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Source: *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (Apr., 2008), pp. 259-278

Published by: Sage Publications, Ltd.

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30036506>

Accessed: 08-04-2020 02:19 UTC

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Ralph Dietl

Suez 1956: A European Intervention?

The Suez Crisis has attracted scholarly interest for decades. This is hardly surprising; Suez changed the Middle East. It had, furthermore, a major impact on Britain's role in the world and on the process of European integration.¹ Political scientists use the inter-allied clash of 1956 to study (1) foreign policy decision-making;² (2) public diplomacy;³ and (3) the problematique of community formation.⁴ Given this wide-ranging scholarship, it is surprising that few authors have captured the structural dimension of the inter-allied conflict. Marc Trachtenberg's *Alliance history* does not even deal with the Suez Crisis at all. A notable exception is the study by French Foreign Minister, Christian Pineau. Pineau's book *1956 Suez*, published in 1976, offered first insights into the all-important question of why Great Britain and France decided to discard a technical or legal settlement of the Suez Canal question — as proposed by the United States. Threat perception seemed to matter most. But why was the threat perception so different on either side of the Atlantic? Complex geopolitical factors are the key to the answer. For the European powers intervening there was more at stake than Britain's communication lines with East of Suez and French influence in North Africa — at stake was the future of 'Europe'.

This article is based on a paper presented by the author at the conference 'Reassessing Suez Fifty Years On' organized by the University of Hull. The conference was held at Blaydes House, Hull, on 25–26 July 2006. For additional archival references, see Ralph Dietl, *Emanzipation und Kontrolle. Europa in der westlichen Sicherheitspolitik, 1948–1963*, Bd. 1, *Der Ordnungsfaktor Europa 1948–1958* (Historische Mitteilungen der Ranke Gesellschaft, Bd. 64) (Stuttgart 2006).

1 W. Scott Lucas, *Divided we Stand. Britain, the US and the Suez Crisis* (London 1991); Keith Kyle, *Suez 1956* (New York 1991); Roger Louis and Roger Owen (eds), *Suez 1956: The Crisis and Its Consequences* (Oxford 1989); Evelyn Shuckburgh, *Descent to Suez: Diaries 1951–56* (London 1986); Sir Anthony Eden, *The Suez Crisis of 1956* (Boston 1960); Selwyn Lloyd, *Suez 1956: A Personal Account* (London 1978); Anthony Nutting, *No End of a Lesson: The Story of Suez* (London 1967); Robert Bowie, *Suez 1956. International Crisis and the Role of Law* (Oxford 1974); Hugh Thomas, *The Suez Affair* (London 1966); Saul Kelly and Anthony Horst (eds), *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis* (London 2000); Mordechai Bar-On, *The Gates of Gaza. Israel's Road to Suez and Back, 1955–1957* (New York 1994); Motti Golani, *Israel in Search of War. The Sinai Campaign, 1955–1956* (Brighton 1998); Nigel Ashton, *Eisenhower, Macmillan and the Problem of Nasser: Anglo-American Relations and Arab Nationalism, 1955–1959* (Basingstoke 1996).

2 Bertjan Verbeek, *Decision-Making in Great Britain During the Suez Crisis: Small Groups and a Persistent Leader* (London 2003).

3 Tony Shaw, *Eden, Suez and the Mass Media* (London 1996).

4 Thomas Risse Kappen, *Co-operation Among Democracies: The European Influence on US Foreign Policy* (Princeton 1995), 83–104.

The attempt of Egyptian President Gamal Abd'el Nasser to reorder the Middle East threatened the 'emancipation' of the 'Old Continent'. It also threatened the vision of Europe as a 'Third Force'. The latter concept had gained prominence after the second world war, had disappeared with the formation of NATO, but had re-emerged with the re-nationalization of the European integration process after the failure of the EDC in 1954.⁵ The revival of the vision of Europe as a 'Third Force' was due to a growing sense of *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* among the Western European powers. A multitude of factors contributed thereto: intra-bloc and inter-bloc relations, but also events on the periphery lying outside the scope of NATO consultation. The year 1956 witnessed a unique blend of developments that enhanced the bonds among the West-Europeans, while weakening those with the United States. The nationalization of the Suez Canal was just the necessary spark that ignited the powder keg. A major upheaval against the institutionalized Western bloc architecture was the result.⁶ A similar pattern of bloc erosion is discernible in Eastern Europe after the Twentieth Party Congress in Moscow — a process that led to the Hungarian Revolution of October–November 1956. Both processes were mutually reinforcing.⁷

Thus this study discards the classic Middle Eastern or Anglo-American contextualization of the Suez Crisis. Here the Suez Crisis is viewed as the result of structural changes. The Suez Crisis emanated from frictions between the European sub-system, the Western partial system and the Cold War system at large. Thus shifts in the tectonic plates constituting the international system explain European crisis behaviour.⁸ A glance at contemporary public statements and the memoirs of the Western decision-makers reveals a highly charged 'Europeanist' agenda. Sir Anthony Eden's memoirs are a good example. They abound with Europeanist rhetoric. Here the Suez Crisis turns into a European crusade. 'We have many times led Europe in the fight for freedom. It would be an ignoble end to our long history if we accepted to perish by

5 Jonathan Schneer, 'Hopes Deferred or Shattered: The British Labour Left and the Third Force Movement, 1945–1949', *Journal of Modern History* (June 1984), 197–226; Sean Greenwood, 'The Third Force Policy of Ernest Bevin', in Michel Dumoulin (ed.), *Plans de temps de guerre pour l'Europe d'après-guerre 1940–1947* (Brussels 1993), 419–36; Richie Ovendale (ed.), *The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Governments 1945–1951* (Leicester 1984).

6 Gustav Schmidt, 'Die Auswirkungen der internationalen Vorgänge 1956 auf die Strukturen des Kalten Krieges', in Winfried Heinemann and Norbert Wiggershaus (eds), *Das Internationale Krisenjahr 1956. Polen, Ungarn, Suez* (Munich 1999), 639–60, 644.

7 Johanna Granville, 'Hungarian and Polish Reactions to the Events of 1956: New Archival Evidence', in *Europe-Asia Studies* 53(7) (2001), 1051–76. F.J. Strauß considered an opportunity for a liberation of Eastern Europe was arising: Daniel Kosthorst, *Brentano und die deutsche Einheit. Die Deutschland- und Ostpolitik des Außenministers im Kabinett Adenauer 1955–1961* (Düsseldorf 1993), 112.

8 'The events of November 1956 have made obvious the crisis of the Atlantic Alliance, but they have not created it. The beginnings of that crisis antedate the autumn of 1956 by several years,' Hans J. Morgenthau, 'Sources of Tension Between Western Europe and the United States', in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 312 (1957), 22–8, at 22.

degrees.”⁹ According to Eden, the seizure of the Suez Canal left ‘Europe’ without a choice. It had to fight for its place in the world; it had to challenge the existing global order and US predominance or accept ‘a master and vassal relationship’.¹⁰ ‘Europe’ was obliged to take a stand. It had to defend its interests in the Middle East, irrespective of the Cold War setting. ‘Western Europe’s economic security was at stake’ — and therewith Europe’s future.¹¹ A similar rhetoric dominated the discourse in France.¹² This raises multiple research questions. Did France and Britain act on behalf of ‘Europe’? Did the Europeans share a common vision of ‘Europe’? Was the military intervention backed by organized Europe? And finally, did the European decision-makers envisage systemic change — a transformation from a bipolar to a multi-polar world order?

This study will address the questions above by examining the visions, policies and decisions of the élite circle of statesmen responsible for shaping the foreign policy of the member-states of the Europe of the Western European Union. Representatives of the WEU member-states such as Konrad Adenauer and Paul-Henri Spaak openly defended Franco-British actions in the Middle East.¹³ The German chancellor considered the military intervention as an ‘act of European *raison d’état*’.¹⁴ In the case that Europe did not defend its interests in the Eastern Mediterranean, it would leave the world stage for all time. Similar expressions were a familiar element in public pronouncements of the eminent European Paul-Henri Spaak. Indeed, the ‘Europeans’ — in and out of office — seemed to share a common threat perception, a threat to Europe’s standing in the world.

The root cause of European discontent was the bipolar global world order.¹⁵ The dissatisfaction about Europe’s place in the postwar world order crystallized in the very same year that bipolarity was institutionalized: 1955. The formation of the Warsaw Pact and the integration of Western Germany into NATO — instead of a European Defence Community — challenged the very idea of ‘Europe’ as it had emerged in the late 1940s.¹⁶ The order established by the Paris Treaties, however, did not forestall a European development within the Western bloc. The revised Brussels Pact emerged as a potential nucleus for the construction of a more autonomous ‘Europe’.¹⁷ Almost simultaneously, the

9 Eden, op. cit., 100.

10 Ibid., 119.

11 Ibid., 213; Keith Kyle, ‘Britain’s Slow March to Suez’, in David Tal (ed.), *The 1956 War. Collusion and Rivalry in the Middle East* (London 2001), 95–118, at 97.

12 Christian Pineau, *1956 Suez* (Paris 1976).

13 Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Adenauer. Der Staatsmann: 1952–1967* (Stuttgart 1991), 301.

14 Schmidt, op. cit., 641; Paul-Henri Spaak, ‘The West in Disarray’, in *Foreign Affairs* 35 (1956/57), 184–90, at 186.

15 Paul-Henri Spaak, ‘The Search for Consensus. A New Effort to Build Europe’, in *Foreign Affairs* 43 (1964/65), 199–208, at 207.

16 See note 5.

17 Pierre Guillen, ‘Frankreich und der europäische Wiederaufschwung. Von Scheitern der EVG zur Ratifizierung der Verträge von Rom’, *Vierteljahrsheft für Zeitgeschichte* 28(1) (1980), 1–19.

institutionalized bipolarity of the Cold War was challenged by the 'spirit of Geneva' emanating from the Geneva summit of 1955.¹⁸ The 'little détente' in East–West relations offered the Europeans a new point of departure. Hope re-emerged in the capitals of Europe that they might overcome the division of the 'Old Continent' and establish 'Europe' as an independent power factor. Churchill's old dream to overcome the Cold War and to re-establish the power of Europe seemed to be achievable.¹⁹ The mood was furthermore reinforced by the de-Stalinization process in Eastern Europe.

In the last resort the years 1955–56 witnessed a struggle within the Western bloc between conflicting 'world visions' — a contest between strategies to stabilize the bipolar and strategies to construct a multi-polar world order.²⁰ Concepts of Europe developed in line with the respective visions of world order. The nuclear dimension of these merits special attention, since global structures in the nuclear age are intrinsically intertwined with the question of control over nuclear affairs.²¹ Four different concepts dominated the architectural debate after the collapse of the European Defence Community project. Two of those aimed at a bipolar world order, the other two at a multi-polar or polycentric world order. The dominant concept was that of the USA: a hierarchical security architecture with NATO as the Western umbrella organization and a regional European sub-organization responsible for the reconstruction of the 'Old Continent'.²² The second bipolar concept aimed at an 'Atlantic community',²³ and was supported by Canada, the United Kingdom and France. The concept of *Eurafrique* — the vision of a Eurafrikan prosperity sphere — was one of the two concepts aiming at a multi-polar world order.²⁴ It was backed by France, Great Britain and Belgium after the policies to foster an

18 Antonio Varsori, 'The Western Powers and the Geneva Summit Conference (1955)', in Antonio Varsori, *Europe 1945–1990s. The End of an Era?* (New York 1995), 221–39; Antonio Varsori, 'British Policy Aims at Geneva', in Günther Bischof and Saki Dockrill (eds), *Cold War Respite. The Geneva Summit of 1955* (Baton Rouge 2000), 75–96; Rolf Steininger, 'Zwischen Pariser Verträgen und Genfer Gipfelkonferenz: Grossbritannien und die deutsche Frage 1955', in Rolf Steininger (ed.), *Die doppelte Eindämmung. Europäische Sicherheit und deutsche Frage in den Fünfzigern* (Mainz 1993), 177–211.

19 Klaus Larres, 'Integrating Europe or Ending the Cold War? Churchill's Post-War Foreign Policy', *Journal of European Integration History* 2 (1996), 15–49.

20 Ralph Dietl, '"Wir müssen Kernwaffen produzieren". Adenauer und die deutsch-französische Nuklearkooperation 1949–1963', in Klaus Schwabe (ed.), *Konrad Adenauer und Frankreich, 1949–1963* (Bonn 2005), 40–64, at 45.

21 Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading 1979); Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons. A Debate* (New York 1995); see also Gunnar Skogmar, *The United States and the Nuclear Dimension of European Integration* (Basingstoke 2004).

22 Dietl, Nuklearkooperation, op. cit., 46.

23 Liz Kane, 'European or Atlantic Community? The Foreign Office and Europe 1955–1957', in *Journal of European Integration History* 3(2) (1997), 83–98.

24 John Kent, 'Bevin's Imperialism and the Idea of Euro-Africa', in Michael Dockrill and John Young (eds), *British Foreign Policy 1945–1956* (New York 1989); René Girault, 'La France entre L'Europe et l'Afrique', in Enrico Serra (ed.), *Il rilancio dell'Europa e i trattati di Roma* (Baden-Baden 1989), 351–78; Pierre Guillen, 'L'avenir de l'Union française dans la négociation des traités de Rome', in *Relations internationales* 57 (1989), 103–12.

'Atlantic community' had faltered. The final concept was that of a 'dumb-bell' structure of NATO. It aimed at a duplication of NATO structures within the WEU.²⁵ It was supported by West-Germany, Italy and Belgium. The year 1956 witnessed a clear shift of priorities within Europe towards the latter two concepts.

This article will try to explain this shift of attitude, which forms the structural setting for an understanding of the Franco-British decision to intervene in the Middle East. Thereafter, it will examine the consultation within the framework of the WEU on the future function of 'Europe'. Its closing section will look at the impact of the Suez Crisis on the pluralistic security community and the reform of the Western security architecture in 1957.²⁶ The conclusion will reflect upon any 'European' character of the intervention.²⁷

The year 1954 marked a turning point in postwar history. The collapse of the EDC project terminated the US experiment in reconstructing Europe on supranational lines.²⁸ The USA now feared a 'return to the dark ages' — a revival of the classic power struggle among the European powers.²⁹ Thus it strengthened the hierarchical security architecture instituted in 1949. A clear division of tasks between NATO and the subordinate functional European institutions was introduced. NATO obtained exclusive responsibility for external security. The powers of the WEU were restricted to matters of internal security. Simultaneously the ECSC was chosen as a raw model for a progressive reconstruction of Europe.³⁰ The US design for Europe had a clear nuclear dimension. The United Kingdom as a nuclear power should not partake in the European construction. This was indispensable, in order to assure US control over the Western European subsystem and superpower control over a future all-European structure emerging out of the Western European subsystem.³¹ Thus the United Kingdom was embraced in a nuclear special relationship with the

25 Schmidt, op. cit., 645, 647.

26 See Robert Jervis, *American Foreign Policy in a New Era* (New York 2005), 30ff.

27 David Calleo, 'The European Coalition in a Fragmented World', in *Foreign Affairs* 54 (1975/76), 98–112.

28 Ronald W. Pruessen, 'Cold War Threats and America's Commitment to the European Defense Community: One Corner of a Triangle', in *Journal of European Integration History* 2(1) (1996), 51–69; Thomas Schwartz, 'Die USA und das Scheitern der EVG', in Rolf Steininger (ed.), *Die doppelte Eindämmung. Europäische Sicherheit und deutsche Frage in den Fünfzigern* (Mainz 1993), 75–98; James G. Hershberg, "'Explosion in the Offing": German Rearmament and American Diplomacy, 1953–1955', in *Diplomatic History* 16 (1992), 511–49; Brian Duchin, 'The "Agonizing Re-appraisal": Eisenhower, Dulles and the European Defense Community', in *Diplomatic History* 16 (1992), 201–21.

29 Ralph Dietl, 'Die Westeuropäische Union — A Return to the Dark Ages?', in Ralph Dietl and Franz Knipping (eds), *Begegnung zweier Kontinente. Die Vereinigten Staaten und Europa seit dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Trier 1999), 67–89.

30 Report by the Department of State to the Council on Foreign Economic Policy, 16.3.1955, *FRUS 1955–1957 IV*, 263–67, at 266. See Ralph Dietl, "'Une Deception Amoureuse"? Great Britain, the Continent and European Nuclear Co-operation, 1953–1957', in *Cold War History* 3(1) (2002), 29–66, at 35f.

31 Dietl, *Nuklearkooperation*, op. cit., 46.

United States.³² Parallel thereto the United States fostered the formation of a supranational European Atomic Energy Agency (EURATOM) to institute a European control system for nuclear affairs. The latter was deemed necessary because the collapse of the EDC had made the development of national deterrent forces possible. EURATOM was meant to forestall European usage of nuclear power for military affairs. The European Atomic Energy Agency was thus a central element in the US strategy for nuclear non-proliferation.³³

The US Grand Strategy allowed the USA to disengage without losing control over affairs in Europe. This strategy was in line with Eisenhower's concern not to overburden the USA in order not to endanger the precious balance of the US Constitution.³⁴ Eisenhower's concept of world order lacked appeal in Europe.³⁵ France rejected equality of status with West Germany. It rejected being submersed into a supranational European community without proper representation in a NATO directorate. Paris demanded equality of status with the United Kingdom. It thus refused to forfeit its right to develop nuclear weapons.³⁶

32 Dietl, 'Nuklearkooperation', op. cit., 43. For general information on the special relationship, see Sir James Eberle, 'The Military Relationship', in William Roger Louis and Hedley Bull (eds), *The Special Relationship. Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* (Oxford 1986), 151–9; Ernest R. May and Geoffrey F. Treverton, 'Defence Relationships: American Perspectives', in Louis and Bull (eds), op. cit., 161–82; Geoffrey Warner, 'The Anglo-American Special Relationship', in *Diplomatic History* 13 (1989), 479–99; David Reynolds, 'A "Special Relationship"? America, Britain and the International Order since the Second World War', in *International Affairs* 62 (1986), 1–20.

33 Pierre Guillen, 'La France et la négociation du traité d'EURATOM', in Michel Dumoulin, Pierre Guillen and Maurice Vaisse (eds), *L'Energie Nucléaire en Europe: Des origines à EURATOM* (Bern 1994), 111–29; Pierre Guillen, 'La France et la négociation des traités de Rome: l'Europe', in Enrico Serra (ed.), *Il rilancio dell' Europa e i trattati di Roma* (Baden-Baden 1989), 513–24; Jonathan E. Helmreich, 'The United States and the Formation of EURATOM', in *Diplomatic History* 15 (1991), 387–410.

34 Ralph Dietl, 'The US Quest for a Pax Americana. Myths and Realities: A Reply', in Norbert Finsch and Herrman Wellenreuther (eds), *Visions of the Future of Germany and America* (Oxford 2001); Steven Metz, 'Eisenhower and the Planning of American Grand Strategy', in *Journal of Strategic Studies* 14 (1991), 49–71.

35 Hanns-Jürgen Küsters, 'Souveränität und ABC-Waffen-Verzicht. Deutsche Diplomatie und die Londoner Neunmächtekonferenz 1954', in *VfZ* 42 (1994), 499–536; Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, 'Konrad Adenauer, John Foster Dulles, and West German-American Relations', in Richard H. Immerman (ed.), *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War* (Princeton 1990), 109–32, 119.

36 Klaus A. Maier, 'The Anglo-Saxon Triangle, the French and Western European Integration', in Francis H. Heller and John R. Gillingham (eds), *NATO: The Founding of the Atlantic Alliance and the Integration of Europe* (London 1992), 403–12; Jacques Bariéty, 'Frankreich und das Scheitern der EVG', in Rolf Steininger (ed.), *Die doppelte Eindämmung. Europäische Sicherheit und deutsche Frage in den Fünfzigern* (Mainz 1993), 99–131, at 119ff.; Georges-Henri Soutou, 'France and the German Re-armament Problem 1945–1955', in R. Ahmann, A.M. Birke and M. Howard (eds), *The Quest for Stability. Problems of West European Security 1918–1957* (Oxford 1993), 487–512; Georges-Henri Soutou, 'La politique nucléaire de Pierre Mendès France', in *Relations internationales* 59 (1989), 317–30; Jean Delmas, 'Naissance et développement d'une politique nucléaire militaire en France 1945–1956', in Klaus A. Maier and Norbert Wiggershaus (eds), *Das Nordatlantische Bündnis 1949–1956*, (Munich 1993), 263–72; Dominique Mongin, *La bombe atomique française, 1945–1958* (Paris 1997), 235ff.

The United Kingdom acquiesced in the US concept — with major reservations. The Anglo-American ‘special relationship’ isolated Great Britain from the Continent. The special relationship liberated Great Britain from her traditional fear of being submerged into a supranational Europe, but simultaneously nurtured British fears of becoming totally dependent on the United States. London thus demanded a break with the past. It envisaged replacing European with Atlantic integration. An ‘Atlantic Community’ would allow Great Britain to maintain its traditional bonds with Europe, Canada and the USA. It would be as binding on the United States as on the European partners and would therefore guarantee equality of status with the United States.³⁷

Britain therefore stayed aloof from the re-launch of European integration. French concerns about the Messina initiative offered the Eden government an ideal opportunity to woo the French in support of a *relance atlantique* instead of a *relance européenne*.³⁸ The strategy was successful: an *entente cordiale* emerged in early 1956. The United Kingdom and France now pushed towards developing NATO to the totality of its meaning. But the concerted actions of the French and British to institute an Atlantic Community floundered. John Foster Dulles rejected the notion at the NATO Council Meeting of May 1956. NATO was a collective security treaty, not a political alliance.³⁹ The USA flatly refused to harmonize its foreign relations with those of the European NATO partners. Washington rejected any suggestion of a global partnership or the extension of the geographical area of NATO. The latter might force the USA unduly to support French and British attempts to maintain their colonial empires and spheres of influence. In short, Washington defended her freedom of action. The USA refused to be integrated.⁴⁰

The unilateralism of the United States at the NATO Council Meeting of May 1956 was responsible for the shift towards multi-polar or polycentric world visions among the Europeans.⁴¹ A disillusioned United Kingdom now turned towards the concept of EURAFRICA.⁴² The Eden government rediscovered the merits of the process of European unity and embarked on a European policy that challenged Washington’s European and global strategy. Strains in the transatlantic relationship were the result. The month of July turned the strains

37 Kane, op. cit., 89f.; Dietl, ‘Deception’, op. cit., 37.

38 Dietl, *Emanzipation und Kontrolle*, op. cit., 298ff.; Kane, op. cit., 89f.; Melvyn O’Driscoll, ‘“Missing the Boat”? British Policy and French Nuclear Ambitions during the EURATOM Foundation Negotiations 1955–1956’, in *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 9(1) (1998), 135–62; Ginevra Andreini, ‘EURATOM: An Instrument to Achieve a Nuclear Deterrent? French Nuclear Independence and European Integration During the Mollet Government (1956)’, in *Journal of European Integration History* 6(1) (2000), 109–28.

39 Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Paris 4–5, 1956, PRO: FO 371/124794.

40 Dietl, *Emanzipation und Kontrolle*, op. cit., 301.

41 Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Paris 4–5, 1956, PRO: FO 371/124794; Verbatim Record of the 22nd Meeting of the Council, 5 May 1956, Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Nachlaß Blankenhorn N 1351, Bd. 72b.

42 Marie Thérèse Bitsch and Gerard Bossuat (eds), *L’Europe Unie et l’Afrique. L’idée de l’Eurafrrique à la Convention de Lomé I* (Brussels 2005).

into a fully-fledged crisis. This crisis was triggered by two events: the publication of the so-called Radford Plan in the *New York Times* on 13 July 1956 and the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Egypt on 26 July 1956. Both events touched a raw nerve in Europe. The former triggered a debate about the political implications of nuclearization for Western defence strategy. The latter led to a debate on NATO's role in out-of-area crises. Both debates revealed substantial differences between the European alliance members and the United States.

The so-called Radford Plan for a unilateral reduction of US forces in Europe raised fears about the 'New Look' defence strategy. The very fact that the USA planned to reduce its own forces while pressuring the European NATO partners to fulfil the 1952 Lisbon force goals led to fears of an unequal division of tasks within the Alliance. The USA seemed to be toying with the idea of streamlining its own NATO forces by unilaterally equipping its units with tactical nuclear weapons. The Europeans were left with the task of furnishing the conventional defence forces.⁴³ German Chancellor Adenauer was especially struck by the revelations of the *New York Times*, since the USA constantly pressured West Germany rapidly to build-up a 500,000-man army. Adenauer instantly grasped the political implications of US force planning. Fearing the creation of a denuclearized zone in central Europe, the Chancellor demanded a NATO 'New Look' — the equipment of all NATO forces with tactical nuclear weapons. This would forestall a class system within the Alliance and with it a possible discriminatory settlement of the German question.⁴⁴ Great Britain strongly supported the demand for a NATO strategy discussion. London intended to streamline the British Army on the Rhine (BAOR). A nuclearization of British forces in Germany would allow the Eden government to withdraw forces for what Field Marshal Montgomery of Alamein termed 'village cricket': out-of-area tasks. A restructuring of British forces along the lines of the British 'Grand Strategy Paper of 1952'⁴⁵ — a nuclearization of British

43 Robert Wampler, 'Die USA, Adenauer und die atomare Strategie der NATO', in Rolf Steininger (ed.), *Die doppelte Eindämmung. Europäische Sicherheit und deutsche Frage in den Fünfzigern* (Mainz 1993), 261–82; Saki Dockrill, 'No Troops Please We are American — The Diplomacy of Burden Sharing in the Case of the Radford Plan, 1956', in Hans-Joachim Harder (ed.), *Von Truman bis Harmel: Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland im Spannungsfeld von NATO und europäischer Integration* (Munich 2000), 121–35; Saki Dockrill, 'Eisenhower's New Look: A Maximum Deterrent at a Bearable Cost? A Reappraisal', in *Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali* 13(1) (1998), 11–25; Christian Greiner, 'Das Militärstrategische Konzept der NATO von 1952 bis 1957', in Bruno Thoss and Hans-Erich Volkmann (eds), *Zwischen Kaltem Krieg und Entspannung. Sicherheits- und Deutschlandpolitik im Mächtesystem der Jahre 1953–1956* (Munich 1988), 211–45, at 235ff.

44 Dietl, 'Deception', op. cit., 39f.; Wampler, op. cit., 267ff.; Klaus A. Maier, 'Amerikanische Nuklearstrategie unter Truman und Eisenhower', in Klaus A. Maier and Norbert Wiggershaus (eds), *Das Nordatlantische Bündnis 1949–1956*, 225–40, at 238; Ulrich Lappenküper, *Die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen 1949–1963. Von der Erbfeindschaft zur Entente Cordiale* (Munich 2001), 1163; Kosthorst, op. cit., 110.

45 Montgomery to Eden, 22 June 1956, PRO: PREM 11/1269; Andrew M. Johnston, 'Mr Slessor goes to Washington: The Influence of the British Global Strategy Paper on the Eisenhower

forces — was deemed indispensable, in order to stop the growing erosion of British influence in Cyprus and the Middle East.⁴⁶

The nationalization of the Suez Canal by Egypt's President Nasser on 26 July 1956 only increased the perceived need to introduce the 'New Look' defence strategy in NATO. The events in the Middle East made France and the United Kingdom join ranks with West Germany. The United States, however, blocked such a development. A nuclearization of NATO undermined the regional and global order envisaged by the Eisenhower administration. First and foremost, a nuclearization of NATO would endanger the formation of an all-European security system for the settlement of the German question and hence make a gradual US disengagement from Europe impossible. At the same time it would allow France and Great Britain to refocus their policies and redirect their energies to preservation of their respective spheres of influence in the Middle East and North Africa. The latter threatened to undermine the prospect of a *Pax Americana* based on the three pillars of European integration, global free trade and decolonization.⁴⁷

The US stance on a NATO 'New Look' embittered the Europeans. The bitterness was further enhanced by the fact that the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) discarded the request of France and the United Kingdom of 6 August 1956 to relocate NATO troops as a response to the emerging crisis in the Middle East.⁴⁸ The US attitude made Britain finally decide not to await a strategy debate, but to forge ahead with a unilateral nuclearization of British forces. The British decision to follow the US example and to implement the 'New Look' unilaterally had major repercussions. According to the Paris Treaties, a reduction of the BAOR needed either the approval of the SACEUR, i.e. the US, or of the WEU — the European partners. The escape clause of the Paris Treaties foresaw the possibility of a force reduction of the BAOR if a major overseas crisis emerged. Given the existing possibilities, anxiety grew among the NATO partners as to which route the Eden government would choose to take. Would Britain look for an alignment with the USA, or throw in its lot with Europe?⁴⁹

The Mollet government feared that the USA would try to defend its world vision by offering the United Kingdom a special deal within NATO. A *lex*

New Look', in *Diplomatic History* 22(3) (1998), 361–98; John Baylis and Alan Macmillan, 'The British Global Strategy Paper of 1952', in *Journal of Strategic Studies* 16(2) (1993), 200–26.

46 Bruno Thoss, 'Die Doppelkrise von Suez und Budapest in ihren Auswirkungen auf Adenauer's Sicherheits- und Europapolitik 1956/57', in Winfried Heinemann and Norbert Wiggershaus (eds), *Das Internationale Krisenjahr 1956. Polen, Ungarn, Suez* (Munich 1999), 573–88, at 574.

47 Dietl, *Emanzipation und Kontrolle*, op. cit., chap. III.

48 Detlev Zimmermann, 'Frankreich und die Suezkrise 1956' in Winfried Heinemann and Norbert Wiggershaus (eds), *Das Internationale Krisenjahr 1956. Polen, Ungarn Suez* (Munich 1999), 395–423, at 403.

49 Dietl, 'Deception', 43; Saki Dockrill, 'Retreat from the Continent? Britain's Motives for Troop Reductions in West Germany, 1955–1958', in *Journal of Strategic Studies* 20(3) (1997), 45–70, at 52ff.

Britannica was anathema to the French. The Mollet government acted instantly on two fronts: in Bonn and London. The Franco-German diplomatic exchanges aimed at creating awareness in Bonn of the growing threat of an Anglo-American nuclear directorate within NATO. General Valluy urged Bonn to agree to a Franco-German marriage of convenience in order to forestall the abdication of 'Europe' from the world stage. The Franco-German axis was meant to serve as a safety-net in case Great Britain opted for an alignment with the United States. The result would be a Franco-German core Europe.⁵⁰ French hopes, however, lay on the development of the *entente cordiale*. France hoped that Britain would discard the special relationship, retake its place among the European powers, share its nuclear know-how with France and opt for the common construction of Europe. The Mollet government now started to woo the Europeanists in London with a Franco-British vision of Europe. The spectre of EURAFRICA emerged — a European entity with a 'prosperity sphere' comprising the dependencies in Africa.⁵¹

The French vision appealed to the British. A Franco-British Europe seemed to be the egg of Columbus, offering a solution to all outstanding problems — a European *placet* to the force reduction and Europe's support for a military intervention in the Middle East. The Eden government now turned to the WEU for support of a military intervention in Egypt. Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick⁵² informed the WEU partners on 4 September that the United Kingdom was not going to stand idle and watch as Britain's vital lines of communication were being cut. Britain would choose war instead of 'strangulation'.⁵³ Reminding West Germany of Britain's solidarity during the Berlin Crisis of 1948, Kirkpatrick asked for the support of 'Europe' in Britain's fight to maintain Europe's traditional spheres of influence in the Middle East. M. Chauvel, the French representative, added that a mere technical solution of the problem of the Canal would be inadequate and unacceptable. Regime change was the unmentioned aim. France and Great Britain intended to topple the Egyptian regime of Gamal Abd'el Nasser. The Belgian, Dutch, Italian and German

50 Kessel an AA, BA NL Blankenhorn N 1351, Bd. 67. See also Lappenküper, op. cit., 1164.

51 Gerard Bossuat, 'Guy Mollet: La puissance française autrement', in *Relations internationales* 57 (1989), 25–48, at 32ff. Association with France, 2 Oct 1956, PRO: PREM 11/1352; Franco-British Union, 21 Sep 1956, PRO: FO 371/124822.

52 On Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick and the Suez Crisis, see Ann Lane, 'The Past as Matrix: Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, Permanent Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs', in Saul Kelly and Anthony Gorst (eds), *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis* (London 2000), 199–220.

53 'The United Kingdom Government wished, of course, that Mr. Menzies' mission should be successful. But if it were not, the next step would have to be considered. Sir Ivone stated that when the Russian leaders had visited the United Kingdom in April, they had been informed, with the present contingency in mind, that if the day came when the Government was faced with either strangulation or war, they would have to choose war. This had been reported to a number of friendly powers and had, it seemed, been generally approved. But now the contingency had actually arisen, and the Western Powers might be faced with the alternative of strangulation or war; for his part, he could only say that he thought his Government would not choose strangulation.' WEU Council Meeting, CD (56) 24, 4 September 1956, PRO: DG 1/55.

representatives instantly signalled their approval.⁵⁴ They furthermore agreed with Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick's characterization of the WEU as a core organization within NATO for intimate consultation. The WEU Council session closed with an agreement not to publish a press communiqué.⁵⁵ It is certainly no mere coincidence that US President Eisenhower on the following day appealed to France and the United Kingdom not to use force to solve the Middle Eastern Crisis. The United States would certainly not acquiesce in a military intervention of the two European powers in Egypt.⁵⁶

The appeal remained without effect. France and the United Kingdom rejected the US appeasement policy in the Middle East, which was deemed incompatible with Europe's future. In the words of Chancellor of the Exchequer Harold Macmillan, 'if it came to the worst, Britain would go down with the bands playing, the guns firing, and the flags flying.'⁵⁷ The United Kingdom and France seemed prepared to risk a rift with the United States in order to secure the future of 'Europe'. The growing awareness of an impending clash with the United States over the future order of Europe and the Middle East made it indispensable to form a European powerbase. Guy Mollet charged ahead. On 10 September 1956 he tabled a proposal to revive the Churchill Proposal of 1940, namely the formation of a Franco-British Union of States.⁵⁸ The French prime minister proposed French membership of the Commonwealth of Nations as a possible alternative association.⁵⁹ The French proposals were too sweeping for Anthony Eden's taste. Domestic support for the French proposals was inconceivable. The Eden government therefore preferred a gradual approach of economic and political association with Europe. The so-called Plan G for a European Free Trade Area was meant to serve as the first step towards a common construction of Europe. Internal planning envisaged a revival of the WEU as a possible second step in the construction of Europe.⁶⁰

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Dietl, *Emanzipation und Kontrolle*, op. cit., 336; Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (London 1994), 533. Compare with this the discussion on regime change: 'The removal of Nasser, and the installation in Egypt of a regime less hostile to the West, must therefore also rank high among our objectives': Eden to Eisenhower, 5 August 1956. 'I am afraid Anthony, that from this point onward our views on this situation diverge. As to the use of force or the threat of force at this juncture, I continue to feel as I expressed myself in the letter Foster carried to you some weeks ago . . . I must tell you frankly that American public opinion flatly rejects the thought of using force': Eisenhower to Eden, 2 September 1956 and 8 September 1956. All cited in Peter G. Boyle (ed.), *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence 1955-1957* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2005), 159, 162f., 167ff.

57 Harold Macmillan, cited in Lucas, op. cit., 67.

58 Franco-British Union, 21 September 1956, PRO: FO 371/124822. See also Scott Lucas, *Divided We Stand*, op. cit., 197; Kane, op. cit., 90. Schmidt, op. cit., 646 — by contrast — interprets the Franco-British Union proposal as a British initiative.

59 Eden-Mollet Talks, Hotel Matignon, 27 September 1956, PRO: PREM 11/1352. See also Dietl, 'Deception', op. cit., 40; Kane, op. cit., 91.

60 Political Association with Europe, 4 October 1956 & 8 October 1956, PRO: PREM 11/1352 & FO/371/124822.

West Germany and Italy now interjected to channel Franco-British ambition. The future Europe should be equally beneficial for all its constituent parts. Bonn and Rome pleaded for an immediate revival of the Western European Union. This multilateral approach would guarantee the emancipation of Europe and forfeit the formation of a Franco-British European directorate. The German Chancellor planned to turn the WEU into a real substitute for the EDC.⁶¹ The Federal government acted accordingly. On 14 September Bonn informed the General Secretary of the WEU, Goffin, of the intention of the Federal Republic to push for a discussion on the future of the WEU.⁶² The day after, the German Foreign Secretary Heinrich von Brentano confronted the Council of the WEU with a plea to work out a European position on the nuclearization of NATO. The Federal Republic intended to push for a reform of the Atlantic Alliance that guaranteed equality of treatment. The German initiative was vividly supported — since it did not exclude the possibility of a nuclearization of the WEU and herewith a path towards a dumb-bell structure of the Atlantic Alliance. Even Selwyn Lloyd sympathized with the German initiative, but requested the WEU partners to understand Britain's attitude. The UK had to streamline its forces in Europe in order to retain its ability to act globally, thus defending the influence of 'Europe' in the world.⁶³

A major impulse to reform NATO emerged from the 60th WEU Council meeting on 15 September. The Belgian NATO ambassador, Andre de Staerke, now tabled a formal request to nuclearize NATO.⁶⁴ The 60th WEU Council Meeting is noteworthy in another — namely European — context. The United Kingdom and France on this occasion used the WEU as a forum for political consultation. They discussed with their WEU partners their approach to the Suez Crisis. As a consequence, a sense of *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* emerged. Thus the construction of Europe took a new twist. The Europeans now embarked on a policy to duplicate NATO functions. The EURATOM negotiations were boosted. The WEU arms co-operation flourished. The emerging 'new vision' of Europe was well captured by Konrad Adenauer in his Brussels speech at the *Grandes Conférences Catholiques*.⁶⁵ The German Chancellor outlined a European structure that would serve the European member states. Envisaged by the Chancellor was a 'Europe' capable of defending its interests globally.

61 Straub Aufzeichnung über die Unterredung zwischen Bundeskanzler Adenauer und dem italienischen Verteidigungsminister Taviani, Rom, 5 July 1945, StBKAH III/4.

62 Straub Aufzeichnung über Gespräche zwischen Bundesaußenminister von Brentano und dem Generalsekretär der WEU Goffin, 15 September 1956, PA-AA, Referat 201, Bd.97.

63 Einleitende Erklärung des Herrn Bundesaußenministers vor dem Ministerrat der WEU, 15 September 1956, BA NL Blankenhorn, N 151, Bd. 67. See Gustav Schmidt, "Tying" West Germany into the West — But to What? NATO? WEU? The European Community? in Clemens Wurm (ed.), *Western Europe and Germany. The Beginnings of European Integration 1945–1960* (Oxford 1995), 137–73, at 154.

64 Dietl, *Emanzipation und Kontrolle*, op. cit., 327ff., 339; Graf Baudissin an Deutsche Botschaften in London und Washington. 21 September 1956, PA-AA Referat 301, Bd. 32.

65 Vortrag des Bundeskanzlers vor den *Grandes Conférences Catholiques*, Brüssel, 25 September 1956, BA NL Blankenhorn N 1351, Bd 67. See Thoss, op. cit., 580.

Reassured by European solidarity, the 'script' sketched during the 60th WEU Council Meeting gradually unfolded. As announced within the WEU, France and the United Kingdom referred the Suez question to the United Nations. This was done to forestall a legal or technical settlement of the Suez Canal question.⁶⁶ Whitehall and the Elysée aimed at nothing less than a UN sanctioning of military action.⁶⁷ US Secretary of State John F. Dulles must have sensed European intentions. During trilateral deliberation on 5 October, Dulles asked his French and British homologues why the issue had been brought before the Security Council. 'Was it for peace or was it for war?'⁶⁸ The responses of Pineau and Lloyd are worth noting. According to the Foreign Ministers of France and the United Kingdom, only the removal of Nasser could restore European prestige in the Middle East and North Africa.⁶⁹ Both Pineau and Lloyd deemed a settlement of the Canal question as inadequate. France and the United Kingdom aimed at nothing else but a new global order. The guiding vision was EURAFRICA. In short, the two European powers went to the United Nations in search of political window dressing for military action.⁷⁰

Meanwhile military preparation started to take shape. Egypt's acquisitions of MIGs in late 1955 are here the point of departure. Israel prepared for a 'preventative' strike against Egypt.⁷¹ This offered France and the United Kingdom a unique window of opportunity to intervene in the Middle East to topple Gamal Abd'el Nasser, who threatened Europe's future status. According to Shimon Peres, later prime minister of Israel, discussion about Franco-British action in the Middle East antedated even the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Nasser — it originated in May 1956.⁷² This does not seem implausible, since Guy Mollet highlighted in a telephone conversation with Sir Anthony Eden on 27 July 1956 — the day after the nationalization of the Suez Canal — that the impending threat to 'Israel security might be the pretext for military action against Abd al-Nasir that both nations had sought.'⁷³ Furthermore, the Franco-British *entente cordiale* had been re-established as a consequence of the failed NATO Council meeting of May 1956. The French, who had developed splendid politico-military relations with Israel in 1954–55, had commenced contingency planning as early as 29 July 1956. A British war plan — developed

66 Zimmermann, op. cit., 407f.

67 W. Scott Lucas (ed.), *Britain and Suez. The Lion's Last Roar* (Manchester 1996), 66.

68 John Foster Dulles, cited in Warner, op. cit., 312.

69 Warner, op. cit., 312.

70 Kyle, 'Britain's Slow March', op. cit., 95.

71 Golani, op. cit., 15ff.; David Tal, 'Israel's Road to the 1956 War', in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 28(1) (1996), 59–81.

72 Sylvia K. Crosbie, *A Tacit Alliance. France and Israel from Suez to the Six Day War* (Princeton 1974), 66.

73 Ibid., 68. See Thomas, op. cit., 47: 'Many Frenchmen regarded the nationalization of the Suez Canal as less of a disaster than an exceptionally good chance of justifying the use of force against Nasser. For Mollet, the supreme objective was to win the war in Algeria.'

independently — dates from 8 August.⁷⁴ The French blueprint for military intervention was finally presented to the British prime minister by General Maurice Challe on 14 October.⁷⁵ The war plan envisaged a concerted action. Israel would attack Egypt. This would trigger a Franco-British intervention under the pretext of the protection of the Suez Canal. The decision of the French Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique in mid-September to sell Israel a research reactor eased Israel's participation in the scheme.⁷⁶ The further steps in the collusion⁷⁷ are all well known: the tripartite Franco-British-Israeli consultations at Sèvres on 22 and 24 October 1956;⁷⁸ the Israeli invasion of the Sinai Peninsula on 29 October; the Franco-British ultimatum of 30 October; and the landing of Franco-British troops on 5 November.⁷⁹

The Eisenhower administration was well aware of European ambitions.⁸⁰ So was the Soviet Union. The latter had warned the European powers to discontinue their troop deployments towards Cyprus as early as 12 September.⁸¹ Both superpowers anticipated a Franco-British military intervention.⁸² The Anglo-French ultimatum to Egypt and Israel shattered any lingering doubts about Franco-British intentions. The USA now acted instantly and forcefully. This contradicted the calculations of France and the UK. The latter had expected that the USA would be forced by the course of events to back the intervention in order to protect the Atlantic Alliance from collapse. This was a gross miscalculation, since what mattered to the USA was not Atlantic solidarity but the reconstruction of Europe — and the latter was under attack.⁸³ The USA instantly contacted West Germany and the other European allies to help stop the war even before the actual Franco-British troop landing. The reactions of the European partners were mixed at best. The reservations of the Europeans over openly supporting the United States had four major causes: (1) European solidarity; (2) disillusionment about existing NATO strategy; (3) contempt for the American-Soviet co-operation in the United Nations; and (4) disappointment about US inaction during the Hungarian crisis. The end result was a hidden sympathy with the Franco-British endeavour. A good example is the

74 Crosbie, op. cit., 68.

75 Zimmermann, op. cit., 410; Warner, op. cit., 312f., Lloyd, op. cit., 164.

76 Jeffrey T. Richelson, *Spying on the Bomb. American Nuclear Intelligence from Nazi Germany to Iran and North Korea* (New York 2006), 239.

77 Geoffrey Warner, "Collusion" and the Suez Crisis of 1956', in *International Affairs* 55(2) (1979), 226–39.

78 Avi Shlaim, 'The Protocol of Sèvres, 1956: Anatomy of a War Plot', in *International Affairs* 73(3) (1997), 509–30; Lucas, op. cit., 227–56.

79 Golani, op. cit., 72ff.; David Tal (ed.), *The 1956 War. Collusion and Rivalry in the Middle East* (London 2001), 47–64, 119–144; Kyle, op. cit., 291ff.

80 Thomas, op. cit., 117; cf. Robert M. Hathaway, 'The Perfect Failure: A Review Essay', in *Political Science Quarterly* 109(2) (1994), 361–6, at 364. Peter L. Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945–1956* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991), 214.

81 Thomas, op. cit., 81. Cf. Laurent Rucker, 'The Soviet Union and the Suez Crisis', in David Tal (ed.), *The 1956 War. Collusion and Rivalry in the Middle East* (London 2001), 65–93, at 76.

82 Warner, op. cit., 313.

83 Ibid., 313.

reaction within the Federal Republic of Germany. The Cabinet was split, but the German Chancellor did not waver. He refused to back the United States, for its 'chumminess with the Russians'.⁸⁴ Konrad Adenauer furthermore discarded the counsel of his advisers to cancel his official state visit to France. Adenauer's presence in Paris on 5 and 6 November 1956 was interpreted as a clear sign of moral support for the Franco-British endeavour.⁸⁵

Many speculations have been articulated concerning Adenauer's presence in Paris during the peak of the Suez Crisis. Undisputed, however, is the impact of the Franco-German deliberations of 5–6 November on the further process of European integration. Two points deserve a short analysis: the Franco-German responses to Bulganin's note of 5 November and to Eden's decision of 6 November to abrogate the Franco-British military intervention. Konrad Adenauer was appalled by Bulganin's note to Eisenhower. It was nothing other than an offer to divide the world. The German Chancellor was shocked by US acquiescence — manifested by the absence of a US response. This smacked of US–Soviet nuclear complicity. Allies seemed not to count. A *pax atomica* was dawning: a world order guaranteed by the nuclear superpowers. This spectre of a *pax atomica* was further highlighted by Bulganin's notes to France and the United Kingdom. The Soviet notes threatened France and the UK with nuclear annihilation in case of non-compliance with the UN demand for a cease-fire. Yet again, it was the US response — or the lack of one — that left a mark.⁸⁶ The Suez Crisis highlighted the utter dependence of Europe. The experience of 5–6 November boosted the determination of France to forge ahead and construct a 'little Europe' with a nuclear potential.

Both Bulganin's notes and the UK's unilateral decision of 6 November 1956 to cease fire changed the course of history. These decisions first and foremost ended the instant 'European' challenge to the bipolar Cold War system. Both Bulganin's notes and Britain's fateful decision to end the military intervention left a major imprint on the construction of Europe. The former increased the policy-makers' determination to turn Europe into a power factor; the latter reopened the architectural debate about the appropriate European framework. Three visions of Europe competed in the post-Suez deliberations: (1) the further development of a Continental European subsystem of NATO; (2) the formation of a Europe of the Six as the core of a European prosperity sphere; and (3) the vision of a 'dumb-bell' structure of the Alliance based on two equal pillars: Europe and North America. The first vision was supported by the Benelux countries; the second by the French; and the third by West Germany, Italy and the UK. Irrespective of the divergent views on the *finalité politique*, the Europeans were now unified in their determination to speed up the negotiations of the Spaak Committee on the Common Market and EURATOM. The

84 Adenauer, cited in Thoss, op. cit., 586; see also Spaak, 'The West in Disarray', op. cit., 185f.

85 Thoss, op. cit., 587; Lappenküper, op. cit., 1166f.

86 Procès-verbal de l'entretien du 6 novembre 1956 entre le président Guy Mollet et le chancelier Adenauer, DDF 1956 III, no. 138; Kosthorst, op. cit., 114.

Mollet government now took charge. The French had learnt their lesson of the Suez Crisis and pushed for the formation of a Continental Europe with a 'prosperity sphere' and nuclear capacity. EURATOM was deemed indispensable for the emergence of a European nuclear industry; even more important was the association of French overseas departments, since the future Europe would not be able to defend its autonomy without a 'prosperity sphere' and overseas testing grounds for its nuclear weapons programme. Thus France tabled her request to associate overseas departments with the communities of the Six on 16 November 1956.⁸⁷

Mollet's European concept contained another important facet: the formation of a Franco-German *comité militaire et technique*. Adenauer supported the French ambition to enhance Europe's autonomy in defence matters.⁸⁸ The Suez débâcle offered a unique opportunity to establish Europe as a third nuclear superpower.⁸⁹ Adenauer, however, rejected the bilateral approach proposed by Mollet and urged the formation of a Europe puissance within the framework of the WEU. British WEU membership would ease the formation of a Europe with a nuclear potential. Mollet and Adenauer finally agreed to forge ahead bilaterally, in case a transformation of the WEU faltered.⁹⁰ These are the roots of the famous F-I-G nuclear co-operation of 1957 — a scheme to complement the Rome Treaties.⁹¹

Italian Prime Minister Gronchi shared Chancellor Adenauer's preference for a Europe of the Seven. Only a European unit including the United Kingdom with its nuclear capacity could safeguard Europe's autonomy. Therefore, nothing should be done to abrogate the promising revival of the WEU. Both statesmen pleaded for institutionalizing the recent practice of harmonizing foreign relations within the WEU; for enhancing the existing WEU arms co-operation; and for introducing a policy of nuclear sharing. The guiding vision of Adenauer and Gronchi was a dumb-bell structure of the Atlantic Alliance.⁹² This Italo-German concept was presented by Gaetano Martino in the WEU Council on 10 December 1956. The initiative was well received by Selwyn

87 Notes pour le Président du Conseil en vue des entretiens prévus au cours de la visite à Paris du chancelier Adenauer, 3–5 Novembre 1956, DDF 1956 III, no 123; Protocol entre la France et la République Fédérale d'Allemagne au sujet de la coopération entre les deux pays dans la domaine des conceptions militaires et des armements, 6 novembre 1956, PA-AA Referat 201, Bd. 145. See Andreini, *op. cit.*, 121ff.; Guillen, 'L'avenir de l'Union française', *op. cit.*, 108, 111; Maurice Vaisse, 'Le choix atomique de la France (1945–1958)', in *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 36 (Oct–Dec 1992), 21–30, at 26.

88 Kosthorst, *op. cit.*, 114.

89 Lappenküper, *op. cit.*, 1157; Mongin, *op. cit.*, 439ff.

90 Straub Aufzeichnung über Unterredung des Bundeskanzlers mit Staatspräsident Gronchi, 6 December 1956, BA NL Brentano N 1351, Bd. 70. In line with this was Adenauer's advocacy of British membership in the emerging communities of the Six: see Herbert Müller-Roschach, *Die deutsche Europapolitik. Wege und Umwege zur politischen Union Europas* (Baden-Baden 1974), 42.

91 Dietl, *Emanzipation und Kontrolle*, *op. cit.*, 351ff; Dietl, 'Nuklearkooperation', *op. cit.*, 52f.

92 Colette Barbier, 'Les négociations franco-german-italiennes en vue de l'établissement d'une coopération militaire nucléaire au cours des années 1956–1958', in *Revue d'histoire diplomatique* 104 (1990), 55–89.

Lloyd, but lacked the support of France, Belgium and the Netherlands. The latter demanded the initiative be put into cold storage in order not to endanger the pending reform of NATO and the breakthrough in the construction of a 'little Europe'. In short, politico-military aspects of the European integration process should be dealt with in the light of the results of the NATO Council meeting of 11–14 December 1956.⁹³

The political fallout of the Suez Crisis dominated the agenda of the NATO Council. The Europeans gave vent to their discontent about the lack of Atlantic solidarity. The Report of the Three Wise Men on 'Non Military Cooperation within NATO', presented to the NATO Council by Gaetano Martino, developed a common denominator for the European gravamina: 'there cannot be unity in defence and disunity in foreign policy.'⁹⁴ In short, NATO consultation had to be restored and institutionalized. Martino, however, added that NATO consultation could be neither exclusive nor restrictive. NATO consultation should neither replace nor hinder consultation in more intimate sub-groupings such as the WEU. Martino's plea for a European caucus within NATO was taken up by the British Foreign Minister Selwyn Lloyd. The latter stressed in his presentation to the NATO Council the need for a Grand Design for the rationalization of Euro-Atlantic institutions. The Eisenhower administration brushed the European reform proposals aside. John Foster Dulles rejected both the notion of Atlantic community underlying the plea for obligatory consultation, and the vision of a dumb-bell structure lurking behind the various programmes for a rationalization of Euro-Atlantic institutions. In defence of the hierarchical security architecture then in existence, Washington turned to a nuclearization of NATO forces under a dual key mechanism. The USA promised the formation of a 'fully effective nuclear retaliatory force' under NATO command.⁹⁵ The chosen formula strengthened the existing order of things. It reinforced the division of tasks between NATO and the European institutions as instituted in 1954.

The reaction to the US reform package was mixed. The USA had offered a technical solution to a political problem, thereby limiting the reform to the 'valid' security concerns expressed by the Europeans. US insistence on 'internationally balanced forces' further undermined the appeal of the proposal to form NATO nuclear forces. The governments of France, Italy and the Federal Republic now turned towards Selwyn Lloyd's Grand Design for the Rationalization of Euro-Atlantic institutions. The WEU Council Meeting of 19 December 1956 witnessed lively deliberations about the future of Europe in general and the project of a rationalization of Euro-Atlantic institutions in

93 Dr. Halter, Tagung des Ministerrats der Westeuropäischen Union am 10 Dezember 1956 in Paris, 19 December 1956, PA-AA Referat 201, Bd. 97.

94 Report of the Committee of Three on Non-Military Co-operation in NATO, 14 December 1956, NATO (April 1953–July 1960), (1), box 5, Subject Subseries, NSC-Series, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, WHO, DDEL; Dietl, *Emanzipation und Kontrolle*, op. cit., 361.

95 Wampler, op. cit., 273.

particular. Viscount Hood sketched the project. The Eden government envisaged a Euro-Atlantic Community. NATO and the OEEC would constitute the Atlantic umbrella; the WEU and the future European Economic Communities the European core. A third element was aspired to, namely the merger of all Euro-Atlantic assemblies into an international parliament. However, yet again reactions were mixed. The French feared a construction centred around and dominated by NATO. Lloyd rejected the French interpretation outright. The Grand Design offered the opportunity to build European unity within an Atlantic framework. The lesson of Suez has to be learned — that no choice existed between an Atlantic and a European construction. The dream of a Europe of a ‘Third Force’ was dead — the vision of Europe as a second pillar of NATO was alive. The UK therefore envisaged turning the WEU into a community with thermonuclear capacity. This had an appeal on the Continent at large.⁹⁶

Problems arose within the United Kingdom itself. The Europeanist agenda of the Foreign Office had no backing from the Cabinet. Selwyn Lloyd’s Grand Design was opposed first and foremost by the Department of Defence, since the United States in bilateral negotiations had hinted at the possibility of a revival of the Anglo-American nuclear special relationship. US Secretary of State Dulles further stated that a revival of the special-relationship would enable SACEUR to support a reduction of the BAOR by declaring ‘equivalent fighting capacity’. A *lex Britannica* should ease the decision to scrap Britain’s European agenda and opt for support of the US global order. The Department of Defence led a ‘rebellion’ of the Atlanticists, which peaked on 8 January 1957. The Cabinet voted against Selwyn Lloyd’s Grand Design and opted for the revival of the special relationship. The Cabinet considered alignment with the Continent a source of weakness rather than strength. Two days later, Sir Anthony Eden was replaced by Harold Macmillan in order to ease a revival of the Anglo-American special relationship.⁹⁷

The repercussion was wide-ranging. The architectural debate within the Alliance was decided. A lack of options made the Continental countries concentrate on the construction of a Europe of the Six. The United Kingdom was embraced in a special relationship.⁹⁸ The unity of the West was preserved. The

96 69th Meeting of the Council of the Western European Union, 19 December 1956, CR (56) 35, PRO: DG 1/57; Werner Abelshauser, ‘Rüstung, Wirtschaft, Rüstungswirtschaft: Wirtschaftliche Aspekte des Kalten Kriegs in den fünfziger Jahren’, in Klaus A. Maier and Norbert Wiggershaus (eds), *Das Nordatlantische Bündnis 1949–1956*, 89–108, at 106f.; Thoss, op. cit., 587; O’Driscoll, op. cit., 121f.; Dietl, ‘Deception’, op. cit., 44; Kane, op. cit., 92ff.

97 Alistair Horne, ‘The Macmillan Years and Afterwards’, in William Roger Louis and Hedley Bull (eds), *The Special Relationship. Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* (Oxford 1986), 87–102, at 89; Martin S. Navias, *Nuclear Weapons and British Strategic Planning, 1955–1958* (Oxford 1991), 132f.; Dietl, *Emanzipation und Kontrolle*, op. cit., 368f.

98 Matthew Jones, ‘Anglo-American Relations After Suez, the Rise and Decline of the Working Group Experiment, and the French Challenge to NATO, 1957–59’, in *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 14(1) (2003), 49–79; Nigel J. Ashton, ‘Harold Macmillan and the Golden Days of Anglo-American Relations Revisited, 1957–63’, in *Diplomatic History* 29(4) (2005), 691–723.

US global order triumphed — the pluralistic security community of the West was preserved because of the preponderance of US power, nuclear diplomacy and the integration of the European Continent.

The year 1956 witnessed a struggle about world order. It witnessed a clash of two world visions: bipolarity versus multi-polarity. It witnessed a contest between nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear proficiency. In other words, the year 1956 is characterized by a European upheaval, set against the US reconstruction of Europe, the hierarchical security architecture of the West, and the bipolar order of the Cold War. The hierarchical security architecture of the West instituted between 1949 and 1955 seemed incompatible with European ambitions. The more self-assertive Europe of the mid-1950s aimed at rebalancing the Atlantic Alliance — either towards an Atlantic community or towards a dumb-bell structure. Neither of these European visions was compatible with Eisenhower's grand strategy to establish a European subsystem that could serve as a platform for an all-European security architecture guaranteed by the superpowers. The US concept entailed a perpetuation of the unequal division of tasks within the Alliance. It implied a transformation of 'Europe' into a US nuclear protectorate.

To escape their thus prescribed future, the Europeans deemed it necessary to secure command over nuclear weapons. This insight made France embark on a military nuclear programme in 1954. The French established their nuclear installations and testing grounds in Algeria, since the control regime of the WEU was limited to the European Continent.⁹⁹ France's nuclear future therefore depended to a large extent on maintaining control over Algeria. Gamal Abd' el Nasser's support of the Algerian independence movement therefore threatened the destiny of France as a great power.¹⁰⁰ The nationalization of the Suez Canal had a similar impact on Great Britain's influence in the Middle East and its global standing. Nasser threatened the Franco-British vision of Europe. SACEUR's refusal to allow France and Great Britain to dislocate NATO troops to defend their respective spheres of influence in North Africa and the Middle East, combined with the rejection of a NATO-wide 'New Look' strategy, made the Europeans question the utility of NATO. US alliance policies furthermore turned the Suez Crisis into a battle about the future order of Europe, the Middle East and the Western world. Suez was much more than a conflict between the two leading colonial powers and an enlightened world leader. Suez was a conflict between two incompatible world visions.

This interpretation is underlined by the fact that the Federal Republic, Italy and the Benelux countries at least temporarily supported the Franco-British military intervention. The WEU partners perceived Nasser's Pan-Arabism as a threat to the future of Europe. The 'collusion' with Israel thus did not change

99 WEU: Dietl, *Emanzipation und Kontrolle*, vol. 1, 238ff.

100 Matthew Connelly, 'Rethinking the Cold War and Decolonisation: The Grand Strategy of the Algerian War of Independence', in: *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 33(2) (2001), 221–45.

European support for the Franco-British endeavour — to the contrary.¹⁰¹ European solidarity manifested itself not only in crisis consultation within the WEU, but during the London Suez Conferences and within the UN. Finally, Italy had co-conspired in the French supply to the Israeli Air Forces in advance of the Suez Crisis by granting overflight rights for the French *Mystère* fighter jets clandestinely acquired by Tel Aviv. The 'European' character of the endeavour is furthermore underlined by the common European reaction to the forced retreat from Suez. The Suez Crisis paved the way to the successful conclusion of the Rome Treaties. In its sequel, European nuclear co-operation within EURATOM had top priority in order to reduce Europe's dependence and to boost the French military nuclear programme. Simultaneously, a Franco-Israeli nuclear partnership evolved that peaked in the development of the Israeli nuclear deterrent.¹⁰²

To conclude: there was more at stake in 1956 than free shipping on the Suez Canal. At stake was the Euro-Atlantic security community.

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101 The German-Israeli politico-military 'special relationship' dates back to the Suez Crisis; see Yeshayahu A. Jelinek, 'Adenauer — Ben Gurion — Sharett — Goldmann und die Entwicklung der deutsch-israelischen Beziehungen', and Michael Wolffsohn, 'Wiedergutmachung oder Realpolitik. Eine Bilanz der Israel-Politik Adenauers in den Fünfzigerjahren', both in Hanns Jürgen Küsters (ed.), *Adenauer, Israel und das Judentum* (Rhöndorfer Gespräche, Bd. 20) (Bonn 2004), 15–26 and 210–25, at 220f. The position of the WEU members was shared by other European nations. On Norway's special relationship with Israel — which led to the support of the Israeli nuclear programme through shipments of heavy water — see Hilde Henriksen Waage, 'How Norway Became One of Israel's Best Friends', in *Journal of Peace Research* 37(2) (2000), 189–211.

102 See: Zach Levy, 'Israel's Pursuit of French Arms, 1952–1958', in *Studies in Zionism*, 14, 2 (1993), 183–210, 207f.; Michael Karpin, *The Bomb in the Basement. How Israel Went Nuclear and What That Meant For the World* (New York 2005), 74ff.