

A Public Strategy of Peace: *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE

Willy Brandt's Foreign Policy and the Western Alliance, 1969-1972

By Richard Post

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Utrecht University*



Supervisor:	Dr. Elmar Hellendoorn
Word count:	14.887
Date:	07-06-2017
Email address:	c.r.post@students.uu.nl
Student number:	4005775

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Abstract

Ostpolitik was the FRG's new approach to East-West relations. It rested on the conviction that change could only come through a policy of rapprochement with the Eastern European states. The Warsaw Pact's call for a CSCE fitted perfectly within this policy. Through an analysis of declassified government sources, this paper addresses how *Ostpolitik* affected the stance of the FRG, the United States and the Netherlands on the CSCE from 1969-1972. Both the U.S. and the Netherlands did not support the CSCE out of its own right. However, the FRG's steps towards the East threatened to disrupt the stability of NATO. Chancellor Willy Brandt used this dynamic by linking *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE with strategic objectives like a Berlin Agreement and MBFR. To maintain the stability of the alliance, the U.S. and the Netherlands were pressured to support the CSCE initiative. This linkage strategy shows how the positive atmosphere with the East resulting from *Ostpolitik* was part of a calculated strategy by Brandt to improve the German situation and the *détente* process.

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Introduction

“Peace, like freedom, is no original state which existed from the start; we shall have to make it, in the truest sense of the word.” – Willy Brandt, 11 December 1971, Oslo.¹

With this sentence, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) Willy Brandt accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971. This prize was awarded to Brandt for his efforts for peace during the Cold War in the form of his *Ostpolitik*, a foreign policy that tried to normalise relations between the FRG and the states of Eastern Europe. In the period of 1969 until 1974, the focus of the two superpowers turned to the FRG and to the question of what *Ostpolitik* meant for the balance of power in Europe. The divided state of the German nation and Berlin had always demanded the attention of both the Soviet Union and the United States, but – with *Ostpolitik* – the FRG transcended a passive role and increasingly became an actor of its own. In the words of the Nobel Prize committee, Brandt functioned as a “European bridge-builder,”² showing the importance of his policy for the security situation in Europe, which was being dominated by the status of Berlin and Germany.

Brandt introduced his foreign policy at a time when new approaches to the security of Europe were being examined. A potential European security conference was being discussed after a proposal from the Soviet Union. Moreover, both the Eastern and Western blocs of the Cold War explored the possibilities of a mutual reduction in armed forces. Given the importance attached to the *German question*, the role of the FRG and its *Ostpolitik* within the Western alliance and European security structure was crucial.

Through an analysis of the response of the United States and the Netherlands to *Ostpolitik*, this paper will show that *Ostpolitik* had a direct impact in determining the position of the Western alliance on the eventual Conference on Security and Co-operation (CSCE).³ *Ostpolitik* affected the negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR), the foreign policy of individual states within the alliance, and the FRG’s role within NATO. Moreover, Brandt used *Ostpolitik* and the Soviet Union’s wish for a CSCE to force a Berlin

¹ Willy Brandt, “Nobel Lecture: Peace Policy in Our Time,” Oslo, 11 December 1971, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1971/brandt-lecture.html, accessed on 16 April 2017.

² Norwegian Nobel Institute, “Willy Brandt – Facts,” no date, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1971/brandt-facts.html, accessed on 16 April 2017.

³ The names used to refer to the European security conference varied greatly, changing from Conference on European Security (CES), European Security Conference (ESC) to Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). CSCE became the official name of this conference that opened in July 1973 and resulted in the signing of the Helsinki Final Act on 1 August 1975. Therefore, I will only use this acronym unless it varies in a direct quote.

Agreement in 1971, thereby greatly contributing to an improvement of the situation in Europe. In total, *Ostpolitik* greatly contributed to the overall easing of East-West relations in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It did so both through the public display of *détente* of the CSCE, as well as through the more secret manifestation of *détente* in the form of the MBFR negotiations. Especially by effectively linking both of these sides of *détente*, *Ostpolitik* became an important factor in driving the *détente* process forward.

Historical Context

For the Federal Republic of Germany, Brandt's introduction of *Ostpolitik* was a radical shift in foreign policy by moving away from the Hallstein Doctrine. As first Chancellor of West Germany, Konrad Adenauer⁴ had introduced the Hallstein Doctrine in 1955. This called for the suspension of the FRG's diplomatic relations with all states recognising the German Democratic Republic (GDR) apart from the Soviet Union.⁵ Moving away from this policy allowed for that normalisation of relations between East and West. According to Krzysztof Ruchniewicz's analysis of *Ostpolitik* in Poland, the abandonment of the Hallstein Doctrine was strongly related to Brandt's wish to repent for Germany's actions of the Second World War. While Ruchniewicz directs his arguments towards the "moral aspect"⁶ of the FRG's foreign policy, this shift might be better explained by a neorealist perspective. Reconciliation with Germany's past was crucial for reassuring other NATO countries while going down the path of *Ostpolitik*.

The status of Berlin played a key role in the development of *Ostpolitik* and overall East-West relations. As a result of the Second World War, Berlin was divided into four sections that came under the control of the four victors: the United States, Soviet Union, United Kingdom and France. With the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, East Berlin was closed off from West Berlin. Negotiations on improving the access to West Berlin commenced in 1970 between the Four Powers.⁷ It is important to realise that these negotiations were strictly between the Four Powers, and that the FRG had no direct say in the negotiations. However, through *Ostpolitik*

⁴ In office from 15 September 1949 until 11 October 1963.

⁵ Hanns Jürgen Küsters, "Hintergrundinformationen. 1955. Die Hallstein-Doktrin," last modified 15 June 2013, https://www.bundesarchiv.de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/bilder_dokumente/01366/index-2.html.de, accessed on 19 May 2017.

⁶ Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, "Ostpolitik and Poland," in *Ostpolitik, 1969-1974. European and Global Responses*, eds. Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 40.

⁷ Gunther Doeker, Klaus Melsheimer and Dieter Schroder, "Berlin and the Quadripartite Agreement of 1971," *The American Journal of International Law*, 67 (1973): 1, 44-62, 51.

Brandt tried to improve the status of Berlin. The ratification of the Moscow Treaty⁸ with the Soviet Union was made conditional on a Berlin Agreement. This treaty was of great value to the Soviet Union, as it implicitly recognised the GDR and the borders of Europe, including the Oder-Neisse line. With this tactic, the FRG had a big part in the eventual signing of the *Quadripartite Agreement* on 3 September 1971.

For the United States, the Nixon administration's general approach to foreign policy was an important factor in determining how the negotiations on the CSCE and MBFR were handled. Jerel Rosati identifies the primacy of White House control through National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger and the National Security Council (NSC).⁹ A central aspect of U.S. foreign policy during the years of *détente* were the bilateral Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) with the Soviet Union that started in November 1969. In these talks, President Richard Nixon showed his preference to control the process through Kissinger by setting up a "back channel"¹⁰ with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin. It is important to realise that these talks ran simultaneously with negotiations on the CSCE and MBFR. Given Nixon's preference to have full control over the arms control negotiations of SALT, it is understandable that he was hesitant towards a multilateral CSCE and MBFR.

For the Netherlands, the memory of the Second World War was still fresh in the minds of the Dutch politicians. As the Netherlands was not a strong country militarily, the importance of protecting the vulnerable Dutch borders far outweighed other motivations.¹¹ This was a major factor for a more restrained approach to *détente* by the Dutch government.

An important development for NATO that made *détente* possible was the 1967 Harmel Report.¹² This report tried to make NATO an instrument of *détente* next to its defensive functionality. It departed from the belief that *détente* was best served by a focus on security and through the preservation of the military balance. According to Ralph Dietl, the Harmel Report was an attempt to improve Western solidarity by harmonising the security interests of the United States with those of the European allies.¹³ Dietl argues that this forced the U.S. to take

⁸ The Moscow Treaty was signed on 12 August 1970.

⁹ Jerel Rosati, "Developing a Systematic Decision-Making Framework: Bureaucratic Politics in Perspective," *World Politics*, 33 (1981): 2, 234-252, 242-243.

¹⁰ Rosati, "Developing a Systematic Decision-Making Framework," 245.

¹¹ Alfred van Staden, *Een trouwe bondgenoot: Nederland en het Atlantisch bondgenootschap 1960-1971*, (Amsterdam: Anthos, 1974), 224-225.

¹² Report, North Atlantic Council, "The Future Tasks of the Alliance. The Harmel Report," Brussels, 14 December 1967, last modified 2 December 2009, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26700.htm, accessed on 22 March 2017.

¹³ Ralph L. Dietl, *Equal Security: Europe and the SALT Process, 1969-1976*, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013), 11.

allied wishes into account as it threatened to weaken the stability of the Western bloc.¹⁴ This dynamic will be an important factor when analysing the relations of the U.S. with the FRG and the Netherlands in this paper.

Historiography

The scholarly debate on Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* and the events leading up to the CSCE in Helsinki has long been dominated by traditional neorealist thinking. However, neorealist explanations have recently been challenged by a group of scholars who have undertaken a constructivist approach and thereby focus more on the importance of social structures rather than material interests. They understand the emergence of West Germany's *Ostpolitik* and its course of direction in the years leading up to the CSCE in 1975 as a logical consequence of the change in West German norms and values.

The constructivist challenge most prominently came from political scientists Karl Cordell and Stefan Wolff, who analysed West German foreign policy from the 1960s onwards. Inspired by the conviction that the *logic of appropriateness* trumps the *logic of consequences*, Cordell and Wolff argue that social norms changed during the 1960s and made room for a new foreign policy of the FRG which had "peace, reconciliation and regime change"¹⁵ at its core. These objectives were formed to comply with new norms like liberalisation that made a more open attitude towards the East possible. Moreover, Germany's tainted history was an important reason for a shift towards norms that accepted responsibility for the Second World War and built towards a sustainable and peaceful living environment with the Warsaw Pact countries.¹⁶ Therefore, they do not seek an explanation for the emergence of *Ostpolitik* rooted in power politics. Rather, Cordell and Wolff explain *Ostpolitik* as a product of the international climate of *détente* and the ongoing process of Germany's economic and political recovery after the Second World War.¹⁷

However, Cordell and Wolff's work does not come without contestation. While Joost Kleuters sees the merit of a constructivist approach on a long continuing process like the social norms behind *Ostpolitik*, he contends that constructivism is insufficiently capable of

¹⁴ Dietl, *Europe and the SALT Process, 1969-1976*, 11.

¹⁵ Karl Cordell and Stefan Wolff, "A Foreign Policy Analysis of the 'German Question': Ostpolitik Revisited," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 3 (2007): 3, 255-271, 256.

¹⁶ Cordell and Wolff, "Ostpolitik Revisited," 261-262.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 258.

establishing causal links.¹⁸ Kleuters states that constructivist accounts of *Ostpolitik* remain “too abstract”¹⁹ and gloss over the fact that the norms that supposedly shaped *Ostpolitik* were already prevalent during the fundamentally different policy of Brandt’s predecessor Konrad Adenauer.²⁰ Adenauer’s *Politik der Stärke* was based on the theory that a powerful Western alliance supported by West Germany would eventually coerce the Soviet Union into the reunification of Germany.²¹ According to Kleuters, the *logic of appropriateness* used by Cordell and Wolff fails to explain why such a sudden shift in policy occurred from Adenauer’s *Politik der Stärke* to Brandt’s *Politik der Annäherung*.

Instead, Kleuters argues for a theoretical approach that does not depart from either the *logic of appropriateness* or from the *logic of consequences*, but one that combines them to develop an understanding of how norms and material interests gave rise to *Ostpolitik*.²² Contrary to constructivists, he suggests that the interests of political actors help define which norms become the standard through the success of the pursued foreign policy.²³ Therefore, Kleuters’ main claim is that the failure of Adenauer to make progress on German unification through his ‘Policy of Strength’ is what enabled Brandt to gain support for a new West German foreign policy towards the Soviet Union.²⁴ Due to the continuation of the ‘Policy of Strength’ in the 1960s, despite the international climate moving towards *détente*, Brandt’s rapprochement policy was the long awaited alternative as a response to norm change in the absence of reunification.²⁵

Although Kleuters includes political interests into his theoretical framework for *Ostpolitik*, he pays little attention to the role played by security interests in Brandt’s *Ostpolitik*. In doing so, a potentially vital element of *Ostpolitik* receives less attention than it deserves, namely the defence of Europe. Notably, the CSCE and MBFR hardly feature in Kleuters’ analysis of *Ostpolitik*.

Yet, the security question makes for an interesting contrast. *Ostpolitik* was regarded as an emerging independent German foreign policy with its own best interests at heart. However, Brandt needed to navigate the competing national interests of the European allies and the U.S. for the FRG’s own security vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. The right balance between bilateral and

¹⁸ Joost Kleuters, *Reunification in West German Party Politics from Westbindung to Ostpolitik*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 14.

¹⁹ Kleuters, *Reunification in West German Party Politics*, 13.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

²² *Ibid.*, 21-22.

²³ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 164.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 168.

multilateral action needed to be found. Therefore, while constructivist approaches to *Ostpolitik* were adequate at describing the emergence of this policy, they fail to address the significance of security interests on the course of Brandt's foreign policy. Hence, a neorealist perspective could prove to be better suited to explain the relation between *Ostpolitik* and the security of Europe.

Andreas Wilkens, scholar of European integration and post-war German foreign policy, does attach great value to external security for its fundamental position in Brandt's policy towards the East.²⁶ Similar to Kleuters, Wilkens highlights the centrality of resolving the division of Germany in Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. However, where Kleuters mainly analyses West Germany's internal dynamics, Wilkens looks outward and puts the 'German Question' in the wider context of both the Atlantic and European security structures. He states that Brandt felt his ultimate goal of reunification could only be achieved through multilateral action via NATO and the European community.²⁷ Political scientist Wilfried Loth is another proponent of the focus on the relationship between European security and Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, and how this caused national interests to collide within the alliance. However, Loth shows how Brandt tried to balance between his allies by pursuing European defence integration while maintaining that this was not a move away from NATO and the United States.²⁸

The complicated theme of European security took centre stage in the years leading up to the CSCE, which eventually saw the signing of the Helsinki Final Act by the United States, Soviet Union and most of the European countries. Being signed by both superpowers, the Helsinki Final Act has been described as the "institutionalization of détente"²⁹, indicating the importance of this moment for normalising East-West relations.

European security expert Petri Hakkarainen focuses on the FRG's role in finalising the Helsinki Accords. Departing from his view that "old-fashioned *Realpolitik*"³⁰ played a crucial part, he states that Brandt used the conference to validate his bilateral *Ostpolitik*.³¹ However, Hakkarainen notices a trend that Bonn started to view the CSCE as an end rather than just a

²⁶ Andreas Wilkens, "New Ostpolitik and European integration: Concepts and Policies in the Brandt Era," in *European Integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik-Westpolitik, 1965-1973*, ed. N. Piers Ludlow, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 69.

²⁷ Wilkens, "New Ostpolitik and European integration," 71-72.

²⁸ Wilfried Loth, "Détente and European integration in the policies of Willy Brandt and Georges Pompidou," in *European Integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik-Westpolitik, 1965-1973*, ed. N. Piers Ludlow, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 60-61.

²⁹ Alexis Heraclides, *Security and Co-operation in Europe: The Human Dimension 1972-1992*, (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1993), 42.

³⁰ Petri Hakkarainen, *A State of Peace in Europe. West Germany and the CSCE, 1966-1975*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 8.

³¹ Hakkarainen, *A State of Peace*, 99.

means. The CSCE “in effect already multilateralised *Ostpolitik*”³², thereby safeguarding the FRG’s interests.³³ Moreover, Bonn increasingly felt that peace on the European continent was their primary objective, even before the reunification of Germany.³⁴

The discussed literature shows an already comprehensive debate regarding *Ostpolitik* and how the Cold War environment helped create and shape this policy. Yet, much less has been written about how *Ostpolitik* itself affected that same Cold War environment. A welcome exception is the edited work of Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer, which addresses the global response to the FRG’s revolutionary foreign policy. Particularly intriguing is Holger Klitzing’s chapter that discusses the hesitant American response by the Nixon administration due to its own *détente* policy.³⁵ Klitzing attributes this attitude to the U.S. belief that Bonn’s unilateral rapprochements with the Soviets threatened U.S. control over the continent and thereby the overall Eastern policy pursued by the allies.³⁶ While Holger Klitzing gives a good representation of the American response to Brandt’s *Ostpolitik*, little attention is given to the greater context of the ongoing process concerning the CSCE. This process had been ongoing since the 1950s, when the Soviet Union initially proposed it. The CSCE was not prioritised by the United States due to its preference of bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union. Moreover, the U.S. wanted Europe to maintain a collective, military approach to support *détente* as shown by the 1967 Harmel Report that was adopted by NATO.

This paper wants to build on the work of Klitzing by analysing to what extent *Ostpolitik* contributed to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. However – unlike the work of Hakkarainen – it will do so by analysing the response to *Ostpolitik* in the context of the CSCE. Therefore, the main research question will be:

To what extent did Ostpolitik determine the CSCE-policy of the FRG, the United States and the Netherlands from 1969-1972?

To answer this question, I have formulated three sub-questions. First, what was the initial stance of the United States and the FRG towards the CSCE? Second, how did negotiations on MBFR

³² Ibid., 136.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 162.

³⁵ Holger Klitzing, “To Grin and Bear It: The Nixon Administration and Ostpolitik,” in *Ostpolitik, 1969-1974. European and Global Responses*, eds. Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 109.

³⁶ Klitzing, “The Nixon Administration and Ostpolitik,” 83-85.

affect the FRG's and United States' position on both *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE? Third, what was the Dutch reaction to the dynamic between *Ostpolitik*, the CSCE and MBFR?

The timeframe of 1969-1972 has been chosen for several reasons. In 1969, discussions on the CSCE picked up following a public appeal from the Warsaw Pact.³⁷ Moreover, in 1969 Willy Brandt took office as Chancellor of the FRG, which accelerated the introduction of *Ostpolitik* on the international stage. During the Moscow Summit in 1972, President Nixon and General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Leonid Brezhnev agreed to the CSCE and decided that MBFR would not be part of the CSCE agenda. This decision concluded the uncertainty surrounding the CSCE and MBFR and their interrelationship. Therefore, this paper will only focus on the developments before the Moscow Summit. However, the main focus will be on 1970 as this was an important year for *Ostpolitik* with the signing of the Moscow Treaty.

The importance of an analysis of the American response does not need much explanation due to its position as the superpower of the West. Moreover, it is interesting to analyse to what extent the foreign policy of the FRG managed to affect the foreign policy of the United States, and thereby the overall dynamics of *détente* and the Cold War. The response in the Netherlands is an interesting counterweight to see how another Western ally formulated its policy in the light of the FRG's new direction. The history of the Second World War between the Netherlands and Germany makes the Dutch response to a more assertive West German foreign policy an intriguing research topic, especially in the context of a conference on European security. Moreover, as a "loyal"³⁸ NATO member and a founding member of the European community, the Dutch held a very special place in relation to Germany, the United States, Europe, NATO, and thereby to European security. The Dutch response to *Ostpolitik* is also something that has mostly escaped the attention of historians, and could therefore be a valuable addition to the extensive material on the FRG's foreign policy.

Key Concepts

How *Ostpolitik* contributed to European security politics during the Cold War revolves around multiple conceptual contrasts. First, the contrast of the FRG's *Ostpolitik* versus the American approach to *détente*. Second, the contrast of multilateral versus bilateral negotiations. Third, the contrast of a European approach to security versus an Atlantic one. Fully understanding both

³⁷ This appeal is known as "The Budapest Appeal" and will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 1.

³⁸ Van Staden, *Een trouwe bondgenoot*, 224.

the overlap and differences between these concepts contributes to an analysis of this period of the Cold War. Moreover, an accurate definition of how these concepts are interpreted and used in this paper is necessary to avoid any misconceptions.

First, the close relationship between *détente* and *Ostpolitik*. Loosely defined, *détente* resembles the “action of reducing tension.”³⁹ This has often been attributed to the foreign policy of President Richard Nixon and National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger towards the Soviet Union. However, the conceptual value of *détente* transcends its role of foreign policy and has been characterised by its ambiguous nature. Back in 1985, Richard Stevenson advocated that *détente* should be defined as the “process of easing of tension between states whose interests are so radically divergent that reconciliation is inherently limited.”⁴⁰ Later, Brian White expanded on Stevenson’s work by addressing that *détente* from the viewpoint of the allies was “a vehicle for exploiting those changes in order to create some freedom of manoeuvre within their respective hegemonic systems.”⁴¹

White’s contribution shows that it would be incorrect to label *Ostpolitik* only as Bonn’s attempt of relaxation with the East. While *Ostpolitik* was developed in the context of *superpower détente*, Fink and Schaefer characterise it as the emergence of a distinct West German foreign policy revolving once again around its own interests.⁴² The ultimate goal was reunification with the GDR, however, after the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 Brandt and Egon Bahr⁴³ realised the “German problem”⁴⁴ would only be solved in the long run and by adopting a more assertive stance.⁴⁵ Therefore, *Ostpolitik* can be understood through White’s definition of *allied détente*, whereas *détente* refers to the greater context of U.S.-Soviet attempts at a relaxation of tensions.

Although *superpower détente* and *allied détente* function as an important point of departure – they explain what *détente* meant for either an ally or one of the superpowers – they fail to address the different ways a superpower or ally could shape the *détente* process. This is

³⁹ Richard Stevenson, *The Rise and Fall of Détente*, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1985), 6.

⁴⁰ Stevenson, *Rise and Fall of Détente*, 11.

⁴¹ Brian White, *Britain, Détente and changing East-West Relations*, (London: Routledge, 1992), 34. White’s other concept – superpower détente – closely resembles Stevenson’s definition of détente.

⁴² This had been a sensitive topic after the events of the two World Wars earlier that century, see Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer, “Introduction,” in *Ostpolitik, 1969-1974. European and Global Responses*, eds. Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-2.

⁴³ Egon Bahr served as secretary of the Chancellor’s office from 1969 until 1972. He is often described as the ‘Architect of Brandt’s *Ostpolitik*,’ see Tilman Fichter, *Die SPD und die Nation: vier sozialdemokratische Generationen zwischen nationaler Selbstbestimmung und Zweistaatlichkeit*, (Berlin: Ullstein, 1993), 234.

⁴⁴ Fink and Schaefer, “Introduction,” 2.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

an important distinction to make, as this research mainly focuses on how *Ostpolitik* contributed to *détente* and the Cold War environment, and not on how *détente* gave rise to *Ostpolitik*.

Therefore, I would put forth a new set of concepts that describes the different ways states could contribute to the overall spreading of *détente*: *atmospheric détente* and *calculated détente*. These two concepts have their origin in different convictions of how to best achieve a relaxation of the tensions between East and West. By making this distinction, the effects of a state's policy on *détente* can be understood, while also explaining the type of policy that was pursued by a government; either an idealist one, or a more realist one.

Yet, I would argue, that a strong connection existed between the strategic reality and measures that were assumed to be atmospheric. *Atmospheric détente* has often been used in a negative way by both historians⁴⁶ and politicians⁴⁷. 'Atmospheric' was used synonymously with 'imaginary' or 'deceptive', implying the dangers of this approach to relaxing tensions. However, this does not do justice to the role of atmospheric in the overall Cold War process. Atmospheric measures should not be approached from the belief that they did not depart from the self-interest of East or West, but rather, that they would make the conflicts of interests between East and West more manageable and debatable.

Atmospheric détente can be seen as the public appearance of *détente*, and is based on the levels of interaction between East and West, referring to the willingness of parties to engage with each other diplomatically. The other, military component of *détente* – or security component – is based on tangible results in the military balance between East and West. This private, more secret component can be described as a *calculated détente*, referring to the trade-offs that can be made to alleviate tensions. The key component separating the two concepts is how they deal with the confrontation of East and West.

Calculated détente embarks from the assumption that there is an irreconcilable gap between the wishes of the East compared to that of the West. It embarks from the belief that the East-West relationship is in fact, a zero-sum relationship that can only be managed through

⁴⁶ Historian Bernt Schulte concludes that the superpowers still thought in terms of power politics at this time and that the "exaggerated expectations" of the public display of *détente* "should not be given any particular importance." For Schulte, relaxation was only achieved through a careful preservation of the status quo, which limited the chance of war, see Bernt Schulte, *Hollands Ostpolitik. Entspannungspolitische Konzeptionen niederländischer Politiker zu Problembereichen des Ost-West-Verhältnisses*, (Hamburg: Universität Hamburg, 1973), 140.

⁴⁷ NSC staff member Helmut Sonnenfeldt warned for an atmospheric conference: "There is widespread Allied acceptance of a 'hortatory' CES that will be largely devoid of substance. [...] we will continue drifting to a Conference that will yield high dividends to the Soviets and produce almost meaningless atmospheric for us," see Minutes of a Senior Review Group Meeting, Senior Review Group, "June NATO Ministerial Meeting, Washington, 14 May 1971, secret," *FRUS European Security, 1969-1976*, volume XXXIX, doc. 48.

reciprocal acts in areas of interest.⁴⁸ However, at all times decisions will be motivated by the conviction that the outcome is the best option for the power balance between East and West, making it the approach that is motivated by a more realist foreign policy. In short, *calculated détente* can be seen as the acceptance of confrontation.⁴⁹

Unlike *calculated détente*, *atmospheric détente* can be seen as an attempt to reduce the tensions of confrontation between East and West by taking steps in the other's direction. It embarks from the belief that the East-West relationship can be improved through accommodation rather than confrontation. Through this improved atmosphere, tensions between East and West are lessened, thereby opening up the possibility of negotiations.⁵⁰ These elements make it the approach that is motivated by a more idealist foreign policy.

Atmospheric détente and *calculated détente* were both unmissable elements of the overall period of relaxed tensions between East and West. This claim is best supported by the coalescing relationship between the CSCE and MBFR, and the arguments of the different parties to push for one or the other. The CSCE has a place on the *atmospheric* side of the spectrum with its main contribution to East-West relations being the open communications between the involved states. MBFR clearly belongs on the *calculated* side due to its direct effect on the strategic reality, namely the level of armed forces.

The distinction between the public and secret sides of *détente* is an important one to make, because, depending on the actor, both can be put forth as evidence that this was in fact a period of eased tensions between both power blocs. Understanding which form of *détente* an actor pursued not only gives great insight into their interests and convictions, but is particularly useful when translating the foreign policy of a state to practical improvements in East-West relations.

⁴⁸ For example Dutch Foreign Minister Joseph Luns, who said that a "real *détente*" had to be founded on a strong defence posture and political solidarity: "*Détente* was not in the first place about improving the political climate, but about reaching stable East-West relations from which to negotiate fundamental political problems. Goodwill and concessions had to come from both sides," see Albert Kersten, *Luns: een politieke biografie*, (Amsterdam: Boom, 2010), 488.

⁴⁹ For example Kissinger, who sees *détente* as "a balancing of national interests and negotiations on the basis of strategic realities" that is founded on "the suspiciousness of a nation that is assumed to have no other motive to attack," see Henry Kissinger, "The Future of NATO," *The Washington Quarterly*, (Autumn 1979), 3-17, 9.

⁵⁰ Brandt and Bahr's *Ostpolitik* rested heavily on *Wandel durch Annäherung*. On this concept, Bahr explains the rationale behind it: "Overcoming the status quo by not changing the status quo. Any policy that aims a direct overthrow of the regime is hopeless. The foundation for reunification can only be created with the Soviet Union. [...] The first result for Germany that comes from a change to a strategy of peace is that the policy of all or nothing has been abandoned," see Andreas Vogtmeier, *Egon Bahr und die deutsche Frage. Zur Entwicklung der sozialdemokratischen Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik vom Kriegsende bis zur Vereinigung*, (Bonn: Dietz, 1996), 62-63.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

As mentioned in the historiography, this paper will use a neorealist perspective when analysing *Ostpolitik* and the road towards the CSCE. Neorealism is a form of structural realism that was most notably introduced by Kenneth Waltz in 1979.⁵¹ Unlike classical realism, neorealism departs from the assumption that the structure of international states is characterised by anarchy, because there is no higher power to control interstate relations. Therefore, neorealism assumes that war is the normal state of affairs, thus making it the principal task of a government to prepare for it.⁵² Effectively, this makes each state an autonomous actor looking after its own interests.

The above assumptions of neorealism make relative power an important element of Waltz's theory. In order to defend their existence, states will try to maximise their power vis-à-vis other states. This can be done by *internal* or *external efforts* according to Waltz. While *internal efforts* involve measures to improve military capacity, *external efforts* involve engaging in or strengthening an alliance.⁵³ As there are large differences in the relative power of states that cannot be overcome through *internal efforts*, weaker states will seek alliances "in the quest for security."⁵⁴

Neorealism suggests that the management of an alliance was vital for the participating states, because they depended on the alliance for their security and existence.⁵⁵ According to Waltz, the bipolar structure of the Cold War caused the need for the states of Western Europe to enter an alliance involving the United States to seek protection from the Soviet Union.⁵⁶ Security studies scholar Glenn Snyder identified that this structure implied superpower leadership by either the United States or the Soviet Union in their respective alliances. Snyder states that this sort of security structure in practice rested on a "unilateral guarantee"⁵⁷ by the superpowers to come to the protection of the rest of their alliances.

When applying the characteristics of neorealism to the central research question, it is possible to formulate the following hypothesis on the role of *Ostpolitik* in determining the stance of the U.S. and the Netherlands towards *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE:

⁵¹ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1979), 103.

⁵² Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 103-104.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 167-168.

⁵⁷ Glenn H. Snyder, "Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut," *Journal of International Affairs*, 44 (1990): 1, 103-123, 117.

Détente and Ostpolitik helped weaken the bipolar structure of the Cold War and with it the stability of the Western alliance, thereby pushing the Netherlands and the United States to support the CSCE to help guard from this threat.

To find the empirical evidence to answer the main research question, I will use declassified sources that show the real policy developments of each state. To find the U.S. response to Brandt's *Ostpolitik* and the U.S. role in the process leading up to the CSCE, the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series is used. The FRUS volumes on European Security, Germany and Berlin, and NATO from 1969-1976 are collections of declassified documents from the U.S. National Security Council (NSC) and the U.S. Department of State. Therefore, they give a good overview of how President Nixon, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger and the U.S. State Department reacted to *Ostpolitik*.

To find the Dutch position on *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE, minutes from the weekly meetings of the Ministerial Council are used. Moreover, documents from the archives of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs offer an insight into Dutch-West German relations, Dutch-U.S. relations, and the Dutch stance on the CSCE and MBFR.

The findings from the U.S. and Dutch sources are combined with documents from the *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (AAPD), which will show the FRG's stance. Moreover, the memoirs of Egon Bahr will provide an additional layer of analysis of the FRG's perspective. Similarly, the memoirs of Kissinger and the political autobiography of Dutch Foreign Minister Joseph Luns⁵⁸ are used to support the empirical evidence of the U.S. and Dutch positions. Together, these sources allow for an in-depth analysis of the different viewpoints of the United States, the Netherlands and the FRG and how they interacted with each other on topics like *Ostpolitik*, the CSCE and MBFR.

This paper is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 analyses how the United States and the FRG viewed the CSCE directly after the Warsaw Pact's public appeal for the CSCE. Chapter 2 addresses how discussions about the inclusion of MBFR at the CSCE affected the position of the FRG and the United States on the CSCE and the dynamic between them. Chapter 3 will use the findings of the first two chapters to analyse how the Dutch government reacted to the developments of *Ostpolitik*, the CSCE and MBFR.

⁵⁸ In office from 13 October 1956 until 6 July 1971.

Chapter 1: Finding a Place for *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE

Introduction

On 17 March 1969, the Warsaw Pact issued the Budapest Appeal, which called for a “pan-European security conference”⁵⁹ and caused a revival of discussions on the CSCE in Western Europe. Shortly after, *Ostpolitik* started to take off after Willy Brandt became Chancellor of the FRG. Therefore, this chapter will deal with the key question of what the stances of the FRG and the United States on the CSCE were and how they related to each other. These findings will become an important point of departure for the development in FRG-U.S. relations that will be discussed in chapter 2.

Holger Klitzing puts forward an interesting theory on why *Ostpolitik* and the U.S. formed a problematic relationship. Klitzing argues that the U.S. government did not possess the needed influence to determine the directions of the FRG, thereby forcing Nixon and Kissinger in a position where they played a minor role at the beginning of Brandt’s rapprochement policy with the Soviet Union.⁶⁰ While a plausible explanation, Klitzing’s theory seems to go against the earlier formulated hypothesis that management of the alliance was the main motivation for the U.S. to allow *Ostpolitik*, and not an absence of influence.

Ultimately, this chapter aims to show a different approach to *détente* by the FRG and the U.S. that determined how both parties thought the CSCE could fit within their foreign policy, if at all. This difference played an important part in determining the stance of the U.S. on both *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE.

The Budapest Appeal

The Warsaw Pact’s plea for a joint effort to ensure security and peace in Europe put pressure on the European allies to formulate their stance on the CSCE. Although the wish of the Soviet Union to have the CSCE had been clear since the 1950s, the public message generated renewed momentum on this discussion. The Budapest Appeal called for items like the recognition of the

⁵⁹ Appeal by the Warsaw Pact member states to all European countries, Budapest, 17 March 1969, last modified 3 July 2015,

http://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/appeal_by_the_warsaw_pact_member_states_to_all_european_countries_budapest_17_march_1969-en-ad406a56-f121-4d4e-9721-87700f88211e.html, accessed on 2 March 2017.

⁶⁰ Holger Klitzing, “To Grin and Bear It. The Nixon Administration and *Ostpolitik*,” in *Ostpolitik, 1969-1974. European and Global Responses*, eds. Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 86.

GDR and the FRG, West-Berlin's special status outside of the FRG and the inviolability of Europe's borders, most importantly the Oder-Neisse line.⁶¹

In the Warsaw Pact's appeal for a European security conference, participation for both the U.S. and the FRG was not a foregone conclusion. Naturally, the United States did not fit the 'European' criteria and its participation would have to be negotiated. Moreover, participation of the FRG brought along the matter of GDR participation, which had traditionally been controversial in diplomatic relations.⁶² This made the Budapest Appeal and the CSCE a heavily politicised topic with important ramifications for East-West relations.

The negotiations that followed in the two years after the Budapest Appeal were characterised by an intricate play of competing national interests and the interests of the Western alliance. Two key themes surrounding the CSCE dictated the foreign relations of the alliance: the participants and the agenda of the conference.

FRG Perspective

The FRG greatly supported the idea of the CSCE after the Budapest Appeal.⁶³ However, the position of the FRG was not a simple one and its participation depended heavily on its new *Ostpolitik*. Willy Brandt's new course in foreign policy meant the abandonment of the Hallstein Doctrine, thereby opening up participation of both the GDR and the FRG. Therefore, while GDR participation could have proven to be a stumbling block for the CSCE, the opposite was true as a result of the FRG's new *Ostpolitik*.

With its new foreign policy, the FRG held a special position in between East and West. U.S. Under Secretary of State Elliot Richardson characterised this in an analogy of a man in a stream: "The further he reaches out his arm, the stronger he must hang on to the tree with his other hand not to fall into the water."⁶⁴ While the invitation from the Warsaw Pact to negotiate on European security was promising for the FRG's *Ostpolitik*, an approach to the conference that insufficiently took allied interests into account threatened to alienate the Federal Republic from the alliance. Therefore, the West German stance on the CSCE had to be deeply anchored in its commitment towards NATO.

⁶¹ Appeal by the Warsaw Pact member states to all European countries, Budapest, 17 March 1969.

⁶² The Hallstein Doctrine had been in effect since 1955 until it was abandoned in 1970.

⁶³ Memorandum, Auswärtiges Amt (hereafter: AA) to the Bundessicherheitsrat (hereafter: BSR), "Inclusion of MBFR at the CSCE, Bonn, 2 March 1970, confidential," *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (hereafter: AAPD), 1970, doc. 83.

⁶⁴ Memorandum, Ambassador to the U.S. (Pauls) to the AA, "FRG-Soviet talks, Washington, 17 February 1970, secret," AAPD, 1970, doc. 62.

While *Ostpolitik* made FRG participation to the CSCE possible, it also opened up the door for the Soviet Union to directly pressure the FRG. As progress on the CSCE stayed out, the Soviet Union grew impatient. On 23 May 1970, Soviet ambassador to the FRG Semjon Zarapkin tried to push Foreign Minister Walter Scheel⁶⁵ away from bilateral and towards multilateral talks. Although Zarapkin thought bilateral negotiations were useful in preparing for the CSCE, he said that “the time had come”⁶⁶ to link them with multilateral negotiations to contribute to the spreading of *détente*.⁶⁷ Scheel confirmed the FRG’s wish for a multilateral CSCE, but he added that bilateral talks would serve the initial purpose of taking away any mistrust between East and West, identifying obstacles for the CSCE and agreeing on sensitive topics that needed to be excluded from the agenda.⁶⁸

U.S. Perspective

Similar to the participation of the FRG, U.S. participation to the CSCE eventually turned out to be easy to negotiate. On 4 April 1969, U.S. Under Secretary of State Elliot Richardson discussed the potential involvement of the United States in the proposed conference with Soviet ambassador Dobrynin. Richardson made clear that the Budapest Appeal suggested the conference would not include the United States, which would make the U.S. strongly against the proposal.⁶⁹ Dobrynin responded that the Soviet Union would have “no objection”⁷⁰ to U.S. participation if the European states deemed U.S. participation required.⁷¹ The combination of Dobrynin’s forthcoming attitude and the vague content of the Budapest Appeal stirred U.S. interests, because it deviated from the Soviet norm of attacking the U.S.⁷² However, Henry Kissinger wanted to ensure that they did not treat Dobrynin’s approval of U.S. participation as a favour, because “anyone who is serious about making progress on European problems knows that we must be a party.”⁷³

⁶⁵ In office from 21 October 1969 until 16 May 1974.

⁶⁶ Memorandum of conversation, Foreign minister (Scheel) with Soviet ambassador (Zarapkin), “Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Bonn, 23 May 1970, confidential,” *AAPD*, 1970, doc. 232.

⁶⁷ *AAPD*, 1970, doc. 232.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Memorandum of conversation, Under Secretary (Richardson) with Soviet ambassador (Dobrynin), “European Security Conference, Washington, 4 April 1969, confidential,” *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter: *FRUS*) *European Security*, 1969-1976, volume XXXIX, doc. 1.

⁷⁰ *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, doc. 1.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Memorandum, President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President (Nixon), “Soviet initiative for a European Security Conference, Washington, 4 April 1969, secret,” *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, volume XXXIX, doc. 2.

⁷³ *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, doc. 2.

Kissinger's memorandum to President Nixon about the Budapest Appeal stressed that it was devoid of substance explaining how to realistically approach the CSCE. Therefore, Kissinger assumed different motivations were behind the Warsaw Pact's appeal. A CSCE that followed the Budapest Appeal would not only exclude the United States, but would also try to elicit concessions from the FRG on the topics of Berlin, the position of the GDR and the Oder-Neisse Line.⁷⁴ Moreover, Kissinger identified Soviet intentions to ultimately make military alliances obsolete, because a CSCE would make "extensive east-west cooperation"⁷⁵ possible.

The initial reaction from Kissinger to the Soviet Union's proposal showed the suspicion with which the CSCE was met by him and President Nixon. Important issues were at stake for the United States like the position of the FRG and the future of NATO. Yet, Kissinger advised to be "positive if cautious"⁷⁶ as he did not consider the CSCE to amount to much due to its multilateral character.⁷⁷ Therefore, Kissinger preferred the U.S. to adopt a responsive attitude towards the CSCE by awaiting European initiatives.⁷⁸

In December 1969, Kissinger repeated his stance to Dobrynin by saying the United States has "no interest"⁷⁹ in the CSCE, but that they would not obstruct the Europeans from having it and would later decide on U.S. participation. Interestingly, Kissinger did mention that they would closely follow West Germany's negotiations with the East and how this would positively affect the Soviet Union's attitude towards further negotiations on Berlin.⁸⁰ Moreover, President Nixon was advised by the State Department to additionally take West Germany's stance on the CSCE into consideration due to the implications East German participation would have on recognising the status quo in Europe.⁸¹

The combination of the above statements show on the one hand a particular U.S. interest in the FRG's *Ostpolitik*, and on the other hand an attitude towards the CSCE that was heavily reliant on the degree to which the Europeans wanted the conference. This might indicate that Washington's main concern about the CSCE was how it would affect the alliance.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Memorandum, National Security Council Staff Member (Sonnenfeldt) to President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), "State Again Pushes the 'Groundswell' on European Security, Washington, 29 October 1969, secret," *FRUS European Security, 1969-1976*, volume XXXIX, doc. 9.

⁷⁹ Editorial Note, *FRUS European Security, 1969-1976*, volume XXXIX, doc. 15.

⁸⁰ *FRUS European Security, 1969-1976*, doc. 15.

⁸¹ Memorandum, Secretary of State (Rogers) to President (Nixon), "United States and Allied Approaches to the Current Issues of European Security, Washington, 31 October 1969, secret," *FRUS European Security, 1969-1976*, volume XXXIX, doc. 10.

Further evidence that alliance management was the main driver of the U.S. concerning European security can be found in a memorandum from NSC staff member Helmut Sonnenfeldt. On 8 January 1970, Sonnenfeldt wrote to Kissinger that the U.S. had refrained from taking initiative on matters relating to the security of Europe.⁸² However, Sonnenfeldt identified that the European allies would probably not allow the U.S. to take a leading role even if it expressed an interest in this.⁸³ Furthermore, he warned for the “chaotic”⁸⁴ effects on NATO if the U.S. tried to negotiate bilaterally with the Soviet Union on matters of European security without consulting the allies. This shows a U.S. position on the CSCE that did not want more influence in the process at this time in order to preserve the stability of the alliance.

The U.S. strategy to the CSCE was to let the European allies determine their path, while keeping control of the balance of power in Europe. A National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) on European security stated that “a stable and peaceful situation [...] based on a military equilibrium”⁸⁵ was the primary U.S. goal, while sustaining the “independence and sovereignty of *all* European states”⁸⁶. However, Kissinger commented on how these two goals could contradict each other, as sovereignty cannot always be ensured in efforts that support stability.⁸⁷ Special attention was given by Kissinger to Brandt’s *Ostpolitik*; highlighting the dangers of the changing relations between the FRG and the GDR and how this would have to be “a major consideration in any discussion of European security.”⁸⁸

Finding the correct balance between superpower control and allied freedom of movement within the alliance was an important challenge of *détente* for the White House. The U.S. attitude to *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE shows how Washington tried to find the correct way to deal with a changing atmosphere in which it had a less tight grip on the alliance. The emancipation of the FRG through *Ostpolitik*, an allied push for multilateral talks with the Warsaw Pact states and public pressure following the Budapest Appeal for the CSCE were all factors threatening U.S. control of the changing East-West relations.

While relaxation between East and West fitted within the frame of Washington’s grand strategy, the tactic of a security conference was not the correct one according to Nixon. Nixon

⁸² Memorandum, National Security Council Staff Member (Sonnenfeldt) to President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), “US-Soviet Diplomacy on European Security, Washington, 8 January 1970, secret,” *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, volume XXXIX, doc. 17.

⁸³ *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, doc. 17.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Memorandum, National Security Council Staff Member (Sonnenfeldt) to President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), “NSSM-83, European Security – May NATO Ministerial Meeting, Washington, 25 March 1970, secret,” *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, volume XXXIX, doc. 20.

⁸⁶ *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, doc. 20.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

stated that the concept of the CSCE would be beneficial to the Soviet Union, but not to the United States as it would only have the “appearance of détente and euphoria”⁸⁹ without having the results to back it up.

Nixon’s warning of euphoria can be understood from Nixon and Kissinger’s approach to U.S.-Soviet relations that rested on three principles: concreteness, restraint and linkage.⁹⁰ The concept of the CSCE seemed to go against all three principles. Particularly from their strategy of linkage, a cautious response to the Soviet proposal made sense until the U.S. could find a way to get something in return. Linking the CSCE with SALT was proposed by the NSC, but this was quickly turned down due to fears of damaging the SALT negotiations.⁹¹ Delaying the conference became the main CSCE tactic over the next two years for Nixon and Kissinger.⁹²

In effect, Nixon and Kissinger’s three principles to U.S.-Soviet relations help understand why *Ostpolitik* was seen as dangerous, particularly in the context of a multilateral conference. *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE both approached *détente* from a completely different perspective. The atmospherics of *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE stood opposite to the calculated linkages of the Nixon administration. U.S. Ambassador to NATO Robert Ellsworth dedicated a memorandum to the threats of *Ostpolitik*. The memorandum highlighted the concern that the FRG would not use a “hardheaded calculation of trade off”⁹³ in order to preserve the positive atmosphere between the two parties, thus making it vulnerable to Soviet abuse.⁹⁴ Furthermore, Ellsworth identified a negative effect of *Ostpolitik* on FRG’s relations with fellow members of the alliance who grew suspicious of West Germany’s “*Drang nach Osten*”⁹⁵ and the effects this would have on the strength of NATO.

⁸⁹ NSC Meeting Minutes, NSC, “Europe, Washington, 28 January 1970, secret,” *FRUS European Security, 1969-1976*, volume XXXIX, doc. 19.

⁹⁰ Kissinger described linkage in two ways. First, as a tactic: linking two goals and using one as leverage for the other. Second, as a reality: actions of the superpowers are inevitably related and have far going consequences, see Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (PDF e-book, 1979), 161 (Chapter V).

⁹¹ National Security Study Memorandum 138, President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to Secretary of State (Rogers) and Secretary of Defense (Laird), “European Security Conference, Washington, 2 October 1971, secret,” *FRUS European Security, 1969-1976*, volume XXXIX, doc. 74.

⁹² The NSC assumed it could “delay, but not arrest” the CSCE due to the position of the allies, see *FRUS European Security, 1969-1976*, doc. 74.

⁹³ Memorandum, Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Ellsworth) to President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), “The Negative Aspects of Ostpolitik, Washington, undated, secret,” *FRUS Germany and Berlin, 1969-1976*, volume XL, doc. 97.

⁹⁴ *FRUS Germany and Berlin, 1969-1976*, doc. 97.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Negotiating the CSCE Agenda

The negotiations on the agenda are perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the conference, as they best showed how national interests collided. Ultimately, the subjects of the CSCE were divided into three baskets. The first basket contained “questions relating to security in Europe.”⁹⁶ The second basket included “cooperation in the fields of economics, of science and technology and of the environment.”⁹⁷ The third basket concerned “cooperation in humanitarian and other fields.”⁹⁸ Interestingly, ‘hard security’ topics remained the key focus area of the parties involved, including the FRG. Therefore, the focus will be on negotiations concerning the first basket. Important security issues that were being discussed as potential agenda items were Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, the status of Berlin and the inviolability of European borders.

In the previous section, the initial viewpoints of the FRG and the U.S. on the concept of the CSCE were being discussed. However, their attitude to the CSCE depended for a great part on which topics the eventual conference would discuss. Although the Budapest Appeal named several key points of interest to the Warsaw Pact, the specific nature of the CSCE still needed to be determined. The FRG felt that the Soviet public appeal for a conference was an error, as it gave the West the initiative on establishing the most important agenda items that would allow them to accept this proposal.⁹⁹

While the Federal Government had already expressed its support for the general idea of a security conference, it was still of the opinion that a conference “missed its purpose”¹⁰⁰ if the most pressing security problems were omitted from the agenda.¹⁰¹ Therefore, it ambitioned to make MBFR the key agenda item for a multilateral conference.¹⁰² West German interest in MBFR was dictated by the fear that troop reductions by the United States would cause the balance of power to shift in favour of the East, undermining its own security and that of West Berlin.¹⁰³ For Brandt, *Ostpolitik*, Berlin and the security of Europe were all connected to each

⁹⁶ Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, “Final Act, Helsinki, 1975,” in: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Conferentie over veiligheid en samenwerking in Europa*, (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij ‘s-Gravenhage, 1976), 254.

⁹⁷ Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, “Final Act, Helsinki, 1975,” 269.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁹⁹ Telegram, Embassy in Germany to Department of State, “Policy of New German Government on Relations with the GDR, Bonn, 5 November 1969, secret,” *FRUS Germany and Berlin, 1969-1976*, volume XL, doc. 40.

¹⁰⁰ Memorandum, AA to the BSR, “Inclusion of MBFR at the CSCE, Bonn, 2 March 1970, confidential,” *AAPD*, 1970, doc. 83.

¹⁰¹ *AAPD*, 1970, doc. 83.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

other. On Brandt's request, Minister of Defence Helmut Schmidt¹⁰⁴ explained to the *Bundeskabinett* that all of these issues were at risk in the event of a unilateral troop reduction by the United States.¹⁰⁵

Contrary to Brandt, the U.S. government did not feel a topic like MBFR was suitable for a multilateral conference. Moreover, as the U.S. and the Soviet Union had started SALT, additional, multilateral negotiations on arms control would have to be coordinated with the bilateral negotiations of SALT.¹⁰⁶ However, U.S. preference for SALT can be easily understood from their overall objective to maintain stability and control over the situation in Europe, as well as from their analysis questioning Soviet motives behind the Budapest Appeal. Secretary of State William Rogers briefed President Nixon on the CSCE, but felt that they had to figure out "what the USSR is up to"¹⁰⁷ because the Soviet Union did not give off the image of wanting to have serious discussions on the agenda of the conference. Rogers came to a different conclusion in his analysis of the Soviet attitude towards SALT, where he found a genuine wish to enter serious negotiations.¹⁰⁸ Due to the importance of MBFR for both the FRG's and the United States' position towards the CSCE, this theme will be discussed in greater detail in chapter two.

Although the status of Berlin and the division of Germany were "at the heart of European security,"¹⁰⁹ the leaders of the FRG, United States and Soviet Union all agreed that these topics could not be discussed directly through the CSCE. Kissinger found a proposal by NSSM 83 to favour a CSCE dealing with meaningful issues "baffling"¹¹⁰ and stated that he did not intend to consider major issues like Berlin in the multilateral context of the conference. Similarly, Brandt wrote to President Nixon that he understood that the CSCE could not address such fundamental problems outside of the security structures of the alliance, even labelling this "an illusion and dangerous."¹¹¹

However, even though the main parties agreed the status of Berlin was not suitable to discuss directly at the conference, it would still play an important role in the CSCE negotiations.

¹⁰⁴ In office from 22 October 1969 until 7 July 1972.

¹⁰⁵ Kabinettsprotokolle der Bundesregierung, online (hereafter: KB), 1970, Meeting nr. 47, Bonn, 5 November 1970.

¹⁰⁶ Memorandum of Conversation, Ambassador to the U.S. (Roth) to Secretary of State (Richardson), "MBFR and European Security Conference, Washington, 11 March 1970, confidential," AAPD, 1970, doc. 108.

¹⁰⁷ *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, doc. 19.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, doc. 20.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Memorandum, President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President (Nixon), "Message from Chancellor Brandt, Washington, 19 November 1969, top secret," *FRUS Germany and Berlin*, 1969-1976, volume XL, doc. 44.

Egon Bahr used the positive atmosphere surrounding talks of relaxation to address the status of Berlin. Bahr said that progress needed to be made to not retain Berlin as a “relic of the Cold War.”¹¹² Moreover, Brandt intended to use the CSCE to make progress on Berlin as he felt that the Soviet Union were willing to compromise in favour of the CSCE.¹¹³

Between Stability and Sovereignty

This chapter started with Klitzing’s theory on U.S.-FRG relations, but was his theory also the correct explanation in the context of the CSCE? Was a lack of influence by the U.S. the determining factor for a problematic relationship with the FRG? In light of the CSCE, this does not seem to tell the whole story. Although the policy of the FRG and a potential CSCE caused concern in Washington, Nixon and Kissinger’s top priority was to keep the alliance together while allowing more freedom of movement for the allies. Therefore, their concern was not necessarily that they had a lack of influence in the course of Brandt’s *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE, but more that they were unsure how an exercise of influence would affect the alliance. As the CSCE was not a topic of primary importance for Nixon and Kissinger, they made their position in large part dependent on the position of the FRG and the rest of the European allies. However, the next chapter will show that this was greatly different when MBFR entered the framework of CSCE negotiations.

Overall, the goal of this chapter was to establish what the attitudes of the U.S. and the FRG were towards the CSCE. What stands out is how their different approaches to East-West relations resonated with their attitude to the CSCE. For the FRG, the concept of the CSCE was an important step towards developing a better climate with the Warsaw Pact. This fitted perfectly within the FRG’s *Ostpolitik* and its aim to normalise relations between East and West. However, the FRG’s ambition to include MBFR on the agenda could be seen as a sign that the *atmospheric* side of *Ostpolitik* included a *calculated* element not dissimilar from the approach of the United States.

In the following chapter, the possible connection between atmospherics and security will be addressed in greater detail by looking at the topic of MBFR. How did the ‘real’ security issues of MBFR relate to the ‘atmospherics’ of the CSCE and *Ostpolitik*? And how was this

¹¹² Memorandum, Secretary of State (Bahr) to American President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), “Talks with the Soviet Union and Four Power Talks on Berlin, Bonn, 20 February 1970, top secret,” AAPD, 1970, doc. 70.

¹¹³ Editorial Note, *FRUS Germany and Berlin, 1969-1976*, volume XL, doc. 45.

dynamic perceived by the United States? By addressing these key questions, a better understanding can be gained of *what* the exact contribution of *Ostpolitik* to *détente* really was.

Chapter 2: Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions

Introduction

On 25 June 1968, NATO adopted the Reykjavik Declaration, which stated that the issues of Europe had to be resolved peacefully by creating “an atmosphere of trust and confidence.”¹¹⁴ When Henry Kissinger looked back at the Reykjavik Declaration in September 1979, he elaborated on why he felt the approach chosen by the FRG and other NATO allies was not compatible with his view of *détente*.¹¹⁵ According to Kissinger, treating *détente* as a way to improve relations through personal understanding instead of through “negotiations on the basis of strategic realities”¹¹⁶ could only become “disastrous for the West.”¹¹⁷

This chapter will deal with the question of how the FRG’s use of MBFR negotiations affected the U.S. position on *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE. Through this analysis, a different side of *Ostpolitik* will come forward, which shows the calculated side of Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr’s foreign policy that was strongly motivated by security interests. Kissinger’s comments are already an indication of the problems Washington faced in trying to manage the alliance in the context of *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE. In order to maintain the FRG’s connection with the alliance, the U.S. realistically could not oppose *Ostpolitik*. This dynamic implied supporting both the MBFR and the CSCE initiatives, as a way to please the European allies and stabilise the alliance. The intra-alliance politics surrounding MBFR and the CSCE made the inclusion of vital strategic assets into the atmospherics of a security conference a distinct possibility in 1970.¹¹⁸

Different Purposes for MBFR

While the 1968 Reykjavik Declaration attached great importance to the *atmospherics* of East-West relations, the 1967 Harmel Report took a contrasting position. It identified a

¹¹⁴ Ministerial Communiqué, NATO, “Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions. Declaration adopted by Foreign Ministers and Representatives of Countries participating in the NATO Defence Program, Reykjavik, 25 June 1968,” last modified 23 October 2000, <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c680624b.htm>, accessed on 22 March 2017.

¹¹⁵ Henry Kissinger, “The Future of NATO,” *The Washington Quarterly*, (Autumn 1979), 3-17, 9.

¹¹⁶ Kissinger, “The Future of NATO,” 9.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Ralph Dietl provides a deeper analysis of how the European allies affected the discussion on arms control between the superpowers. Dietl focuses on “the Alliance game” and how Europe influenced the bilateral SALT process between the United States and the Soviet Union, see Ralph L. Dietl, *Equal Security: Europe and the SALT Process, 1969-1976*, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013), 14.

complementary relationship between military security and *détente*, stating that a strong military alliance was required for “effective policies [...] towards a greater relaxation of tensions.”¹¹⁹

Yet, both the Reykjaik Declaration and the Harmel Report attached great value to the concept of MBFR. This displayed the important position of MBFR in the overall *détente* process, because it had merit for both the *atmospheric* and *calculated* elements of *détente*. MBFR would serve a dual purpose as an important public display of lessening tensions, while departing from a strong focus on the strategic reality.

The stance of Nixon and Kissinger on MBFR was closely related to that of the Harmel Report.¹²⁰ They departed from the belief that *détente* was best served by a focus on security and through the preservation of the military balance. Any reduction in U.S. forces could not come at the expense of NATO’s defence posture and had to “preserve or enhance”¹²¹ the position of the West relative to the Warsaw Pact. This is further evidence of a different conviction of how to pursue *détente*. An agreement on MBFR was possible, but only if the military balance was not negatively affected.

Conversely, Brandt’s policy of rapprochement with the East had made a positive atmosphere an important goal for Bonn, thus making the FRG’s position on MBFR highly similar to that of the Reykjavik Declaration. The FRG Ambassador to the United States Hellmuth Roth stated that MBFR should not be approached from a purely military viewpoint, but that force reductions should be treated as ways to achieve a lasting peace settlement that “promotes understanding, reduces antagonisms and increases political leeway.”¹²² This was different from the U.S. approach to MBFR. The FRG attached value to the political meaning of MBFR, thereby seemingly attaching less value to a strict preservation of the military balance than Washington.

The MBFR position taken by the FRG and other European allies came to the dislike of Kissinger. In an NSC meeting on 19 November 1970, Kissinger stated that U.S. forces in Europe had a military purpose, but that “our allies wanted them to have a political role.”¹²³ For the U.S., MBFR was primarily analysed in the framework of how it would affect the defence of Europe

¹¹⁹ Report, North Atlantic Council, “The Future Tasks of the Alliance. The Harmel Report,” Brussels, 14 December 1967, last modified 2 December 2009, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_26700.htm, accessed on 22 March 2017.

¹²⁰ Minutes of a Senior Review Group Meeting, Senior Review Group, “Military [*Mutual*] Balanced Force Reductions, Washington, 23 November 1970, top secret,” *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, volume XXXIX, doc. 39.

¹²¹ *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, doc. 39.

¹²² Report, Legal Counsellor (Ederer) to AA, “MBFR, Bonn, 10 July 1970, confidential,” *AAPD*, 1970, doc. 303.

¹²³ Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting, National Security Council, “NATO & MBFR, Washington, 19 November 1970, top secret,” *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, volume XXXIX, doc. 37.

in the case of a Soviet attack. The key issue was upholding the level of conventional forces, so that nuclear weapons would not become the only viable strategy: “The primary objective of our military strategy is to give the President a choice other than between losing Western Europe and going to an all-out strategic exchange.”¹²⁴

For Brandt and Bahr, MBFR was crucial for connecting the FRG’s national security goals with their political goals. The *Auswärtiges Amt* (AA) felt MBFR would not only “dismantle the massive military confrontation,” but would also “give credibility to their peace policy by showing a willingness to negotiate on security issues.”¹²⁵ Therefore, a link existed between the positive atmosphere and the strategic reality of the military balance between East and West.

Crucially, the Federal Government pursued MBFR out of fear that the U.S. would resort to unilateral troop reductions. Nixon was facing domestic pressure within Congress to reduce U.S. troops in Europe.¹²⁶ Bonn was hopeful that MBFR would have a “binding effect”¹²⁷ on the U.S. commitment towards Europe, at the very least for the duration of the negotiations. To unilaterally withdraw forces would relinquish the opportunity to get something in return in the context of MBFR. This made one-sided reductions by the U.S. highly unlikely once MBFR negotiations had started.

Apart from the value MBFR had in relation to the presence of U.S. forces, two other benefits were identified by the Federal Government. A concrete proposal like MBFR was seen as a necessary counter towards the vague proposal on European security of the Warsaw Pact’s Budapest Appeal.¹²⁸ Moreover, the FRG was pushing for a quick start to a multilateral assessment of MBFR in order to safeguard from a bilateral superpower agreement on the matter that excluded the other involved parties.¹²⁹

The motivations behind Brandt and Bahr’s MBFR-policy show a more forceful and calculated side of *Ostpolitik*. Preserving the atmosphere with the Soviet Union seemed to imply more than a mere gesture of goodwill. It was based on a calculated strategy on how to manage the relationship with the rest of the alliance, as well as with the Soviet Union.

¹²⁴ *FRUS European Security, 1969-1976*, doc. 37.

¹²⁵ Memorandum, AA to the BSR, “Inclusion of MBFR at the CSCE, Bonn, 2 March 1970, confidential,” *AAPD*, 1970, doc. 83.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *AAPD*, 1970, doc. 303.

In April 1970, MBFR had become the main focus of Bonn; Bahr even warned of linking it with the CSCE out of fears it might endanger MBFR.¹³⁰ The priority given to MBFR suggests how big of a role U.S. armed forces played for the FRG's rapprochement policy, and how important the dynamic between the FRG and the U.S. was. The positive atmosphere Brandt was pursuing rested in part on the strategic balance that was being upheld by American forces. This element of *Ostpolitik* caused irritations with Kissinger: "Brandt wants the benefit of every course. He needs U.S. troops as bargaining counters."¹³¹

The different objectives of the U.S. and the FRG when discussing MBFR showed in the months leading up to – and during – the NATO ministerial meeting in Rome on 26-27 May 1970. On 17 April prior to this meeting, the Federal Government advocated that MBFR should headline the agenda of a future CSCE in a position paper delivered to the permanent representation to NATO.¹³² Moreover, this paper outlined the wish to establish a working group that consisted of all affected parties, while neutral states would observe their findings. This conflicted with the view of Nixon and Kissinger, as they preferred bilateral negotiations and would have trouble giving some control over U.S. troop levels to a multilateral committee.¹³³ Although the Rome meeting eventually did not lead to a decision on how to approach MBFR, NATO did issue a declaration affirming its intentions to discuss MBFR with the East.¹³⁴

After the Rome meeting, Foreign Minister Walter Scheel was content with his role in steering the alliance towards the issued declaration on MBFR.¹³⁵ Scheel saw it as a sign that European NATO member states had an increasingly important voice in determining the West's relations with the East. This feeling of relevance is typical for what *détente* meant from the European allied perspective. This held particularly true for the FRG, which had struggled with formulating its own foreign policy since the end of the Second World War.¹³⁶ This new climate

¹³⁰ Telex, Secretary of State (Duckwitz) to AA, "First Meeting of FRG German Delegation in the White House, Washington, 10 April 1970, secret," *AAPD*, 1970, doc. 151.

¹³¹ Minutes of a Senior Review Group Meeting, Senior Review Group, "European Security (NSSM 83), San Clemente, 31 August 1970, top secret," *FRUS Germany and Berlin, 1969-1976*, volume XL, doc. 111.

¹³² Report, Legal Council II B 2, "Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR), Bonn, 16 April 1970, confidential," *AAPD*, 1970, doc. 160.

¹³³ Memorandum of Conversation, Ambassador to the U.S. (Roth) with U.S. Secretary of State (Richardson), "MBFR, Washington, 11 March 1970, confidential," *AAPD*, 1970, doc. 108.

¹³⁴ Ministerial Communiqué, NATO, "Declaration on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, Rome, 27 May 1970," last modified 23 October 2000, <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c700526b.htm>, accessed on 25 March 2017.

¹³⁵ Telex, Under Secretary (Lahn) to AA, "NATO Ministerial Meeting in Rome, Rome, 2 June 1970, confidential," *AAPD*, 1970, doc. 244.

¹³⁶ Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer, "Introduction," in *Ostpolitik, 1969-1974. European and Global Responses*, eds. Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-2.

of overall East-West rapprochement combined with *Ostpolitik* gave the FRG an important place within the alliance, and between the two superpowers.

Political Pressure

Bonn's *Ostpolitik* and its push for MBFR forced Nixon and Kissinger in a difficult position. In an NSC meeting, Kissinger argued that he would prefer not to have MBFR altogether, but that their hand was being forced due to the political context of that time:

We could conclude that there should not be any discussion of MBFR. It is necessary, however, in view of present political pressures in many countries, and since SALT and *Ostpolitik* will both have mutual balanced force reductions as their logical conclusions. Also, it is better than unilateral force reductions.¹³⁷

The key element in Kissinger's comment is that the U.S. was facing pressure from two directions to go in the direction of MBFR.

The first source of pressure related to the signing of the Moscow Treaty between the FRG and the Soviet Union. As the FRG was holding off on ratifying the treaty, the United States was put in the delicate situation where it had to negotiate on Berlin in the Four Power talks or "be blamed of sabotaging *Ostpolitik*."¹³⁸ Effectively, it had further tied up the U.S. with Brandt's *Ostpolitik*.¹³⁹ The success of *Ostpolitik* now hinged on both the military aspect of U.S. troop levels in Europe and on the political aspect of the Berlin negotiations.¹⁴⁰

The close connection between *Ostpolitik* and the U.S. created the difficult task for the U.S. to develop a policy that supported *Ostpolitik*, while sustaining NATO's defence of Europe.¹⁴¹ This called for a deeper evaluation of Washington's position on MBFR and the CSCE. It was assumed that progress on Berlin would lead to even stronger calls for the CSCE,

¹³⁷ Minutes of a Combined Senior Review Group and Verification Panel Meeting, Combined Senior Review Group and Verification Panel, "US Strategies and Forces for NATO (NSSM 84) and MBFR (NSSM 92), San Clemente, 31 August 1970, top secret," *FRUS European Security, 1969-1976*, volume XXXIX, doc. 32.

¹³⁸ Minutes of a Senior Review Group Meeting, Senior Review Group, "European Security (NSSM 83), San Clemente, 31 August 1970, top secret," *FRUS Germany and Berlin, 1969-1976*, volume XL, doc. 111.

¹³⁹ In his memoirs, Bahr labelled it "the beginning of an intimate collaboration, without which the Four-Power Agreement on Berlin would not have existed," see Egon Bahr, *Zu meiner Zeit*, (Pößneck: Graphischer Großbetrieb, 1996), 336.

¹⁴⁰ The Moscow Treaty was seen as an important milestone for *Ostpolitik* and as evidence of the emancipation of the FRG. In his memoirs, Bahr stated that the treaty "gave the Federal Republic its extra weight and prestige" and proved that "the Soviet Union can be moved. Also by us," see Bahr, *Zu meiner Zeit*, 336.

¹⁴¹ Memorandum, President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President (Nixon), "The German-Soviet Treaty, Washington, 1 September 1970, secret," *FRUS Germany and Berlin, 1969-1976*, volume XL, doc. 113.

as a potential Berlin Agreement would be another big sign that *détente* was spreading in Europe.¹⁴² Kissinger made it clear that they would not enter discussions on the multilateral CSCE until the situation of Berlin had improved.¹⁴³ However, progress on Berlin would not be an easy task as the demands of the FRG were perceived to be “non-negotiable”¹⁴⁴ for the Soviet Union.

The developments between the FRG and the Soviet Union caused frustration for Kissinger, who stressed the impact of the Moscow Treaty on Washington’s grip on the European continent.¹⁴⁵ Kissinger stated that the Treaty would lead to unrest among the alliance in response to the FRG’s growing independence.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, the treaty would give off the impression of *détente*, which would lead to more allied pressure to move towards MBFR and the CSCE. However, Brandt still required U.S. forces to remain present to have a strong negotiation stance towards the Soviet Union.

A second reason to go in the direction of MBFR came from Montana Senator Mike Mansfield¹⁴⁷ of the Democratic Party. On 1 December 1969, Senator Mansfield issued a resolution calling for a unilateral reduction of U.S. forces in Europe.¹⁴⁸ Unilateral force reductions were seen as the worst possible outcome for Kissinger and Nixon.¹⁴⁹ A paper prepared by the U.S. State Department stated that unilateral cuts would be interpreted in Europe – especially by the Soviet Union and the FRG – as a sign that the U.S. was not as committed to Western Europe as before.¹⁵⁰ Not only would this negatively affect U.S. leverage on the continent, but it would also motivate the European allies to search for other security arrangements like the CSCE.¹⁵¹ This was an important factor for the interest in MBFR by both Bonn and Washington. Yet, the U.S. government did not support MBFR out of its own

¹⁴² Memorandum, Secretary of State (Rogers) to President (Nixon), “NATO Ministerial Meeting, Washington, 5 December 1970, confidential,” *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, volume XXXIX, doc. 41.

¹⁴³ Memorandum, President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President (Nixon), “Germany’s Eastern Policy and the Berlin Talks. A Status Report, Washington, 8 June 1970, confidential,” *FRUS Germany and Berlin*, 1969-1976, volume XL, doc. 88.

¹⁴⁴ Memorandum, President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President (Nixon), “The Berlin Talks, Washington, 17 July 1970, secret,” *FRUS Germany and Berlin*, 1969-1976, volume XL, doc. 101.

¹⁴⁵ *FRUS Germany and Berlin*, 1969-1976, doc. 113.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ In office from 3 January 1953 until 3 January 1977.

¹⁴⁸ Senate Resolution 292 (1969), 91st United States Congress, introduced by Senator Mike Mansfield (D-MT), a substantial reduction of U.S. forces permanently stationed in Europe, 1 December 1969.

¹⁴⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, Secretary General (Brosio) with President (Nixon), President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and Ambassador (Ellsworth), “MBFR, Naples, 30 September 1970, secret,” *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, volume XXXIX, doc. 34.

¹⁵⁰ Paper, Department of State, “A Longer Term Perspective on Key Issues of European Security, Washington, undated, secret,” *FRUS Germany and Berlin*, 1969-1976, volume XL, doc. 110.

¹⁵¹ *FRUS Germany and Berlin*, 1969-1976, doc. 110.

immediate security concerns. Rather, the U.S. had to pursue MBFR to prevent “getting sucked in”¹⁵² an early CSCE and to “prevent the unravelling of NATO.”¹⁵³

The dynamic between the Mansfield Resolution and Bonn’s *Ostpolitik* was a determining factor for Washington’s policy towards MBFR and the CSCE. Following the Moscow Treaty, NATO Ambassador Ellsworth warned that this landmark achievement would give fuel to critics calling for troop reductions in Europe, while pointing out the problem that the success of *Ostpolitik* rested precisely on the presence of these forces.¹⁵⁴ It required the U.S. to be forthcoming on MBFR as a way to both counter Mansfield and to keep the FRG firmly situated within the alliance.¹⁵⁵

Documents show that there was significant tension between Washington and Bonn relating to troop reductions. Brandt feared disengagement by the United States, while Kissinger feared *Ostpolitik* would prevent the FRG from remaining close to NATO: “The objective obstacle facing Brandt is that he cannot keep Soviet friendship if he emphasizes West Germany’s ties to NATO.”¹⁵⁶ To preserve the FRG’s position within NATO, the U.S. could not obstruct *Ostpolitik* without threatening the stability of the alliance. This implied supporting the MBFR initiative, as it was a way to please the European allies by giving them a voice in their own security. Moreover, it assured them that the U.S. would maintain its military presence in Western Europe.¹⁵⁷

The European focus on MBFR meant that the European allies had avoided investing in their military, causing Kissinger and Nixon to adopt MBFR as a tactic to fend off critics of the U.S. defence budget.¹⁵⁸ On 19 November 1970, Kissinger argued that unilateral cuts were likely to lead to the neutralisation of allies. Therefore, he pleaded to develop an approach to MBFR that would preserve a strong, strategic position towards the Warsaw Pact.¹⁵⁹ Although Kissinger saw this as nothing more than a temporary solution, he nonetheless felt it was the only option available to “prevent immediate disaster”¹⁶⁰ for the alliance.

¹⁵² Editorial Note, *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, volume XXXIX, doc. 90.

¹⁵³ *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, doc. 90.

¹⁵⁴ Memorandum, Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Ellsworth) to President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), “The Negative Aspects of Ostpolitik, Washington, undated, secret,” *FRUS Germany and Berlin*, 1969-1976, volume XL, doc. 97.

¹⁵⁵ *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, doc. 90.

¹⁵⁶ *FRUS Germany and Berlin*, 1969-1976, doc. 113.

¹⁵⁷ *FRUS Germany and Berlin*, 1969-1976, doc. 110.

¹⁵⁸ Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (PDF e-book, 1979), 481 (chapter XI).

¹⁵⁹ Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting, NSC, “NATO & MBFR, Washington, 19 November 1970, top secret,” *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, volume XXXIX, doc. 37.

¹⁶⁰ Kissinger, *White House Years*, 482 (chapter XI).

While Nixon and Kissinger's decision to go along with MBFR had given them some control over the situation in Europe, they still struggled to find how they could maximise U.S. interests parallel to *Ostpolitik*. Kissinger had not yet found an approach to MBFR that would preserve NATO's military position, so therefore the tactic was to delay the matter of European security.¹⁶¹ This both served the purpose of slowing down *Ostpolitik* as well as reminding Brandt of "the limits beyond which he ought not go."¹⁶² Furthermore, this policy gave the U.S. Government the time to formulate a proposal to MBFR that would benefit NATO in relation to the Warsaw Pact.¹⁶³

Prior to the NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels from 2-4 December 1970, developments in the West German stance on both the CSCE and MBFR helped Washington's cause. The Federal Government informed both the U.S. and NATO that it wanted progress on both the Berlin negotiations and on "the inner German *modus vivendi*"¹⁶⁴ before it would agree to the CSCE. While the same demands were not placed on MBFR, Bonn did state it would decide based on the "atmosphere prevailing at the time" and whether there was "a genuine preparedness by the East for negotiation."¹⁶⁵ This is an indication that Brandt and Bahr wanted to be more ambitious with their own linkage strategy by attempting to demand even more from the Soviet Union in return for the CSCE. From this, one might conclude that the CSCE – the public appearance of *détente* – was secretly being used to advance the German situation as much as possible. This new course in Bonn was embraced in Washington, with Helmut Sonnenfeldt describing the preconditions as "manna from heaven"¹⁶⁶ to Kissinger.

Ahead of the NATO meeting in Brussels, Secretary of State William Rogers drafted a positional paper on the positions he will take regarding MBFR. Crucially, Rogers' aim was to convince the European allies that MBFR was not a suitable topic to discuss at a CSCE. Furthermore, for the U.S. the CSCE would have to come after negotiations on MBFR, which was a position contrary to that of the Soviet Union. Washington had long feared giving up the CSCE – badly wanted by the Soviet Union – without getting anything in return on MBFR or

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 481; 497 (chapter XI).

¹⁶² *FRUS Germany and Berlin*, 1969-1976, doc. 97.

¹⁶³ Paper, Department of State and National Security Council, "Discussion of United States Policy toward Europe, Washington, undated, secret," *FRUS Western Europe; NATO, 1969-1972*, 1969-1976, volume XLI, doc. 28.

¹⁶⁴ Memorandum, National Security Council Staff Member (Sonnenfeldt) to President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), "MBFR and the NATO Ministerial, Washington, 20 November 1970, confidential," *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, volume XXXIX, doc. 38.

¹⁶⁵ *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, doc. 38.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

the status of Berlin.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, the NATO meeting was essential to get the allies on board in order to obtain a strong negotiation position on these issues.

Bonn's new stance on MBFR and the CSCE made the position of the U.S. easier to defend in Brussels. It had curbed the fear that the U.S. would be forced to rapidly go ahead with MBFR or the CSCE just to keep the alliance together. After the Brussels meeting, NATO issued a communiqué affirming that negotiations on a multilateral Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe could start "as soon as the talks on Berlin have reached a satisfactory conclusion."¹⁶⁸ NATO adopting U.S. linkage of Berlin with the CSCE was an important development for Kissinger and Nixon, because a Berlin Agreement had to be settled before the CSCE could take place. Moreover, due to Brandt's earlier linkage of the ratification of the Moscow Treaty to Berlin, the danger of the FRG moving further to the East was mostly averted.¹⁶⁹

A Game of Linkages

The FRG's endorsement of MBFR showed a new element of *Ostpolitik*. The MBFR tactic used by Brandt and Bahr revealed that preserving the atmosphere with the East relied heavily on a strategy not so dissimilar from the linkage strategy of the United States. The FRG linked the ratification of the Moscow Treaty with progress on Berlin, thereby linking *Ostpolitik* to the United States. The FRG played a clever, strategic game. In practice, the FRG forced the hand of the United States to support *Ostpolitik*, negotiate on Berlin, and back the MBFR initiative all because it needed to prevent the unravelling of the alliance.

While the linkages by the FRG forcing the U.S. in the direction of the CSCE and MBFR caused frustration in Washington, ultimately they also helped Nixon and Kissinger to find a place for *Ostpolitik* in their approach to *détente*. At the beginning of this chapter, Kissinger expressed his reservations about an *atmospheric* approach to *détente*. However, *Ostpolitik* was much more than that. The preservation of a good atmosphere with the Soviet Union relied heavily on linking strategic objectives to each other. Bonn's additional linkage of the CSCE with a Berlin Agreement and of MBFR with a positive atmosphere – obviously heavily dependent on progress on the inner German situation – ultimately made it possible for the U.S.

¹⁶⁷ *FRUS Germany and Berlin, 1969-1976*, doc. 101.

¹⁶⁸ Ministerial Communiqué, NATO, "Final Communiqué, Brussels, 4 December 1970," last modified 23 October 2000, <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c701203a.htm>, accessed on 27 March 2017.

¹⁶⁹ In his memoirs, Kissinger stated these developments meant the U.S. "had harnessed the beast of *détente*," see Kissinger, *White House Years*, 634 (chapter XIII).

to convince NATO to endorse linking the CSCE with Berlin. Thereby, effectively linking the *atmospheric* side of *détente* with the *calculated* side.

These first two chapters have discovered an interesting dynamic between *Ostpolitik* and the United States. For the next chapter, this dynamic will be analysed from the perspective of the Netherlands. This will provide a new outlook that offers an insight into how the developments of *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE process affected one of the smaller states in the alliance. Chapter 3 will address how the new foreign policy direction of the FRG was received by the Dutch government, and what the consequences of *Ostpolitik* were for the Dutch stance towards the CSCE. Ultimately, it will contribute to obtaining a wide-ranging overview of the meaning of *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE in the overall *détente* process.

Chapter 3: The Dutch Response

“We are living in a changing world. [...] It is the task of politicians to draw their inspiration from these developments, from this dynamic, while trying to guide us towards *real* security and not just a *sense* of security that can turn out to be a false sense of security.” – Max van der Stoel, 6 July 1973, Helsinki.¹⁷⁰

Introduction

The address by Dutch Foreign Minister Max van der Stoel¹⁷¹ in Helsinki during the first phase of the CSCE was an important signal to the world of what *détente* meant to the Netherlands. Moreover, with his speech Van der Stoel gave an insight into how the CSCE played a part in Dutch foreign policy of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Van der Stoel’s quote hints at both challenges and opportunities for the security of Europe, which perhaps is an accurate description of how this period was viewed on the Dutch side. On the one hand with great hope that tensions were easing, but on the other hand with great apprehension about Soviet intentions and the state of European security.

The previous chapters analysed how the effects of *Ostpolitik* were felt at the superpower level, and how this helped form a U.S. approach towards the CSCE and MBFR. However, Bonn’s policy and Washington’s response had consequences for all states in Europe. In order to get a more complete understanding of how *Ostpolitik* and *détente* impacted the rest of Europe, this chapter will analyse how the Netherlands as one of the smaller, European allies handled this new political atmosphere.¹⁷² While the Netherlands’ influence in determining the directions of the CSCE process seems limited, the Dutch response does show the other side of *détente* and how smaller states tried to look after their own security interests.

¹⁷⁰ Speech, Minister of Foreign Affairs (Van der Stoel), “Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Helsinki, 6 July 1973,” in: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Conferentie over veiligheid en samenwerking in Europa: Helsinki-Genève-Helsinki 1973-1975*, (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij ‘s-Gravenhage, 1976), 236.

¹⁷¹ In office from 11 May 1973 until 19 December 1977.

¹⁷² It can be argued whether the Netherlands should be classified as a small- or medium-sized state. However, due to its limited role in the area of East-West relations in the years leading up to the CSCE it makes more sense to classify the Netherlands as a small state. For a deeper insight into his discussion, see Hilbert W. Bomert, *Nederland en Oost-Europa: meer woorden dan daden. Het Nederlands Oost-Europa beleid, geanalyseerd binnen het kader van het CVSE-proces (1971-1985)*, (Utrecht: Drukkerij Elinkwijk BV, 1990), 20-32.

Dutch Foreign Policy

To get an idea of how Dutch foreign policy developed in the context of *détente* and *Ostpolitik*, it is important to identify what its determining factors were. Key roles were reserved for the position of the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the United States was primarily motivated by preserving stability and maintaining control of the alliance, while the FRG's *Ostpolitik* rested on the concept *Wandel durch Annäherung*. However, previous chapters addressed how these two strategies were closely related and influenced each other. Similarly, Dutch foreign policy could not be seen separate from the foreign policies of the U.S. and the FRG.

Alfred van Staden puts forth the concept of the Netherlands as a *faithful ally* in his dissertation on Dutch NATO membership from 1960-1971.¹⁷³ Van Staden states that this attitude was primarily motivated by its weakness militarily. However, a certain moral conviction that the Netherlands owed the alliance for its existence greatly contributed to the loyal, Dutch attitude according to Van Staden.¹⁷⁴

Joris Voorhoeve has a different explanation for the Dutch role of “faithful NATO ally.”¹⁷⁵ According to Voorhoeve, the Dutch government adopted a following attitude to *détente* with the Soviet Union because it was convinced that *détente* was mostly a task for the United States, and to a lesser extent for West Germany, the United Kingdom and France.¹⁷⁶ Interestingly, Voorhoeve found a Dutch approach to foreign policy that wanted the defence of the continent to remain in the hands of the United States.¹⁷⁷ This ensured that all NATO allies remained on an equal footing: “Their security should be dependent on U.S. deterrence.”¹⁷⁸

Suspicious of the consequences of a Europe controlled by France and West Germany are a key explanation for the Dutch preference to have an Atlantic focus in the late 1960s. For Duco Hellema, NATO helped protect the Netherlands from being dominated by France and particularly West Germany.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, American nuclear weapons were seen as a necessity to deter the Soviet Union.¹⁸⁰ However, the European integration process was becoming

¹⁷³ Alfred van Staden, *Een trouwe bondgenoot: Nederland en het Atlantisch bondgenootschap 1960-1971*, (Amsterdam: Anthos, 1974), 224.

¹⁷⁴ Van Staden, *Een trouwe bondgenoot*, 224-225.

¹⁷⁵ Joris Voorhoeve, *Peace, Profits and Principles: a Study of Dutch Foreign Policy*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979), 131.

¹⁷⁶ Voorhoeve, *Peace, Profits and Principles*, 131-132.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Duco Hellema, *Nederland in de wereld: de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland*, (Houten: Spectrum, 2016), 221-222.

¹⁸⁰ Hellema, *Nederland in de wereld*, 220.

increasingly important in the 1970s. Mathieu Segers states that the history of the European continent made the Netherlands wary of a Franco-German leadership of Europe, thereby favouring American leadership.¹⁸¹ According to Segers, Dutch European policy was characterised by a desire for Great Britain's entry to the European Economic Community (EEC), which would serve as a counterweight to France and West Germany.¹⁸²

The above findings serve as a good framework for analysing the Dutch perspective on *Ostpolitik*, MBFR and the CSCE.¹⁸³ They show an interesting dynamic between the United States and the European allies, as well as between the Netherlands and its more powerful neighbour: the FRG. To what extent did the developments in Bonn lead to a response in The Hague? Did this affect the Dutch position within NATO, or its stance on the CSCE and MBFR? The minutes of the weekly meeting of the Ministerial Council will help gain an understanding of how the Dutch government really felt about these developments and what its effects were on its CSCE policy.

Between Opportunity and Danger

The emergence of the FRG's *Ostpolitik* had the potential to disrupt two important aspects of Dutch foreign policy: preventing a Europe dominated by West Germany and preserving the U.S. protection of Europe. Shortly after the Moscow Treaty was signed by the FRG and the Soviet Union, the Ministerial Council addressed how this would impact the Netherlands. While the ministers agreed that the potential of this treaty was cause for "moderate optimism,"¹⁸⁴ this feeling was overshadowed by reservations about the political consequences of the treaty.

First, the Moscow Treaty was seen as evidence that the political leadership of Western Europe "had shifted from Paris to Bonn."¹⁸⁵ This was an important cause for concern for the Dutch government, which had been wary of a dominant FRG in Europe.¹⁸⁶ However, Foreign Minister Joseph Luns expressed that he thought Brandt was "realistic enough"¹⁸⁷ to understand

¹⁸¹ Mathieu Segers, *Reis naar het continent: Nederland en de Europese integratie, 1950 tot heden*, (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2013), 184.

¹⁸² Negotiations on the United Kingdom's accession to the EEC were eventually finalised on 22 January 1972.

¹⁸³ The dissertation of Hilbert W. Bomert is not included in this overview, as Bomert mainly focuses on the Netherlands' contribution at the CSCE instead of the years leading up to the CSCE. However, for a deeper analysis of the Dutch perspective on the CSCE, his work is an excellent starting point, see Bomert, *Nederland en Oost-Europa: meer woorden dan daden*.

¹⁸⁴ Dutch National Archives, The Hague (hereafter: NL-HaNA), Ministerial Council (hereafter: MR), 2.02.05.02, 1823-1992, inventory number 987, minutes, MR meeting, The Hague, 20 August 1970, top secret.

¹⁸⁵ NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, inv. nr. 987, 20 August 1970.

¹⁸⁶ Neutralising the "German threat" and German nationalism was a key goal of Dutch NATO-policy, see Hellema, *Nederland in de Wereld*, 222.

¹⁸⁷ NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, MR, 1823-1992, inv. nr. 987, minutes, MR meeting, The Hague, 28 August 1970, top secret.

that the FRG would not try to achieve its goal of unification outside of the framework of the alliance. Yet, the Ministerial Council still saw the actions of Bonn as a sign that Great Britain had to join the EEC as soon as possible.¹⁸⁸

Second, The Hague feared the Moscow Treaty would fuel calls for a return to isolationism in the United States and subsequent reductions of American troops in Europe.¹⁸⁹ This was particularly alarming for the Netherlands, because the American conventional troops in Europe were seen as their “political hostages who guarantee that the American nuclear umbrella would continue to extend across Western Europe.”¹⁹⁰

Third, and perhaps most importantly, the effects of the treaty on NATO cohesion was a great unknown at this moment in time. According to Luns, Western Europe would be “at the mercy of the goodwill of Russia”¹⁹¹ if the Soviet-West Germany Treaty were to loosen the alliance. Similarly, Prime Minister Piet de Jong warned that if the FRG were to become a special case in light of the treaty, it would be “extremely dangerous”¹⁹² for Europe. De Jong stated that the Netherlands had to “prevent at all cost”¹⁹³ that this would drive a wedge between NATO members.

A fourth and final consequence of the developments between Bonn and Moscow was that a potential CSCE had become more likely. The Hague assumed that the FRG would strongly push for it to back up their treaty.¹⁹⁴ For the Netherlands, it was essential that the mutual reduction of conventional forces would become an agenda item at a conference. Luns not only feared the military threat of the Warsaw Pact’s conventional forces, but also the political pressure these forces could apply in the case of an allied force reduction that was not both mutual and balanced.¹⁹⁵ This indicates that the Dutch government was a clear proponent of a *calculated* approach to *détente* over an *atmospheric* one.¹⁹⁶

At this point in time, the Dutch approach to the CSCE – similar to their approach to *détente* in general – can be described as restrained. 25 years after the end of the Second World

¹⁸⁸ NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, inv. nr. 987, 20 August 1970.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, inv. nr. 987, minutes, 28 August 1970.

¹⁹² NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, MR, 1823-1992, inv. nr. 988, minutes, MR meeting, The Hague, 2 October 1970, top secret.

¹⁹³ A particular mention was given to the French government, which was most concerned following recent developments in the FRG, see NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, inv. nr. 988, 2 October 1970.

¹⁹⁴ NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, inv. nr. 987, 20 August 1970.

¹⁹⁵ Albert Kersten, *Luns: een politieke biografie*, (Amsterdam: Boom, 2010), 487.

¹⁹⁶ Further evidence can be found in Luns’ position on NATO defence budgets. Luns feared that NATO member states would prematurely “cash in” on the reduction in defence budgets that would come from a future MBFR. This would compromise the negotiation position of NATO against the Soviet Union on both MBFR and the CSCE, see Kersten, *Luns*, 471-473.

War, this legacy still loomed large over the Dutch government.¹⁹⁷ As Minister of Interior Affairs Henk Beernink¹⁹⁸ said on 6 November 1970: “Once occupation is a fact, all social and cultural measures lose their value. [...] We need to learn from our past.”¹⁹⁹

Another important factor for Dutch restraint was the high level of mistrust with which the Soviet Union was met. Although there were promising signs – like the CSCE proposal, the SALT negotiations, and the Moscow Treaty – the Dutch government could not afford to let its guard down. Luns stated that they “need to assume that the intentions of the Soviet Union are unchanged, until we see clear evidence proving otherwise.”²⁰⁰ In a memorandum to several Dutch embassies including Bonn and Washington, the Dutch Department of NATO and Western European Union Affairs (DNW) warned that the treaty was nothing more than a starting point from which to begin working on actual relaxation: “The degree to which Moscow wants actual relaxation will have to be measured from their attitude during the quadripartite talks on Berlin.”²⁰¹ Adding to the Dutch list of reservations was that a CSCE that did not deal with troop levels would “lull the Dutch people”²⁰² into believing that the Soviet threat had passed. This was important because at this time, the U.S. was pushing for Europe to increase its defence spend.²⁰³ Justifying a higher defence budget to the Dutch people would become problematic in the event of a CSCE.

For the first few months after the Moscow Treaty, the Dutch government was most worried about *Ostpolitik* due to the effects it could have on NATO and thereby on the defence of Dutch borders. This would change after the NATO meeting in Brussels on 4-5 December, which would give the Netherlands the desired clarity on how the alliance would respond to *Ostpolitik* and what NATO’s position on the CSCE would be.

The sudden shift in attitude is further evidence of the large amount of influence NATO had on Dutch foreign policy. Most of the fears of *Ostpolitik* were eased by NATO’s show of support for *Ostpolitik* in Brussels. Yet, the Netherlands still feared the consequences of

¹⁹⁷ Luns expressed his concerns for the idealism shown by people who had not experienced the Second World War. Luns felt it was a necessity to convince them of the dangers of the forces of the Warsaw Pact or risk undermining Dutch efforts to *détente* and security, see Kersten, *Luns*, 487.

¹⁹⁸ In office from 5 April 1967 until 6 July 1971.

¹⁹⁹ NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, MR, 1823-1992, inv. nr. 988, minutes, MR meeting, The Hague, 6 November 1970, top secret.

²⁰⁰ NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, inv. nr. 988, 2 October 1970.

²⁰¹ Archives of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (not yet stored in NL-HaNA), The Hague, (hereafter: ABZ), 921.353.22, 1965-1974, inv. nr. 856, memorandum, DNW to Embassies (Bonn, Paris, London and Washington), East-West relations – ESC, The Hague, 1 October 1970, confidential.

²⁰² NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, MR, 1823-1992, inv. nr. 988, minutes, MR meeting, The Hague, 23 October 1970, top secret.

²⁰³ NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, inv. nr. 988, 6 November 1970.

Ostpolitik for the balance of power within the European integration project, as shown by the wish for a swift accession of Great Britain into the EEC.

Working within NATO

As discussed in the earlier chapters, the NATO meeting in Brussels established three main points that were all essential for the Netherlands. First, NATO identified the developments of *Ostpolitik* as “contributions toward reduction of tensions in Europe and as important elements of the *modus vivendi* which the Federal Republic of Germany wishes to establish with its Eastern neighbors.”²⁰⁴ Moreover, NATO unanimously supported Brandt’s linkage of the ratification of the Moscow Treaty with a solution on Berlin. Second, NATO adopted the linkage suggested by the U.S. to link a CSCE with a Berlin Agreement. Third, a statement by President Nixon was read affirming that the U.S. would not reduce their troop presence in Europe unless it was “in the context of reciprocal East-West action.”²⁰⁵

The NATO meeting took away the reservations of the Dutch government towards *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE, because it secured the cohesion of NATO and the American commitment to NATO. Shortly after the Brussels meeting, Dutch Parliament adopted a motion that was nearly identical to the NATO Brussels final communiqué. The motion affirmed that *Ostpolitik* “forms an essential contribution to relaxation in Europe and should be heavily supported by the Netherlands.”²⁰⁶ Moreover, the motion identified the topics of military reductions and the normalisation of intra-German relations as central issues for a Dutch relaxation policy. Luns confirmed that the Dutch government agreed with its content and would not object to passing such a motion.²⁰⁷

CSCE and MBFR – Fighting for Linkage

In the two years following the Brussels meeting, 1971 and 1972, the CSCE policy of the Netherlands was marked by continuity. Under the new Foreign Minister Norbert Schmelzer²⁰⁸, The Hague maintained its conviction that a conference should only take place if it was well-

²⁰⁴ Ministerial Communiqué, NATO, “Final Communiqué, Brussels, 4 December 1970,” last modified 23 October 2000, <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c701203a.htm>, accessed on 27 March 2017.

²⁰⁵ Ministerial Communiqué, NATO, “Final Communiqué, Brussels.”

²⁰⁶ Parliamentary Proceedings, House of Representatives (hereafter: HTK), 1970-1971, 10900, Chapter V (Foreign Affairs), nr. 24, motion Max van der Stoel, 16 December 1970, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=sgd%3Ampg21%3A19701971%3A0002598>, accessed on 6 April 2017.

²⁰⁷ HTK, 1970-1971, 1841, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=sgd%3Ampg21%3A19701971%3A0000631>, accessed on 12 April 2017.

²⁰⁸ In office from 6 July 1971 until 11 May 1973.

prepared and would include the topic of MBFR.²⁰⁹ Without MBFR, the CSCE would be nothing more than “a display of Soviet propaganda.”²¹⁰ On the one hand, this shows a similar conviction as the United States that the atmospherics of a conference in itself were not deemed useful by the Dutch government. On the other hand, the Dutch viewpoint ran opposite to the U.S. view that MBFR was not a suitable topic for a multilateral conference, as discussed in the previous chapter. While Schmelzer acknowledged American concerns, he still felt the West should not miss the opportunity to use the Soviet Union’s desire for the CSCE to push them to talk on MBFR.²¹¹

In the annual departmental memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 1972, Schmelzer explained that lately MBFR “had taken on a life of its own,”²¹² thus making it plausible that it would be dealt with in a separate forum.²¹³ However, Schmelzer noticed MBFR still took a backseat to the overall concept of the CSCE.²¹⁴ Therefore, he felt that “only a sudden disruption in East-West relations”²¹⁵ could stop the current dynamic that was moving towards the CSCE.

With his analysis of the state of MBFR and the CSCE, Schmelzer showed that it was going to be an uphill battle for the Netherlands to achieve its goal of including MBFR in the conference. In the eyes of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, momentum was not on the side of the Netherlands with MBFR having almost transcended the status of agenda-item at a CSCE. On 6 May 1972, a final attempt to link the two topics was made by Schmelzer when he met with Secretary of State Rogers ahead of President Nixon’s visit to Moscow. Schmelzer’s plea rested on the dangers of a “vague”²¹⁶ CSCE, which included feelings of euphoria among the Dutch people. Although Rogers agreed with Schmelzer’s view, he only replied that the U.S.

²⁰⁹ NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter: BZ), 1965-1974, inv. nr. 11832, memorandum of conversation, Minister of Foreign Affairs (Schmelzer) with Secretary of State (Rogers), New York, 1 October 1971, confidential.

²¹⁰ NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, inv. nr. 11832, 1 October 1971.

²¹¹ ABZ, 921.353.22, 1965-1974, inv. nr. 894, memorandum, Minister of Foreign Affairs (Schmelzer) to Permanent Representation to NATO in Brussels, Upcoming meeting of 25 April: MBFR – CES, The Hague, 24 April 1972, confidential.

²¹² HTK, 1971-1972, 11500 (Central Government Budget 1972), Chapter V (Foreign Affairs), nr. 2 (Budget memorandum), 8.

²¹³ In a meeting of the Ministerial Council, Schmelzer stated that the MBFR and CSCE policy of the Netherlands was in line with the departmental memorandum, see NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, MR, 1823-1992, inv. nr. 1107, minutes, MR meeting, The Hague, 3 December 1971, top secret.

²¹⁴ HTK, 1971-1972, 11500 (Central Government Budget 1972), Chapter V (Foreign Affairs), nr. 2 (Budget memorandum), 8.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, BZ, 1965-1974, inv. nr. 11832, memorandum, Permanent Representative to NATO in Brussels (Spienburg) to BZ, conversation of Minister Schmelzer with Secretary of State Rogers, Brussels, 6 May 1972, confidential.

would “do all we can for linkage.”²¹⁷ However, the previous chapter already showed that Rogers’ answer was completely opposite to the views of Washington, and that discussing MBFR at a CSCE was something the U.S. was trying to prevent.

The response of Rogers to Schmelzer is further evidence of the centrality of alliance management in the CSCE and MBFR negotiations for the United States. Washington’s position on MBFR and CSCE was perfectly clear. It had always preferred to “maintain total separation.”²¹⁸ Yet, Washington realised that there was pressure coming from European allies to link MBFR with the CSCE. By overtly holding out for separation, the European allies could accuse the U.S. of “killing MBFR.”²¹⁹ Therefore, Rogers’ reply to Schmelzer at least gave off the impression that the U.S. was attempting to take Dutch and other European views into account when negotiating bilaterally with the Soviet Union.

Ultimately, the Moscow Summit of May 1972 between Nixon and General Secretary of the CPSU Leonid Brezhnev determined that MBFR would be negotiated in a forum separate from the CSCE.²²⁰ At the ministerial meeting of December 1972, NATO guidelines were set for both MBFR and CSCE. Schmelzer explained that even though they had been unsuccessful in establishing a link between the two, he now recognised how both sets of negotiations could have a positive effect on each other.²²¹ The failure of linking MBFR with the CSCE is evidence of the limitations of a smaller state in determining the outcome of events involving the superpowers. Schmelzer’s attempts of convincing the U.S. of the importance of discussing MBFR at the CSCE fell on deaf ears, as Washington was executing its own approach to *détente*.

An Overlooked Ally

The Dutch response to *Ostpolitik* and its stance on the CSCE was mostly shaped by a concern for its security. The emergence of a distinct West German foreign policy meant the Dutch government had to find a solution to prevent political domination by Bonn. Consistent with the earlier works on Dutch foreign policy by Hellema and Voorhoeve, the Netherlands turned to

²¹⁷ NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, inv. nr. 11832, 6 May 1972.

²¹⁸ Minutes of a Senior Review Group Committee Meeting, Senior Review Group Committee, “Issues in European Security Conference and MBFR, Washington, 29 March 1972, top secret,” *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, volume XXXIX, doc. 87.

²¹⁹ *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, volume XXXIX, doc. 87.

²²⁰ Memorandum of Conversation, President (Nixon) with General Secretary of the CPSU (Brezhnev), “Basic principles; Vietnam; SALT; European Security; Bilateral Relations; Announcement of Visit; Summit Arrangements; China, Moscow, 22 April 1972, top secret,” *FRUS European Security*, 1969-1976, volume XXXIX, doc. 91.

²²¹ NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, MR, 1823-1992, inv. nr. 1162, minutes, MR meeting, The Hague, 15 December 1972, top secret.

NATO for its security needs in light of the developments of *Ostpolitik*. Once NATO endorsed *Ostpolitik* and Nixon reiterated the U.S. commitment to Western Europe, *Ostpolitik* was quickly viewed more positively.

On the CSCE and MBFR, the Netherlands formulated its own position motivated by the conviction that *détente* had to come through concrete measures. Contrary to the theory of Voorhoeve, the Netherlands did try to influence how *détente* was approached and did not leave it to the bigger powers of NATO. Its particular history of the Second World War served as an important reminder of the vulnerability of the Netherlands. This context helps understand why the Dutch government felt the strong need to treat *détente* in a *calculated* fashion through MBFR. Whether it was actually able to influence this process is a different matter. The limits of Dutch power were telling.

Conclusion

This paper analysed the contributions of *Ostpolitik* to the Cold War environment during the years of *détente*. It did so by addressing the role of *Ostpolitik* within the framework of the negotiations on the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which eventually led to the signing of the Helsinki Accords in 1975. The central research question was: *To what extent did Ostpolitik determine the CSCE-policy of the FRG, the United States and the Netherlands from 1969-1972?*

On the basis of the theory of neorealism, I formulated the following hypothesis: *Détente and Ostpolitik helped weaken the bipolar structure of the Cold War and with it the stability of the Western alliance, thereby pushing the Netherlands and the United States to support the CSCE to help guard from this threat.* On the grounds of the evidence found in this paper, it is possible to carefully accept this hypothesis with the addition of a few important side notes.

Throughout all three chapters, the primacy of the stability of the alliance shone through as a consistent factor. For the FRG, its policy of rapprochement with the Soviet Union rested heavily on maintaining the strong negotiation position that NATO provided. For the United States, its response – as the Western superpower – to the developments of *Ostpolitik* was primarily motivated by trying to keep the alliance together. The U.S. functioned as a manager of the alliance that had to take the wishes of all allies into account when developing an approach that best looked after its own direct interests. For the Netherlands, NATO provided security against the Soviet Union, as well as against the rise of the FRG.

Although *Ostpolitik* ultimately did not measurably weaken the coherence of NATO – *Ostpolitik* was unanimously supported – it did threaten to do so. This feeling of uncertainty played a key part in determining the Dutch and American stance towards the CSCE. It is up for discussion to what extent distrust within the alliance qualifies as an actual weakening of the alliance.

For the United States, supporting the CSCE was not something it wanted out of its own direct interests. This held particularly true for the inclusion of MBFR at the conference. The bilateral SALT negotiations gave the White House more control over the strategic balance than the multilateral MBFR, especially if MBFR would be included in the CSCE. However, *Ostpolitik* opened up the FRG to Soviet pressure to move towards the CSCE. Moreover, the FRG strongly wanted MBFR to prevent the withdrawal of American troops in Europe and to give substance to *Ostpolitik*. Particularly through linking the ratification of the Moscow Treaty with progress on Berlin and the subsequent linkage of Berlin with the CSCE, *Ostpolitik* became

heavily intertwined with the CSCE and MBFR. As a result, Nixon and Kissinger had to move along with the CSCE and MBFR initiatives. If they did not, they risked sabotaging *Ostpolitik* and alienating the FRG from the alliance.

For the Netherlands, supporting the CSCE was not a given. According to The Hague, the conference had to include MBFR for it to be more than Soviet propaganda. However, the developments of *Ostpolitik* had made the CSCE likely to transpire. Moreover, *Ostpolitik* threatened to damage the stability of the alliance. This threat of instability eventually led to NATO affirming its support for *Ostpolitik* by supporting and adopting the linkages of the Moscow Treaty, Berlin and the CSCE. This contributed to a more receptive stance of the Netherlands towards the CSCE, as it had safeguarded the stability of the alliance. The Hague maintained its position that MBFR should be an agenda item at the CSCE, but could ultimately live with the two being negotiated separately.

The findings of this paper also helped gain a deeper understanding of the concept *détente*. This paper has shown that *détente* was not something between the two superpowers. White's distinction between *superpower* and *allied détente* has proven to be most useful, and this paper has hoped to show just how important the allied part was in the overall *détente* process. The European allies had a direct impact on the Cold War policy of the United States. The U.S. need to preserve the stability of the alliance gave the European allies leverage to pressure Washington. Without this pressure – particularly that of the FRG – the United States would have never agreed to the CSCE and MBFR. *Ostpolitik* is an example of how *détente* helped the European allies gain a voice in their own security matters.

Earlier, I proposed the introduction of two concepts: *atmospheric détente* – a more idealist approach – and *calculated détente* – a more realist approach. Throughout this paper, these concepts have helped understand the different kind of contributions states could make to ease East-West relations. However, crucially, by looking at how *Ostpolitik* incorporated atmospherics in a *calculated* approach to *détente*, it becomes clear that the idealism of an *atmospheric* approach to *détente* had an important role to play in forming the linkages that contributed to important milestones in East-West relations: the Moscow Treaty, the Berlin Agreement, the CSCE and MBFR negotiations. This made Brandt's linkage policy distinctly different from the one pursued by Kissinger, who only saw the dangers of such an approach. Yet, the accomplishments of *Ostpolitik* seem to prove the value of Brandt's conviction.

The realist element of *Ostpolitik* is something that has often been missing in earlier work on Brandt's policy. As a result, the focus has too often been on the idealist elements of *Ostpolitik*, thereby not granting enough attention to the centrality of security considerations. As

a consequence, relatively too much value has been attached to social norms while this paper has pointed out the degree to which *Ostpolitik* revolved around power politics.

Naturally, this paper does not come up with the defining answer for what *Ostpolitik* and the CSCE meant for *détente*. There is much more that can be said on these intriguing research topics and I welcome further contributions. An analysis from the perspective of the Soviet Union or one of the Warsaw Pact states would be a valuable addition. This would give a most-welcome perspective from the East on Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. However, the accessibility of source material could pose difficulties. Another interesting subject for further research could be the effects of *Ostpolitik* on the European integration project. Although this topic was briefly addressed here, due to the restrictions of this paper it was not possible to provide an in-depth analysis of the dynamic between *Ostpolitik* and European integration. *Ostpolitik* emerged at a time when European integration was quickly moving forward. For example, an important development was the introduction of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) in 1970.

I started this paper with a quote from Brandt's Nobel Lecture, in which he stated that peace and freedom is not the original *state of nature*. Did Brandt's words hint towards his own (neo)realist convictions concerning international relations? Quite possibly, but it definitely showed his ambition to *make* peace. *Ostpolitik* was Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr's design to overcome the *state of nature*. *Ostpolitik* was a combination of an idealist ambition and a realist understanding of how they could use this ambition to achieve their own foreign policy goals. *Ostpolitik* was a public strategy of peace driven by a secret strategy of power politics.

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Abbreviations

AA:	Auswärtiges Amt
AAPD:	Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
ABZ:	Archives of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
BSR:	Bundessicherheitsrat
BZ:	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
CES:	Conference on European Security [see CSCE]
CPSU:	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSCE:	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
DNW:	Department of NATO- and Western European Union Affairs
EEC:	European Economic Community
EPC:	European Political Cooperation
ESC:	European Security Conference [see CSCE]
FRG:	Federal Republic of Germany
FRUS:	Foreign Relations of the United States
GDR:	German Democratic Republic
HTK:	Parliamentary Proceedings, House of Representatives
KB:	Kabinettsprotokolle der Bundesregierung, online
MBFR:	Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions
MR:	Ministerial Council
NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NL-HaNA:	Dutch National Archives, The Hague
NSC:	National Security Council
NSSM:	National Security Study Memorandum
SALT:	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
U.S.:	United States
USSR:	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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