embark on the next phase of the negotiations before it has made the decision to produce and deploy the missiles. Such a decision would have to be accepted by the other party in the talks as a hard and fast policy just as the latter's own programs are accepted by the West. This would have to be the sine qua non condition of the talks being extended to gray area problems, if they are not to be deprived of any useful purpose before they start.

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NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE "GRAY AREA"

At the fringes of public attention to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), the United States and its European allies are considering changes in NATO nuclear arrangements that bear on two decades of Alliance practice. The issue is what to do about the nuclear threat to Western Europe, and to NATO's deterrent, posed by Soviet systems targeted on Western Europe—the SS-20 mobile missile and other Soviet weapons in the "gray area" between the strategic and the tactical. Those weapons, coupled with strategic parity between the United States and the Soviet Union, have sharpened a long-standing European concern about the commitment of the American central nuclear deterrent to Europe's defense. This issue will rank behind only the dollar on the agenda of U.S. relations with Europe in the several years ahead.

SALT, present and prospective, bears directly on gray area issues. Europeans worry that SALT will do nothing about the Soviet weapons of immediate concern to them, and worse, will constrain possible Western "counters," especially cruise missiles. In the end, the United States and its allies may decide to modify NATO nuclear arrangements. But the political and military implications of the choices run deep into Alliance doctrine. On these sensitive issues, *how* the United States goes about reaching a decision with its European allies will be as important as what is decided.

II

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, NATO leaders decided, more or less consciously, to locate the bulk of NATO's strategic nuclear deterrent—its weapons capable of striking the Soviet homeland—not in Europe but rather "offshore," that is, in American bombers, submarines and land-based missiles. Debate about that decision

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ended with the demise in 1965 of the Multilateral Force (MLF), which was to be a fleet of NATO surface ships manned by sailors from different nations, carrying nuclear weapons whose firing would be controlled by the United States. Nuclear forces located in the European theater would serve as adjuncts to conventional defenses and, most important of all, as a critical middle rung on the escalation ladder, "coupling" the American strategic deterrent to the defense of Europe.[1] There always remained doubts about this state of affairs, but it was judged tolerable on both sides of the Atlantic.

Now, however, the situation seems unacceptable, especially to many in Europe. At the heart of the concern is doubt whether, in an era of strategic parity between the United States and the Soviet Union, the United States would in fact launch a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union in defense of Western Europe. In a more elaborated form, Europeans fear that the new Soviet theater nuclear weapons pose the possibility of limited Soviet nuclear attacks on Western Europe, or threats thereof. The only Western response might be from the central American strategic arsenal—an escalation that would risk the destruction of American cities.

Finally, there are specific European worries that the "noncircumvention" provision in SALT II will limit the American ability to transfer nuclear weapons technology to its allies, or that cruise missile limitations will deny the Alliance potentially attractive "counters" to the new Soviet threat. At another level, it is less the specifics of SALT II that concern Europeans than the signals to the Soviets implicit in American actions. For instance, assurances that the Soviet "Backfire" bomber will not be used against the United States—and thus will be deployed *only* against Western Europe—make many Europeans fear that the United States is suggesting to the Soviets, without meaning to do so, that American and European security *can* be decoupled. SALT also has several unhappy effects on public perception: increased attention to nuclear matters disturbs uneasy but dormant compromises within the West; and, by underscoring what is being negotiated, SALT also emphasizes what is left out.

[1] This is something of an oversimplification. American and Soviet programs can be seen as being driven by their differing strategic conceptions: for the United States, the medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs) developed for Europe in the 1950s and 1960s were a temporary expedient; once Soviet targets could be covered by intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), the need for MRBMs ended. By contrast, the Soviets sought from the beginning to have nuclear capabilities against *both* the homeland of their principal antagonist *and* the likely locus of any conflict, Europe. Critics believe that the United States has long overlooked the importance of Soviet long-range *theater nuclear systems*, and SALT is guilty of reinforcing that neglect.

In the spring of 1978, the allies reached a tentative agreement to increase the size of NATO's nuclear forces in Europe capable of striking the Soviet Union. The Carter Administration, reluctant then, has moved toward accepting that conclusion. Meetings this spring of NATO defense ministers have confirmed that disposition, although final decisions will not be taken before autumn.

An increased force might cause more problems than it solves, however, for there are in the current situation more than faint echoes of the MLF affair. The MLF was a technical solution to a political problem, namely, Germany's so-called second-class status in the Alliance because of its lack of access to NATO's nuclear levers. Washington heard then, as it does now, a European, and especially a German, concern, clear in importance but short on specifics (as German pronouncements on nuclear weapons are apt to be). Ultimately, the MLF was unconvincing on its military merits. But more important, MLF, far from solving a "German problem," threatened to split the German government at the seams.

III

Why do arrangements that seemed tolerable for two decades, if never ideal, now appear unacceptable? Unquestionably, the most important reason is the emergence of something like strategic parity (or worse) between the United States and the Soviet Union. SALT II codifies that parity. Under its provisions the two sides would each be limited to 2,250 strategic launch vehicles, with sublimits on various categories of multiple independently targeted reentry vehicle (MIRVed) launchers. Depending on the pace of various development programs, the United States will retain a lead in the number of warheads, but that lead will narrow. The Soviet Union will maintain and probably increase its lead in many other indices, especially missile size, or "throw weight."

In particular, SALT II will do little to reduce the foreseeable Soviet threat to American land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs)—the Minuteman—and the debate over Minuteman vulnerability will be at the center of discussions of SALT III and of American strategic planning. The vulnerability of Minuteman feeds European concern over the implications of parity, psychologically if not analytically, by suggesting another reason for American caution if Europe alone is attacked by Soviet nuclear weapons. The United States could be counted on to fire missiles from its strategic arsenal—thereby risking its cities—in

response to a Soviet nuclear strike on Western Europe so long as the United States possessed clear nuclear superiority. Now, it is argued, Europe cannot be sure of the American response. The fear is of long standing; parity has sharpened it and given it more justification.

A companion concern derives from the new nuclear weapons the Soviet Union has begun to deploy. These—primarily the SS-20 mobile medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM), and the "Backfire" and "Blinder" bombers—seem explicitly intended for use against Western Europe (and China). Militarily, these weapons could give the Soviet Union new kinds of options in attacking Western Europe. Each SS-20, for instance, has three warheads (MIRVs), and is both mobile and more accurate than each of the 600 SS-4 and SS-5 missiles it supersedes; the SS-20 does not, in this view, suffer from the "shoot it or lose it" defect of its vulnerable predecessors. Its range may reach 3,000 miles; some 120 are now deployed, in a force projected to grow to 250, perhaps more.[2] Politically, the SS-20 in particular suggests that the Soviet Union has nuclear objectives against Western Europe (and China); it cannot be explained, as might the SS-4 and SS-5, as merely a technical way station en route to an intercontinental ballistic missile.

A third change, much less discussed, is the modernization of Soviet battlefield and short-range theater nuclear weapons. For instance, the Soviets have begun to deploy the SS-21, an improved and slightly longer range replacement for the FROG missile, may soon field two other new missiles, the SS-22 and -23, and are developing nuclear artillery—formerly a NATO monopoly. These changes also suggest that the Soviets may take the prospect of nuclear war-fighting in the European theater more seriously than had been thought.

It is less clear precisely *how* NATO's current nuclear position in the European theater is inadequate in light of these changes. European statements sometimes imply that Soviet forces are growing while American capabilities are declining, and thus that the Soviet Union has more and more military targets while the United States has fewer and fewer warheads to cover them. Quite the contrary. At present, the United States has nearly 9,000 warheads (including the 400 or so Poseidon warheads assigned by the United States to NATO and targeted by the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe), and that number will continue to increase

[2] These figures are from *The Military Balance, 1978–1979*, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1978.

under the terms of SALT II.[3] Beyond the early 1980s, with bombers carrying cruise missiles and with the new Trident submarine force, the United States could deploy almost any number of warheads it chooses.

Any military problem, therefore, is not one of total NATO capabilities but rather of specific scenarios. It boils down to the possibility that the Soviet Union might threaten to employ limited nuclear strikes from the SS-20 or its kin against military targets in Western Europe. It could do so, the analysis runs, while retaining a clear second-strike capability against Western Europe from its SS-20. Whether the Soviet Union has ever considered, or might ever consider, such an option is another question.[4]

If the Soviets were to employ such tactics, NATO would have only a limited capability to launch similar counterstrikes *from European soil.* NATO's choices would be American or allied aircraft capable of delivering nuclear weapons, based in Britain or central Europe—so-called forward-based systems—British and French nuclear systems, U.S. Poseidon submarines (the most likely), or a combination of these. There are grounds for technical doubt about these options—for example, concerning the ability of planes to penetrate, or the accuracy of sea-based systems—but these issues are secondary. The real military issue becomes a political question: Would the President of the United States authorize Poseidon strikes? Would he be more likely to authorize a strike if the weapon to be used were an American ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM), or a medium-range ballistic missile based in central Europe? Does the visibility of a system based on land or on a surface ship, versus Poseidon's invisibility, make a difference to deterrence?

There is little analytic ground for arguing that the President of the United States, confronted with Soviet forces about to overrun Western Europe or with a Soviet nuclear attack on selected targets in Western Europe, would be more likely to press the button marked "GLCM (or MRBM) in central Europe" than he would be to press "Poseidon." But the evident fact that some Europeans

[3] For a comparison of U.S. and Soviet forces under several SALT regimes, see Richard Burt, "Reducing Strategic Arms at SALT: How Difficult, How Important?" in *The Future of Arms Control, Part I: Beyond SALT II*, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1978, p. 8.

[4] The debate over Soviet doctrine, or even whether there is one in our terms, is a lively one. For recent contributions, see Robert Legvold, "Strategic Doctrine and SALT: Soviet and American Views," *Survival*, January-February 1979, pp. 8–13; and Raymond Garthoff, "Mutual Deterrence and Strategic Arms Limitation in Soviet Policy," *International Security*, Fall 1978, pp. 138–55. For a discussion with more specific relevance to Europe, see Joseph D. Douglass, Jr. and Amoretta M. Hoeber, "The Nuclear Warfighting Dimension of the Soviet Threat to Europe," *The Journal of Social and Political Affairs*, Summer 1978, pp. 107–46.

think he would cannot be dismissed.

IV

Europeans confront a dilemma in addressing the gray area question: to discuss it may be to make the situation worse. To raise the issue is to question coupling, thereby risking the creation of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Put differently, for well over a decade Western Europe has been threatened by Soviet SS-4 and SS-5 missiles (and other systems), a threat not qualitatively different from that posed by the SS-20. Yet the threat conferred little political influence on the Soviets because the Europeans paid little attention to it.

It is the West Germans who have expressed the most open concern over the gray area question. That is new and slightly discomforting to an Alliance in which the Germans long have stayed in the background of discussions about nuclear weapons.[5]

In his speech at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London in October 1977, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt called explicitly for a recognition of the need for parity at all levels—strategic nuclear, theater nuclear and conventional. When he met Soviet President Brezhnev in Bonn in May 1978, Schmidt urged the United States and the Soviet Union to negotiate over some theater nuclear systems in SALT III, and he apparently pressed the point on President Carter during the meeting of heads of state and government last January. Throughout discussions of SALT II within the Alliance, West Germany was the ally most skeptical about American assurances on noncircumvention provisions, most concerned about cruise missile restrictions, and most eager that the United States commit itself, in the SALT III principles section of SALT II, to some negotiation of gray area weapons in SALT III.

Paris and London have been clearest about what they do not want—theater nuclear negotiations that will involve their own independent nuclear forces. The French have remained aloof from SALT or related deliberations within the Alliance, since they are members neither of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group nor of the Alliance's integrated military command. Britain shares France's interest in assuring that no possible gray area negotiation will

[5] The current situation differs from the MLF episode in one important particular: German access to nuclear weapons is not an issue; any new weapons in Europe will be American, or "dual-key," with Americans retaining a veto over firing.

bear on its independent forces, although for London the question is further complicated by the touchy politics of deciding what to do about a next generation of those independent forces. Both countries, and especially France, have been inclined to feel a problem exists if the Germans perceive one, and hence have been attracted to some increase in Western nuclear hardware in Europe.[6]

The Federal Republic must share its allies' skepticism about what negotiations could accomplish, and Schmidt may well regret having dramatized a set of issues for which no solutions are at hand. The view of the Federal Republic is inherently split: it is both most exposed to the threat of the SS-20 and most anxious to preserve some shred of East-West détente. The Chancellor has thus had to steer a course between the call of the opposition Christian Democrats to deploy new weapons before negotiating and the expressed concern of his own party's Bundestag leader, Herbert Wehner, that new weapons might damage what is left of détente. In the process, Bonn's official positions have been mostly negative—no new weapons in Germany alone—and the gray area issues have looked more and more like bilateral business between Bonn and Washington, an impression that serves neither the two governments nor NATO.

Washington's approach to the gray area issue has also shown ambivalence. In the spring of 1978, the Defense Department was prepared to embrace the NATO consensus in favor of increasing the number of long-range systems based in Europe. However, the Administration backed away from that consensus and remained neutral, to the distress of some allies. The initial American reaction was dominated by concern lest the gray area issue further complicate SALT II, and by a strong sense that NATO was not ready to reach decisions on issues that touch the center of its nuclear doctrine and practice. Yet bureaucratic momentum developed amid official open-mindedness, and various branches of the government said different things to the Europeans. At the same time that the White House and State sought to dampen enthusiasm over cruise missiles and so reassure Europeans about the SALT II protocol, Pentagon officials were singing the virtues of cruise missiles to their European colleagues.

The neutron bomb affair of the last two years stands as a procedural warning. The United States had told its allies it was

[6] For a sophisticated "private" view by a French official, see Jean-Louis Gergorin, "Les négociations SALT et la défense de l'Europe," *Défense Nationale*, June 1978, pp. 43–56.

prepared to produce the weapon and deploy it in Europe, but only if the Europeans would publicly support such a course. European leaders, especially Schmidt, were thus pulled into more direct involvement in the decision than they found politically comfortable. Then, at the eleventh hour, President Carter reversed course and announced, in April 1978, that production would be deferred indefinitely.

On the gray area issue, then, the United States could not just say it was prepared to do whatever its allies wanted, for that would have been to risk a repeat of the neutron bomb debacle on a far more critical issue; so the official U.S. view moved toward accepting the NATO consensus of the previous spring, at least as a sign of seriousness in addressing allied concerns. That formed a basis for a series of consultations—bilateral and within NATO—during the fall of 1978 and into 1979. Yet the discussions for some time remained unsatisfactory to those on both sides of the Atlantic. Europeans suffered the discomfort of having to express concern that the United States would give up cruise missile options in SALT but not being able to say which, if any, of those options they might want. And some Americans carried into the gray area issue residual anger from the neutron bomb episode: How can Europeans berate us about cruise missiles and the SS-20 when they would not stand up and be counted in favor of a much less significant weapon, the neutron warheads?

On the specific SALT II issues of concern to Europeans, the United States has reached agreements with the Soviets that will satisfy the Europeans, if hardly make them enthusiastic. The cruise missile limitations in the protocol lasting for about three years (no range limitation on air-launched cruise missiles but no deployment of ground and sea-launched cruise missiles with ranges over 600 km) will permit the United States and its allies to develop cruise missile programs, although Europeans remain worried that the Americans will be under pressure to extend similar provisions in SALT III. On noncircumvention, the United States interprets the SALT II language as not precluding all cooperation with allies. Washington argues, in effect, that the provision itself makes little difference: with or without it, certain kinds of technology transfers to allies would pose political problems, to be dealt with case by case. Finally, the principles for SALT III, contained in SALT II, are very general, leaving open the question of theater nuclear negotiations in SALT III.

Europeans remain concerned over these specific SALT II issues, but that concern is muted, especially for the Germans, by the

political imperative of assuring that the SALT process continue. So long as SALT ratification could be taken for granted, Europeans felt free to press their concerns on Washington. Now that it is clear that ratification is in danger, the Europeans do not want to increase that danger, nor have their arguments become grist for SALT opponents in the Senate. Helmut Schmidt seems to have laid down a clear line that no German official will be heard muttering against SALT II.

The combination of a political need to support SALT II and doubts about where it is leading is hardly a happy one for European leaders, especially if they feel under pressure to decide how they want to handle the gray area issue. Schmidt would like to defer final decisions until after his elections in October 1980. There is no need for the United States to force the pace. Yet the fact that a tentative decision to deploy new weapons has been taken covers only a small part of the problem. If the United States and others are to avoid serious mistakes, they must not let the availability or schedule of weapons programs dictate the making of complex decisions. At present, NATO discussions of new weaponry are much in advance of deliberations about gray area arms control. That is not surprising—weapons choices are more concrete, and easier—but the gap is bad policy and bad politics. It was only late this spring that NATO created a special group to look at arms control, matching the so-called High Level Group that has been looking at weapons choices for nearly two years. The impression that the Alliance is moving smartly toward deploying new weaponry without evidence of real attention to arms control will only increase the political heat on European leaders, and nowhere more than in the Federal Republic.

V

There are no once-and-for-all solutions to the gray area problem. So long as Europe ultimately depends on the American strategic deterrent, there will remain the paradox that NATO's doctrine rests on an American response even when American soil is not attacked. All that can be done is to manage that paradox. In confronting the gray area question at this juncture, the United States and its allies face interlocking choices of force posture and negotiation. The choices are simply stated: to adopt new political measures, to deploy new weapons capable of striking the Soviet Union, to seek negotiated constraints on Soviet systems, or some combination of all these.

An approach limited to political measures need not be as inconsequential as it might first seem. What resulted after the last period of interallied strain over nuclear doctrine, the MLF episode, was a political mechanism, the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG). This includes the United States, Britain, the Federal Republic and Italy, plus three or four others in rotation (France does not take part); defense ministers of NPG members usually meet on nuclear matters once a year. Unquestionably, at its inception the NPG provided the allies with more information about American systems, thus enhancing coupling.

A limited approach would not foreclose options over the longer term, but would only assume that the Alliance is not ready to reach basic decisions now and that such choices are not now imperative. It can indeed be argued that new military deployments could well cause more problems—both political and military—than they would solve. If significant enough to matter at all, new weapons would raise the specter of decoupling. If small enough to avoid that problem, they would hardly be worth the political effort—and cost—within the Alliance of reopening the issue of long-range nuclear weapons in central Europe. Reassurance might be provided, for the time being, by the United States assigning additional Poseidon warheads to NATO and taking actions to underscore their commitment to theater purposes, while stressing again America's commitment to the nuclear defense of Europe.

As the allies move toward SALT III, new forms of consultation between the United States and its European partners will in any event be required, even if NATO does not launch a gray area arms control initiative. During SALT II, "consulting" the allies, meticulous though it was, meant informing them and giving them a chance to object. The Europeans will need to have more real say over aspects of SALT III that are of direct relevance to them—a logical extension of the SALT II arrangements, whereby the United States reported to the North Atlantic Council often and in detail on the course of the negotiations. That was supplemented by meetings reinforced with SALT experts from national capitals, and by bilateral consultations. In SALT III, NATO will need procedures in order to agree on issues that directly affect Europeans, to guide American negotiators, even if the debate over where and how binding NATO guidance should be produces some strain in the Alliance.

In parallel, the NATO allies should examine the adequacy of their consultative mechanisms in the nuclear realm, especially the

NPG. The problem is that the NPG cannot serve as a means of pressing the political implications of nuclear choices on the top levels of NATO governments. The neutron bomb, for example, proceeded happily through the Alliance at the technical level, with neither the NPG nor any other Alliance instrument sounding a warning of the likely political impact. By the time allied leaders understood the problem, it was too late.

The reasons why the NPG cannot play such a role are not hard to find. First, it is a force-planning body, not a forum for political decision. Second, it is a defense ministry operation; its ministerial participants may share with their bureaucracies an interest in not raising warning signals that threaten new weapons proceeding down their budget tracks. And the NPG's emphasis on security, appropriately enough, has limited the range of officials in any government who know of the issues that come before it and hence are in a position to draw their implications.

Sadly, I do not believe political and consultative measures will suffice. The military problem, if limited, is real. At a minimum, the perception of NATO's inadequacy is severe enough to endanger the effectiveness of deterrence. Some new weaponry will be required in the end. The obvious questions are: How many new weapons, and which ones?

On military grounds, it is hard to argue for more than a small force. If the purpose is to provide NATO with more nuclear options *from* Europe to counter the threat of selective Soviet strikes against Western Europe—and thereby to ensure coupling to the central American deterrent—a small force should suffice. Moreover, the domestic row provoked in Western Europe by the prospect of deploying a large new nuclear force on European soil could make the neutron bomb affair look tame by comparison. Europeans may all agree in principle that Europe should have more long-range nuclear weaponry, provided it is located in someone else's country. And, of course, a large force is almost by definition decoupling: Why build such a strategic force in Europe if the coupling of the American force to Europe's defense is credible?

The primary requisites of any force, and especially a small one, would be the ability to survive preemptive Soviet strikes and to penetrate Soviet air defenses. Survival argues for mobility, so that missiles or aircraft cannot be destroyed before they are fired or can be put into the air.

The need to penetrate argues for a ballistic missile force, instead of cruise missiles. Given the existing Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM)

Treaty, the Soviets can have no effective defense against ballistic missiles. Their ability to penetrate is assured. Not so, however, for cruise missiles, which over the next decade will rely either on large numbers or increasing sophistication to ensure that enough could get through improved Soviet air defenses. Thus, to be effective for several decades a new NATO cruise missile force would have to be larger than European domestic politics would easily allow, or more expensive than cruise missiles now appear, or both.[7]

There are other reasons why an MRBM system may be preferable to a cruise missile force. *Any* new force could be destabilizing: to be mobile enough to survive, it would pose verification problems. But an MRBM would be unambiguously nuclear, while cruise missiles might not. The Soviets could be more certain of its range; it might, for instance, be set up to reach military targets in the western part of the Soviet Union but not to strike Moscow. Cruise missiles, which are relatively slow, would have the virtue of not posing nearly the same first-strike threat as an MRBM, but neither would they permit a quick response if that were required.

Now that cruise missiles are on the table at SALT, wisely or not, an MRBM would have the virtue of not holding NATO deployments hostage to those negotiations. One possibility would be a longer range version of the Pershing missile already in Europe—the Pershing IIXR with a range upward of 1,000 miles. The fact that something called a Pershing already is fielded in Germany might reduce both the strain on European domestic politics of its deployment and the likelihood of a strong Soviet reaction.

There will, of course, remain the problem of where to locate a new force. The Federal Republic is the logical place, but deployment there alone is not in the cards, and no other country is likely to step forward. A mixed force of ballistic missiles, perhaps cruise missiles on surface ships, ground-launched cruise missiles, or even improved nuclear-capable aircraft, would minimize political problems as well as hedge against an uncertain technical future. Yet the heart of that force probably should remain ballistic missiles in Germany.

If new weapons are to be deployed, some sort of arms control effort will be required. What logic suggests, politics will compel. So far, much of the discussion of new forces has assumed, unrealistically, that NATO actions will not prompt Soviet reactions, but

[7] On cruise missile costs, see Desmond Ball, "The Costs of the Cruise Missile," *Survival*, November-December 1978, pp. 242–47.

new weapons would hardly look attractive if the Soviets responded with more SS-20s. Moreover, Wehner's comments and the incipient debate in the Federal Republic illustrate the political pressures for an arms control initiative that will arise if new weapons are contemplated.

Yet, alas, negotiations in the gray area are not attractive.[8] The most obvious problem is what the subject would be. In principle, opening the gray area box could also open up the entire theater nuclear box. If the ensuing negotiations involved short-range systems, they would be extremely messy at best; at worst, they could seriously constrain NATO's ability to compensate for Soviet conventional force advantages with modernized battlefield and shorter range nuclear forces. On the other hand, if the negotiations were somehow confined to U.S. and Soviet long-range theater systems, NATO would not have many negotiating chips, largely as the result of its own doctrine. What Europeans now perceive as NATO's weakness in long-range theater systems can hardly be regarded by the Soviets as an inducement to arms control concessions.

Yet it is hard to see how negotiations could be avoided even if NATO preferred to avoid them. *Some* gray area issues are certain to be on the SALT III agenda, like it or not; hence, European interests will inevitably be involved in SALT III. In any case, the protocol will come to an end and with it the limits on cruise missiles. The Soviet Union no doubt will argue that protocol limits should remain in force, but the United States should be able to exact a price for doing so. It will be tempting to trade some limits on ground- and sea-launched cruise missiles (which at that point will be further along in development but not yet deployed) for some restriction on the Soviet SS-20.[9] Perhaps the Soviets would reckon such a trade to be a good one. They might, however, revert to the demand they made throughout SALT I: that there must be limits on American forward-based systems—aircraft with a nuclear capability based in Europe—and perhaps that British and French strategic systems must somehow be addressed. In the end, the real question will be how to manage negotiations, not whether to have them.

[8] For discussion of arms control issues, and for detailed tables on Eastern and Western forces, see Robert Metzger and Paul Doty, "Arms Control Enters the Gray Area," *International Security*, Winter 1978/1979, pp. 17–52.

[9] First deployment—so-called Initial Operational Capability (IOC)—of air-launched cruise missiles in heavy bombers is scheduled for 1982. No final decisions about longer range ground- or submarine-launched ballistic missiles (GLCMs and SLCMs) have yet been made, so deployment dates for them would be later.

If NATO is to negotiate gray area systems, it should negotiate where its doctrine suggests and where coupling compels—at SALT. The Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks in Vienna already suffer from the need to treat too many different kinds of weapons systems. Adding theater nuclear weapons to MBFR would make it hard to exclude short-range systems intended to complement conventional forces. That, in turn, would compound the risk that MBFR might complicate the modernization of tactical nuclear weapons that NATO so badly needs to accomplish. In doctrine, adding gray area weapons could be decoupling because of the implication that NATO weapons could be separated from NATO's ultimate deterrent—U.S. strategic forces. Moreover, the Soviet systems of most concern to the Europeans are based outside the MBFR area, in the Soviet Union itself. And adding gray area weapons to MBFR would cause further problems with the French, who do not participate in MBFR and would again be (self) excluded, but with legitimate fears that the new negotiations would bear directly on their interests.

A separate negotiation over theater nuclear weapons would be even worse. Substantively, it would produce just the process NATO should be trying to avoid—codifying and then negotiating over a "theater nuclear balance." That would be decoupling in the extreme.

VI

The gray area question thus confronts the United States and its European allies with a dilemma. A small number of new nuclear weapons in Europe capable of striking the Soviet Union is needed but not easy, politically, to deploy; some effort at arms control must accompany that deployment, but no such approach is attractive. The combination is grounds for caution, for the worst of all outcomes would be for NATO to direct attention to the gray area threat but then find itself unable to do anything about it.

There are no easy ways to square the circle. NATO should, I believe, move carefully toward deploying some new weaponry while doing what it can to prepare the ground politically. This may be the time, for instance, finally to remove several thousand of the redundant American nuclear warheads in Europe. Beyond that, NATO should avoid offering not to deploy weapons if the Soviets themselves demonstrate restraint, as was the plan at one point with the neutron warheads. Such a proposal looks weak and

indecisive, invites Moscow to meddle in Western force planning, and ensures division within NATO over the conditions to be set and, later, over whether they have been met.

Instead, I believe NATO should aim for a limited agreement at the end of the SALT II protocol, trading continuation of some limits on ground- and sea-launched cruise missiles for some constraints on the SS-20. Even that sort of deal may not be easy: if NATO has moved toward deploying significant numbers of long-range cruise missiles, it will be chary of limits; if it has not, Moscow will not be much interested in a trade.

In the end, the United States must bear most of the burden of deciding whether or not to deploy new weapons in central Europe, and will have to take most of the political heat. That will be uncomfortable, and will seem illogical in light of the nature of the issue and the increasing influence of America's European partners, especially the Federal Republic. But to insist that Europeans fully share in the decision to produce and deploy new nuclear weapons risks a much more serious version of the neutron bomb episode. Instead of grumbling about Chancellor Schmidt's indecision or the German socialist Left's romantic attachment to détente, Washington would do better to remember that, of the major NATO powers, only the Federal Republic is a non-nuclear-weapons state. Both West Germany and America share an interest in having it remain so, and Bonn may thus be entitled to some exemption from participation in nuclear decisions which its stature would not allow it on other issues.

The United States must lead. But there *is* time. SALT II will not unduly restrict future European weapons choices. It will rather lay down a general marker on theater negotiations in SALT III that can be picked up later if NATO chooses, but that will not be binding if the Alliance chooses to restrict the negotiations. Given the ratification process and the ensuing U.S. presidential campaign, there will be no SALT III to speak of before 1981 at the earliest. The Administration may well be called upon during the SALT II ratification debate to say what it intends to do about the gray area problem. But ratification would hardly be served by risking the disarray in the Atlantic Alliance that would come from forcing decisions on unprepared Europeans.