957; Soman, “‘Who’s Daddy’” p. 376–377, Soman, *Double-Edged Sword*, pp. 123–124; and Chang, “To the Nuclear Brink.”

reinforcing their ability to deter aggression by North Korea while at the same time reducing defense expenditures and security assistance costs for support of ROK forces in keeping with President Eisenhower's "New Look" strategy. A few years after the conclusion of the Mutual Security Treaty, Pentagon officials concluded that this would require the "modernization" of U.S. military forces, including the introduction of nuclear weapons—the Honest John short-range surface-to-surface and 280mm nuclear artillery.³³

There were several controversial issues surrounding the larger question of deploying nuclear weapons. The Armistice terms negotiated at Panmunjom in 1953 precluded each side from introducing "new weapons" onto the Peninsula, and this provision of the Armistice, among others, was being monitored by the Neutral Nations Supervisory Committee (NNSC), which was composed of representatives from Sweden, Switzerland, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The NNSC was controversial from the outset, and there were suspicions both that some of the NNSC members were reporting information to the DPRK and that the USSR and PRC were reinforcing North Korea outside the view of the NNSC.

When the Department of Defense raised the issue of introducing nuclear weapons inside the U.S. Government (USG), it was viewed as an opportunity to reduce U.S. forces and the cost of ROK forces (which were drawing heavily on U.S. resources). The "modernized" weapons would offset the impact of the withdrawal and minimize the opposition of South Korean President Syngman Rhee to both the prospective U.S. withdrawals and ROK drawdown. The State Department objected that the modernization steps would violate the Armistice terms (according to State's lawyers), arouse controversy not just among Communist and neutral nations but also U.S. allies, and that the United States lacked compelling evidence that the Soviets had introduced nuclear weapons into North Korea. Moreover, they warned that this step might provoke the USSR to provide the PRC with nuclear weapons.³⁴

After a year plus of interagency debate, the U.S. government decided to abrogate the restrictive elements of the Armistice agreement on the grounds that the shifting military balance had created a dangerous situation on the Peninsula, but it held off on immediately deploying nuclear weapons. Secretary of State Dulles strongly resisted, arguing that the deployment of nuclear weapons would provide fodder for Communist propaganda, raise hackles elsewhere in Asia, and, at a minimum, if necessary, should be used as a bargaining chip with President

33 Terence Roehrig, *Japan, South Korea, and the United States Nuclear Umbrella: Deterrence After the Cold War*, pp. 56–59; Lee Jae Bong, "US Deployment of Nuclear Weapons in 1950s South Korea & North Korea's Nuclear Development: Toward Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 7:8:3, pp. 1–17; for the full history of nuclear weapons systems that were deployed between 1958 and 1991 when President Bush ordered the weapons withdrawn, see Hans M. Kristensen & Robert S. Norris, "A history of US nuclear weapons in South Korea," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 73:6, 349–357.

34 For the State Department's initial objections see: Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs Walter S.J. Robertson to the Secretary of State, "Introduction of Atomic Weapons into Korea," January 17, 1957, with attached memorandum from Herman Phleger, January 17, 1957, Secret RG 59, Central Decimal Files 1955–1959, box 2877, 711.5611/1-1757 located at <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/19722-national-security-archive-doc-02-assistant>. Terence Roehrig, *Japan, South Korea, and the United States Nuclear Umbrella: Deterrence After the Cold War*, pp. 56–59.

Rhee to win his assent to drawing down ROK forces. The Pentagon argued the modernization of U.S. forces required nuclear weapons to prevent the DPRK from overrunning US and ROK forces in a renewed conflict (as they had done in 1950). President Eisenhower, after some initial hesitation and an unsuccessful effort to bargain with President Rhee, ultimately broke the interagency deadlock, and the first U.S. nuclear weapons were deployed in South Korea early in 1958. The arsenal of nuclear weapons on the Peninsula grew more diverse in type, including short-range missiles, artillery, demolition mines, and gravity bombs, and increased in number to a peak of around 950 warheads.³⁵

The introduction of nuclear weapons in South Korea ultimately did not cause nearly as much regional upheaval as Secretary Dulles and others had feared—at least in the short term. In part, the United States avoided raising major concerns through the low-key manner in which the deployment was handled and more than 20 years of a “neither confirm nor deny” policy that maintained some ambiguity about the issue. It was only in 1975 that Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger implicitly acknowledged the presence of theatre nuclear weapons in South Korea. The deployment required strong U.S. Presidential leadership but was accomplished despite resistance from an allied leader, and given the absence of multilateral security institutions, the degree of difficulty was significantly lower than the 1979 dual-track decision in Europe discussed below. The evidence suggests that despite the internal and diplomatic difficulties, the deployment of U.S nuclear weapons and the means of delivery contributed significantly to the success of U.S. extended deterrence in East Asia until they were withdrawn in 1991, by which time South Korea had become one of the most prosperous countries in the world with a much-strengthened capability for self-defense (albeit reinforced by continued U.S. military presence and C2 capabilities).

CONCLUSION AND LESSONS

These East Asia cases from the Cold War underscore that, as was the case in Europe, allied desires were crucial in facilitating deployments, but in the Far East, there was another factor at play. U.S. deployments were made to demonstrate commitment and to convince allies of U.S. determination to make extended deterrence work. These essential steps in underpinning the bilateral U.S. security treaties also served the purpose of calming U.S. allies and helping the Washington policymakers control the impulses of South Korean and ROC leaders, who American decision-makers feared might drag the U.S. into a conflict. These deployments and treaties fit the pattern of U.S. security assurances serving as a restraint on U.S. allies in East Asia.³⁶

35 Roehrig, *Japan, South Korea, and the United States Nuclear Umbrella: Deterrence After the Cold War*, pp. 56–59; Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, “A History of US Nuclear Weapons in South Korea,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 73:6, 349–357.

36 Victor Cha, *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

The deployments also fit neatly into a clear U.S. strategy—the New Look—that Eisenhower and Dulles had already articulated to both the American public and allies around the world. It helped that the U.S. capabilities served, as they did in the European case, a clear deterrent purpose and unambiguous targets—the PRC and airfields and facilities from which it could launch attacks on Taiwan.

The availability of U.S. developed capabilities, including the short- and medium-range missiles deployed to both the ROC and ROK, was indispensable in highlighting the U.S. determination to maintain the peace and stability of East Asia in the early Cold War. Deployment required determined U.S. leadership, careful alliance management, and constant diplomatic effort across the region. These efforts paid off as neither of the crises in the Taiwan Strait led to war. All of these factors would also play a crucial role in what is perhaps the most dramatic and visible U.S. deployment of missile capabilities during the Cold War in the 1970s and 1980s—the 1979 Dual Track decision by NATO to deploy the Pershing IIs and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) that led to the negotiation of the INF Treaty in the first place.

CHAPTER 4

The Euromissile Crisis and the INF Treaty

Strategic dilemmas about the coordination of a joint allied response to an adversary's missile deployments were clearly on display during the so-called Euromissile Crisis.³⁷ During the 1970s and 1980s, the United States and its NATO partners faced newly deployed Soviet SS-20 intermediate-range missiles and struggled to contain the threat from these weapons. Many of the concerns that influenced U.S. and allied decision-making during this period, including the credibility of U.S. defense guarantees and internal divisions within NATO, parallel issues that Washington faces in contemporary Asia and Europe. Today Chinese missile deployments are largely conventional, although its missiles are dual use. Russia has also deployed dual-use medium-range missiles that can range much of Europe, although many of these are presumed to carry nuclear warheads. Although contemporary circumstances are in many ways more complex than the experience of the late Cold War, a close examination of the Euromissile Crisis, the emergence of NATO's "dual-track" policy, the deployment of Ground-Based Cruise Missiles and Pershing II Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBM) in NATO host countries, and the successful negotiation of the INF Treaty can yield valuable insights into how the United States and its partners might think about navigating the challenges to the current anti-access challenges posed by China and Russia.

History of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty

The origins of the Euromissile Crisis can be found in the consequences of the Soviet buildup of nuclear forces that began after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and continued apace in the late 1960s and 1970s. This buildup led to the arrival of U.S.-Soviet strategic nuclear parity after a five-year U.S. nuclear monopoly followed by a decade-plus of decided U.S.

37 In this study, we refer to the crisis itself as the Euromissile Crisis and to the deployment of such missiles as Euromissiles. Other studies have used the two terms interchangeably.

nuclear superiority. Soviet nuclear parity was accompanied in the 1970s by modernization of both the USSR's strategic and non-strategic arsenals. In particular, the three-warhead Soviet SS-20 missile's extended range, accuracy, and reload capacity were of concern to U.S. allies. From the Soviet point of view, these deployments overcame the challenges presented by U.S. forward bases in Europe and submarine patrols on the periphery of the Soviet Union. Soviet leaders appear to have believed that it would be possible to tilt the correlation of forces on the Eurasian landmass in their favor. This perception would have provided the Soviets with the theoretical ability to counter NATO's options for nuclear employment at every level of conflict.

The Soviets were essentially trying to exploit nuclear parity and undermine NATO's strategy of "flexible response," which had been adopted after long and painful wrangling inside the Alliance during the 1960s. In effect, the USSR appeared to be developing the capability for escalation dominance in Europe which, in turn, raised questions about the effectiveness of NATO's deterrent and the credibility of U.S. defense guarantees to its allies. Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Dobrynin, would later characterize Soviet decision-making as a "gross miscalculation" because it underestimated the potential NATO response.³⁸

Initial concerns about the shifting European nuclear balance came from NATO partners rather than from Washington. American officials were, at first, more sanguine about the Soviet buildup because they believed that U.S. strategic systems could more than compensate for the new Soviet deployments, which they believed did not change the fundamental nuclear balance. This seriously underestimated the concerns of America's European allies, particularly Germany.

The period leading up to the dual-track decision to deploy U.S. countervailing capabilities in Europe to offset the SS-20s demonstrates the degree to which the conventional and nuclear balances were inextricably linked as well as the impact that domestic politics—both in the United States and Europe—had on the deployment decision and the subsequent arms control negotiations and agreement.

Even before the SS-20 deployments, concerns were increasing in Europe about growing Soviet conventional capabilities that threatened to negate the promise and purpose of "flexible response" and call into question U.S. willingness to use its strategic nuclear forces to defend Europe given Soviet nuclear parity. As one element to counteract the Soviet conventional buildup and to provide limited nuclear options at the theater level, the Ford Administration authorized the development of Enhanced Radiation Warheads (ERW)—the

38 Gerhard Wetting, "The Last Soviet Offensive of the Cold War: Emergence and Development of the Campaign Against the Euromissiles – 1979–1983," *Cold War History*, 9:1, pp. 79–110, quotation on p. 83; James A. Thomson, "The LRTNF Decision: The Evolution of U.S. Theatre Nuclear Policy, 1975–1979," *International Affairs*, 60:4, pp. 601–614, quotation page 602; and Stephanie Freeman, "The Making of an Accidental Crisis: The United States and the NATO Dual-Track Decision of 1979," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 25:2, pp. 331–355, Dobrynin quoted on p. 334.

so-called “neutron bomb.” These weapons were intended to provide a technological solution to deal with some of the concerns that policymakers had about using nuclear weapons in the center of Europe if deterrence failed. The ERW would essentially reduce the blast effects of nuclear weapons but increase the radiation effects to limit collateral damage. The potential military applications of this technology had been discussed in U.S. congressional hearings and NATO military channels for some time but had not been brought to the attention of European policymakers nor the broader American and European publics until, in 1977, they appeared in the first defense budget sent to Congress by the Carter Administration.³⁹

When *Washington Post* journalist Walter Pincus reported that the Administration had requested funds for the ERW it created an immediate firestorm in the media. On both sides of the Atlantic, the ERW was lampooned by anti-nuclear activists as “the ultimate capitalist weapon,” since it killed people but left property intact (if highly irradiated).⁴⁰ The Pincus story was picked up in the European press and led to controversy both in the U.S. Congress and with the European public. The storm provided a perfect backdrop to a major Soviet propaganda campaign against the deployment of the ERW. The issue was a major headache for German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, a former Defense Minister and serious student of nuclear strategy. Schmidt was far more concerned about the Soviet buildup of SS-20s and the creation of what he perceived to be a “gray zone” in the European nuclear balance than he was about the ERW. Carter, for his part, was ambivalent about the ERW, given his own campaign promises to seek reductions in the levels of nuclear armaments. As the year wore on, the U.S. and German governments tended to talk past one another on the issue. Carter hoped that European leaders would publicly call for deployment while European leaders hoped that U.S. leadership would provide a path forward on the issue. At the end of the day, after Schmidt and others had expended significant political capital on the ERW, President Carter decided to kill the project, despite the objections of his senior national security officials. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski described this decision as “the worst presidential decision of the first fourteen months.” The *Washington Post*’s Bonn correspondent considered the ERW the most politically bungled major weapons project in NATO history. As seen from Bonn, it had “sown more confusion and bewilderment among members of the Western alliance than anyone in this capital can remember.”⁴¹

39 For background on the Neutron Bomb affair see Vincent A. Auger, *The Dynamics of Foreign Policy Analysis: The Carter Administration and the Neutron Bomb*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996); Sherri Wasserman, *The Neutron Bomb Controversy: A Study in Alliance Politics*, New York: Praeger, 1983); for the backdrop of German politics against which the controversy unfolded see Kristina Spohr Readman, “Germany and the Politics of the Neutron Bomb, 1975–1979,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 21:2, 259–285.

40 Walter Pincus, ‘Neutron Killer Warhead Buried in ERDA Budget’, *Washington Post*, June 6, 1977; C. Raja Menon, “The American Dream and Global Nightmare,” *Social Scientist*, 10:2, pp. 18–24.

41 The best account of the US-German diplomacy is to be found in Kristina Spohr, *The Global Chancellor: Helmut Schmidt and the Reshaping of the International Order*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016) pp. 61–84; Brzezinski and Michael Getler, the *Post* correspondent in Bonn are quoted by Spohr on p. 83.

The allied response to the SS-20 deployments played out amid this unfolding foreign policy debacle. For Schmidt, the European missile balance mattered most for purposes of deterrence. As Wallace Thies notes in a study of NATO's remarkable persistence as a military alliance:

Soviet theater nuclear forces, Schmidt and others argued, were developing to the point at which they might be able to destroy in a first strike all of NATO's means for retaliating against the Soviet Union that were then based in Europe. In view of the emerging parity in strategic nuclear forces between the United States and the Soviet Union, the American strategic nuclear deterrent might be paralyzed rather than invoked in the event of a Soviet attack.⁴²

Schmidt, who had been trying to galvanize Carter and Washington about the issue with no success throughout 1977, outlined his concerns in a lecture in London on October 28 at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). Although he focused on issues of nuclear force posture Schmidt's main concerns were the political consequences of the Soviet SS-20 buildup. For Schmidt, the deployments were intended to intimidate Europeans, raise doubts about American reliability, and tempt them with the siren song of neutralism. Thies outlines the logic at work:

If the Soviets could foster in Europe the impression that they could destroy in a first strike all of NATO's means of retaliating against the Soviet Union that were then based in Europe and that the United States would be deterred from using its strategic nuclear forces in response, then they would have gone a long way toward fostering a sense of vulnerability and isolation that, Schmidt and others feared, could ultimately "decouple" Western Europe from the United States, which was the prerequisite for Soviet dominance of all of Europe.⁴³

Deployment of U.S. countervailing long-range theater nuclear forces in Europe would mean that the United States and USSR would become embroiled from the outset of a conflict and thus maintain the "coupling" of U.S. and European defenses.

As Schmidt saw things, in the face of the Soviet buildup, the West could build up its forces, or the West and the Soviet Union could agree to lower levels of theatre nuclear weapons. "I prefer the latter," he declared. As Kristina Spohr notes, "in these remarks one can discern the germ of what would later become the chancellor's 'dual-track' approach to achieving European security. These two strands, though still embryonic when he spoke in London, would become central to his future thinking."⁴⁴

Schmidt's London speech finally seized Washington's attention and led to a "tightrope walk for the alliance." A transatlantic and intra-European debate emerged about NATO's "credibility, direction, and purpose." European observers had become concerned that the United

⁴² Wallace J. Thies, *Why NATO Endures* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 179–180.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Spohr, *The Global Chancellor*, p. 75.

States would yield to Soviet blandishments in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II) talks that had re-launched in early 1977 and ban both ground and submarine-launched cruise missiles.

“The Carter Administration...pursued policies that exacerbated rather than alleviated European concerns and thereby increased the political pressure on the U.S. to move forward with the cruise missile program. The more the United States displayed its reluctance to pursue cruise missiles for NATO, the more its allies wanted them.”⁴⁵

Paradoxically, one of the Carter Administration’s concerns was that cruise missiles could lead to the “de-coupling” of U.S. and European defense. Schmidt articulated a European view that argued to the contrary that nuclear parity at the strategic level required a European balance of capabilities that fell below the strategic level.⁴⁶

Schmidt’s advocacy and the neutron bomb debacle ended U.S. reluctance on the cruise missile question. The so-called “gray area” issue that Schmidt had raised moved to center stage in transatlantic deliberations. The Carter Administration, recognizing the failure of alliance management, set out to repair the damage. In the first instance, senior USG officials realized that the lack of an agreed USG position had allowed the transatlantic dialogue to spin out of control. They realized the imperative of U.S. leadership as well on nuclear issues in the Alliance and Presidential engagement throughout the process.⁴⁷

The interaction of Helmut Schmidt’s evolving thinking and Carter’s need to restore some of his lost credibility as an alliance leader led to a series of initiatives in both the security and arms control arenas that proved to be quite creative and, more importantly, successful in the long run. First, NATO moved to make a nuclear procurement decision collectively for the first time. In order to accomplish this, the Alliance created new institutional mechanisms: a High-Level Group (HLG) to consider the mix of systems and their deployment, and the Special Group (SG) that concentrated on the arms control dimensions of the decision. The allies concluded that the long-range theater nuclear forces they were considering should not be seen as disposable bargaining chips in an arms control negotiation but as necessary steps to remedy deficiencies in NATO’s deterrent posture. They realized, in other words, that “NATO needs to decide on a force posture before moving to arms control.”⁴⁸

Allied deliberations were extremely complex, and the detailed story has been told well elsewhere by Kristina Spohr and Jeffrey Herf, among others. But several key points stand out. First, the allies considered a range of options to meet the Alliance’s need for capabilities to offset Soviet deployments. Second, out of the process emerged a commitment to an

45 Thomson, “The LRTNF Decision,” p. 603.

46 Kristina Spohr Readman, “Conflict and Cooperation in Intra-Alliance Nuclear Politics: Western Europe, the United States, and the Genesis of NATO’s Dual-Track Decision, 1977–1979,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 13:2, pp. 39–89.

47 Spohr, *The Global Chancellor*, pp. 85–86; Thomson, “The LRTNF Decision,” p. 606.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 64.

integrated strategy of deploying the Pershing II and the BGM-109G GLCM, as well as arms control positions that had buy-in from allied governments. Third, the leadership from a variety of European officials (not solely Helmut Schmidt) was crucial to the ultimate success of the process that led to the dual-track decision. In toto, this meant that when Moscow launched another information operation to drive wedges in the Alliance and derail the deployments, it had a harder row to hoe than had been the case with the ERW.⁴⁹

The Alliance reached its decision at a Ministerial meeting in December 1979, just as the East-West relations entered a period of persistent crisis in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. With the Carter Administration entering a political season in which the President was challenged domestically both by opposition within the Democratic Party and from a Republican opponent, as well as internationally by the seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran, the issue of Euromissiles went onto the back burner. It would be left to the Reagan Administration to implement the dual-track decision that NATO had reached before it entered office.

As with all policies inherited from an earlier Administration, the Reagan Administration approached the dual-track decision with more than a little initial skepticism. Senior officials were concerned that the NATO decision “might increase pressure for arms control to take the place of modernization.” Since Reagan had campaigned on a platform of nuclear modernization to keep pace with the Soviet Union, this decision presented a difficult strategic and political problem for the Administration, which was famously divided over how to approach arms control negotiations with the Soviets. After several months of internal debate, Reagan adopted the so-called “zero option” that called for no INF on either side. Critics, both in the United States and Europe, immediately declared that this proposal was not “negotiable” with the Soviets, not least by Secretary of State Al Haig, who had opposed it during the Administration’s internal deliberations.⁵⁰

The USSR had already deployed hundreds of missiles and would be expected to withdraw them under the Reagan proposal, while the United States did not have any analogous capability to withdraw. The Reagan Administration, however, stuck to its negotiating position in the face of intensive Soviet propaganda and vigorous campaigns by anti-nuclear activists. Along the way, Reagan received crucial support from UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, French President Francois Mitterrand, and Schmidt’s successor as German Chancellor,

49 Spohr-Readman, “Conflict and Cooperation” provides the most detailed account, but see also Thomson, “The LRTNF Decision,” and Freeman, “The Making of An Accidental Crisis.”

50 Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies: The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 191; Alexander Haig, *Caveat: Realism, Reagan and Foreign Policy*, (New York: Macmillan, 1984), p. 229.

Helmut Kohl. With no agreement in sight after two years of talks, the U.S. began to deploy its INF systems to host countries in Europe.⁵¹

For nearly eight years, U.S. and Soviet missiles remained deployed on their respective sides of the European continent. Diplomatic negotiations, however, resumed in 1985 after Reagan's overwhelming re-election, especially once Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev expressed interest in establishing a new agreement to limit intermediate-range missiles. The negotiations ultimately expanded to encompass the entirety of both sides' intermediate-range missile arsenal rather than just those based in Europe. As President Reagan noted, the U.S. would not agree to "shifting the threat from Europe to Asia."⁵²

The negotiations ultimately led to the signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in December 1987 and its ratification in the spring of 1988. The treaty was an enormous milestone in superpower relations. As Kristina Spohr, one of the best historians of this episode, has noted, it marked "the first time the superpowers had ever agreed to reduce their nuclear arsenals," and that it was clearly a "significant step in defusing the Cold War."⁵³ Both countries promptly disarmed and removed a wide range of intermediate- and medium-range missiles in their arsenals. They also remained in compliance with the agreement until accusations of Russian violations surfaced in 2014. The ground-breaking character of the

51 Marilena Gala, "The Essential Weaknesses of the December 1979 "Agreement": the White House and the Implementing of the Dual-Track Decision," *Cold War History*, 19:1, pp. 21–38, quotation on p. 27. The story of the inter-agency deliberations of the Reagan Administration was told in Strobe Talbott, *Deadly Gambits: The Reagan Administration and the Stalemate in Arms Control*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984). A recent account argues, unconvincingly, that the Administration was uninterested in arms control, Andrea Chiampan, "The Reagan Administration and the INF Controversy: 1981–1983," *Diplomatic History*, 44:5, pp. 860–885; for the Soviet campaign see Gerhard Wettig, "The Last Soviet Offensive in the Cold War: Emergence and Development of the Campaign against NATO Euromissiles, 1979–1983," *Cold War History*, 9:1, pp. 79–110 and Jeffrey Herf, *War By Other Means: Soviet Power, West German Resistance, and the Battle of the Euromissiles*, (New York: Free Press, 1991). For the anti-nuclear activists see Lawrence S. Wittner, "Peace Through Strength?" in Ekart Conze, Martin Klimke, Jeremy Vann, eds, *Nuclear Threats, Nuclear Fear, and the Cold War of the 1980s*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016) pp. 271–289 and Wittner, *Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), pp. 141–192. Wittner argues that it was the antinuclear movement that led to the INF agreement which seems to put the cart before the horse. There is no question that domestic politics in both the U.S. and Europe played a role but the U.S., European and Soviet decision-makers were the key to the outcome not activist pressure. On support from allies, see the memo from Secretary of State George P. Shultz to Reagan in June, 1983 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1981–1988*, Vol. IV, Soviet Union, January 1983–March 1985, (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2021) pp. 215–219. For the intelligence community assessment of the Soviet campaign see CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, "Soviet Strategy to Derail U.S. INF Deployment: An Intelligence Assessment," February 1983, located at https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000500596.pdf

52 President Reagan quoted in Maynard W. Glitman, *The Last Battle of the Cold War: An Inside Account of Negotiating the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 147. Glitman's account of how Asia came to be included as part of a commitment to "global zero" can be found pp. 143–158.

53 Kristina Spohr, *Post Wall, Post Square: Rebuilding the World After 1989* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), p. 16

treaty undoubtedly is one reason that arms control advocates were so dogged in arguing that the U.S. should not leave it despite Russian violations.⁵⁴

54 The detailed story of the INF Negotiations can be found in Glitman, *The Last Battle of the Cold War*; a comprehensive retrospective on the treaty can be found in the essays collected by Philipp Gassert, Tim Geiger, and Hermann Wentker, eds. *The INF Treaty of 1987 – A Reappraisal* (Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht Verlage: Munich-Berlin, 2021).

CHAPTER 5

Lessons for a Contemporary Missile Strategy

The current strategic circumstances that confront the United States are complicated, but the U.S. experience with intermediate-range missile deployments in Europe and allied reactions during the Cold War can still offer some important lessons for how Washington can approach a post-INF Treaty posture in both Europe and Asia in the current era of strategic competition. Geographic factors, political conditions, and U.S. security structures across both theaters may differ considerably, but concerns over collective burden-sharing and allied fear of abandonment or entrapment can extend across both regions. Because, in the current context, we are talking about conventional rather than nuclear weapons, the lessons from the Cold War cases of deploying controversial capabilities could be misleading. The current environment, for all its difficulties, does not seem to be one of a hair-trigger nuclear confrontation that loomed in the background of the early cold war in Asia or the later cold war in Europe. Moreover, some of what we discuss in this report goes beyond deploying U.S. capabilities and involves encouraging allies to develop their own complementary systems. Nonetheless, whether we are talking about deployment or indigenous development by allies, there seem to be some lessons from the earlier experiences that commend themselves for consideration by U.S. policymakers as they consider how to develop U.S. and allied force postures in a post-INF Treaty environment.

Lesson #1: The Need for Allied Buy-In and Leadership

The lessons of the nuclearization of NATO, deployments to the Republics of Korea and China in the 1950s, and the INF deployments in the 1970s highlight that getting buy-in from allies is essential. Allied acceptance that deployment of missile capabilities is in their interest—not just U.S. national interest—is key. Consultations with allies via either bilateral or multilateral channels will be needed to work through the issues and to help allies appreciate the issues at stake.

Leadership by allied leaders is also necessary. In today's environment, advocates for missile deployments who can play the role that Helmut Schmidt played in the INF case would undoubtedly be helpful in pushing for alignment with the United States on a common missile strategy. Such advocates should be well-versed in strategic affairs to effectively inform and educate public and political stakeholders about the issue at hand. A figure like the late Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe might have been able to play such a role and Australian Prime Minister John Howard, for example, might still come to play such a role. But allied leaders calling for new missile capabilities may not be strictly necessary since growing Chinese and Russian missile capabilities, and especially the brutal use that Russia has made of such systems in Ukraine, may galvanize U.S. and allied convergence on a missile strategy much as the SS-20 deployments did in the Cold War. Since the capabilities under discussion today are conventional, they should be less controversial than the nuclear deployments discussed in the cases above.

Lesson #2: Deployments Must Fit into a Broader Strategy with a Clear Role for Allies

The nuclearization of NATO was consistent with the Eisenhower Administration's strategy of "massive retaliation" and neatly plugged the capability gap that was emerging due to the failure of European allies to meet the conventional force generation goals that the Alliance had set in 1952. It also provided allies with a clear role in hosting nuclear capabilities that could offset the Soviet advantage in conventional forces. The deployment of nuclear-capable MATADOR missiles to East Asia in the 1950s was consistent with the "New Look" and was even seen as a test of the policy's ability to effect extended deterrence for Treaty allies in the Far East. Prior to the deployment of the Pershing II, some Allied leaders, notably Helmut Schmidt, feared that the absence of U.S. intermediate-range capabilities and the lack of a flexible response to the Soviet SS-20 would leave Western Europe vulnerable to political pressure from Moscow. Moreover, some European allies feared that the United States might give up critical military capabilities (cruise missiles) that might be used to plug capability gaps during the SALT II negotiations with the USSR. The SS-20 challenged the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence and Washington's defense commitments in Europe, giving the Soviets an opportunity to fracture the NATO alliance. The deployment was built on the back of a coherent strategy of deploying arms but maintaining the option for arms control and diplomacy with allies playing a key role in hosting the deployments.

Lesson #3: If You Build It, They Will Come

As was the case in the Cold War, today Washington is working to build up a solid array of intermediate-range platforms that might be used to counter Russian and Chinese deployed capabilities. Until U.S. forces can harness a reliable portfolio of strike options, adversaries' missiles continue to outrange those of the United States and hold U.S. and allied interests in Europe and Asia at risk. U.S. surface action and carrier strike groups in the Indo-Pacific may be unable to traverse the region or operate within or near the First Island Chain freely

under the threat posed by People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF) missiles and U.S. air bases are also at risk. Russian missiles in Kaliningrad can target NATO ground and naval forces moving to reinforce the Baltics and interdict logistics flows, hindering U.S. and allied efforts to provide frontline security for NATO's eastern flank.

The initial reaction to Secretary Esper's statements after the abrogation of the INF Treaty was lukewarm at best, but it may not be the last word on the subject. Unlike the late Cold War, the United States has appeared at present to be more concerned about the missile balances in Asia and Europe than its allies. But Chinese behavior post-COVID and Russia's invasion of Ukraine could change the equation. The United States should not wait for a modern-day Helmut Schmidt to arise in Europe or Asia, but instead prepare to cultivate leaders among its allies and to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves, as the Biden Administration has done with the AUKUS submarine deal. The record of Cold War deployments demonstrates that having extant capabilities is crucial since it facilitates Allied decision-making when politico-military circumstances change and enable effective U.S. defense diplomacy.⁵⁵

Lesson #4: Missile Deployments Offer a Strong Sign of US Commitment

If the United States cannot project credible combat power forward in these two regions, U.S. allies may fear that Washington will abandon them if it finds its own strategic positions in these areas to be untenable. This fear of abandonment may constrain alliance cohesion in times of competition or crisis and give Russia and China the strategic edge they need to assert their interests and coerce U.S. allies. Going further, if U.S. allies deem Washington unwilling to provide protection against adversary long-range precision fires, they may be tempted to procure their own capabilities in an uncoordinated manner.

Such a scenario could undermine the unity of force inherent within alliances and undermine U.S. escalation control, removing a major obstacle to Russian and Chinese advances in contested areas. The Cold War experience highlights the need for strong leadership among U.S. allies in both Europe and Asia to avoid these potentially dire outcomes. The record in Europe and Asia is clear that deployment of missiles was a strong signal of U.S. commitment to NATO, the Republic of Korea, and the Republic of China and exercised an important deterrent purpose in times of crisis.

55 For Esper's statements, see <https://apnews.com/article/cold-war-asia-pacific-russia-china-asia-6cadb0920cb8440a44fb7e8691d66d3a>. For the cool reception, see <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-australia-usa-missiles/australia-wont-host-us-missiles-prime-minister-says-idUSKCN1UVoIB>; on AUKUS see Sidharth Kaushal, "What Does the AUKUS Deal Provide Its Participants in Strategic Terms?" located at <https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/what-does-aukus-deal-provide-its-participants-strategic-terms>.

Lesson #5: Institutional Mechanisms and Coordination Matter

During the Euromissile Crisis, the United States and its NATO partners created new consultative mechanisms and coordinated closely to manage a shared approach to the dilemma of Soviet IRBMs, resulting in the dual-track decision. The decision cemented U.S.-NATO resolve during the crisis, and President Reagan's decision to condition the beginning of negotiations with an updated NATO threat assessment and requirements study ensured that the Allies would confront the Soviet threat in synchronization with one another. Communication and coordination were key elements in this phase and restored confidence in the U.S. security commitment to Western Europe, assuaging fears of U.S. abandonment of the region.

In the present day, this same level of coordination will be critical between the United States and its partners in both theaters as they plan for a post-INF posture. Constant intra-alliance dialogue and consultations should reassure allies of U.S. commitment to their defense in the face of Russian and Chinese long-range precision fires, outline expectations of defense roles and missions between partners, and present a united bloc against adversarial aggression. NATO's integrated military command and consultation mechanisms make this challenge a bit easier to navigate in Europe than in Asia where the U.S. hub-and-spoke system of bilateral alliances will potentially create difficulties in reaching a concerted Asian approach. For the moment, the U.S. will need to continue to operate through bilateral channels but over time, new mechanisms like the Quad or AUKUS may provide additional multilateral options.

Lesson #6: Alliance Management is Like Gardening: It Requires Persistence and Creativity

As the late Secretary of State George Shultz argued, alliance management is like gardening and "it is one of the most underrated aspects of diplomacy."⁵⁶ As one of the principals in both the INF deployments and subsequent Treaty negotiations, he recognized that persistence is key to negotiations with both allies and adversaries. Overcoming the political roadblocks to deployments always required the determined attention of the principal officers of the U.S. government—particularly the President, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was indefatigable in establishing "massive retaliation" as NATO strategy as well as in managing the Taiwan Straits crises and implementing the "New Look" in East Asia. Secretary Shultz was similarly deeply engaged on INF.

Persistence, however, is not the only diplomatic virtue. Creativity in resolving political, military, and technical obstacles in order to arrange a solution amenable to both the U.S. and prospective host nations was crucial in all of the cases we have examined.

⁵⁶ George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State*, (New York: Charles Scribners and Sons, 1993) p. 128.

The U.S. deployment of the Pershing II in Western Europe triggered significant domestic controversy among the European public, and the anti-nuclear sentiment provided fertile ground for the Soviet Union to engage in a major information operation. Critics on the Left, like Egon Bahr in Germany and others, argued that these weapons would only destabilize the region and heighten the risk of war with the Soviet Union. Soviet leaders, who may have believed some of the rhetoric, did everything they could to fan the flames of public concern that the world was edging closer to the brink of a nuclear catastrophe.⁵⁷

A similar dynamic could exist in both Europe and Asia in the present day. While U.S. allies in either theater may support the deployment of intermediate-range missiles for security purposes, they may hesitate to fully embrace these weapons for political reasons. Local populations may oppose such weapons based on rationales that are like those that fueled opposition to the Pershing II deployment in the 1980s. Although we are currently talking about conventional missiles rather than missiles that carry nuclear warheads, the distinction is not likely to appreciably ease the political and diplomatic task for the United States. First, even conventional missiles meant to strike PRC or Russian territory will make the basing countries targets for Chinese and Russian missile forces. Second, because some of these systems are likely to be dual-use, Beijing and Moscow will have every incentive to elide the difference and wage informational campaigns claiming the U.S. is feeding the nuclear arms race.

Moreover, the rise of social media has arguably increased the ability of our authoritarian rivals to wage information and political warfare against deployments of new missile capabilities beyond what took place in the Cold War, even if those capabilities are less controversial than the nuclear deployments of years past. The Chinese media campaign against the terminal high-altitude air defense (THAAD) deployments in South Korea offers a case in point.⁵⁸ Although the implementation of the dual-track decision and the subsequent INF Treaty eventually led to the removal and dismantlement of Pershing IIs in Europe, there is no guarantee that the United States and its competitors in the present day will necessarily enter a comprehensive agreement to limit intermediate-range missiles anytime soon (although the Euromissile Crisis does suggest that firmly moving ahead with deployments may actually facilitate rather than frustrate arms control). If Washington and its partners

57 Gerhard Wettig, "The Last Soviet Offensive in the Cold War;" Jeffrey Herf, *War By Other Means*; Ekart Conze, Martin Klimke, Jeremy Vann, eds, *Nuclear Threats, Nuclear Fear, and the Cold War of the 1980s*; Beatrice Heuser, "The Soviet Response to the Euromissile Crisis: 1981–1983," in Leopoldo Nuti, ed.: *The Crisis of Détente in Europe: From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975–1985* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 137–149; Beatrice de Graaf, "Détente from Below: The Stasi and the Dutch Peace Movement," *Journal of Intelligence History*, 3:2, pp. 9–20; Vladimír Černý & Petr Suchý, "Spies and Peaceniks: Czechoslovak Intelligence Attempts to Thwart NATO's Dual-Track Decision," *Cold War History*, 20:3, pp. 273–29. There is a large literature on the war scare of 1983 but see especially, Gordon Barrass, "Able Archer 83: What Were the Soviets Thinking?," *Survival*, 58:6, pp. 7–30; Dimitry (Dima) Adamsky, "The 1983 Nuclear Crisis—Lessons for Deterrence Theory and Practice," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 36:1, pp. 4–41. For a recent article that uses archival material to downplay the likelihood of a war see Simon Miles, "The War Scare That Wasn't: Able Archer 83 and the Myths of the Second Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 22:3, pp. 86–118.

58 Robert C. Watts, IV, "'Rockets' Red Glare"—Why Does China Oppose THAAD in South Korea, and What Does It Mean for U.S. Policy?" *Naval War College Review*, 71:2, pp. 79–107

seek to maintain a robust post-INF missile posture in the absence of a comprehensive arms control agreement, they will have to find ways to address and manage public opposition to these assets to sustain long-term competition. There is a critical need for Washington to clearly convey its intentions and rationale for the deployment of these weapons, inform allied publics about the role these assets play, and prepare partners to meet potential responses from Russia and China.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Revisiting the history of Cold War missile deployments to host nations is more than a walk down memory lane. It provides a set of valuable lessons—if not cookie-cutter solutions—to the contemporary politico-military problems presented by the current missile imbalances in both the European and Indo-Pacific regions. Experience suggests that the United States needs to take the lead in developing capabilities both to meet its own potential needs on the battlefield and as part of its conventional and nuclear deterrent but also because it provides the larger framework for thinking about strategy for itself and its allies. Even if political conditions don't seem propitious for deployment of missile capabilities to prospective host nations today exogenous events like Chinese shelling of the off-shore islands, the Soviet Union's deployment of SS-20 missiles or Russia's invasion of Ukraine can dramatically shift threat perceptions and, combined with clear and persuasive leadership can change the equation in unanticipated ways.

Capabilities, however, must fit into an overall strategy that allies accept and see as serving their own as well as U.S. purposes. The Eisenhower Administration made excellent use of the strategic framework it articulated to win allied support for “massive retaliation” and “the New Look” in Europe and East Asia. A common U.S.-European strategy on the “Dual-Track” decision facilitated the successful deployment of Pershing II and GLCMs in the early 1980s. Persuading allies that, from a strategic point of view, deterrence was cheaper than war and that offsetting capabilities could promote real arms control proved to be a winning hand for U.S. policymakers.

Allied leadership has also been important. Winston Churchill and Konrad Adenauer played important roles in winning European acceptance of “massive retaliation,” and Helmut Schmidt was a decisive figure in the INF decision (although he had left office by the time of the actual deployments). Having allied leaders who understand the strategic issues and can explain them to their respective publics can be crucial in winning acquiescence in the deployment of controversial military capabilities on a nation's territory. This lesson is especially true when adversaries are making serious efforts (via overt or covert means) to whip

up public antipathy to acceptance by sovereign governments of foreign capabilities on its soil. But it can also be crucial if governments agree to a functional division of labor—developing their own capabilities to fit into a larger common strategy—rather than hosting U.S. capabilities. In today's environment, this latter leadership role may become even more important.

The deployment of ground-based missiles has been used historically to show American commitment to its allies, to signal resolve in crises, and achieve U.S. policy goals. These deployments undergirded U.S. success in the cold war with the Soviet Union and in repeated crises over the Taiwan Straits with the PRC.

Dealing with issues like the missile imbalances in Europe and the Indo-Pacific will require the kind of persistent, adept diplomacy that the United States proved successful at during the Cold War. It may require the kind of institutional innovation in communication and coordination that marked the successful diplomacy that led to the Dual-Track decision in 1979 or the strong presidential leadership that was required in cutting through the bureaucracy to deploy missiles and nuclear weapons to the Republic of Korea in the 1950s. U.S. policymakers working with their allied counterparts will need to educate allied publics to the dangers of the current missile imbalances and the capability gaps that they create. They will need to build support for developing countervailing capabilities to right the balance and develop creative solutions to the numerous political, military, and technical difficulties that may emerge to obstruct deployments or effective functional divisions of labor among allies. There will be many challenges, but the historical record suggests that U.S. leaders who articulate clear strategies, dispose of extant military capabilities, and know how to work persistently with international partners can develop a strong allied deterrent posture to serve the needs of long-term strategic competition.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CSBA	Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
ERW	enhanced radiation warhead
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GLCM	ground-launched cruise missile
HLG	High-Level Group
ICBM	intercontinental ballistic missile
IISS	International Institute for Security Studies
INF	Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces
IRBM	intermediate-range ballistic missile
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NNSC	Neutral Nations Supervisory Committee
NSC	National Security Council
PLARF	People's Liberation Army Rocket Force
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	Republic of China
ROK	Republic of Korea
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SG	Special Group
THAAD	terminal high-altitude air defense
UN	United Nations
USG	United States Government



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