

April 17, 1979
(revised from February 23, 1979)

EUROPEAN REACTIONS TO SALT II

INTRODUCTION

Many American critics of the proposed SALT II agreements were undoubtedly confused and upset early in January by the outcome of the Guadeloupe summit meeting. For months now these Americans had been hoping that the major European leaders would publicly indicate what are reported to be strong reservations about certain aspects of the SALT II agreements. However, at the conclusion of the Guadeloupe talks, French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing, British Prime Minister James Callaghan, and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt instead declared their support for the swift conclusion of the SALT II negotiations. As Alexander MacLeod wrote at the time in The Christian Science Monitor: "Mr. Callaghan declared at a news conference that it would be tragic if a SALT II treaty was not ratified. Mr. Schmidt undertook to urge early ratification at every opportunity. The French President...agreed on the need to move quickly to the conclusion of SALT II." It was all quite difficult for most American SALT II critics to understand. They knew that the European leaders clearly had doubts about certain aspects of the proposed agreements, but then they saw three major European leaders publicly supporting President Carter's SALT initiatives. Why? This paper offers some tentative explanations.

EUROPEAN RESERVATIONS ABOUT SALT II

European worries about the proposed SALT II agreements first became publicly known in this country in early December 1977, during the semi-annual NATO ministerial meeting. Major concerns

at that time centered on the agreements' potential for excluding the transfer of U.S. cruise missile technology to the European allies. As a news story of the time put it:

What worries the Europeans, according to defense officials here, is that the Soviet Union wants any new arms agreement to restrict the spread of cruise missiles and already appears to have persuaded the Carter Administration to limit deployment and testing of the weapon for the first three years of the projected eight-year treaty.

The Europeans fear that these temporary restrictions may become permanent ones and result in their being prevented from buying cruise missiles from the United States or acquiring the American-developed technology involved in their construction.¹

That December it took the combined efforts of American Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance to assuage European fears. On December 7, for example, Secretary Brown told the assembled ministers that the United States had made "no commitment not to transfer technology to its European allies." A day later, Secretary Vance stressed that the United States was listening to its European allies and that any limits that would be imposed on cruise missiles by the three-year protocol would be completely lifted when the protocol ran out. These assurances apparently had the intended effect of calming European fears. British Foreign Secretary David Owen told the ministerial meeting: "We have no criticism of the way the United States has consulted Europe on SALT."² NATO Secretary-General Joseph Luns remarked that "Mr. Vance has promised us ever fuller consultations on these matters as things proceed."

Nevertheless, the optimistic American assurances of December 1977 could, at best, have had only a temporary settling effect on European fears, and, as the months of 1978 passed by, worries about the SALT II negotiations again reasserted themselves. In these months, as the shape of the strategic arms limitation agreements became better known, the central concern about the transfer of

1. Paul Lewis, "NATO Allies Fear U.S. Concedes Too Much in Soviet Arms Talks," The New York Times, December 6, 1977, p. 2.

2. Owen had gone on to say: "It is important not to feed the critics of the SALT process who are concerned with the minutiae of negotiations. Instead, we should champion the cause of arms limitation. A SALT agreement would be a major achievement and have the full support of Her Majesty's Government." Quoted in Bernard Gwertzman, "Vance Asks Backing In NATO On Arms Talks," The New York Times, December 9, 1977, p. 7.

cruise missiles broadened to encompass several other issues. By mid-1978, four issues directly linked to the proposed SALT II agreements could be discerned: the possible ban on transfer of cruise missile technology, the proposed limitations on cruise missile ranges and deployments, the adequacy of the agreements' treatment of the question of "grey area" weapons systems, and the question of the verifiability of the SALT II accords.

The first issue had, of course, been the major concern for the Western European leaders in 1977. Writing in the fall of that year, Manfred Wörner, the Chairman of the Defense Committee in the West German Bundestag, had commented:

If NATO wants to be in a position to repel (and thus deter) a large-scale Soviet conventional aggression, ...it must also take the following measures:

(1) Exploit optimally all technological possibilities that loom beyond the classical spectrum of conventional weapons (e.g.,...cruise missiles).³

Even as Wörner's words were being published, however, proposals were being negotiated at SALT that would severely curtail NATO's chances of acquiring cruise missiles. In December 1977, Secretary of State Vance hastened to assure the NATO ministers that the limitations imposed on cruise missiles by the proposed protocol would last only three years. He argued that after the expiration of the protocol the United States would be perfectly free to furnish cruise missiles or cruise missile technology to its European allies. This assurance, however, came into question in 1978. The Europeans wondered if the temporary limitations might not be extended. As Kurt Birrenbach noted: "In theory, an option on these weapons remains open to Americans and Europeans after three years --but this is a highly doubtful prospect."⁴

There are several reasons for this European lack of faith. First, the European leaders understand that short-term agreements often acquire a legitimacy which later hinders their cancellation, particularly in cases where negotiations are continuing, as in SALT. They know that the extension of short-term limitations of the protocol could well be used by the Soviets as a prerequisite for negotiating SALT III. In addition, the European leaders know that one of the provisions being negotiated at SALT II precludes the

3. Manfred Wörner, "NATO Defenses and Tactical Nuclear Weapons," Strategic Review, Volume 5 (Fall 1977), p. 15.

4. Kurt Birrenbach, "European Security: NATO, SALT and Equilibrium," Orbis, Volume 22 (Summer 1978), p. 302.

circumvention of the purposes of the agreements--a provision that if adopted could be interpreted by the Soviets so as to deny the transfer of cruise missile technology to third parties.⁵ While the United States insists that such would not be the case, the Soviet Union sees the issue differently. The Soviet interpretation of the provision is reportedly that the transfer of cruise missiles or cruise missile technology in any form would circumvent the purposes of the agreements.

The second issue which concerns the European allies has to do with the nature of the limitations which the SALT II agreements could impose on the range and deployment of cruise missiles.⁶ The Europeans do not understand why the United States agreed so readily to a maximum range of only 600 kilometers for ground- and sea-launched cruise missiles. After all, the Soviets have already deployed intermediate-range ballistic missiles in Europe (SS-20s) which can strike any European target west of the Urals.⁷ They also worry that the Soviet insistence that air-launched cruise missiles with ranges greater than 600 kilometers could only be carried by "heavy bombers" would keep the European NATO members from deploying such missiles, since they have no "heavy bombers" as defined by the agreements.

The third issue of special concern to the Europeans involves the adequacy of SALT's treatment of "grey area" systems--those nuclear weapons delivery systems that lack intercontinental range but which exceed the range needed for use as strictly tactical nuclear weapons delivery systems (i.e., theater nuclear weapons

5. Both sides have apparently agreed to a non-circumvention proposal. As Paul Nitze wrote in his latest analysis of the SALT II agreements: "Both sides are agreed that there will be a commitment that neither side will take any action which would circumvent the purposes of the agreements. Such a provision would appear to ban the significant transfer to third countries of weapons limited by the agreements. The extent to which it would ban the transfer of components or technology associated with such weapons is not clear. The USSR interpretation has been reported to be that the transfer of components, blueprints, and technology directly pertinent to such weapons is included in such a ban." Paul H. Nitze, "Current SALT II Negotiating Posture," Committee on the Present Danger, January 15, 1979, p. 4; see also "SALT: Basic Agreement Would Stop U.S.-NATO Data Flow," Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily, December 21, 1978, p. 1.

6. In a collateral matter, the Europeans worry about how the agreements will influence the American development and deployment of the MX missile.

7. See Second German-American Roundtable on NATO: The Theater Nuclear Balance. Summary of a Transatlantic Dialogue (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1978), pp. 12-13.

delivery systems). Europeans fear that the proposed Statement of Principles might be too specific in discussing how "grey area" systems would be treated in SALT III. As Takashi Oka noted in The Christian Science Monitor: "This is because there is as yet no allied consensus on what to do about so-called 'grey area' systems...." This particularly concerns the British and the French because their nuclear forces fall into this category. In addition, the NATO partners worry that the hoped-for NATO medium-range ballistic missile, and even the extended-range PERSHING II, might be severely constrained or even eliminated by the "principles" set forth in SALT II for negotiating SALT III.

The Europeans are also bothered by what they consider the United States' casual treatment of the term "strategic." European leaders believe that by agreeing to the Soviet contention that "strategic" weapons systems consist of those systems capable of targeting each other's home territory, the U.S. ignores the reality that systems already deployed by the Soviet Union (the SS-20 missile and the BACKFIRE bomber) are quite capable of devastating European home territories and are thus just as strategic to Western Europe as the other systems are to the United States and the Soviet Union. As West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt told an American reporter in October 1978: "Not only intercontinental strategic weapons, but also continental strategic weapons have a bearing on the security of Europe and Germany."

The United States' ready acceptance of the powerful Soviet nuclear presence in Europe (after all, the Europeans noted that the U.S. did not attempt to trade off cruise missile limitations for some equivalent Soviet concession on the deployment of the SS-20) served to again bring up the question of the strength of the United States' strategic nuclear commitment to Europe. As The Economist editorialized in August 1978: "Some Europeans have always doubted whether the Americans would fight a nuclear war for Europe; and even the trusters are beginning to think that what might have been true when the United States had a commanding lead is not necessarily true now. Hence the Europeans worry about the growing grey-area problem." It was, in part to still this European doubt about the decoupling of the United States' nuclear guarantee that the Carter Administration, in November 1978, began pushing for the development and deployment of a medium-range, land-based nuclear missile system for NATO.

The final issue of concern to the Europeans leaders is the whole problem of the verifiability of the strategic arms limitation agreements. Many Western European leaders doubt that it will be possible to verify the limitations which the agreements or the separate written assurance on BACKFIRE impose on the number of MIRVed warheads actually placed on each MIRVed missile and on the deployment

and war-fighting characteristics of the BACKFIRE bomber.⁸ They echo the belief of some American critics of SALT II that certain aspects of the SALT II agreement would require on-site inspection for adequate verification--a condition which the Soviets have always rejected. As Paul Nitze noted on the problem of verification:

In many instances unambiguous verification of the SALT II limitations will not be possible. For this reason the arms control community now uses the phrase "adequately verifiable." It is correct that "verifiability" is not an absolute requirement; it is a means toward the end of a good agreement....The difficulty, however, rests in determining which provisions are "strategically significant" to us and what is meant by the word "adequate."⁹

It might be said that Western European leaders have their doubts about the way that the Carter Administration might choose to apply the "adequate verification" yardstick.

THE EUROPEAN SILENCE ON SALT II

One would think that the above reservations concerning the nature of the proposed SALT II agreements would be sufficient to cause the Western European leaders to voice open criticism of certain aspects of the agreements. Obviously, this has not happened. On the contrary, at Guadeloupe the leaders of Great Britain, France, and West Germany declared public support for President Carter's SALT II negotiating posture. There are a number of reasons for this evident disparity.

1) First, the influence of the domestic political situations in the respective European countries mitigates against public

8. As John Lehman noted with regard to the BACKFIRE: "The Soviets would be required to provide assurances that the Backfire would not be used as a strategic vehicle: Since the strategic capability inherent in the Backfire bomber is not seriously disputed, the limitations requested of the Soviets would be limitations of intent. It is impossible to verify limitations of intent." (Emphasis added.) John F. Lehman, "The Carter Comprehensive SALT Proposal: Verification and Grey Area Systems," in Paul H. Nitze, John F. Lehman, and Seymour Weiss, The Carter Disarmament Proposals: Some Basic Questions and Cautions (Coral Gables, Florida: Center for Advanced International Studies, University of Miami, 1977), p. 21. See also John G. Behuncik, "Examining SALT Violations and the Problems of Verification," Background No. 60, The Heritage Foundation, June 6, 1978.

9. Paul H. Nitze, "Considerations Bearing on the Merits of an Agreement," Committee on the Present Danger, January 15, 1979, p. 10.

criticism of SALT II's effects. Domestic politics in Europe often narrow the operating latitude of a government with regard to a particular issue such as SALT. As a general rule, strong pro-defense stands are not popular with vocal segments of the populations of the Western European countries. One need only remember the public furor that arose in various European capitals almost a year ago over public discussion about the potential deployment of the "neutron bomb" in NATO. In Amsterdam, for example, over 50,000 people participated in an international demonstration against the bomb sponsored by The Netherlands "Stop the Neutron Bomb" group. This same issue had caused the resignation of the Dutch defense minister.

In France and Italy there are large and vocal Communist parties to which the governments must pay attention. Speaking in general of these Western European Communist parties, Pierre Hassner noted: "All accept, more or less, the Western structures (NATO, the European Community) which the Soviet Union criticizes as aggressive; but in actual debates or negotiations on East-West relations in Europe (from the neutron bomb to East-West trade), they usually see the Soviet Union on the side of the angels."¹⁰ In Norway and Denmark, on the other hand, the general public is opposed to the stationing of non-national NATO troops on national soil and are particularly opposed to the introduction of nuclear weapons there. But aside from what might be called anti-military sentiment, it is safe to say that in Western Europe as a whole, there is a general perception that arms limitation talks are a useful thing, both for limiting defense spending and for aiding detente.

In addition to the influence that public sentiment has upon the European governments, there is the influence that the internal political situation has upon each European leader. For example, in both West Germany and Great Britain the leaderships' legislative support is shaky. In September 1978, Helmut Schmidt was ruling an SPD/FDP coalition government with only a ten-vote majority. Even within his own party, the Chancellor has been forced to hold off the more leftist members, who desire much greater accommodation with the Soviet Union.

These left SPD members now comprise almost half of the party's membership. They are led by, among others, Egon Bahr (formerly the Brandt government's orchestrator of Ostpolitik and currently SPD secretary-general) and Herbert Wehner (chairman of the SPD faction in the Bundestag), a man who has always believed in the necessity

10. Pierre Hassner, "Western European Perceptions of the USSR," Daedalus, Volume 108 (Winter 1979), p. 134.

of closer relations between Germany and the Soviet Union because of the U.S.S.R.'s pivotal political role on the Continent.

The left SPD members view the current state of detente between East and West, under which they believe West Germany has been able to establish a special relationship with the Soviet Union, as extremely important to their country's continued wellbeing. For this reason, they continue to seek new ways to strengthen the Federal Republic's ties with the U.S.S.R. and they denigrate attempts to add to NATO's tactical nuclear arsenal as being both unnecessary for Germany's security and overly provocative to the Soviets. In public, party-leader Wehner couches his call for greater German-Soviet cooperation in terms of the changing balance of power in Europe. He argues that United States' leadership in the Atlantic Alliance is weakening and that it is therefore only practical that West Germany attempt to foster a better relationship with the ever-more-powerful Soviet Union.

The Chancellor's task of holding off these forces of his party's left wing will prove considerably more difficult now that Schmidt's supporter, Willy Brandt, has been incapacitated by heart trouble. In Great Britain, on the other hand, the situation would be complicated for Prime Minister James Callaghan even if he wanted to speak out on SALT II (which he does not) by the massive economic troubles which must necessarily occupy most of his time. As he tries to cope with the ever-burgeoning labor strikes, he is constantly aware of the watchful gaze of Margaret Thatcher's Conservatives, who are waiting for the May elections that they fully expect will bring them to power.

In Western Europe as a whole, the necessity of governing by coalition makes for continuing problems of leadership stability. Under the above-mentioned circumstances, it is not easy for European leaders to take public stands in favor of a stronger American negotiating stance at SALT.

2) European leaders also hesitate to openly discuss the SALT II agreements for fear that such discussions could have an influence on the NATO commitments of the United States. They believe that the Carter Administration might judge their comments on SALT II to be interference in internal American politics. American critics of SALT II believe that Defense Secretary Brown's emphasis on improving NATO's defense capability should be sufficient to reassure the Europeans that the United States has no intention of lessening its NATO commitments. They further argue that some questioning of President Carter by his allied leaders on SALT II matters would be entirely proper and would not be construed by the Carter Administration as interference. The European leaders continue to wonder.

West Germany is particularly careful not to antagonize the United States by making public criticisms of American initiatives in areas not directly linked to Germany's policies. Chancellor Schmidt, in a May 1978 interview, noted:

We Europeans are concerned about the expansion of Soviet influence--political and military....On the other hand, Germany is a medium, non-nuclear power the size of Oregon...in a very delicate and vulnerable situation. No German leader will ever forget this....It would be unrealistic and improper for a German head of government to be indulging in those fields of world politics outside our area of responsibility, or even giving advice to the leading Western power the United States.¹¹

The Germans are not the only ones reluctant to make public criticisms of the proposed SALT II agreements. British Foreign Secretary David Owen reminded all the NATO ministers in December 1977 that it was "important not to feed the American critics of the SALT process." Many European leaders worry that American pique at such interference could conceivably spur a general American desire for further separation or even disengagement from Europe. As Pierre Hassner commented in Daedalus: "The Europeans are forever afraid that American-Soviet relations are either too close to collision or too close to collusion." The fact that most Americans would find such fears excessive does nothing to lessen the fact that such fears are very real to some European leaders.

3) Many European leaders, believing that the SALT II agreements are a fait accompli, feel that any criticism will be futile anyway. Only the "minutiae" (to use David Owen's critical expression) can still be argued about, as far as the Europeans are concerned. How could we have any influence, they emphasize, on a negotiation which, except for the signing, has already been concluded.

4) The European leaders feel that for the sake of allied solidarity they must lend support to President Carter in this negotiation. The expressions of support at Guadeloupe from Callaghan, d'Estaing, and Schmidt which so dismayed American critics of SALT came about, in large part, for this reason.

West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, who has had his problems in the past with President Carter, felt that he could not weaken the American leader's position at a time when many of the Carter Administration's foreign and domestic policies were in disarray. The West German leader's major concern was to keep from damaging Carter's international prestige any further than current events such as Iran have already damaged it. In the past, Schmidt has often criticized the President in off-the-record talks for his weakness of leadership. Privately, the Chancellor still believes that Jimmy Carter is performing his job poorly. This view of Carter's amateurishness is also shared by French officials. For example, one French official at Guadeloupe noted that his government was not worried that President Carter would intentionally jeopardize Western European interests. "It is the unintentional blunder that worries us," he said.

11. Interview between Arnaud de Borchgrave and Helmut Schmidt: "Schmidt: After You," Newsweek, May 29, 1978, p. 46.

The low-key support for SALT that French President Giscard d'Estaing expressed, revealed more a current French interest in general arms limitation talks than a heartfelt support of Carter's SALT II negotiating position. While Giscard did not make any specific comments in favor of Carter's SALT II agreements, he at least avoided criticizing the idea of arms limitation negotiations as DeGaulle or Pompidou would have done. This marks a major change from the Gaullist position which has held sway in France for almost twenty years. At the same time, the new French position does not seem to indicate that France would be pleased to enter into the discussions on "grey area" systems that will probably come up in SALT III, particularly since it has decided to continue upgrading its nuclear deterrent.

5) Finally, Western European leaders basically favor the principle of arms limitation and see SALT as a vital component of detente with the Eastern European bloc. Although detente has recently been seen by both the United States and Western Europe as being less beneficial in changing Soviet policies than had been hoped, the context of European politics has made it harder for European leaders to adjust their policies in accordance with this new perception of detente. Thus, they continue to hope for the best in regard to the SALT agreements.

The Western European leaders would like to have a larger share of consultation with the United States when the SALT III negotiations take place. It should be remembered that consultation and participation are two distinctly different activities. The West Germans are particularly interested in participating in the SALT III discussion of "grey area" systems. They have nothing to lose by participating. The British and the French, on the other hand, would, in all likelihood, have to see their nuclear forces placed "on the negotiating table" if they took part in these talks. Thus, they are less enthusiastic about participating.

In addition to increased consultation on SALT III, the Europeans would like to have the United States more closely ally SALT and MBFR (Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions). They see this as vitally important if the West is going to avoid the dangerous lack of coordination in bargaining positions that currently reigns. Given the absence of a European role in the SALT II negotiations though, there is some considerable doubt that the United States will allow the Europeans either a major consultative role or the kind of close SALT/MBFR alliance that they desire.

CONCLUSION

On November 23, 1978, the CDU/CSU faction in the West German Bundestag sent the Government a formal paper questioning its views on disarmament.¹² Schmidt's government answered this document on February 16th of this year. On March 8th and 9th, the debate on the nature of strategic arms control questions in general, and SALT II and SALT III in particular, was held. During this debate the CDU and CSU speakers made a number of important points. Among these were: 1) that the non-circumvention clause should not be allowed to limit the modernization and development of NATO's theater nuclear forces by preventing the transfer of weapons technology to the European allies; 2) that the Europeans should look for an official American guarantee (before the treaty ratification) that all options for new weapons such as the cruise missile will be open after expiration of the three-year protocol; 3) that it is important to have further development of mid-range and tactical nuclear (and conventional) weapons to fill the defense gap that will exist in the early and mid-1980's; and 4) that the Alliance should develop a common negotiating strategy (before ratification of SALT II) for the SALT III negotiations.¹³

However, just as important as the stands that the CDU/CSU faction took, were the stands which it avoided taking. For example, the whole question of treaty verification was ignored, because it was felt that verification is a problem for the Americans, not the Europeans. Also, the CDU/CSU speakers argued that the judgement about the merits of the SALT II agreements is an autonomous judgement for the American President and Congress to make and that the Europeans must not interfere in the pros and cons of the ratification debate.¹⁴

For his part, Chancellor Schmidt, in a two-hour speech during the debate in the Bundestag, accused the CDU/CSU opposition of lending fuel to American congressional opponents of SALT II and argued that if SALT II was not ratified, it would lead to a grave crisis of confidence throughout the world.¹⁵ The impact that the debate had

12. "Erhaltung und Festigung des Friedens durch Sicherheit, Rüstungskontrolle, Abrüstung und den Abbau der politischen Spannungsursachen."

13. Rupert Dirnecker, "Informationen und Thesen zur Sicherheitspolitik, Rüstungskontrolle und Abrüstung," March 1979, pp. 15-17.

14. Ibid., p. 15.

15. Quoted in David Shears, "Europe is second safest continent, says Schmidt," The Daily Telegraph (London), March 10, 1979.

in West Germany remains to be judged. Nevertheless, the debate was the sort of public discussion that American critics of the SALT II agreements have long been hoping for from the Europeans. The speeches had much to tell American leaders about the deep-seated European fears concerning the possible effects of SALT II. They should be read very carefully by interested persons in this country. The influence that the German debate will have on the ratification process in the United States Senate will depend upon whether certain currently uncommitted Senators are made aware of the questions posed in the Bundestag debate and whether they find these questions pertinent to American concerns. Yet, whatever the debate's influence on the matter of SALT II, it is hoped by both the German and American critics of the SALT process that it will have a positive impact on SALT III.

Some SALT critics in this country probably believe that the Germans did not go far enough in their questioning of the SALT process. They would have liked to have seen the CDU/CSU members argue against ratification of the SALT II agreements. However, it is unrealistic for Americans to have expected that the West Germans would indulge in the sort of dramatic give-and-take on SALT that some here would desire. Even within the CDU itself, there remained divided counsel on the proper approach to take in the debate. One faction of the party clearly looked back with a special fondness to the CDU's history of support for general arms control measures. And the party leadership had no wish to be on the losing side of the SALT question. If the CDU/CSU faction had taken a strong stand in opposition to certain aspects of the proposed SALT agreements and then the United States Senate passed the agreements, it would have been placed at a serious political disadvantage to the SPD/FDP coalition.

In such a case, the SPD would have been in a position to say: "We were always in favor of the arms control negotiations. We are the party of peace." Of course, the SALT II agreements could fail to pass the Senate, in which case the CDU/CSU faction would have found itself on the winning side, but it would have been hard to take such a chance when so much was at stake.

In Great Britain, while the Callaghan government maintains discrete silence on whatever doubts it may have concerning SALT II, a few men of stature still believe that it is important to be heard. Thus, on February 7th of this year, in a special national BBC television broadcast, former Prime Minister Harold Macmillan expressed his grave reservations about the course of the SALT II negotiations:

It alarms me. I must be frank. I said we could have peaceful co-existence if we keep up our guard, and it's a duty not to ourselves, but to the Soviet imperialists, too, because they will only be able to hold back their extremists if we do keep up our guard --the West as a whole.

But what, in fact, has happened? America is weaker. I tell you quite frankly I am alarmed about the SALT discussions which look like abandoning or endangering the safety of Europe....

In this case, it is clear that Harold Macmillan's non-official status allowed him to say things that the British government would not dare to say.

Such public candor is a precious commodity in Western Europe today. Even the French government, which since the days of DeGaulle has remained critical of America's policies in Europe, has decided to avoid public comment on SALT II. Public criticism of the Carter Administration's negotiating at SALT could prove politically hazardous.

In a sense, this situation is an accurate mirror of the Western European dilemma. The European leaders may have serious reservations about an issue as important to their security as SALT, but they believe that they cannot afford to make their reservation known in a public manner. The activity that looks so simple from an American perspective--European questioning of SALT proposals that might prove detrimental to their security--could have untold consequences for European leaders whose political power can be subject to sudden, possibly ruinous reverses.

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I would like to thank Jurgen Schwarz, a professor at the University of the Federal Armed Forces Munich (currently The Heritage Foundation's Visiting Scholar), for assisting in the analysis of many of the issues discussed in this paper.