

Pacifist-Neutrality in Western Europe

by

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"A pacifist and neutralist tendency is taking shape in Europe. This will have catastrophic consequences for the defense of Western Europe." This view was expressed by press bureau New China in August 1981.¹ In the same month, an article by Andrei Sakharov was published in the West. The Russian champion of peace and human rights warned:

"How simple it is for pro-Soviet propaganda to organize massive, one-sided campaigns against placement of American . . . missiles. . . How often the Western intelligentsia take a one-sided position, when they protest against the arms race, not taking reality into account. . . Public opinion in the West should recognize the seriousness of the totalitarian danger and realize that it is psychologically unarmed against this."²

A contrary view is found among left-wing social-democratic politicians in Western Europe. Erhard Eppler reminded his political leader Helmut Schmidt in the fall of 1981 that, in the future, the majority of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the trade unions, the churches and the largest part of West German youth would belong to the hopeful new pacifist movement.³ Michael Foot proudly exclaimed at the end of his party's conference in 1981 that he was "an incorrigible, incurable peace monger," which earned him an ovation.⁴

These four quotations characterize the important but controversial nature of the subject of this paper. It is a complex and emotionally laden matter. I will attempt to analyze it in six steps. First, it is necessary to look at the terminology. It was, I think, Confucius who wrote that the greatest political reform he could imagine would consist of everyone using the proper words. After some definitions, the different appearances of pacifist-neutrality in some European countries will be dealt with. Then, some quantitative aspects, according to public opinion polls, will be considered. Finally, a number of possible causes will be reviewed.

Pacifist and neutralist tendencies in Western Europe are being discussed widely, both in Europe and North America. My country, The Netherlands, has received the doubtful privilege of great international interest in this regard, especially after the article by Walter Laqueur in *Commentary*.⁵ Laqueur considered "Hollanditis" an infectious disease which can also affect other countries, especially where resistance may become as weak as it seemed to him in The Netherlands. By "Hollanditis", Laqueur not only meant a preference for a neutralist foreign policy and a pacifist defense attitude; he and other commentators have also related it to exaggerated expectations about the possibilities of an East-West dialogue and détente, a relatively weak sense of independence, and not too much ap-

preciation for Western society. Another part of the syndrome seems to be unwillingness to make clear-cut decisions, not only in defense, but also in financial and socio-economic questions. I think he regards it basically as a crisis of moral-political will. This view is not without ground, but the problem is exaggerated. I will return to this later on.

Pacifism

The sickness which has put my country into the international limelight seems caused by two bacteria: one, pacifist and the other, neutralist. Pacifism is the belief in the possibility of perennial peace and the fight against arms and everything related to war. There are various kinds of pacifism which differ fundamentally. First, there is *general pacifism* as a peaceloving attitude. Few people do not belong to that broad category. Second, there is pacifism which is not dogmatic, but is generally critical about defense spending and prefers to reduce the defense effort. This applies to about half the population in Western Europe,⁶ but much less to their governments.⁷ It has, at different times, also applied to the American population and sometimes to their government.⁸

Third, there is principled or *dogmatic pacifism* which rejects every use of violence, irrespective of the situation. This applies only to a minor segment of the population. The principled pacifist deems war and violence, defensive or offensive, always morally illegitimate.

The *utilitarian pacifist*, the fourth type, deems violence to be ineffective as a means to attain desirable goals. Both the utilitarian and the dogmatist emphasize the possibilities of non-violent means to counter interior and exterior tyranny and exploitation. Non-violent resistance, according to this doctrine, is able to change the attitude of a tyrant or occupying force and to neutralize his military power. This doctrine of non-violent action is popular among an influential segment of the intelligentsia in the northern European countries.

Between the general and dogmatic pacifism there is selective pacifism. *Politically selective pacifism* lets the attitude towards violence depend on the ideological situation. There are some in Europe who are pacifist as far as their national defense is concerned, but applaud the use of violence by liberation movements in the Third World. This inconsistency is sometimes found in the left wing. The reverse inconsistency occurs too: there are those who support national defense ardently, but are very critical towards movements in the Third World which try to liberate their country from an unjust regime.

Apart from this politically selective pacifism, there is *militarily selective pacifism*. In Western Europe, nuclear pacifism has increased the last few years. Most nuclear pacifists do not reject out of principle the use of conventional arms and show relatively little attention to non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction, which are as much a cause for concern.

Neutralism

Neutralism currently means a refusal to choose sides in the struggle between communist and non-communist states. Like pacifism, neutralism

is a species with many varieties: armed or unarmed, imposed or voluntary, and internationalist or isolationist neutralism. A powerful neighbor can insist on the neutralism of a country, as is the case of Finland and Austria. Sweden is an internationalist voluntary neutral; Switzerland, however, is a strict neutral with little foreign policy, and Ireland falls in-between. Voluntary neutralism is well known to The Netherlands: between 1648 and 1940 the country was often a voluntary neutral for very long periods.

The term neutralism, as it is used today, is considerably less precise than the old diplomatic term neutrality, which meant that a country, from the legal point of view, remained impartial during a war between one or more parties and invoked extensive international rules concerning neutrality, developed since the 17th century by the Dutchman Hugo Grotius and other international lawyers. Since the 1950's, the term neutralism has been applied to newly independent countries which refused to choose sides in the Cold War. In the U.S., it received the negative connotation of moral indifference in the struggle against communism. Therefore, Nehru preferred to call India "non-aligned" and Nasser spoke of "positive neutrality". Typically, countries which are traditionally neutrals, such as Ireland and Sweden, were not invited by the Conference of Non-Aligned States to become members. This emphasizes the distinction between neutrality as a legal concept and neutralism as a political orientation. Among the European members of the Western alliance, there is little public support for neutrality, but somewhat more for neutralism, as will be shown below.

Nehru saw the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union as rivalry for world power, not as a result of a fundamental ideological conflict. Opinions of some in Western Europe who are inclined to put the super-powers morally into one category, i.e. large countries which try to manipulate and exploit the rest of the world to their own advantage, are not far from this Third World neutralism. Also Nehru's thought that a neutralist state could be a mediator between East and West, a channel for communication, a moderating force between the superpowers, is found again among those who are inclined towards neutralism in Western Europe.⁹

Pacifist-Neutralism in Western Europe

As words with many meanings, the terms pacifism and neutralism represent political forces with very different features some of which overlap each other. The broad category of a pacifist-neutralist movement in Western Europe is defined here as: an international movement consisting of diverse groupings which, however, all plead for an immediate reduction of national defense, a one-sided reduction of Western nuclear weapons, a softening of the confrontation with Soviet communism, détente in East-West relations, and a lessening of the cohesion and discipline of the West and East blocs. A concomitant feature of these groupings is that most desire also a change of the Western economic model of free enterprise into a socialist economy: not a communist system, but in the social-democratic sense of the word, i.e. with a larger role for the government in the economy than at present. This pacifist-neutralist move-

ment occurs mainly in North-Western Europe, it is strongest among the socialists, communists, members of the Protestant Churches, intellectuals, employees in the quaternary sector (the non-commercial service sector), women and youth movements, and ecological groupings.

The Federal Republic of Germany

Pacifist and neutralist tendencies have arisen in the Federal Republic particularly during the last two years. This tendency is not totally new. In the years prior to the end of World War I, Carl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg strongly criticized the violence of "capitalist" society. During the Weimar Republic there was a strong anti-military movement in which Berthold Brecht and Erich Maria Remarque, among others, played a rôle. Also here there was a humanitarian communist undertone. Fascism finished this pacifism brutally. After the Second World War, pacifism reappeared particularly in the socialist movement which played with the idea of German neutrality and unification of East and West Germany. The forces for alignment with the West and rearmament of West Germany were much stronger, however. At the end of the 1950's, the pacifist-neutralist movement took shape in demonstrations against nuclear weapons. This "Kampf gegen den Atomtod" was inspired by the left wing of labour, which in 1958 organized a large ban-the-bomb-demonstration. In Germany support for this movement came from the opposition SPD and the left wing of the liberal party (FDP), from trade unions and church leaders. It was a protest against the CDU-CSU defense-policy, particularly against the decision to equip the Bundeswehr with weapons suitable for nuclear warheads and the installation of U.S. nuclear weapons on German soil.

This anti-nuclear movement dissipated when the SPD changed its course with the adoption of the Godesberger-program and accepted co-responsibility for government policy in coalitions with the Christian Democrats and the Liberals. Then the civic action groups had to continue without formal support of the SPD and the trade unions. When the SPD came into the government and Willy Brandt started his Ost-politik, the activities of the pacifist-neutralist groupings dwindled. Also, their greatest attention was absorbed in protests against the Vietnam War. Thus, until about 1978, there was little pacifist-neutralist criticism of government policy and NATO membership. Since then the mood has changed, first slowly, then drastically. The Schmidt Government is bothered increasingly by criticism especially from its own social-democratic supporters.

The West German pacifist-neutralist movement consists of a number of large groupings which are well co-ordinated and implement joint action. At the end of the 1950's, the Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste ASF was established. In the beginning its purpose was to promote reconciliation with those countries which had suffered badly from Germany in the Second World War. As of 1969, work started in Germany itself, when the Evangelical Church asked ASF to develop alternatives for military service. Since 1974, ASF has organized every year a "festival of peace services". Especially during the last few years, the churches have played a

prominent rôle. The church conference in Hamburg in June 1981 was one long accusation against German government policy and NATO. This Kirchentag was dominated by fear of nuclear arms and criticism against the West.¹⁰

The neutralist-pacifist movement has played a leading rôle in mass demonstrations and campaigns such as "Ohne Rüstung leben" and "Frieden schaffen ohne Waffen". It protests particularly the coming introduction of modern nuclear weapons (Pershing-II and ground launched cruise missiles) in Western Europe and against the foreign policy of the Reagan administration. Its zenith was reached in the demonstration of 300,000 people in Bonn in October 1981.

As a recent report of the German internal security service showed, a number of key positions in some organizations which participate in this pacifist-neutralist movement, such as the Krefelder Appell, are occupied by members of the German Communist Party (DKP). It is, however, erroneous to regard the entire movement simply as communist. Leading communist and non-communist figures have only mobilized the increasing fear of nuclear war of many non-communist Germans.

The development of pacifist-neutralism in the Federal Republic is probably the key to the future of the North Atlantic alliance. The Government and main political parties are still firmly committed to NATO. West German armed forces are among the largest and most modern conventional contributions to the alliance. The increased pressure of the left wing of the Social Democratic Party in a pacifist-neutralist direction is not likely to become worse in the near future, because of the re-manifestation of the Soviet threat in the case of Poland. If this left-wing gains further strength, the socialist-liberal coalition might fall and be replaced by a coalition which the CDU/CSU would dominate, whose pro-NATO and defense orientation is beyond doubt. There are rumors, however, that some conservative nationalist forces advocate neutralism as a means to promote reunification. Moreover, the exposed position of the country, the division of Berlin, the latent desire for re-unification with East Germany, the humanitarian interest in immigration and visits from the East bloc, the extensive economic interest in trade and financial relations with the East, the demonstrated strength of the "peace movement" and a fear of limited nuclear war in Europe (whether justified or not) are many factors which make improbable a return of Adenauer's policy of following the U.S. as closely as possible.

United Kingdom

As in the Federal Republic, British pacifism goes back to the beginning of this century. The First World War encouraged it especially. That seemingly senseless and bloody war made thousands of young Britons take the Oxford oath in the 1930's, promising never to fight again for king or country. It was then that the actions of munitions producers were criticized as causing war. During this time the thought became popular that the lust for profit in a free market economy led to an arms race, international enmity and war.

Experience in the second half of the 1930's and the Second World War changed many a pacifist mind. However, the convictions of some strengthened when confronted with contrary evidence. Some of these old pacifists are still playing a prominent rôle in Britain today. After the announcement of the British H-bomb, Lord Fenner Brockway launched in 1955 the first demonstration against nuclear weapons. At the end of the 1950's, the campaign for nuclear disarmament (CND) grew into a large movement. In 1960, the Labour Party adopted a resolution for unilateral disarmament, which almost tore the party in two. During the second part of the 1960's the CND slumbered, however — perhaps because the peaceful solution of the Cuban missile crisis demonstrated that nuclear arms had made the superpowers very careful and less willing to resort to military force against each other.

In Britain, the philosopher Bertrand Russell, the Marxist E.P. Thompson and the author J.B. Priestley encouraged the pacifist movement. The current Labour leader Michael Foot was one of the leaders of CND in the 1960's. The pacifist movement was influential and caused great tensions inside Labour when it was in opposition. When Labour formed the government, pacifism was generally not a strong force.

In 1980, the British Trade Unions Congress (TUC) embraced nuclear disarmament as a policy, in multilateral steps with room for unilateral initiatives. In 1981 TUC moved to the left and adopted unilateral arms reduction. In the fall of 1981, the Labour Party conference endorsed unilateral nuclear disarmament. According to the current platform a Labour government would refuse cruise missiles on British soil and would abolish Polaris missiles and not replace them by Trident; all British and American nuclear bases would be closed. Many in Labour want a non-nuclear Europe. Notwithstanding the radicalization of the party, there was still a large majority against formal secession from NATO, however.¹¹

The new Social Democratic Party still regards NATO membership as a necessity and opposes one-sided nuclear disarmament. According to David Owen, it is essential to remain within NATO: arms control and disarmament cannot be achieved if Great Britain acts on its own. The conference of the Liberal Party adopted, in 1981, a resolution against placement of cruise missiles on British soil and for multi-lateral disarmament negotiations to effect a nuclear-free Europe. The parliamentary faction of the Liberal Party, however, shares the SDP point of view and is inclined to cooperate with NATO policy.¹²

There is not much reason to fear that Great Britain for political reasons will become an unreliable ally in the 1980's. The main problem is perhaps the sorry state of the economy which keeps the defense budget low. The staunch alliance policy of the Conservative Party is well-known and the SDP and Liberal leaders also favor NATO. The Labour Party is in crisis and is unlikely to replace the present government. A Labour-Liberal coalition, however, could pose a problem to the alliance.

The Netherlands

Although much less important than the previous two, my own country is

interesting for analytical purposes. It turned from being the most pro-American ally in the 1950's and early 1960's into a critical ally, with a pro-alliance government, but a vocal neutralist-pacifist movement. The decline of support for NATO and the U.S. started slowly in the second half of the 1960's and increased at the end of the 1970's.

Although The Netherlands had a long tradition of neutrality, it joined the Western Union in 1948 and NATO in 1949 whole-heartedly. Anti-NATO feelings were mostly limited to members of the Communist Party. Members of the Social-Democratic Party were at first staunchly Atlanticist. In the early 1950's, pacifist-neutralism was represented in the so-called Third Way, a small movement which wanted Europe to steer clear of the American and Russian power blocs. Later on, many pacifists gathered in the small Pacifist-Socialist Party, PSP. In 1961, the pacifist movement demonstrated its increased political force in a large Easter march.

From 1948 to the beginning of the 1970's, the Dutch played a very active role in the organizations of the West, more influential than the size of the country seemed to justify. The special circumstances which explain this constructive period in Dutch diplomatic history have been analyzed elsewhere.¹³ The decline of this rôle and, at the same time, the rise of a critical attitude towards NATO is the result of both external and internal changes. The country shrank from a small "medium" power to that of a small power. A part of the public finds it increasingly difficult to accept co-responsibility for the policies of international institutions which are dominated by the larger powers.

In the middle of the 1960's, Dutch society and its political system changed drastically. Democratization of foreign policy opened foreign affairs, once a subject for the privileged few, to broad public debate, in which the intelligentsia and the media became more and more influential. The decline of religion as main organizing factor in the complicated domestic politics gave rise to heated debate on matters of foreign policy, especially on events of ideological significance. The churches became more and more politicized; church criticism of nuclear arms increased throughout the 1960's and led in 1967 to the establishment of the Interchurch Peace Council (IKV). In 1977, a well-organized campaign against the "neutron bomb" started, in which communists, socialists, pacifists, church leaders and others co-operated. In the same year, the IKV started its influential campaign "remove nuclear weapons from the world, starting in The Netherlands".¹⁴

This movement, which advocates unilateral reduction of American nuclear arms in Europe, has steadily gained ground against a political élite which did not explain and defend NATO policy very convincingly. Strong pacifist sentiment in the socialist and other left wing parties, as well as in the left wing of the Christian-Democratic Party, led the government to adopt a policy of avoiding decisions regarding defense matters. In December 1979, the government, while agreeing with NATO's analysis which led to the decision to deploy in the future 572 modern nuclear

weapons in Western Europe, reserved its approval for installation of 48 cruise missiles on Dutch soil, but promised to make that decision in December 1981. In the meantime, opponents against modernization have grown even stronger. As could be expected, no decision was made. The Dutch defense minister asked instead for a further postponement, pleading that the arms control negotiations in Geneva have only just started.¹⁵

There are some signs of opposition against the pacifist-neutralist movement in The Netherlands, but the grassroots initiatives in favor of NATO, defense and two-sided arms control through negotiations are not yet coordinated. The military takeover in Poland has dealt a blow to the hope of the pacifist-neutralist movement for a *general relaxation of tensions in Europe* and diminished prospects for dissolution of the two blocs. There are no convincing signs, however, that the pacifist-neutralist movement has been structurally weakened. Unless pro-NATO forces organize themselves and start an active campaign, pacifist-neutralism may gradually grow stronger and make The Netherlands an increasingly wayward ally, which would try to reduce the present six nuclear NATO-tasks of the Dutch armed forces by at least two and would refuse the placement of cruise missiles on its soil.¹⁶

Behind the scenes there remains, however, a rather strong and modern conventional effort of The Netherlands. The Dutch contribution to NATO is not at all as small or undisciplined as U.S. media sometimes portray it. In NATO exercises the Dutch armed forces prove to be very effective. The general population is still in favor of NATO and quite pro-American. It is difficult, but not impossible, to counter the erosion of alliance support in the future.

Other Small Countries

In Norway, neutralist-pacifism is represented by a large part of the socialist party and a number of private organizations such as Women for Peace. The socialist politician Jens Evensen advocated in the chapter he contributed to the book *Nuclear Weapons and Insecurity Policy* neutralism for Norway. The Norwegian socialist party has responded positively to the plan for a nuclear free zone in Northern Europe, but opinion is still divided on the question whether the Russian Kola peninsula, with its far reaching nuclear armaments, should be part of it. The Soviet Union has shown great interest in a Scandinavian nuclear free zone, but has failed to make clear that it would be prepared to remove nuclear weapons from Kola. The leader of the anti-nuclear movement, Erik Alfson, is not bothered by this and holds, in fact, the view that it is not necessary to include Russian territory. The interesting thing is that Scandinavian countries already form such a nuclear free zone — in this sense, that there are no nuclear weapons on their soil, but that Soviet nuclear arms are present in large concentrations east of this area on land, and at sea to the south, north and west. The penetration by a Soviet submarine with nuclear arms into Swedish territorial waters has weakened support for a nuclear free zone, but it is unclear whether this incident will have a lasting effect on Scandinavian public opinion.¹⁷

Also in Denmark, where defense questions are now perhaps less intensely debated than in my own country, one can speak of pacifist-neutralism. Recently, a Soviet diplomat was made *persona non grata* for supporting the peace movement with finance.¹⁸ In Sweden, the formal policy of neutrality has a clear streak of pacifist-neutralism. As early as the 1950's Sweden had mass demonstrations against nuclear arms. Public protests forced the social-democratic party to abolish plans for a Swedish tactical nuclear weapon. In Sweden the anti-nuclear weapon movement is composed broadly of different political forces. The left wing political parties are the dominating elements. In Belgium, resistance against nuclear weapons comes particularly from socialists and communists, but to some extent also from the younger members of the Liberal Party. The Flemish socialist leader Karel van Miert deplored, in the election campaign of 1981, that we West Europeans are "the permanent vassals and nuclear hostages of the United States" and that Western Europe is nothing more than an "American protectorate".

The socialist parties of the Benelux and Scandinavian countries have, in the meantime, intensified their contacts on disarmament and East-West détente during their so-called Scandilux-meetings. The British Labour Party and the German SPD are also represented.

France

France is a different case. Organized pacifism hardly exists there. It is striking that the socialist government, in which the communists participate, supports the French nuclear force. There is a national consensus on the value of defense because the sense of independence and patriotism are considerably greater than in other West European countries. There is much support in France for the modernization of American nuclear weapons in Europe, even though the French will not accept them on their own soil. The government is, moreover, very skeptical about the arms reduction talks in Geneva. It is an ironic situation that the black sheep of the alliance, Gaullist France, has turned gradually into the member with the greatest defense preparedness, least influenced by pacifist-neutralism, and very supportive of the current American view of the USSR. Of all the allies, the government has retained the greatest capacity to make decisions on defense.

To the surprise of many West European socialists, the new government in France has turned sharply against pacifist-neutralist tendencies elsewhere in Europe. Foreign minister Claude Cheysson called the resistance against the modernization of nuclear weapons disturbing. In June 1981 he exclaimed: "I am shocked that in some large countries neutralism is now an important force, because neutralism is not a policy, it is surrender, it is indolence. . ."¹⁹

At first, these strong remarks and the clear pro-NATO declarations of defense minister Hernu were rejected as a tactical move to convince the political right of the basic reliability of the new government, but there are strong indications that the socialist government in France is keenly aware of the dangers of pacifist-neutralism and the consequences of increased

Soviet influence over Western Europe. The change of France from the "wayward ally" of the 1960's to a staunch supporter of American efforts to contain the USSR in 1981-2 seems first of all prompted by indignation over the invasion of Afghanistan and Soviet pressure on Poland. French socialists remember Munich and are sharply critical of Soviet society. Second, France perceives a more structural phenomenon: the changing balance of power. France is interested in its own rôle in the world, in between the superpowers. But the increased Soviet threat has forced the French to consolidate their relationship with the U.S. as a condition to play an independent role, e.g. in the Third World. That these two goals may not be easy to combine was recently shown in the cases El Salvador and Nicaragua. France may also agree with Reagan's view of East-West relations, because it fears close West German relations with the East Bloc. A more neutralist West Germany, looking for possibilities to reunite, seeking accommodation with the USSR, would have serious repercussions for France's room for manoeuvre and relative power.

Eastern Europe

In Eastern Europe, organized pacifism of private institutions and political parties does not exist. Official doctrine sharply rejects pacifism. Soviet authors on international politics view it as fundamentally contrary to their system. Lenin wrote: "Pacifism, however small its significance, is unacceptable to us. Our revolutionary and military traditions are of great value to us, are sacred to our people".²⁰ Accordingly, one can find in an official annotated dictionary of the USSR that pacifism is: "hypocritical bourgeois policy, which rejects all revolutionary and other justified wars". To explain this definition the following is added: "pacifism is an instrument to prepare new wars under the guise of slogans about peace".²¹ More positive words are to be found in the declarations of the international organizations, such as the World Peace Council, which are in close contact with the USSR and are active particularly among West European communists, pacifists and socialists. During recent trips of Dutch politicians and political analysts to Moscow, Kremlin leaders spoke in glowing terms about West European pacifism.

Recent contacts of the Dutch Interchurch Peace Council IKV with the Evangelical Church in the German Democratic Republic reportedly show that there are also in East Germany an increasing number of sympathizers with pacifism, who are highly critical of their country's defense policy and subservience to the Warsaw Pact.²² Obviously these pacifists are not allowed to organize themselves into a force which would threaten the government's defense policy. Massive demonstrations for peace in Romania in December 1981 are perhaps a second sign of increasing pacifist feelings in Eastern Europe too, although this was completely organized by the government. The 300,000 participants were not at all comparable to the private peace marchers in Bonn, Rome, Brussels and Amsterdam in the fall of 1981. Still, there are those in Western Europe who interpret these signs in a hopeful fashion as the beginning of pan-European pacifism which will eventually weaken the position of both

superpowers on their continent.

Public Opinion in Western Europe

In the last years, fear of a new world war has increased in a number of West European countries. A large segment of the population holds the view that the Soviet Union is aggressive. There is also a growing concern about increasing tension between the superpowers. Particularly, the invasion of Afghanistan has increased this and, more recently, the Polish crisis has heightened fears. Still, the segment which is deeply concerned about the possibility of Soviet aggression against their countries, is not very large. In March 1981, about one-third of those polled in West Germany, The Netherlands and Norway were of the opinion that the Soviet Union might attack Western Europe in the coming five years. In France and Britain, however, this was the view of about half of the people. The better-educated showed less concern about the Soviet threat than the general public, except in France, where the better-educated were more concerned.²³ At the same time, relative majorities in France, The Netherlands and Norway thought that the superpowers had more or less equal military strength. Most people who held the view that there was no balance of power anymore, thought that the Soviet Union was ahead. This was particularly the case in Britain; half of those thought that the Soviet Union was more powerful. It was striking in these opinion polls that most allies of the United States did not prefer American superiority, but equality of both superpowers.²⁴

In most NATO member countries, there is still an absolute majority in favor of NATO membership. France is an exception and so is Greece. Apart from "Hollanditis" we should distinguish "Hellenitis": the preference of a part of the Greeks for a more neutralistic position. There is strong criticism of NATO and the United States which, according to many left wing Greeks, are responsible for supporting the colonels' regime between 1967 and 1974, the occupation of a part of Cyprus by Turkey, and interference in internal political affairs. The elections on October 18, 1981 confirmed that Hellenitis had grown: the socialist Pasok received 47.5% and the communist KKE 10.6% of the votes. Both favor leaving NATO and the European Community.

In March 1981 absolute majorities of those polled in Britain, Norway, West Germany, The Netherlands, Italy, Belgium and Denmark still maintained that NATO was essential for the security of their country.²⁵ An analysis of the trend in a number of European countries shows that this opinion on NATO has remained more or less constant during the last ten years. There are, however, recent signs that support for NATO is diminishing quite rapidly in The Netherlands.

The West Europeans do not find it easy to agree on an alternative to the present NATO structure. If they are asked what alternatives they want to maintain their security, between 11 and 17% advocate a different NATO in which Europeans have a larger voice, but also a larger share in the total defense burden. Less than 1 out of 10 is in favor of the French solution, i.e. leaving the integrated military structure of NATO, but remaining a

partner to the Washington Treaty on which NATO is based. In France 28% of those polled support this, which reflects the French situation. (See Table 1). An independent West European defense force, which would not be allied to the United States, was the preference of one out of seven or even fewer. Finally, the option of accommodation with the Soviet Union received only between 2 and 7% support.

Table 1. **Options for National Security** (March 1981)²⁶

“Regardless of how you feel about NATO, which of the statements on this card (Hand card) comes closest to your own view on how (SURVEY COUNTRY) could best provide for its security?”

	UK	France*	FRG	Neth.	Norway
NATO as it now operates among the countries of Western Europe and the United States and Canada	35%	10%	57%	31%	57%
NATO changed so that West Europe has more say in NATO in return for paying more of the costs	16	11	17	15	11
Withdraw our military forces from NATO but otherwise remain in NATO for things such as policy consultations	9	28	8	11	6
Establish an independent West European defense force not allied to the U.S.	15	13	9	11	6
Rely on greater accommodation to the interests of the Soviet Union	3	7	6	6	2
Don't know	24	33	5	27	18

* In France, option 3 read: “To rely primarily on our armed forces and remain in the Western Alliance.”

One can safely conclude from this table that neutrality, in the sense of being unaligned with the U.S., is generally rejected by the West Europeans. If asked directly to choose between alignment and neutrality, an overwhelming majority wants to keep the ties with the United States and only between 12 and 20% prefers neutrality, as shown in Table 2. France and Greece are exceptions, however. It is interesting to note that in a number of countries, neutrality is more popular among the better educated members of the public. In West Germany and The Netherlands, about a quarter of those with an academic education favored neutrality. In France it was the reverse: the higher the level of education, the less support for

Table 2. NATO Membership or Neutrality? (March 1981)²⁷
 (opinion of best educated in brackets)

	UK	FRG	Neth.	Norw.	France	Greece (March '80)
In NATO	67%	67%	62%	74%	45%	12%
Neutral	20	14(29)	17(25)	15	40(31)	58
No Opinion	13	19	21	11	15	30

neutrality. But, as far as I know, there is not sufficient quantitative material to test the hypothesis that the desire to remain neutral is increasing in Europe. Perhaps, as Swedish research indicates, pacifist-neutrality occurs more among members of a new generation of politicians than the mass public.²⁸

It is clear, that the defense preparedness of the West European public is generally weaker than in the United States. The prevailing mood in Western Europe is that defense expenditures should not be increased. About half of the public wants to keep them at the present level and about one-third wants to lower them. However, in the largest three West European NATO members, support for defense expenditures is considerably stronger than in the smaller countries.²⁹ Particularly these smaller countries show a clear contrast with the United States. In the United States an absolute majority of the population deemed defense expenditures not too high, but too low in 1981.³⁰

How can this weak support for defense expenditures be explained? First, a considerable part of the public in Western Europe does not consider the Russian threat as anything serious or urgent. Their leaders have been crying wolf for three decades now, but the wolf has not showed up in their country. It has in others, but that's abroad. Moreover, a number of history teachers, social scientists, commentators and clergymen explain that the USSR is threatened by the West and if that threat is reduced, the wolf will soon turn into a friendly sheep. To speak about the Soviet threat is using old-fashioned scare tactics at best, and is perhaps even a sign of a neurotic desire for enemies.

Second, there are the well-known economic problems. Willingness to save on other government expenditures, such as social security, in favor of defense is only found among right wing parties. Third, particularly the smaller NATO members have the feeling that what they can contribute to defense does not influence the total situation very much. Defense is more the business of neighbors and superpowers. In the smaller NATO countries a feeling prevails that the contribution of their country to allied defense need not be more than a sort of minimum, comparable to the premium paid to an insurance company. Belgium and Danish public opinion polls suggest that a part of their populations regard the special NATO contribution as such a small and insignificant force that it is futile to make further sacrifices for them. In 1981, a relative majority of the Belgians did not think that their defense effort was very useful. More than

half of the Belgians polled thought that Belgian forces would not be able to perform their allied tasks. Also in Denmark almost half the population seemed to think that the country was not meeting its NATO requirements and more than half thought it could not fend off an attack long enough for help of NATO allies to arrive. A relative majority thought that it was not necessary to increase the Danish contribution, even though it fell far short of NATO commitments. Typically, this sense of indifference seems strongly related to opinions on the usefulness of defense. Among those who thought that Danish defense was possible, there were three times as many in favor of an increase in the defense budget than among those who thought that defense was not possible.³¹

Related to this is the fourth factor: a general feeling both among smaller and larger allies, that if an attack occurs, Western Europe can count on the United States. In the beginning of 1981, large majorities in England, Norway, France, The Netherlands and Germany had confidence that the United States would help them. Only one in twenty had no trust at all. Remarkably, trust in the American commitment to NATO is on the increase after the low of 1975 when the United States pulled out of Vietnam.³²

Fifth, the West European public has a distinct preference for arms control negotiations and détente over a policy of strength as the way to enhance security. There was little support in 1981 for stopping the arms controls negotiations in Geneva if the Soviet Union invaded Poland. Two-thirds of the Germans and half of the French were of the opinion in February 1981 that a policy of reconciliation was to be preferred to a policy of strength towards the Soviet Union. In the United States an absolute majority preferred a policy of strength.³³

Although generally critical of defense, the pacifist segment of the European public focuses almost exclusively on the most modern nuclear weapons. Attention is much less directed at the 6000 nuclear warheads which are in place in Western Europe, but much more at those which may come in the future: the Enhanced Radiation-Reduced Blast-weapon and the intermediate range nuclear forces (INF). Only one out of two people favor deployment of INF in their country, as shown in Table 3:

Table 3. Public Opinion on INF Deployment (July 1981)³⁴

	Britain	France	W. Germany	Italy	Neth.
Favor Deployment	57%	42%	44%	44%	44%
Oppose Deployment	29	32	29	48	51
No Opinion	14	26	27	8	5
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

From a rational point of view, it is surprising that there seems to be relatively little public discussion or concern about the Soviet nuclear arms build up. It would also be more logical if fear of nuclear weapons were

directed at the existing nuclear battlefield systems, and if the anti-nuclear movement advocated a policy to reduce the dependence on these weapons by increasing conventional means and shifting the emphasis away from short-range systems to fewer but better INF. Also, the resistance of anti-nuclear groups to better territorial defense and civil protection measures is hard to square with fear of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, the debate since 1977 on modern nuclear weapons in the U.S. and Western Europe has overshadowed other matters in the alliance, strengthened the pacifist-neutralist movement, and driven both sides of the North Atlantic apart. Appearances, rhetoric and irrational fears play a more important role than realities, interests and long-tested friendships. The alliance sometimes moves into periods of downward dialectics, in which pre-conceived and only partially correct, critical views of one's partners are reinforced by a selection of views which fits a negative picture, especially during crisis.

It is not necessary to dwell here on well-known misrepresentations of U.S. policy in certain European media. It may be useful, however, to submit that the Europeans sometimes have problems with the pictures drawn of them in the U.S. The share which the West Europeans carry in the common defense and promotion of Western values and interests in the world is much greater than is sometimes believed in the U.S. As Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger concluded in his "Report on Allied Commitments to Defense Spending" in March 1981, the NATO allies are shouldering their fair share of the total defense burden, looking at a variety of measures to assess burden sharing. The NATO allies maintain 3 million men on active duty, compared to 2 million Americans. The allies' reserves are 6 million, compared to 3 million Americans. Most European members have conscription. The NATO allies have steadily increased their share in the total burden. In the 1970's U.S. real defense spending declined, but the total of its allies increased in real terms. The West Europeans contribute 57% to NATO's ground forces measured in armored division equivalents, and 50% of tactical air combat aircraft. Their gross domestic income is also 50% of the total. The share of eight West European nations in Official Development Assistance from the NATO members is 68%. Part of this is also an indirect contribution to stability and security in the world.

Summary

As is clear from the analysis above, only a small segment of the public in West European NATO members is really neutral in that it prefers non-alignment. A somewhat larger grouping is neutralist in the sense of preferring a foreign policy in-between that of the U.S. and the USSR. There is still an overwhelming majority in most countries in favor of NATO. The political strength of anti-NATO groups is much too weak to cause secession of any country in the foreseeable future, with the possible exception of Greece. Dogmatic pacifism is the policy of only a minor fraction of the population. Selective pacifism, directed against Western nuclear arms, is more widespread. Much larger is a vague, general pacifism which prefers to lower defense expenditures and to seek security through a policy of recon-

ciliation and arms control rather than strength.

The governments of the West European NATO members are generally more in support of NATO and much less affected by pacifism and neutralism than public opinion. The special ties of the Federal Republic with the East, its vulnerable political position, conventional military strength and geopolitical location make it the key to the future of NATO and Western Europe. For the foreseeable future, France will be a staunch ally in East-West relations, but follow its own course in the Third World. Pacifist-neutralism is strongest in the "Scandilux" group. If its causes are well-understood, it can be reduced by joint action of all NATO members. *Diminishing it is essential to preserve the structure and strength of the alliance.*

Footnotes

1. *NRC Handelsblad*, 17 Aug. 1981.
2. *Ibid.*, 29 Aug. 1981.
3. *Der Spiegel*, no. 25, 1981.
4. *NRC Handelsblad*, 30 Sept. 1981.
5. "Hollanditis: A New Stage in European Neutralism", *Commentary*, Aug. 1981, pp. 19-26.
6. See Below.
7. Most European NATO-governments are increasing defense spending in real terms in 1981-82, though not all meet NATO's 3% target.
8. A poll in 1971 showed that during the year only 11% of Americans favored more defense spending and 49% opposed it. Source: "U.S. Attitudes Toward NATO", Memorandum of the Atlantic Council, Washington, D.C., Nov. 20, 1981. During 1971-79, U.S. defense spending declined in real terms by an annual average of 2.1%, compared to a 2.1% increase of non-U.S. NATO allies. Source: Caspar W. Weinberger, "Report on Allied Commitments to Defense Spending", Department of Defense, March 1981, p. 3.
9. See, for eg., E.P. Thompson and Dan Smith, eds., *Protest and Survive* (Harmondsworth, 1980), pp. 57-59.
10. "West German Protestants at Odds with Government over Missiles". *Washington Post*, 22 June 1981.
11. Peter Jenkins, "Cruising into a Minefield", *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 11 Oct. 1981.
12. *NRC Handelsblad*, 6 Oct. 1981; see also Reuter/AP report, 18 Sept. 1981.
13. Joris J.C. Voorhoeve, *Peace, Profits and Principles: A Study of Dutch Foreign Policy* (The Hague; 1979).
14. See Claire Trean et al. "Europe's Peace Marchers", excerpted from *Le Monde* in *World Press Review*, Dec. 1981, pp. 25-26.
15. See "Militant Pacifists Worry Dutch", Reuter News Agency report, 2 Feb. 1982.
16. The present coalition of Labour, Christian-Democrats and Democrats may reduce Dutch nuclear tasks by at least one and will postpone a decision on cruise missiles as long as possible, because it would break the coalition. The main opposition party, the Liberal VVD, advocates placement of cruise missiles.

17. An article in the *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 Dec. 1981 suggested that the submariatic incident was one significant factor in the reduction of public support for the nuclear free zone.
18. The diplomat, Vladimir Merkulov, was a Second Secretary at the Soviet embassy in Copenhagen.
19. *NRC Handelsblad*, 3 June 1981.
20. M.P. van den Heuvel, *De Militair-patriottische opvoeding van de Sovjetjeugd* (The Hague, 1977), p. 89.
21. W.P. van den Bercken, *Het Beeld van het Westen in de Sovjet-pers* (Groningen, 1980), p. 111.
22. In February 1982 several thousand East German youths attended an apparently genuine and spontaneous protest in Dresden.
23. Kenneth P. Adler and Douglas A. Wertman, Paper for the 1981 annual meeting of the American Association of Public Opinion Research at Buck Hill Falls, Pa., May 1981, p. 2.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
26. Kenneth P. Adler and Douglas A. Wertman, "West Security Concerns for the Eighties: Is NATO in Trouble?" Paper for the 1981 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Public Opinion Research, Buck Hill Falls, Pa., May 28-31, 1981.
27. Alder and Wertman, op. cit., p. 8.
28. R. Inghart, C. Sorensen, I. Gordon and I.J. Rabier, "European Security: Attitude of Candidates to the European Parliament", *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol. 3, no. 4 (1980).
29. Adler and Wertman, pp. 9-10.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
34. International Communications Agency, Research Memorandum, Sept. 1, 1981, p. 2. Note: The question asked was: Do you favor or oppose basing LRTNF (INF) in your country in the light of the fact that "the Russians have 450 nuclear warheads on new medium-range nuclear missiles — the SS-20 — aimed at Western Europe while NATO has no such missiles aimed at the Soviet Union". In France, the question was related to deployment "in Western Europe".