

**January 31, 1962**

**Research Memorandum REU-25 from Roger Hilsman  
to Mr. Kohler, 'European Attitudes on Independent  
Nuclear Capability'**

**Citation:**

"Research Memorandum REU-25 from Roger Hilsman to Mr. Kohler, 'European Attitudes on Independent Nuclear Capability'", January 31, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RG 59, Entry UD-UP 131, INR/DDR, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Reports Coordination and Review Staff, Research Memoranda 1961-1963, box 132, REU-25-RM. Contributed by William Burr, National Security Archive.  
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/134046>

**Summary:**

Concerns about the credibility of US nuclear deterrence generated Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General Lauris Norstad's proposal for a NATO-controlled medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) force. This lengthy report represented INR's assessment of "present and future European interest in national or multinational nuclear weapons capabilities," including the MRBM proposal, and the extent to which an "enhancement of NATO's nuclear role" could "deter national or multinational European nuclear weapons programs."

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

SECRET

31 P Original Scan  
This document consists of 1 pages,  
No. 3 of 7 Copies, Series 8

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

Research Memorandum  
REU-25, January 31, 1962

MEMORANDUM

TO : EUR - Mr. Kohler  
FROM : INR - Roger Hilsman  
SUBJECT: European Attitudes on Independent  
Nuclear Capability

In response to your memorandum of December 27, 1961, we have been making a study of European attitudes toward an independent nuclear capability for Europe, and of the specific related questions you raised. Attached is a draft embodying the results of this study to date.

Because of the complexity of the questions and their implications, we view this as a continuing study. The present paper is therefore preliminary and some of the conclusions are tentative; we would hope to be able later to provide more on this general subject.

It should be noted that this paper was drafted before replies to the questions sent to the field by circular cable began to be received, and no effort has been made specifically and completely to incorporate these replies into this draft. However, we note that there seems to be no discrepancy between the draft and such replies as have reached us.

May I also add that this draft is divided into four sections, of which not all may be of equal interest. The second section briefly summarizes the series of proposals, which are no doubt familiar to anyone who has worked in this field, and the country views outlined in the third section are largely reflected in the last section headed "Conclusions", which could be read independently.

Attachment:

Study on "Western European  
Views on Nuclear Weapons  
Capabilities"

SECRET

SECRET/NOFORN

This document consists of 3 pages,  
No. 7 of 2 Copies, Series A.

## WESTERN EUROPEAN VIEWS ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITIES

This paper was prepared in response to a request for an analysis of European views on an independent European nuclear weapons capability. Specifically, REU was asked to assess present and future European interest in national or multinational nuclear weapons capabilities, and to estimate whether an "enhancement of NATO's nuclear role" would be likely to deter national or multinational European nuclear weapons programs. In order to answer the questions, it is necessary to consider the situation which has given rise to them, to review the several proposals put forward to deal with various aspects of this situation, and to analyse the positions of the several European nations with respect to these proposals.

### The General Situation

As a result of reports of the development of long range missiles by the USSR, it is now generally believed in Europe that the USSR has available enough nuclear missiles of sufficient range virtually to destroy Western Europe and that, if it does not have them already, it soon will have enough missiles of sufficient range to cause widespread destruction in the US. In this situation of existing or anticipated nuclear equipoise between the US and the USSR, there has arisen in Western Europe concern about the credibility of the NATO deterrent, which, in effect, has been based upon the idea of massive retaliation by the US. Specifically, there is apprehension<sup>1</sup> that the Soviets may not believe now, or

---

1. This apprehension is not necessarily related to what the European nations believe the US would do; in fact, however, there is some skepticism in Europe about US intentions.

SECRET/NOFORN

31 P 700 0041

SECRET/NOFORN

- 3 -

example, because European-based MRBM's can reach targets in the USSR, some Europeans consider them to be strategic and hence inappropriate to the NATO shield. Others fear that their mere presence might be provocative to the USSR, or that, being in Europe, they would be more likely to be used too early, in what was intended to be a limited conflict, thus causing rapid (and otherwise unnecessary) escalation to general war.

Nevertheless, since SACEUR might reasonably be expected to use all weapons in Europe in the defense of Europe, the assignment to SACEUR of MRBM's capable of reaching the USSR might be thought to add to the credibility of the deterrent, particularly in a situation where the Russians might doubt that there would be massive retaliation from the US to an attack on Europe. Some Europeans seem to believe that the contribution of MRBM's to the credibility would be even greater if they were part of a multilateral NATO MRBM force and also that such a force would add to the cohesiveness of NATO.

The location of MRBM's in Europe, under SACEUR or as part of a NATO MRBM force, would also raise questions of NATO planning--how would they be fitted into NATO's plans for responding to a Soviet attack? In turn, the pattern of NATO's probable response in Europe to a Russian attack there is relevant to the European estimate of credibility, in that Russian expectation of this or that kind of response would be presumed to be a factor in the Russian decision to attack or not.

In addition to the matter of physical position in Europe, and their role, there also arises the question of control of these MRBM's and this

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 4 -

is also relevant to the credibility of their role as a deterrent, as well as to NATO weapons systems and planning. The question of whether the US is to have exclusive custody and the ultimate power of decision with respect to all nuclear warheads in Europe--for tactical system and for MRBM's--or whether the control is to be lodged elsewhere thus becomes of critical concern in European considerations of credibility.

These broadly are the origins of, and the main elements in, the general situation. These elements have not always been isolated nor presented in the context in which they have been presented here, however; most frequently, they have been presented in the context of various proposals put forward at various times, chiefly by the US. It is in terms of reactions to these proposals that the positions of the several countries have largely been developed and can best be understood.

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 5 -

SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND PROPOSALS

It is convenient, as a point of departure, to go back to the 1957 meeting of the NATO Heads of Government, where it was agreed in principle that, as they were developed, IRBM's (intermediate range ballistic missiles) should be made available to SACEUR. In keeping with this agreement, Jupiter weapons were assigned to NATO commands. As new MRBM's (mid range ballistic missiles) with a range of 1,000-1,500 miles were developed, SACEUR, (The Supreme Allied Commander, Europe) set forth a requirement for these, beginning in 1963, as part of his modernization program.

In the spring of 1960 the so-called Gates' proposals were made to the North Atlantic Council with a view to fulfillment of SACEUR's statement of need. The alternative in the Gates proposals which was preferred by the US included an offer to sell MRBM's to individual NATO members, for use under SACEUR's control and with the nuclear warheads in US custody and control. None of the Gates proposals was ever approved by the NAC.

In November, 1960, General Norstad, as SACEUR, made a speech to the NATO parliamentarians, in which he distinguished three areas of concern. First was his requirement for land and sea based MRBM's for NATO commands in Europe, beginning in 1963<sup>1</sup>; these were to be provided under existing

---

1. This requirement was embodied in a document of NATO's Military Committee designated MC-96; this requirement is also referred to as "end-1966 requirement."

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 6 -

arrangements, that is, control by SACEUR, with custody and ultimate decision over use resting with the US. A second was the matter of Alliance participation in the decision to use the US strategic force; Norstad dismissed this idea as "interesting." The third was the matter of giving NATO members "an equal voice" in the control of those atomic weapons "essential to the direct defense of Europe", that is, tactical nuclear weapons, and, presumably, the MRBM's requested by SACEUR. Norstad suggested that consideration be given to this problem.

In the NATO Ministerial meeting in December, 1960, Secretary Herter suggested that Norstad's (SACEUR's) end-1966 MRBM requirements might be met by a multilateral NATO MRBM force, for the creation of which the US would be willing to sell MRBM's and to provide warheads, under US custody. As interim satisfaction of SACEUR's requirements, Herter offered to commit 5 Polaris equipped submarines to NATO, under suitable but unspecified control arrangements. Addressing himself to the problem of sharing control of nuclear weapons, Herter said that the multilateral ownership and control of the NATO MRBM force would be a step in this direction but would not preclude the idea of increasing Alliance authority over the atomic stockpile as a whole.

Secretary Herter's presentation linked together several diverse elements. SACEUR's MRBM requirements were linked to the idea of sharing control, by way of the proposed multilateral MRBM force. Sharing control of the NATO MRBM force was related to sharing control of the entire Alliance stockpile. The offer of Polaris subs was a completely new notion.

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 7 -

The linking of all these elements seemed to cause some confusion -- and so apparently did the presentation. NATO members were not sure what was meant by the word "commit," used in reference to Polaris subs; there was uncertainty whether the Polaris offer was absolute or was conditioned upon the purchase of MRBM's for a NATO MRBM force. Similarly, NATO members seemed confused as to whether the suggestion of a NATO MRBM force was a proposal or only a "concept", and uncertain as to where the next initiative lay. There was also confusion over what was meant by sharing control, and skeptical references were made to "15 fingers on the trigger" -- and/or "on the safety catch."

In April, 1961, the US Permanent Representative to the NAC (NATO Advisory Council) repeated the Polaris offer but without adding any precision to the word "commitment" or to the NATO guidelines for their use. Instead of offering Polaris as interim satisfaction of SACEUR's MRBM requirements, however, as Secretary Herter had done, the US Representative suggested that this offer made it possible to postpone dealing with these MRBM requirements. With regard to a NATO MRBM force, he said that if NATO members were interested, the US would be glad to hear their views on Secretary Herter's December "concept" -- but only after NATO's non-nuclear force goals had been met. He stressed the new Administration's emphasis on the priority of the build-up of NATO's conventional forces. On the question of sharing control, the US representative distinguished between military control and the decision to use, and laid down the principles which the US thought should govern the decision to use. He said that the US would welcome suggestions for

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 8 -

a system of NATO control over use and suggested that a beginning might be made by establishing guidelines for their employment.

At Ottawa, President Kennedy repeated the Polaris offer, but without any additional details. He said that beyond this the US looked to the eventual establishment of a NATO seaborne force, "truly multilateral in ownership and control", if such a force were desired and feasible, after NATO's conventional goals had been met. President Kennedy made no mention of SACEUR's MRBM requirements -- although Secretary Herter had said that it was to meet these requirements that he proposed the NATO MRBM force and made the Polaris offer. President Kennedy also said in Ottawa that the US was prepared to join the Allies in working out political controls of nuclear weapons that would meet the needs of all NATO countries.

In the ensuing months of 1961, there was almost no discussion in the NAC of the Polaris offer, and very little of the NATO MRBM force, in spite of several exhortations by the US Permanent Representative to the effect that members should put forward proposals on this subject. The members' apparent reluctance may have reflected basic doubts and reservations particularly about a NATO MRBM force; in addition, members may have expected additional details from the US. In any case, members were disconcerted at the new Administration's emphasis on conventional weapons, which gave rise to doubts about US intentions and to preoccupation with questions of NATO strategy and long range planning.

Extended discussion of long range planning might presumably have encompassed such subjects as a NATO MRBM force and sharing control of

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 9 -

nuclear weapons, as well as SACEUR's end-1966 MRBM requirements. In September 1961, however, the NAC was informed that the US had decided to give priority to Berlin planning and would be unable to submit comprehensive proposals on long-range planning. As a result, NAC discussion of long range planning was deferred, although most reluctantly, and the NAC concentrated upon MC-96, on which action was overdue, and which included SACEUR's end-1966 requirements for MRBM's. The US indicated, however, that it was not ready to submit its views on MRBM's and, after a rather stormy session, MC-96, was approved, but with reservations with respect to the requirements for MRBM's.

Early in December, at German initiative, the Military Committee of NATO agreed to undertake immediately a study of the military aspects of the integration of MRBM's into NATO forces. At the NATO Ministerial Meeting in December, German Defense Minister Strauss proposed, the creation of a group to study problems of the control of nuclear weapons within NATO and of the introduction of MRBM's into Allied Command, Europe -- that is, SACEUR's command. At the request of Norway, supported by the UK and US, Strauss' proposal was referred to the Permanent Representatives.

Also at the December NATO Ministerial meeting, Secretaries Rusk and MacNamara made formal statements setting forth the U.S. estimate of the strategic situation, indicating what the U.S. was prepared to do and pointing out some of the things which it thought ought to be done. These statements were intended to, and no doubt did, clarify in the minds of the NATO partners the U.S. position. However, they were made in

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 10 -

restricted session and not released to the public, and although much of the drift of them has been discussed in the press here and in Europe, there has not yet been time for their impact to have registered.

Consequently, the following discussion of country reactions to U.S. proposals reflects only the previous U.S. statements. Nevertheless, although Government positions will no doubt be influenced in some measure by the Rusk-MacNamara presentations, the underlying attitudes reflected in reactions to previous U.S. initiatives are likely to persist.

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 11 -

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY POSITIONS

The views expressed by the NATO Governments have reflected in large part the several US presentations. There was, however, a degree of imprecision in certain of these presentations. In addition, some of them repeated earlier proposals but with new conditions or qualifications. Again, some of the presentations lumped together elements of proposals which elsewhere had been treated separately. Finally, none of them was really explicit or detailed. In any case, discussion within the NAC was limited, due to the preoccupation first, with the conventional buildup, and then with Berlin planning.

All these circumstances gave rise to certain reservations on the part of NATO members with respect to US proposals and to some confusion, which was often compounded by a plain lack of information about, or understanding of, important terms and concepts. Nevertheless, NATO Governments did respond to the US proposals, although in varying degrees, and it is convenient to group these responses in terms of major issues, that is, the assignment of MRBM's to SACEUR, the sharing of control and use of nuclear weapons and the creation of a multilateral NATO MRBM force.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, there is no one subject on which all the NATO Governments have been agreed. Nevertheless, on two proposals, there has been almost complete accord. Except by the U.K., there has been

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 12 -

approval of SACEUR's MRBM requirements (MC-96); some members, however, seem not to have attempted a considered military judgment but to have supported the idea simply because SACEUR recommended, and still recommends, that he have MRBM's. There is also general agreement, with reservations by the UK, on the idea of sharing in the control and use of nuclear weapons; it is not always clear, however, whether the governments are thinking of the strategy of use, or the actual decision to use -- or whatever they have in mind -- all nuclear weapons, or only those in Europe. The issue on which there is least agreement is the concept of a multilateral NATO MRBM force. Here in particular, there seems to be considerable uncertainty, partly because of a lack of information about what such a force might entail, especially with respect to cost, control, deployment, and use.

What does emerge is that Germany, and only Germany, has set forth clear and unambiguous notions of what it wants and why; only Germany has pressed consistently for SACEUR's MRBM's, for a NATO MRBM force, and for a NATO share in control and in the decision to use nuclear weapons in Europe, -- and has done so as a matter of urgency.

#### SACEUR's MRBM Requirements

So far as SACEUR's end-1966 requirements for MRBM's (under existing arrangements for control and use) are concerned, there is general approval, except from the UK. The UK considers, in part, that there is no military

SECRET/NOFORN

- 13 -

need for MRBM's in Europe, on the grounds that the Soviet bloc targets which these would threaten are already covered by the US strategic force. In any case, the British believe, this question should be considered as part of an overall review of NATO weapon and strategy. The other members apparently accept the military need, but only Germany and, to a lesser degree, France and Belgium, seem to have consciously worked out their rationale. The rest seem to accept SACEUR's recommendations on general grounds, such as the need for modernization of NATO's nuclear forces, and to have been influenced above all by the fact that SACEUR has said, and still says, that he has a military requirement for MRBM's. Germany, together with France and Belgium, actively support SACEUR's rationale, that MRBM's are necessary to replace planes made vulnerable by the new Soviet missiles and to give SACEUR the full range of nuclear response to an attack. In addition, however, Germany and France relate their views to the idea of credibility of the deterrent; they consider that SACEUR must have available in Europe a weapons system which threatens targets in the USSR, in order to maintain the credibility of the NATO deterrent. Others make the same relation, but more on the grounds that the presence of MRBM's demonstrates the US nuclear commitment to Europe.

With regard to the composition of an MRBM system under SACEUR and its deployment and manning, not even Germany seems to have completely worked out its ideas. France has specifically rejected the idea of a

SECRET/NOFORN

- 14 -

wholly seaborne force but has not altered its position against the stationing of nuclear weapons in France. Germany has indicated a preference for seaborne missiles and has said that it would not wish mobile MRBM's in Germany. Others are impressed by the fact that seaborne missiles would avoid the problem of deployment in Germany, which concerns them greatly. Proposals for mixed manning of seaborne missiles have aroused skepticism, and there are reservations in most NATO countries about manning any MRBM's with German units. Germany has indicated, however, that it does not expect to have discriminatory treatment imposed upon it. Except for Germany, all NATO members seem concerned, in varying degrees, with the costs of procuring MRBM's for SACEUR.

Control and Use Arrangements

With the exception of the UK -- and of France for reasons peculiar to it -- all NATO Governments have indicated an interest in participating in arrangements for the control and use of nuclear weapons. Confusion is especially rampant here, however; it is frequently not clear which nuclear weapons are under consideration -- that is, the tactical weapons, now available to NATO commands, the MRBM's requested by SACEUR, the proposed NATO force's MRBM's, the US strategic weapons, or all four -- nor is it always clear whether the aim is participation in establishing the strategy for use, in the decision to use, or in actual custody and use.

Again, the German position is the clearest. The Germans would like to see NATO Commanders control the logistics and have the authority to decide when to use NATO's tactical weapons systems; they would also like

SECRET/NOFORN

- 15 -

NATO members to share in the control and in the decision to use any MRBM's stationed in Europe. With regard to the latter, it seems that the Germans would prefer an arrangement which would permit the country attacked in conjunction with SACEUR, or SACEUR acting alone on behalf of NATO, to take the decision for use. The German aim, in any case, seems to be to insure that the decision to use will be taken promptly at an appropriate military level. (In German minds, this question, too, bears on the credibility of the deterrent.)

France seems to be really interested only in a tripartite sharing arrangement which would give France, together with the US and the UK, the control of, and the decision to use, all nuclear weapons, including the US strategic force. The UK, possessing a nuclear force of its own, seems generally satisfied with existing control arrangements. The British would welcome a voice in the decision to use the US strategic forces but they are concerned at the prospect of general participation in such a decision, fearing that this might allow irresponsible -- notably German -- fingers on the trigger. To the British, the fear that nuclear weapons may be used irresponsibly is a real one and they wish, above all, to be sure that the decision on use is taken by a responsible political authority, such as the American President or the British Cabinet. However, the UK would be willing to have broader participation in the development of "guidelines" for use.

Like the British, the remaining NATO members are equally concerned that the decision to use should be taken by a responsible political

SECRET/NOFORN

- 16 -

authority; ideally, it seems, they would all like to participate in this decision, and with respect to all nuclear weapons, including the British and American strategic forces. Proposals for weighted voting, or for decision by the big powers have been coolly reviewed. They are all concerned, however, at the implications and difficulties of any formula for truly multilateral participation in the decision to use nuclear weapons. Most doubt its military feasibility; some seem to be frightened at the responsibility and all have reservations about German participation.

On balance, it seems that many, and particularly the Scandinavians, may conclude that existing arrangements are not so bad, provided, however, that all NATO members could participate more in determining the strategy of use and would be consulted, where possible, in advance of the decision to use, especially for those nuclear weapons in Europe. The question of sharing the decision to use tactical weapons or MRBM's stationed in Europe is not usually considered separately, except with regard to a NATO MRBM force. To the extent that the control question is considered separately for the weapons assigned to SACEUR, there seems to be some sentiment for a kind of host-veto arrangement, that is, an arrangement in which the country directly affected would have a determining voice.

#### NATO MRBM Force

Only the Germans and the Belgians have been really enthusiastic about a multilateral NATO MRBM force. To the Germans, a force of this kind,

SECRET/NOFORN

stationed in Europe under multilateral NATO control and able to threaten targets in the USSR, is important to maintain the credibility of the NATO deterrent. Belgian enthusiasm seems to be largely that of Prime Minister Spaak and he seems to be motivated in part, if not primarily, by political considerations, chiefly the idea that such a force would contribute to the cohesiveness of NATO -- and, perhaps, the unity of Europe. Italy is in favor of such a force, in principle, as is the Netherlands.

The UK has not opposed the idea openly but is apparently against it. The British have already indicated that they see no need for stationing strategic nuclear weapons (which they consider MRBM's to be) in Europe and that they have doubts about sharing control and use of any nuclear weapons. In addition, the British are concerned that a NATO MRBM force might be provocative to the USSR, and disturbed at the share it would give Germany in the control of nuclear weapons. France considers a NATO MRBM force largely irrelevant to France's concerns. France might support the idea of such a force if it seemed the only way to locate MRBM's in Europe; it is not certain that the French would participate, however, nor allow the MRBM's on French soil.

The remaining NATO members are sympathetic to the idea of such a force, in that it seems to accord with their desire to participate in the control and decision to use nuclear weapons and have MRBM's in Europe. As indicated earlier, however, these NATO members have reservations about the problems of deployment and manning of any MRBM's stationed in

SECRET/NOFORN

- 18 -

Europe and they are also concerned at the implications, particularly with respect to Germany, of any multilateral control arrangement. Denmark has already indicated that it would wish additional details before framing a position on the NATO MRBM force. It seems that the Danish position and probably that of Norway will depend very much upon the control and deployment arrangements proposed; Belgium, Italy, and the Netherlands, although favorable in principle, will probably also be influenced in their final judgment by control and deployment arrangements. Cost is a factor to all nations, except perhaps Germany.

Another consideration important to all is their concern to avoid the spread of national nuclear weapons capabilities, particularly to Germany. To the extent that a German nuclear force seemed imminent, and a NATO MRBM force seemed likely to prevent it, this consideration might resolve all doubts. So far, however, none seems to be convinced that this is the situation and the British are openly skeptical. The British, and others, also fear that a NATO MRBM force would complicate the question of disarmament and arms control.

Finally it should be noted that there seem to be latent fears that such a force might eventually lead to U.S. withdrawal from Europe. The Europeans are well aware that they rely ultimately on the U.S. and (except, perhaps, in the case of the French) will continue to do so. Anything, therefore, which raises the spectre of U.S. disengagement is likely to arouse apprehension and opposition, and this may come to be reflected in European views on a NATO MRBM force.

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 19 -

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Special Problem

The questions posed relate to European drives for independent national or collective European nuclear weapons capabilities, and to possible means for diverting or heading them off. They also relate to the more general and much larger problem of national security, but before commenting on this it may be useful to recapitulate our findings on the subsidiary question of desires for independent capabilities.

a. Attitudes Toward National Capabilities. The UK already has a national nuclear weapons capability and France is striving to achieve one. The UK began its program in 1946 and, in spite of the considerable financial burden, the British Government has indicated clearly that it has no present intention of abandoning it. Official circles in the UK do not openly relate the maintenance of the British nuclear force to doubts about the credibility of the U.S. deterrent, but it seems that this is a factor; in the UK, however, this notion is usually expressed positively, that is, by saying that the credibility of the allied deterrent is reinforced by reason of the UK's contribution. Political considerations are also important, however, in the British motivation. The British maintain that their possession of an independent capability gives the UK a special place in the councils of the world and, in particular, of the US. Nevertheless, the UK has strong views about the spread of nuclear capabilities and is particularly alarmed at any suggestion or move which might aid Germany to achieve

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 20 -

such a capability or bring Germany closer to possession or control of nuclear weapons.

In France, De Gaulle has made the achievement of an independent nuclear capability the keystone of his foreign policy and has steadfastly pursued this goal in the face of many competing claims. There is no reason to believe that he will abandon this objective, so long as France is able to pursue it, and he seems willing to make sacrifices in order to sustain the economic burden. De Gaulle's motivation is a mixture of military considerations and considerations of power and prestige, often expressed in near mystical fashion. To him, it is simply intolerable that a great nation should depend for its defense on another nation, however friendly; the prime characteristic of a great and sovereign nation, in his view, is its ability to defend itself. France has not seemed very much dismayed, in principle, at the prospect of the spread of nuclear weapons' capabilities, though the thought of spread to Germany causes some concern.

The remaining NATO members, including Germany, have so far displayed no interest in achieving an independent nuclear capability; in fact, except for Germany and perhaps Canada, they would probably find it economically impossible to undertake nuclear weapons programs of their own.<sup>1/</sup> Not only have they shown no interest in independent programs but all of them (leaving aside Germany) are much opposed to the spread of national nuclear capabilities. They view with alarm the French effort and, with much greater alarm, any suggestion of a German effort.

---

<sup>1/</sup> See NIE 4-3-61, September, 1961 Nuclear Weapons and Delivery Capabilities of "NTH" Countries.

SECRET/NOFORN

- 21 -

Germany has so far shown no intention of undertaking or planning a nuclear program but there is apprehension, obviously, that it might do so. In part, this apprehension seems to be based on the fact that Germany presumably has the economic capability and on the assumption that it will wish, in time, for military independence or at least, for military equality with France and the UK. In part, this apprehension is based on recent events. It seems that Germany is dissatisfied with existing NATO arrangements with regard to nuclear weapons. Germany has actively supported all proposals designed to place MRBM's in Western Europe; it has advocated a control formula which would give the decision to use tactical weapons to NATO field commanders and the decision to use any MRBM's in Europe to the country attacked, in conjunction with SACEUR; lastly, Germany has been the foremost supporter of a NATO MRBM force.

It appears therefore, that the question which concerns us might be rephrased to read -- would the enhancement of NATO's role serve to deter German drives toward an independent nuclear weapons capability?

b. Possibility of Independent German Effort. Germany has indicated that it would like NATO's nuclear role enhanced -- most importantly by the assignment of MRBM's to SACEUR, and, further, by the creation of a multilateral NATO MRBM force. Presumably, if this enhancement takes place, German concerns and desires would be met -- at least to the extent that these concerns and desires have been made known. Even if its desires should not be fully met, however, it is most unlikely that Germany would undertake an independent effort, at least in the short

SECRET/NOFORN

- 22 -

run -- which may be defined as the time required for NATO consideration of the entire subject, or about two years. Germany has based its post-war foreign and defense policies upon close association with the West and, in particular upon membership in NATO. It has done so essentially because NATO engages the US in the defense of Europe - and Germany.

For Germany to undertake a nuclear weapons program of its own would not only be in conflict with existing limitations on its armament production; it would also be a move which would arouse the suspicions and probably the open disapproval of the other Western European Countries, and the US, and hazard German participation in the affairs and councils of the West -- including NATO. At the same time, such a move would undoubtedly be considered highly provocative by the USSR. Germany is not likely to embark upon a course which would risk these consequences -- and would mean, in effect, a reversal of its foreign and defense policies, simply because its desires with regard to NATO's nuclear role are not fully met. Rather, Germany is likely, in the short run, if its desires are not fulfilled, to intensify its efforts within NATO to achieve fulfillment.

A German nuclear effort within the framework of the EEC (European Economic Community) or the WEU (Western European Union) would presumably seem more respectable and German Defense Minister Strauss has hinted at this possibility. Such a program would, however, almost certainly meet with the opposition of the UK and the other members of these groups, except perhaps France, which place their reliance upon

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 23 -

NATO and the US -- and would fear that a program of this kind would weaken NATO and the US commitment to Europe. Further in the EEC, where the matter of common defense strategy is, in any case, only beginning to be talked about, the members, except for France, have been careful to stipulate that any EEC defense measures must be taken in common with NATO.

There remains the idea of German cooperation with France and French officials have hinted that this is a possibility. Such an effort, however, would expose Germany to much the same consequences as would an independent German effort, and seems equally unlikely in our short run.

2. The General Problem. The question of enhancing NATO's nuclear role has arisen as part of a more general problem of European security. At the core of the general problem is the question of maintaining the credibility of the deterrent - and, to all NATO members the deterrent still rests on the US strategic forces. Related to this is the question of reassuring NATO members themselves about US intentions. On both counts, a key question is that of alliance participation in the control and use of nuclear weapons, including the US strategic force. A second key question is that of NATO's nuclear role- including the balance between conventional and nuclear forces, and the kind of nuclear weapons which should be made available to NATO, specifically - whether MRBM's should be made available to SACEUR and whether there should be a NATO MRBM force. Introduction of this last idea, however seems to have been unnecessary at this time to deal with the two key questions - such a force is actively supported only by Germany and Mr. Spaak - and, in fact, seems to have complicated finding answers to these questions. Setting

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 24 -

aside the idea of a NATO MRBM force might create a problem with respect to Germany but, on the other questions, too, there is a special German point of view. For the sake of analysis, it is fruitful not only to set aside the NATO MRBM force concept but also to abstract Germany from discussion of the two key questions - and then to recognize and try to deal with a special German problem. This approach conforms to the reality of the situation.

a. Control and Use. With regard to control and use, all NATO members seem reasonably satisfied with existing arrangements, where custody is in US hands and the decision to use rests ultimately with the American President.<sup>1/</sup> Their satisfaction is not complete but they see no really feasible formula for sharing in control and the decision to use, - and the present system does meet their overriding requirement, that the decision to use should be made by a responsible political authority. All of them do wish, however, to share equally in determining policy with respect to use and in establishing guidelines for use. A limited directorship of any kind for this purpose would not be acceptable. All of them would like, too, to establish some arrangement which would insure that they would be consulted, where possible, in advance of use. None would wish to make this consultation an absolute precondition, however, except, perhaps, for nuclear weapons stationed on their own soil.

---

<sup>1/</sup> The French, of course, are a special case, but their dissatisfaction is not so much with existing arrangements as with the inadequacy of of their own independent capability, which they would like the U.S. to help them overcome.

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 25 -

b. NATO's Nuclear Role. The question of the balance between conventional and nuclear weapons involves considerations outside the scope of this paper but it is possible to deal with the question of SACEUR's requirement for land and sea based MRBM's. Differences of opinion exist with respect to these MRBM's because of different concepts of what they are. The UK regards them as strategic weapons and considers that they have no place in ACE (Allied Command, Europe). SACEUR considers them replacements for obsolescent aircraft committed to the support of the shield forces and says that he needs them. The other members support SACEUR's requirements and his rationale, in part, it seems, because of their regard for SACEUR -- and in spite of reservations having to do with costs, deployment and manning, particularly with respect to land based MRBM's.

Support for the idea of MRBM's in ACE is also related to the idea of credibility, and the desire for reassurance about US intentions. Periodic statements by leading US officials, reaffirming the US intention to defend Europe with the full range of its nuclear weapons, coupled with greater Alliance participation in framing guidelines for their use, would help to deal with apprehensions on these two counts, and so undermine that part of the motivation for supporting MRBM's for SACEUR. The question of the purely military requirement would remain, however, -- so long as SACEUR maintained that it did and, perhaps, even if he withdrew it; in any case, it seems unlikely that SACEUR, having maintained the requirement so firmly and so long, would now conclude

SECRET/NOFORN

- 26 -

that the need does not exist. It seems, therefore, that satisfaction of this requirement, at least in part, is likely to continue to be regarded as essential. If it is not satisfied, some formula, such as the Polaris offer, but with more direct participation by SACEUR, will probably have to be devised to convince NATO members that the need set forth by SACEUR is, in fact, being met.

Action along the lines above, accompanied by closer consultation on all aspects of NATO planning and US planning, particularly with respect to targetting, would probably meet the immediate concerns of all NATO members, except Germany (and, for different reasons, France).

3. The German Problem. There would remain a German problem. In the short run, at least, this is not the problem of side-tracking German drives for an independent nuclear capability; these do not now exist. Rather, it is the problem of meeting, within NATO and in a manner acceptable to the US and other members, the apprehensions which have been expressed with particular emphasis, if not solely, by the Germans. Basically, these apprehensions are the same, that is, they have to do with maintaining the credibility of the deterrent and with the nature of NATO's response in the event of a Soviet attack.

According to the Germans it is essential that the NATO military commanders should have control of the logistics of warheads and the decision over use. The Germans have emphasized the point that the Soviets must realize that an attack on Europe - whatever the US response - would be met with widespread destruction to the USSR. To this end, they

SECRET/NOFORN

- 27 -

consider it essential to have MRBM's in Europe, under a control arrangement by which the country attacked, acting with SACEUR, - or SACEUR alone, could direct their use. MRBM's assigned to SACEUR would meet this need, in theory; however, SACEUR envisages the use of these MRBM's in direct support of the NATO shield forces, and not against strategic targets in the USSR, so that their assignment would not necessarily satisfy the requirement set forth by the Germans. A NATO MRBM force, in the sense that it would be a strategic force, would meet this need, under certain control arrangements. It seems that the Germans would not wish a veto arrangement, except a military veto on the part of SACEUR. Apparently, they would be satisfied if SACEUR were an American and they would expect him, in fact but not in form, to consult with the American President.

These Germans views, it should be noted, have been put forward in a purely military context and without any reference to considerations of power or prestige. The need for an effective defense of Germany has been offered as the sole consideration. In the German view this is the basic consideration, the need to demonstrate to the USSR the effective defense of Germany - and so to deter a Soviet attack, or threat, to which the Germans feel they are peculiarly vulnerable.

Actions which would meet the other NATO members concerns, that is, sharing in guidelines for use of all nuclear weapons and the assignment of MRBM's to SACEUR, coupled with periodic and unambiguous US assurances, would to some extent meet the requirements set forth by the Germans but not fully. On the other hand, fully to meet the German requirements

SECRET/NOFORN

- 28 -

would raise problems with other members of the Alliance, to whom most of the German proposals are unacceptable, undesirable, or not feasible.

If Germany is not to remain a dissatisfied member of the Alliance, however, presumably some effort must be made to deal with its concerns. In doing so, however, it may help to recognize that while they are similar in kind to the concerns of the other members, they differ in degree to the point of being a separate problem, -- and that, at the basis of these concerns is the need for reassurance about US intentions, and the need for evidence of US intentions demonstrable to the USSR.

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 29 -

#### 4. Trends

We have thus far been discussing present views of the Europeans regarding national nuclear capabilities, and have indicated that they are likely to persist in the short run, i.e., for the next two years. We have noted that the U.K. and France have national capabilities which they wish to maintain and develop, and that the only other country which might have the urge and ability to undertake the development of one has at present, and for the near future at least, no intent in doing so. At the same time, we have indicated that there is no perceptible drive for an independent European capability in any configurations of national states now organized or in prospect.

This leaves, however, the question of whether, in the longer run, beyond the next two years, some such interest might develop. What are the possibilities or probabilities that the present complex of considerations which actuates and limits the motives and policies of the European states may undergo substantial change? And more specifically, how might the potentialities for change be affected by an enhancement of NATO's nuclear role?

It seems clear that any longer-term estimate on these points must be based in some, if not considerable, measure on speculation and conjecture. Whether or not there remains an area in which useful estimates may be formed can be determined only after further study and extended analysis, in which we are now engaged. Meanwhile, we would offer the following preliminary and very tentative judgments.

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 30 -

It hardly need be said that the development of European views as to the most appropriate policies for national survival -- including the whole spectrum of questions about nuclear capabilities -- will be greatly affected by the behavior and policies of both the USSR and the US. In the present state of East-West relations and of intra-European collaboration there is, as stated above, no indication of any move toward a "European" answer to these questions. Nor do we perceive any clear outlines of a basis for the development of one in the next several years. This point deserves, and in a later paper will be given, considerable elaboration; here we can but briefly note that the distance between the measures of economic collaboration thus far adopted, and the political and military measures involved in an independent, joint European nuclear effort, is indeed great, and the steps needed to traverse it would be many and difficult.

Nevertheless some impetus for independent national or European solutions will remain. We strongly suspect that this is inherent in the situation, and reflects a problem for which there is quite literally no solution. So long as Russia threatens, there will be misgivings about the state or form of NATO defenses. Moreover, these misgivings are likely to continue to be voiced most loudly and explicitly by the Germans, who may also develop an increasing interest in nuclear capabilities for reasons of national prestige as well as those of strictly military security.

But controlling the misgivings, and thus curbing the impetus which they may give to the development of an independent German capability or

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

- 31 -

of a multinational European force is essentially a matter of persuading the Germans and the Europeans that such a force is superfluous because the U.S. is committed to the defense of Europe -- and that this commitment is credible to the USSR. A NATO multilateral force would be but one means of persuasion, and might not be the best in view of the many problems it raises. There are other means of demonstrating the US commitment. Enhancing NATO's nuclear role (but short of a NATO MRBM force); sharing in formulation of policy for the use of nuclear weapons; periodic reassurances to the NATO allies -- these have been suggested. Equally important, however, is the demonstration that the US, in all fields, has a concern for European interests and that the global interests of the US are not in basic conflict with European national interests.

SECRET/NOFORN

CONFIDENTIAL with SECRET/NOFORN attachments

# INR REPORT AND RELEASE FORM

This form and a distribution list must be completed and submitted in duplicate to CS/ILB, Rm. 6528 with each INR issuance. No classified reports are released outside the Department until specific approval is given.

Report Number  
 Research Memo. REU-25

Date Completed  
 January 31, 1962

Number of Pages

Title of Report: European Attitudes on Independent Nuclear Capability

Requester: EUR - Mr. Kohler Requester's Due Date: Jan. 30, 1962  
 Name Agency (Unit if State)

Producer: REU/WS - John McGrath Extension: 4541  
 Office/Division/Project Supervisor/Project Analysts

Distribution by Producer: EUR - Mr. Kohler \*\* Clearances: None  
 Date/No. of Copies (Attach List) Producing Office/Others  
 \*\* No further distribution -- distribution is to requester only.

- ☐ Recommended for release to other US Government agencies (specify on Distribution Form)
- ☐ Recommended for release to UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand
- ☐ Recommended for release to all NATO countries, Australia, and New Zealand
- ☐ Recommended for release to USIB contractors (specify)
- ☐ Recommended for release to other countries (specify)
- ☐ Not recommended for any distribution other than that indicated by the producing office
- ☒ Not recommended for release outside the Department
- ☐ Not recommended for release outside the US Government

Does this Report contain:

Yes No

- ☐ ☒ Statements which might disclose US policy or agreements in the process of formulation or not yet revealed?
- ☒ ☐ Statements about other countries which should not be revealed to foreign recipients?
- ☐ ☒ Classified military information?
- ☐ ☒ Classified information, clearance for which must be obtained from another agency, a foreign government or other non-Departmental intelligence source prior to release?
- ☐ ☒ Information which is the property of private companies or individuals that should not be released?

From the intelligence standpoint, is there any other reason why this report should not be released? ☒ Yes ☐ No

REMARKS: It is intended that as many reports will be released as is possible consistent with security and broad policy considerations. Accordingly, if a report in general seems appropriate for release, excepting certain portions which may require excisions or clearances from other agencies, the responsible officer should recommend release. If any of the preceding questions are answered affirmatively, please explain below as may be appropriate, citing sources and page numbers and indicating passages suggested for deletion, etc.

OBSERVATIONS: Subject is one on which US policy is being formulated; release of this paper might be misinterpreted.

John B. McGrath, REU/WS  
 (Typed Name)

RECEIVED

(Signature)

Jan. 31, 1962  
 (Date)

CONFIDENTIAL with SECRET/NOFORN attachments  
 NS/E