## Origins of the European Security System

This edited volume explores the significance of the early "Helsinki process" as a means of redefining and broadening the concept of security during the latter half of the Cold War.

The early Helsinki process introduced innovative confidence-building measures, and made human rights a requirement of a legitimate and well-functioning international system, thus providing the framework for disarmament in Europe in the mid-1980s, as well as the inspiration for the later demise of Communism in Europe. Using newly declassified archives, the book explores the positions of the two superpowers and the crucial impact of European Community member states, which introduced European values into the Cold War debate on security. It also shows how Eastern and Central European nations, such as Poland, did not restrict themselves to providing support to Moscow but, rather, pursued interests of their own. The volume sheds light on the complementary role of the Neutrals as mediators and special negotiators in the multilateral negotiations, on the interdependence of politics and economics, and on the link between military security and the CSCE process.

This book will be of much interest to students of international history, Cold War studies, European history, and strategic studies.

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## Origins of the European Security System

The Helsinki process revisited 1965–75 Edited by Andreas Wenger, Vojtech Mastny, and Christian Nuenlist

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First published 2008

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge 270 Madison Ave. New York, NY 10016

and Christian Nuenlist; individual chapters, the contributors

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business © 2008 Selection and editorial matter, Andreas Wenger, Vojtech Mastny,

Typeset in Times by Wearset Ltd, Boldon, Tyne and Wear Printed and bound in Great Britain by TJI Digital, Padstow, Cornwall

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data Wenger, Andreas. Origins of the European security system: the Helsinki process revisited,

1965–75 / edited by Andreas Wenger, Vojtech Mastny, and Christian

p. cm. — (CSS studies in security and international relations)

Includes index. 1. Cold war—Diplomatic history. 2. Detente. 3. Conference on Security

and Cooperation in Europe (1972: Helsinki, Finland) I. Mastny, Vojtech, 1936- II Nünlist Christian III Title

JZ5599.W47 2008 909.82'5-dc22 2007049879

ISBN10: 0-415-43387-8 (hbk) ISBN10: 0-203-89530-4 (ebk)

ISBN13: 978-0-415-43387-7 (hbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-203-89530-6 (ebk)

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### Acknowledgments

This book evolved in the context of the Parallel History Project (PHP) on Cooperative Security (www.php.isn.ethz.ch). In an attempt to shed new light on the history of the Cold War, the PHP brings together a network of scholars and academic institutions to collect, analyze, and interpret formerly classified documents from Eastern European and NATO records. Soon after its foundation in early 1999, the PHP initiated an international history project that aimed at providing new scholarly perspectives on the transformation of European security in the early Helsinki process. The opening of archives due to the moving 30-year declassification rule promised a wealth of new material for such a project. The research for the chapters in this book was originally undertaken for a conference convened at ETH Zurich on 7–10 September 2005. The conference was organized by the Center of Security Studies, in cooperation with the National Security Archive at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and the Machiavelli Center for Cold War Studies in Florence.

On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, some 55 leading scholars in the field and ten former diplomats and policy-makers discussed the significance of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) for the redefinition and expansion of the meaning of security. The three-day conference mixed "critical oral history" – the testimonies of contemporary witnesses – with the most recent archive-based historical research. The original texts were rewritten based on the discussion during the conference and the editor's comments. Thus, this book represents the final product of what for us has been an exciting and stimulating collaboration among a group of friends and colleagues.

We have been extraordinarily fortunate to have been assisted by many people and in a variety of ways, from the development of the conference concept through to the publication of the book. We thank Malcolme Byrne and Massimiliano Guderzo for assisting us in the editorial committee set up in early 2004 to review paper proposals and to review critically the first drafts of submitted papers. CSCE diplomats Yuri Kashlev (former Soviet Union), John Maresca (United States), Jacques Andréani (France), Luigi Ferarris (Italy), Siegfried Bock (former East Germany), Nicolae Ecobescu (Romania), Edouard Brunner and Hans-Jörg Renk (Switzerland), and the former British CSCE expert at the

#### xii Acknowledgments

Foreign Office, Sir Crispin Tickell, all shared their insights at the conference. Adam D. Rotfeld, the then foreign minister of Poland, actively participated in the meeting for two days and delivered the introductory keynote speech. We would like to thank all the conference participants who presented their views and provided useful comments. In addition to the authors of this volume, they are Juhana Aunesluoma, Jordan Baev, Oliver Bange, Csaba Békés, Alan Dobson, Thomas Fischer, Kostadin Grozev, Jussi Hanhimäki, Seppo Hentilä, Wanda Jarzabek, Klaus Larres, Gottfried Niedhart, Leopoldo Nuti, Ilaria Poggiolini, Ambassador Rudolf V. Perina, Sandy Roupioz, Erwin Schmidl, and Svetlana Savranskaya.

Our thanks go also to Jennifer Gassmann from the Center for Security Studies for her invaluable help with the organization of the conference and to Swiss pianist André Desponds, who entertained the conference participants with an East–West concert and an improvised "happy birthday" medley for Helga Haftendorn. We are delighted that our project ended up in the capable hands of Andrew Humphrys at Routledge, who has handled the review and production process with great skill. Finally, we thank Christopher Findlay from the Center for Security Studies for his excellent editorial assistance. While we are indebted to all those mentioned above, the final responsibility for any errors is ours alone.

Andreas Wenger, Vojtech Mastny, Christian Nuenlist Zurich and Washington, 15 November 2007

# Part I Introduction

## 1 New perspectives on the origins of the CSCE process

Andreas Wenger and Vojtech Mastny

The Helsinki process remains a controversial legacy of the Cold War. Did the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) play a crucial role in bringing the East–West conflict to an end? Or was it largely irrelevant with the implosion of the Soviet Union that decided the outcome? There is no doubt that Communism collapsed under the weight of its economic inefficiency and the rejection of its repressive political system by its subject peoples. A non-violent ending of the Cold War, however, was not preordained. Developments set in motion by the Helsinki Final Act helped make it possible. By 1989, the CSCE had supplied a normative framework conducive to the peaceful demise of Communism while providing for the radical, but orderly, disarmament that defused military confrontation in Europe. The Helsinki process created the external conditions for the internal legitimization of democratic reform movements in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

It had not always looked that way. The CSCE is a textbook case of history read backwards. At the time when the heads of states gathered to sign the Helsinki Final Act in August 1975, the West widely viewed it as a one-sided Soviet victory that sanctioned Moscow's sphere of influence and the partition of Europe – an assessment that was seemingly supported by the Kremlin's obvious satisfaction. Even after this simplistic view was proven false, as the CSCE became a forum where Moscow was put on the defensive, it remained uncertain how much difference, if any, the verbal battles waged there could eventually make. Few contemporaries were prepared to see the Helsinki process in a larger historical perspective. Only the revolutionary events of 1989/91, which brought the dynamic side of the process to the fore, highlighted the role of human rights in the expansion and redefinition of security. With the benefit of hindsight, the Final Act could be seen as a pyrrhic victory of a short-sighted and overconfident Soviet leadership and a genuine victory for the West's innovative multilateral diplomacy. Soon, however, the CSCE's importance as a viable model for a new European security system began to be overrated.<sup>2</sup>

The Final Act's potential as a catalyst of change was already becoming apparent in 1986 – after the tenth anniversary of the CSCE and before the revolutionary changes in Eastern Europe took place. One of the co-authors of this introductory chapter wrote at that time:

#### 4 A. Wenger and V. Mastny

In the Final Act, the West pledged its respect for the geopolitical realities Moscow deemed essential for its security. For its part, the Soviet Union subscribed to texts that made its domestic conduct a legitimate subject of international scrutiny. It received a better title to something it already had – control of its East European empire. But the West was given a means to facilitate transformation of that empire. The distinction was between the static and the dynamic components of the Final Act, between present and future deliveries, between security as a condition to be achieved and security as a process to be maintained, between an order built on power alone and an order with justice. An open-ended product of unconventional diplomacy, Helsinki was the beginning rather than an end.<sup>3</sup>

This book is about the origins of that beginning – the lengthy run-up to the Final Act that prefigured much of the substance as well as the direction of what would follow. In an attempt to take stock of the most innovative results of recent research, the individual chapters deal with Eastern and Western strategies, analyze the views of the two superpowers, discuss the critical role of the then nine members of the nascent European Community, and evaluate the contributions of the neutral and nonaligned countries. The authors used a wealth of new evidence from a multitude of archives and many valuable testimonies by the diplomatic eyewitnesses of the time. The CSCE was a largely open process – the reason why much of its record already became available and published at the time. But enough of the preparatory work and deliberations behind the scenes remained hidden, only to become available later on. The records from the Warsaw Pact archives have been particularly revealing, as the Communist countries' common – or not so common – strategy on the security conference was being hammered out at the meetings of the alliance's committees.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the early writings by participants in the Helsinki preparatory talks, particularly those by John J. Maresca and Luigi V. Ferraris, remain valuable accounts of the prehistory of the Final Act. They have more recently been supplemented by additional accounts from both Western and Eastern sides. In 2003, the Machiavelli Center for Cold War Studies – a consortium of Italian universities – organized an oral history conference in Florence on the period, the audio files of which are available on the website of the Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (PHP), the organizer of the 2005 conference in Zurich, of which the present book is the main product. The Florence conference was followed in the following year by a workshop in Padua, the papers of which were subsequently published. In 2007, an oral history workshop in Vienna dealt with the role of the neutral and non-aligned states, particularly during the CSCE's preparatory stages.<sup>5</sup>

The European security conference – originally a Soviet project first floated by Foreign Minister Viacheslav M. Molotov in 1954 – had long been a non-starter. Calculated to split the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) by excluding the US from the list of the prospective participants, the proposal elicited tentative interest from among some of NATO's member countries that were disgrun-

tled about American leadership, but no action ensued, despite the protracted crisis of the alliance in the 1960s. The idea appealed more to Soviet allies because of the opportunity it might provide for them to assert themselves in the international arena — which was why Moscow, facing disarray within its own alliance as well, vacillated in pressing the project. Only with the onset of détente at the end of the decade were the necessary preconditions in place for the conference to be given serious consideration.

This introductory chapter begins by dealing with the background of the change. NATO had been consolidated after adopting the Harmel formula in 1967, which envisaged pursuing defense together with détente. The Soviet Union, having acted to "normalize" the situation in Czechoslovakia and consolidated the Warsaw Pact as a result, was getting ready for détente in Europe as well – all the more so since it was at the same time facing a possible military confrontation with China in the Far East. The new conference proposal by the Warsaw Pact summit of March 1969, which left the door open to American and Canadian participation, finally set the project in motion. Even so, more than three additional years would pass before the main conference would actually meet.

The diplomatic maneuvering that ensued showed that the two superpowers saw détente as a static, stability-oriented project that would be shaped bilaterally rather than multilaterally. Both Washington and Moscow focused on military security. However, their vision of top-down détente clashed with the political interests of their allies. The small and medium-sized members of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact perceived détente as a more dynamic process, which could eventually favor change over the status quo, and emphasized the multilateral dimension of détente. Reacting to these bloc-internal challenges, Washington decided to cut its losses, moderate its hegemonic leadership style of the 1950s, and leave the initiative for political détente in the hands of its European allies.<sup>6</sup>

The main surprise resulting from recent research is how much these differences permeated relations not only within the voluntary Western alliance of democratic nations, but also within the involuntary alliance of Communist dictatorships regimented by Moscow that was NATO's Eastern counterpart. The asymmetry did not prevent the regimes from trying to pursue their own priorities, preferably – though not necessarily – with, rather than against, the Soviet Union. Nor was the Soviet Union, regardless of its strengthened hold on the Warsaw Pact, interested in dictating its will without consultation, however limited. In trying to forge a common strategy on the security conference, it felt compelled to treat its dependents somewhat more as partners than it had been previously accustomed to.

This was particularly the case with regard to the German question, which – as shown in the second part of this chapter, on the period of 1969–72 – determined the internal dynamics within both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The launching of West Germany's new *Ostpolitik* by the Brandt government in 1969 created problems for both alliances. Before responding to its initiatives, the Soviet Union convened its allies to reassure them about its intentions. At the same time,

the West feared that Bonn's opening toward the East could lead to German neutralism, and hence tried to ensure that the progress of *Ostpolitik* be firmly anchored within NATO and monitored by it. Not until Bonn's "Eastern treaties" had been concluded in Moscow and Warsaw to both Soviet and Western satisfaction did the project for the security conference start moving toward preparatory talks.

The chapter continues with the period from 1972–74, which shows why the EC Nine were able to assert themselves in a leading position during the preparatory talks. US–European differences on the relationship between the conventional force reduction talks (MBFR) and the CSCE negotiations, as well as on the potentially more important issue of free movement, which entailed the prospect of evolutionary change in Eastern Europe, could not be resolved within NATO. While Washington was distracted by its economic problems, the Vietnam War, and the Watergate scandal, the CSCE preparations became the catalyst of the European Community's emerging foreign policy. It was during the preparatory talks that the EC Nine managed to win acceptance of their model for the conference.

The chapter ends with the period from 1974–75, which helps explain why and how the West, in a changing international environment, was able to overcome its differences and maintain a common front throughout the Geneva stage of the preparatory negotiations. While the Western European strategy depended to some degree on support by the neutral and non-aligned countries, in the end active support by the US was indispensable. It was provided by Henry Kissinger who, notwithstanding his skepticism about the CSCE project, secured the key Soviet concession that made the Final Act possible.

#### Superpower détente and allies' self-interest, 1963-68

After the Berlin crisis and the Cuban missile standoff, changes were under way in both Eastern Europe and Western Europe. Taking a step back from nuclear danger, by 1963 the two superpowers began to move towards a *modus vivendi* in their bilateral relations. Superpower bilateralism, however, did not do justice to the concerns of the Eastern and Western allies. The nuclear impasse between Moscow and Washington did not allow for a satisfactory settlement of the issues that were top priorities in Bonn, Paris, and London, as well as in Warsaw, Bucharest, and East Berlin. Washington's and Moscow's focus on the stability of their relationship nourished fears of a superpower sell-out of their allies' interests. Not surprisingly, therefore, détente initiatives tended to emanate from other capitals than Washington and Moscow.<sup>7</sup>

Top-down détente, dominated by the global interests of the two hegemons, was unattractive to their respective allies. Those in the American camp began to pursue a more independent and assertive foreign policy. They were not necessarily consistent about it. While longing for the permanence of the US nuclear umbrella, they regarded the superpowers' jockeying for hypothetical military advantage as both dangerous and pointless. They were disturbed by the diver-

sion of Washington's attention from Europe to Southeast Asia, yet encouraged by the room the diversion gave them for voicing their preferences for détente more vigorously.<sup>8</sup>

The same was true about Soviet allies – with allowances made for the qualitative distinction between a voluntary and a coercive alliance as well as that between governments responsive to the will of the people and those imposing their will upon the people. Eastern Europe's ruling elites had reason to be disturbed about the creeping re-militarization of the Cold War under Nikita S. Khrushchev's successors in the Kremlin. In trying to contest it, they also had opportunities they had not had before. The simultaneous loosening of the bloc discipline under a less cohesive and overbearing Kremlin leadership provided them with opportunities to pursue their own interests if they wanted to.

#### Warsaw Pact: towards reaffirmation of Soviet hegemony

Ferment within the Warsaw Pact was more prevalent than its façade of totalitarian unity suggested. Douglas Selvage in his chapter explores the diverse national interests behind the intensified Eastern calls for a security conference during the 1960s. At the alliance's January 1965 summit, the Romanian party leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej questioned Soviet secretary general Leonid I. Brezhnev's call for an arms buildup by arguing that the Western challenge could be better met by détente. Romania, appalled by Khrushchev's high-risk gamble during the Cuban missile crisis, proceeded to obstruct the Soviet-backed draft of a nonproliferation treaty, pressing for one that would make it more difficult for both superpowers to keep expanding their nuclear arsenals. For its part, Poland tried to revive, with rather than against the Soviet Union, Khrushchev's 1955 call for a European security system, adapted to serve Polish purposes better. These included military disengagement and political rapprochement across ideological lines, as publicized in plans by Polish foreign minister Adam Rapacki. Implying a reduction of Moscow's exclusive influence in Central Europe, the plans elicited no more than lukewarm Soviet endorsement.9

Discomfort about the military courses the alliances were taking gave rise among their respective members to yearnings for détente that triggered the parallel crises of NATO and the Warsaw Pact in the latter part of the 1960s. Moscow's efforts since early 1966 to solidify the Warsaw Pact by bolstering its still rudimentary institutions, thus making it into something more closely approximating a functional equivalent of NATO, aggravated the crisis. Originally intended to be accomplished in a matter of weeks, the proposed reform would drag on for three years. It prompted some of the junior allies to seek more influence on the management of the alliance and encouraged Romania to seek restriction of Moscow's predominance. In contrast to the Soviet Union, they all wished for a less military and more political organization. Gromyko described the strengthening of the Warsaw Pact as part of the "struggle for détente," another part of which was to be the concurrent weakening and, preferably, demise of NATO.

Campaigning for the non-renewal of the North Atlantic Treaty upon its expiration in 1969, the Soviet Union rallied its allies behind the call for a European conference that would lead to a "collective" security system, presumably superseding the two military groupings. The July 1966 Bucharest declaration that called for a new framework, however, was not so much a Soviet accomplishment as that of Poland, the main champion of the conference, and especially Romania. Having appropriated, to the dismay of the Soviets, Khrushchev's original idea of simultaneous dissolution of both alliances, the Romanians exacted from Moscow a deferment of its Warsaw Pact reorganization plans as the price of their consent to the declaration issued by the conference. By early 1967, Polish Foreign Minister Rapacki had managed to win the support of his Warsaw Pact colleagues for the so-called "Warsaw package," in effect linking the progress of détente to Western acceptance of the territorial status quo, including the Polish and East German borders.

The 1968 Soviet crackdown in Czechoslovakia seemed to bury the package, but prospects for détente actually brightened in its aftermath. It was not the restoration of Soviet-style normalcy in the restive empire, however, but the persisting uncertainty about the way in which it had been attained that provided the necessary setting. The landmark meeting of Warsaw Pact representatives in Budapest in March 1969, which happened to coincide with the climax of armed confrontation along the Sino-Soviet border, reiterated the call for a European security conference – for the first time without preconditions. It also finally enacted most, but not all, of the institutional reforms Moscow had been striving for. The compromise consisted in adding military dimensions to the Warsaw Pact while giving its members a greater say in its councils, thus giving them more incentive to toe the Soviet line voluntarily.

As military conflict with China continued to loom, Moscow decided to supplement the normalization in Eastern Europe with the normalization of its relations with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Securing the Soviet Union's European flank while demonstrating the Warsaw Pact's unity was essential in view of the escalating tensions with China, as noted by Bernd Schaefer in his chapter on China and the CSCE. Selvage views the Soviet push for the security conference as an opportunity to reaffirm its hegemony over Eastern Europe. Détente entailed a calculated risk for the Soviet Union, as Marie-Pierre Rey notes in her chapter on its CSCE strategies. Opening the closed Soviet system to the West was bound to undermine it unless détente could be managed on Soviet terms to avoid paying a price. In trying to limit the risk, Moscow acted to tighten controls both at home and over its empire. The crackdown on dissidents and the increased pressure on Romania to streamline the Warsaw Pact were some of the results.

#### NATO: towards compromise on political leadership

During much of the 1960s, the NATO allies found themselves on the defensive with regard to détente. Although Western public opinion increasingly demanded

a more active détente policy, a majority of the US and European political elites rejected the idea of an early security conference. At the same time, like their Eastern counterparts, Western elites increasingly disagreed about political leadership within their alliance. In Paris and Bonn, Washington's willingness to negotiate with Moscow was interpreted within the context of the growing vulnerability of the US homeland to Soviet nuclear attack. For both West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and France's President Charles de Gaulle, bilateral superpower negotiations linking the German and Berlin questions with nuclear arms control and a non-aggression treaty were incompatible with their countries' sovereignty and political independence.<sup>10</sup>

Most Western Europeans wanted to increase their political clout in dealing with the US, but disagreed about the ways and means. They vacillated between their commitments to the evolving European integration and to the Atlantic alliance. Although London concluded that it needed to join the Common Market to be rid of its economic problems, its political vision remained decidedly transatlantic - the main reason why de Gaulle vetoed British entry to the European Community in January 1963. The French leader also opposed military integration within NATO as well as the alliance's role as a forum for political consultation and coordination. Moreover, Washington's new emphasis on conventional forces and tighter central nuclear control were obstacles to his quest for an independent French security strategy. Even less acceptable politically to him were US attempts to negotiate bilaterally a European settlement with the Soviet Union. In de Gaulle's view, US forces would have to leave Europe before the historic process of détente could be accomplished.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, national control over nuclear weapons – by France if not by any additional European nation – was a prerequisite of a French bid for détente.

De Gaulle's vision of an independent European polity under French leadership had few supporters in Western Europe. In the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis, the president attempted to boost French influence in Europe by forming a close partnership with the FRG. Most West Germans, however, favored a strong transatlantic partnership and did not want to be forced to choose between Washington and Bonn. Once it became clear that the French–German Elysée Treaty of 1963 would not work the way de Gaulle had hoped, and once France's *force de frappe* became operational in 1964, he decided to seek détente with Moscow bilaterally. Paris soon began to court the smaller East European countries and in June 1966 de Gaulle traveled to Moscow. Only a few weeks earlier, France had announced that it would withdraw from NATO's integrated military command, bringing into the open NATO's simmering crisis.<sup>12</sup>

De Gaulle's challenge to NATO threatened to undermine the FRG's position in the postwar world, which was built on the country's integration into the multi-lateral framework of the alliance. The most likely, and most dangerous, reaction to the French withdrawal from NATO would be for the FRG to shift towards political and military neutralism, potentially spurring another Soviet–German deal à la Rapallo. Three parallel developments allowed the remaining allies to

overcome the centrifugal forces set in motion by the Gaullist challenge and create the necessary preconditions for eventually discussing European security with the Soviet Union. First, the trilateral talks among Washington, Bonn, and London forged a new consensus on economic and security priorities, paving the way for a new consensus of the 14 remaining member states of NATO's military structure on strategy, force levels, and nuclear planning.

Second, the FRG's first coalition government between the CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union) and the SPD (Social Democratic Party) fundamentally reoriented the FRG's policies towards Eastern Europe. The government of Kurt Kiesinger, with Willy Brandt as foreign minister, prioritized environment improvement over reunification. The crucial question, however, was whether the FRG would attempt to implement such a policy within NATO or whether it would follow the French line of achieving German and European unity by dissolving NATO and the Warsaw Pact. <sup>13</sup>

Third, it was precisely the key function of the "Harmel exercise" to demonstrate that the East–West dialog on European security could be anchored in NATO's multilateral structures. The report acknowledged the danger of selective détente and stressed that the US presence in Europe would remain vital to a peaceful order even after a European settlement. In return, the US government agreed to leave the lead of political détente to the Europeans and, as Michael Cotey Morgan explains in his chapter, decided to focus on military NATO and arms control.

The allies accepted that the FRG had a special responsibility with regard to the pace of political détente and contacts between the two German states. In return, Bonn agreed that NATO institutions would play a key role in harmonizing and coordinating the détente policies of the West. France did not want to sacrifice its position as a member of the political aspect of NATO and decided to accept the strengthened political role of the alliance. In return, Washington agreed to drop the proposals for the establishment of new political machinery within NATO. This was important because it kept the option of an autonomous European foreign policy mechanism on the table, which would become another tool for the Europeans to exert some influence over the pace and direction of Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. The "Harmel Exercise" thus created the necessary preconditions within NATO to link progress on a security conference with progress on *Ostpolitik*.

#### Ostpolitik and the CSCE, 1969-72

In its call for the European security conference, the East had been the *demandeur*. By 1969, however, the call could be expected to fall on receptive ears as the West became more amenable to détente. This, however, was not immediately the case with the US, since the new administration under Richard Nixon, which was aiming for progress toward a strategic arms control agreement as its top priority, continued to regard the conference project as a Soviet ploy. As outsiders with a vital interest in European security, the US and Canada aimed pri-

marily at securing their participation while upholding allied solidarity, as Michael Cotey Morgan reminds us in his chapter.

De Gaulle, too, was mistrustful of the Soviet proposal. In June, however, the succession to the French presidency of George Pompidou, who believed the project could be turned to the West's advantage, changed the situation. That belief had been shared by the British government of Prime Minister Harold Wilson, provided NATO could maintain its unity in dealing with the Soviet initiative. But most important for the conference's future was the coming into power of the West German government of Chancellor Willy Brandt in September 1969. The launching of its new *Ostpolitik* allowed to link the settlement of the German question with the Soviet demand for the conference, thus setting the stage for East—West bargaining.

The Soviet Union was taken aback by the interest its allies began to show in the CSCE once it had entrusted them with sounding out individual Western European governments bilaterally. Poland went the farthest in developing innovative concepts of security. It annoyed the Soviets by drafting a security treaty that would unite European states in a new organization and by preparing its charter as well. The proposals drawn up in Warsaw envisaged a continent in which the military confrontation would be blunted and the influence of both superpowers limited. They are referred to in the final part of Selvage's chapter. <sup>15</sup>

For different reasons, both Romania and East Germany initially obstructed the campaign for the security conference. Bucharest looked forward to a conference that, by treating all participating states as sovereign equals, would help them minimize Soviet interference in their affairs. They therefore opposed efforts to use the alliance to forge a common policy as a group, as promoted by the East Germans, who wanted to bolster their drive for international recognition – the theme analyzed in Federica Caciagli's contribution. They went so far as to demand that recognition of East German sovereignty be made a precondition for convening the conference. In the fall of 1969, Moscow found it necessary to solicit Hungarian support to fend off "extreme Polish, Romanian, and East German demands" that could "effectively strangle the [CSCE] baby in the cradle." <sup>16</sup>

The Hungarians were supportive, but advanced their own ideas, some of which, if implemented, could have resulted in making the Warsaw Pact obsolete more quickly than they would NATO. Such would have been the likely consequence of creating the security institutions and procedures Budapest suggested. These were to include a permanent European security council as a political body (an idea also favored by the Romanians), which would be created after a general agreement had been reached on the continent's new security order, and a system of follow-up conferences that would implement it. Opinions differed about whether the conference should be a one-time affair or a continuous process.

Suspicious of an open-ended process it would not be able to control, Moscow delayed discussion about the Hungarian proposals, prevailed upon the Poles not to publicize their unorthodox ideas, and restrained East Germany's clamor for

international recognition.<sup>17</sup> However, since all of the Communist regimes were anxious to draw a line to prevent discussion on anything that might endanger their security of their arbitrary power at home, they were willing to submit to Moscow's lead, with the single exception of Romania.

On the Western side, too, there was less discomfort among the small states than among the big powers about where the process might lead once it had been started. The idea of an all-European security forum appeared most attractive to those countries that had already developed extensive contacts with Warsaw Pact members, particularly with Poland, such as was the case with Belgium and the Nordic countries. Like their Eastern counterparts, they welcomed an opportunity to make themselves heard.

With its stated goal of overcoming the rigidity of Germany's division through rapprochement with the East, Bonn's policy introduced an element of uncertainty as some of its proponents dropped hints that its attainment presupposed the dissolution of the military alliances. Petri Hakkarainen shows how Bonn's bilateral opening toward the East was accompanied by allied fears of another Rapallo. Policy-makers in allied capitals were nervous that *Ostpolitik* might lead to German neutralism. Brandt, however, was able to reassure both Washington and the NATO allies, who in turn decided to support his attempt to make progress toward the security conference conditional on progress of the *Ostpolitik*. Between 1968 and mid-1972, Western preparations for a security conference evolved primarily within the institutional structures of the alliance.

Concern about NATO's integrity permeated US and British attitudes toward the conference proposal. Under pressure from Washington, the allies fell in line by agreeing to deal jointly with the challenge. They decided not to oppose the conference but delay it, insisting on preparatory talks to clarify its particulars. In May 1970, NATO formally declared its willingness to negotiate about the conference Moscow wanted, but on condition that parallel talks would be started on what the West wanted, namely, "mutual and balanced" reductions of conventional forces (MBFR). In addition to US and Canadian participation, the Soviet Union would have to accept the MBFR in exchange for Western consent to the conference and the participation of GDR, which amounted to de facto international recognition of the German Communist state.

Subsequently, the prospects for either talks remained in abeyance while the superpowers turned their attention to the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) and while the "Eastern treaties" that were to normalize relations between West Germany and the Soviet bloc were being negotiated. Washington, in particular, linked progress on the security conference to the progress of the four-power talks on Berlin. In effect, this provided the US with a monitoring device and veto over the progress of Brandt's *Ostpolitik*.

The German question was central to the bloc-internal dynamics both within NATO and within the Warsaw Pact. Increasingly, as Petri Hakkarainen shows in his chapter, the FRG became the epicenter of multilateral preparations for the conference, now referred to as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Progress on the *Ostpolitik* was anchored in a multitude of mul-

tilateral structures, including NATO, the four-power Bonn group, and the emerging European Political Cooperation (EPC). It was the initial uncertainty about the course of the *Ostpolitik* that prompted Belgian diplomat Étienne Davignon to design the EPC to ensure the policy's conformity with larger European interests.<sup>19</sup>

With the help of its allies, the FRG was able to delay the CSCE long enough to conclude its key Eastern treaties. The breakthrough came in August, with the Treaty of Moscow, in which West Germany recognized the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. Four months later, Poland secured recognition of its borders by Bonn in the Treaty of Warsaw. The GDR, however, had to settle for the continuation of four-power rights for the time being. It would only win de facto acknowledgment from Bonn in the Basic Treaty of 1972, a few days before the beginning of the Multilateral Preparatory Talks (MPT) in Helsinki.

From a Western perspective, the linkage strategy had served its main purpose with the achievement of the "Eastern treaties." Soon France began to push for a quick convocation of the conference. Bonn, by contrast, became progressively more interested in the substantive side of a security conference, arguing that the issue of freer movement provided an opportunity for grass-root improvements of intra-German affairs, as Petri Hakkarainen shows in his chapter. This shift in emphasis brought the FRG into conflict with Washington, which was still busy trying to restrain the growing European enthusiasm for a security conference.<sup>20</sup> Disagreement on matters of substance multiplied among NATO members. As the MPT moved closer, the leading role in the West's preparation for a security conference had begun to shift from NATO to the EC Nine.

As détente began to show results, the CSCE assumed key strategic, rather than merely tactical, importance for the Soviet Union. It became Leonid Brezhnev's blueprint for a new European order, to which he personally committed his prestige. <sup>21</sup> In his keynote speech to the January 1972 summit of the Warsaw Pact, he outlined the future of the Eastern alliance in political rather than military terms. While ruling out its dissolution together with that of NATO any time soon, he expressed belief in their gradual rapprochement once an agreement had been reached on the general principles of European security, which he expected to be approved by the CSCE before the end of that year.

The seven principles, published in the summit's communiqué in response to NATO's demand for clarification half a year earlier, were general enough to be unexceptionable: inviolability of frontiers; renunciation of force; peaceful coexistence; good neighborly relations based on independence, national sovereignty, equality, and noninterference in internal affairs; mutually advantageous interstate relations; disarmament; and support of the UN. The principles conveyed the recognition that security depended on more than merely troops and armaments. In view of what the Kremlin came to regard as an irreversible decline of US power and influence, however, they could be interpreted and manipulated by the Soviet Union.<sup>22</sup>

Rather than "equal security," what was at issue was security dominance. This was why the Chinese Communists, as shown in Bernd Schaefer's contribution in

this volume, denounced the CSCE as a European insecurity conference, designed to "Finlandize" Western Europe, and tried to convince the West not to buy it. But it was the West Europeans who would turn the tables on Moscow during the preparatory talks they insisted must be held before the main conference could take place.

## Western Europe takes the lead: multilateral preparatory talks, 1972–73

In both Washington and Moscow, the focus of key policy-makers was on the development of bilateral superpower détente rather than on the multilateral preparations for the CSCE. The May 1972 Nixon–Brezhnev summit culminated in the SALT I treaty and the Agreement on Basic Principles, whereby each side conceded the other's right to "equal security" and vowed to respect the other's vital interests. As Jeremi Suri highlights in his chapter, the summit signaled superpower preference for détente based on status quo, which promised security through great-power cooperation.<sup>23</sup>

Both Soviet and American political elites were ambivalent about the merits of the CSCE. Some Soviet party leaders and KGB officials were suspicious of its multilateralism, fearing risks to domestic and bloc stability. But, as Marie-Pierre Rey explains in her chapter, these skeptical views were offset by interest in a symbolic conclusion of World War II that would perpetuate a multilaterally sanctioned status quo. Brezhnev wanted to appear to the world as a man of peace. In Washington, the lack of White House interest in the CSCE was accentuated by Henry Kissinger's aversion to multilateral diplomacy, matched by his penchant for bilateral deal-making, as explained by Michael Morgan and Jeremi Suri in their contributions. Washington was not interested in leading the Western allies toward the conference, but merely in upholding their solidarity.<sup>24</sup>

In NATO's internal debate in 1971, US-European differences on the substance of the CSCE escalated over the question of whether priority should be given to it or to the MBFR. Most Europeans cared more about the CSCE than about the MBFR, which Washington had made a precondition for its consent to the conference desired by Moscow. They feared that tampering with the military balance could be destabilizing; France, in particular, preferred détente without disarmament. Besides, since Europeans had a limited say in arms control, they favored the CSCE, with its principle of sovereign equality. As a consequence, NATO member states never agreed on a common MBFR negotiating position, as Helga Haftendorn explains in her chapter.

West Germany – as well as Romania – wanted to link the MBFR with the CSCE by including disarmament issues in the security conference. Washington used the MBFR to fend off Senator Mike Mansfield's calls for the withdrawal of US troops from Europe. Paris opposed the MBFR talks in principle because they would cement bloc-to-bloc relations. NATO's appointment in December 1971 of its secretary general, Manlio Brosio, as its MBFR negotiator came to nothing. Not only was it opposed by both Paris and Washington, but Moscow also

declined to receive him. In a secret deal with the Soviets in April 1972, Kissinger agreed to the establishment of the CSCE and MBFR as separate forums – a fait accompli that infuriated Europeans. The Soviets agreed to start exploratory talks on MBFR in return for US willingness to do the same with the CSCE. No sooner had the MBFR started in 1973, however, than it bogged down amid disagreements about how the asymmetrical forces should be counted.

In the meantime, West Europeans had taken the lead in preparations for the CSCE. The shift from NATO to the European Community as the preparatory framework reflected the centrality of the issue of free movement, first pressed by the French, in Western strategy for the conference. Different perspectives conveyed different perceptions of détente. Both the US and Dutch governments, for example, saw the issue of freer movement as a central element in political warfare, aimed at exposing the closed Communist societies to the West. But while policy-makers in Washington did not expect substantive change in Eastern Europe any time soon, their counterparts in The Hague deliberately and purposefully sought to undermine the Communist regimes' hold on power. Floribert Baudet reveals this offensive strategy in his chapter.

In contrast, the FRG, loath to wage a propaganda battle, favored an evolutionary approach, a continuation of *Ostpolitik* by multilateral means, aimed particularly at "change through rapprochement" in the GDR. Since NATO was unable to reach a consensus on freer movement during its consultations in the summer of 1971, the FRG, with French support, took the issue to the nascent European Political Cooperation. At the time, the EC was a more authentic community of values than NATO, which counted the repressive regimes in Greece, Turkey, and Portugal among its members. Daniel Möckli explains how human rights became a catalyst in the rise of Europe's common foreign policy. The EC caucus at the preparatory talks was the key driving force behind the expanding notion of security that included recognition of human rights.<sup>25</sup>

The ability of the EC Nine to assert themselves in a leading position with regard to Western CSCE preparations met with tacit approval by Washington. The US chose to keep a low profile and act as their loyal partner. According to Duccio Basosi, US economic weakness at the time was a key factor. Nixon's decision of August 1971 to end the convertibility of the dollar into gold undermined the Bretton Woods monetary system that had existed since World War II, threatening to disrupt the European Common Market and its projected Monetary Union. The president feared that a US–European trade dispute and the fragility of the European economies might drive the allies into the arms of the Soviets. In any case, the US delegation had no more specific instructions than to promote allied solidarity when the preparatory talks started in November 1972.

The distraction of the US by the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal, as well as the harmonious relationship between the EC and NATO, help explain why the EC Nine in 1973 were able to dominate the talks at the time of a severe transatlantic crisis. Kissinger's ill-conceived "Year of Europe" initiative prompted the EC, which as of January 1973 included Britain, Ireland, and Denmark as new members, to speak with one voice. <sup>26</sup> In March 1973, the

economic crisis peaked with the dismissal of the Bretton Woods system. Later that year, transatlantic relations reached their nadir. The outbreak of the Arab–Israeli war in October, which led to a split between the US and Europe, and the asymmetric impact of the energy crisis, brought the accumulated tension to boil.

At the preparatory talks, the Western European caucus introduced its characteristic procedural innovations into the CSCE, as Daniel Möckli shows in his chapter. These included the three-stage system proceeding from general discussion to work in committees, the results of which would then be approved at the highest level. The requirement that consensus be achieved on a set of issues before proceeding to the next set meant that the negotiators were almost "condemned to succeed."27 Arranging the agenda into "baskets," an idea credited to the Swiss, allowed the most important items to be gathered together and submitted to exhaustive discussion despite the Soviet penchant for generalities. Thus came about the "Basket Three" of the Western desiderata bearing on the practices that Communist regimes saw necessary to engage in to maintain themselves in power - from keeping inconvenient ideas out to keeping recalcitrant citizens in. Having thus introduced domestic security into a conference originally designed to deal exclusively with interstate relations, the ensuing discussion then branched off in different directions while moving from the general to the specific.

The EC Nine conceded the key Soviet demand for the inviolability of frontiers in return for Soviet agreement to place human rights on the agenda. While Basket II on economic cooperation, pursued by the East, remained uncontroversial, the EC Nine, together with Canada, won support for a substantive CSCE mandate on human contacts, information, culture, and education. The US helped by refusing to strike bilateral bargains with Moscow while leaving the initiative to the Europeans and Canadians.

To the surprise of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the four neutral states of Europe – in particular, Finland as impartial host and Switzerland as a very active participant – played a constructive role as mediators between East and West and as a catalyst for compromise proposals throughout the multilateral preparatory talks, as Christian Nuenlist explains in his chapter. The Finnish invitation of May 1969 to host the security conference in Helsinki had included both German states, as well as the US and Canada, thus expediting Soviet acceptance of their participation in return for the West's acceptance of GDR participation. Yet it was only after the breakthrough of *Ostpolitik* with the successful conclusion of the "Eastern treaties" that the neutral states began to perceive the conference as an opportunity to expand their foreign policy profile and to strengthen their sovereignty while reaffirming their international status as neutral countries. Acting in loose coordination, the Neutrals made good use of their space for maneuver. Some of their diplomats became core members of the conference.

## Reaffirmation of US leadership and the Helsinki Act, 1974–75

The escalating transatlantic tension did not bode well for Western cohesion as the CSCE negotiations moved from Dipoli to Geneva in September 1973. Three parallel developments helped the West to overcome the diverging transatlantic interests and maintain a common front through the protracted Geneva negotiations.

First, the visible limits of détente between the superpowers in the aftermath of their showdown during the October 1973 Middle Eastern war eased European fears of their condominium. Kissinger's adroit diplomacy started pushing Moscow out of the Middle East. In the US, domestic support for détente with the Soviet Union was falling apart. Criticism of the failure of SALT II to stop the qualitative growth of the Soviet nuclear arsenal intensified. In the spring of 1974, the US Congress dampened Moscow's hopes for an expansion of East–West trade by refusing to give it the Most Favored Nation (MFN) status.

Second, the EPC's limitations as an engine of common European policy alleviated US concern about it. Two of the key architects of the EPC, Pompidou and Prime Minister Edward Heath of Great Britain, had left office in mid-1974. As not only the EPC, but also the Monetary Union project ground to a halt, the dynamic period of European integration ended. The energy crisis exposed Europe's economic vulnerability and dependence on US leadership in the Middle East, driving Europeans back to the US fold. In June 1974, NATO's "Declaration of Atlantic Relations" reaffirmed the alliance's common values and its indispensability, thus putting a happy end on the unhappy "Year of Europe."

Third, the resurgence of US economic power fostered Washington's willingness to lead, as Duccio Basosi explains in his analysis. As a remedy to the energy crisis, Kissinger triumphantly inaugurated the International Energy Agency under US sponsorship. The simultaneous launching by Secretary of the Treasury George Shultz of what eventually became the G-6 group of leading Western industrial nations would provide Washington with an alternative forum to NATO, which could be used to hammer out economic disputes and maintain US economic preeminence. For the Soviet Union, this ended any hopes that it could have the bounties of Western technology while dictating the terms of East–West trade. The exchange of US grain for Soviet oil not only diversified the supply of oil for thirsty Western markets, but also confirmed the supremacy of the West's economic structures.

By mid-1974, the US was back in business while the negotiations were dragging on in Geneva. Trying to speed them up, Kissinger pressed Europeans to pursue "realistic demands." Supported by Canada, however, the Europeans were strong enough to fend off his push to define minimum goals and end the negotiations as soon as possible. Since Moscow obviously did not want to get bogged down in endless talks, playing it slow increased the chances of extracting Soviet concessions. By swamping the conference with proposals for practical improvements in Basket III, the EC Nine put the East on the defensive. They secured the

important acceptance of the CSCE's system of follow-up conferences to monitor the implementation of its decisions. Daniel Möckli also rightly credits the European caucus with imprinting upon the CSCE its dynamic dimension of expanding security.

The strategy depended on crucial support from the neutral and non-aligned countries. During the Geneva negotiations, their loose coordination began to transform into much closer cooperation. As such, they became a diplomatic forum that contributed compromise proposals at critical junctions of the multilateral negotiations process. Nuenlist discusses their initiatives, which were critical for overcoming the impasse in Basket III, and some of their proposals on the diffusion of information and the enhancement of working conditions of journalists that made it into the Final Act. In the provisions of Basket I on the military aspects of security, particularly the confidence-building measures, the specifics of notification of military maneuvers closely followed the compromise language introduced by the Neutrals. Their strong commitment to the principles of follow-up conferences to monitor the CSCE's results proved supportive of the position of the EC Nine. The tabling of the final compromise solution by Switzerland and Finland made it easier for the Soviet Union to drop its demand for a permanent political institution.

More importantly, the success of the European strategy depended on Washington's refusal to strike a bilateral deal with Moscow. Kissinger gradually realized the tangible advantages of the multilateral European approach. Turning the screws on the Soviets by highlighting the authoritarian nature of their state system also promised to attract popular support at home, thus helping to silence those who had been accusing him of being soft on Communism. His belated decision to back the allies was instrumental in harvesting major concessions from the East. He was responsible for the crucial tradeoff that made possible the adoption of an essentially Western Final Act. As Jeremi Suri puts it, Kissinger made a virtue out of necessity. The Final Act came about both despite and because of him.

#### Conclusion

The early CSCE process emphasized stability over change, as preferred particularly by the two superpowers. Amid nuclear parity, diffusion of political power, and domestic unrest, they both perceived détente as a stability-oriented project to uphold the status quo. Neither superpower expected the CSCE to trigger domestic forces in a way that would be conducive to a fundamental change of the European order. In the grand scheme of things, they regarded the CSCE as a diplomatic footnote, as human rights rhetoric did not seem to make a difference to the realities of power.

The perspective of the small and medium-sized powers was different. Superpower détente threatened their national interests and political independence. Political détente and the CSCE's principle of sovereign equality offered them an opportunity to increase their international clout as "soft" powers. The multilater-

alization of détente, along with greater political and military transparency, promised to overcome Europe's division peacefully and perhaps bear the seeds of a better political order on the continent and beyond.

To be sure, the situation was not the same on both sides of the European divide. For all their disagreements, the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe shared with their Soviet patron a vested interest in the preservation of the repressive domestic systems that kept them in power. The element of change, however, was highly relevant for the development of intra-alliance politics in a time of détente, and here the differences between the two blocs are telling. In the context of escalating tension with China, Moscow chose to use the security conference as a means of increasing its control over all Warsaw Pact members. Reaffirming the Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe, Moscow had already achieved most of its key aims with the Eastern treaties. The CSCE would multilateralize the territorial status quo and, on a symbolic level, bring World War II to a close. Other than this, Eastern elites were unable to develop a forward-looking CSCE strategy that would support the aspirations of both the Soviet and the Eastern European populations.

Washington, by contrast, was prepared to turn over the lead in the political détente to its allies. CSCE preparations in the West went along with a fundamental transformation of Western multilateral cooperation. While NATO was critical for monitoring the development of the FRG's *Ostpolitik*, its political functions would always remain closely linked to its military strength. The establishment of the complementary political structure of the EPC, which was closely linked to the CSCE process, and the institution of a new economic structure in the form of the G-6 were critical elements in the restoration of the unity of the West. No longer would NATO have to achieve the impossible compromise between military security and economic prosperity alone. The establishment of the G-6 structure restored US structural power while disrupting the EC's Monetary Union project, thereby facilitating the renewal of US commitment to Europe's security while at the same time confirming the hierarchical structure of the West.

The CSCE process provided the EC countries with an opportunity to reconceptualize security according to their own vision of how the division of the continent could eventually be overcome. As a non-military actor, the EC Nine found it easier than NATO to act as a community of values. As such, they were the key driving force behind a widening of the concept of security to include human rights, a notion that added the security of individuals as a complementary factor to the security of states. This dynamic dimension of the Final Act, providing a normative framework for peaceful change, constituted the lasting key contribution of the CSCE process. While the Final Act legitimized the status quo, it left open the possibility of domestic and international change. Unlike the depressing security provided by a frozen geopolitical status quo, the norm-based security conception of the Europeans not only made the Cold War more bearable, but also included a vision of how it might eventually be overcome peacefully.

#### **Notes**

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- 3 Vojtech Mastny, *Helsinki, Human Rights, and European Security, 1975–1985: Analysis and Documentation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1986), p. 9.
- 4 Hermann Volle and Wolfgang Wagner (eds.), Konferenz über Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa: Beiträge und Dokumente aus dem Europa-Archiv (Bonn: Verlag für Internationale Politik, 1976). Igor I. Kavass, Jacqueline P. Granier, and Mary F. Dominick (eds.), Human Rights, European Politics and the Helsinki Accord: The Documentary Evolution of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, 1973–75, 6 vols. (Buffalo: Hein, 1981). Gill Bennett and Keith A. Hamilton (eds.), Documents on British Policy Overseas, series 3, vol. 2: The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1972–75 (London: Stationery Office, 1997). Institut für Zeitgeschichte im Auftrag des Auswärtigen Amtes (ed.), Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1969–75 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000–06). Vojtech Mastny and Malcolm Byrne (eds.), A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955–91 (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2005).
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- 6 Andreas Wenger, "Crisis and Opportunity: NATO's Transformation and the Multilateralization of Détente, 1966–68," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 1 (2004), pp. 22–74.
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- das gemeinsame Interesse der Supermächte am Status quo in Europa," Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte 46, no. 1 (1998), pp. 69–99; Christof Münger, Die Berliner Mauer, Kennedy und die Kubakrise: Die westliche Allianz in der Zerreissprobe, 1961–63 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2003).
- 8 Andreas Wenger, Christian Nuenlist, and Anna Locher (eds.), *Transforming NATO in the Cold War: Challenges beyond Deterrence in the 1960s* (London: Routledge, 2006).
- 9 On Khrushchev's 1955 project, see Vojtech Mastny, "The Soviet Union and the Origins of the Warsaw Pact in 1955," in *Mechanisms of Power in the Soviet Union*, Niels Erik Rosenfeldt, Bent Jensen, and Erik Kulavig (eds.) (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), pp. 241–66. Also online, available at: www.php.isn.ethz.ch/ collections/coll\_pcc/into\_VM.cfm (accessed 18 January 2008). On the contentious 1965 summit, see Mastny and Byrne, *A Cardboard Castle?*, document no. 30, and additional documents online, available at: www.php.isn.ethz.ch/collections/colltopic.cfm?lng=en&id=17127 (accessed 18 January 2008).
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- 14 Ibid., 59–70; Helga Haftendorn, "Entstehung und Bedeutung des Harmel-Berichts der NATO von 1967," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 40, no. 2 (1992), pp. 169–220; Helga Haftendorn, "The Adaptation of the NATO Alliance to a Period of Détente: The 1967 Harmel Report," in *Crises and Compromises: The European Project,* 1963–69, Wilfried Loth (ed.) (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2001), pp. 285–322.
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