

The London School of Economics and Political Science

**WESTERN POLICY-MAKING IN THE POLISH CRISIS (1980-83): THE
PROBLEM OF COORDINATION**

Thesis submitted to the University of London in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in International Relations.

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how the Western states responded to the Polish crisis (1980-83), both severally and collectively, with particular reference to their capacity for coordinated action. The thesis concentrates on the interaction between the major Western states (France, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States) inside the broader Western institutional framework (looking in particular at NATO, the European Community, European Political Cooperation and CoCom). It assesses the impact and relative importance of the various Western institutional networks and of longer term conflicting Western aims in Poland for the success and failure of coordination. It also analyses the relevance of wider transatlantic disputes over detente for coordination. It is argued that the domestic Polish crisis gradually spilled over into East-West and West-West relations, ultimately triggering one of the most serious crises in the history of the Western alliance.

The thesis is different from that of other studies of international crises in that most such studies concentrate on relations between governments who identify each other as "enemies", whereas the main concern here is with relations within one "enemy camp". Highlighting the political and economic, as well as security dimensions to the crisis, the thesis also shows that the Western states were faced with a more complex problem than a classic foreign policy crisis. Finally, the complexity of the issues raised as a result of the Polish crisis meant that the Western states were faced not only with the problem of reconciling different and sometimes conflicting national objectives, but also with the need to reconcile contradictory economic, political and security concerns cutting across national borders.

Against this backdrop the thesis argues that the problem of coordination is more complex than what is implied by the neo-realist and neo-liberal institutionalist perspectives, and that the success and failure of coordination rests with the individual states, navigating within the constraints of domestic politics, alliance politics and international [in this case East-West] relations.

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I remain solely responsible for any errors in this work.

To my parents,
Nina and Ørnulf Sjursen

CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how the Western states responded to the Polish crisis of 1980-83, both severally and collectively, with particular reference to their capacity for persistently coordinated action.

According to Timothy Garton Ash, the Polish crisis marked the beginning of the end of communist rule in Eastern Europe:

"The Polish revolution of 1980-81 was the first great contraction in the birth of [the] new Europe. If Yalta began in Poland, there is a real sense in which the end of Yalta also began in Poland."¹

The crisis was triggered by the development of strikes across Poland over the summer of 1980. In August, the Polish authorities were forced to sign an agreement (the Gdansk agreement) with Polish workers which recognised, amongst other things, the workers' right to create an independent trade union - Solidarity. In the sixteen months that followed the signing of the Gdansk agreement, a political and economic struggle developed between the Polish authorities and the Solidarity movement over the interpretation and implementation of the agreement. Reforms were introduced which substantially enhanced individual liberties in Poland.

¹Timothy Garton Ash, The Polish Revolution: Solidarity, London, Granta Books, 1991 ed., p. 371.

Yet there was constant pressure from the Soviet Union, as well as from Poland's other East European neighbours, to halt the reform process. It was ended with the imposition of martial law in Poland on 13 December 1981.² Brown has argued that the Polish crisis was "potentially the worst in Eastern European communist history":³ It remained in essence a grassroots movement, driven forward by the workers, albeit strongly supported by other groups in society. These were the very same workers who were supposed to be the backbone of the ruling Communist party. In this respect, the crisis was more damaging to communism than the Czechoslovakian crisis of 1968 or the Hungarian crisis of 1956.

The crisis also posed serious difficulties for the Western alliance. It occurred at a time of growing tension both in East-West relations and in relations within the Western camp. We now know that, had martial law failed to return "order" to

²Solidarity still survived underground and the first non communist government in Eastern Europe was formed in Poland after the so-called round table negotiations between Solidarity, the Catholic Church and the Polish government (concluded 5 April 1989). For the transitions from communism in Eastern Europe, see George Schopflin, Politics in Eastern Europe, Oxford, Blackwell, 1994 or Misha Glenny, The Rebirth of History: Eastern Europe in the Age of Democracy, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1993.

³J.F. Brown, Surge to Freedom, Duke University Press, 1991, p. 76.

Poland, plans were being made for a Warsaw Pact intervention.⁴ European detente was already under considerable strain as a result of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979. No doubt, an intervention in Poland would have provided the final blow to the process. It would also have resulted in considerable instability on the European continent. Indeed, most observers consider that a Warsaw Pact intervention would have provoked armed resistance by the Poles.⁵ Against this backdrop, the Polish crisis represented serious problems for the West, not only in terms of East-West relations, but also in terms of West-West relations. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan had revealed important differences in the interests and objectives of the member states of the Western Alliance and revived the debate about an Atlantic crisis. The United States' attempts at convincing the West Europeans to follow their line on sanctions against the Soviet Union had failed dramatically. Events in Poland promised to play directly into existing transatlantic disagreements and to continue to undermine confidence in the Alliance.

⁴Mark Kramer, "Poland, 1980-81. Soviet Policy during the Polish crisis", Cold War International History Project, Bulletin, Washington DC, Woodrow Wilson International Center, Issue 5, Spring 1995, pp.1, 116-139.

⁵Arthur Rachwald In Search of Poland: The Superpowers' Response to Solidarity, 1980-89, Calif, Hoover University Press, 1990, p. 10.

Most studies of the Polish crisis focus on the domestic dimension of events in Poland, on their impact on communist rule and on Poland's relations with the Soviet Union.⁶ Two authors in particular have studied the Polish crisis in the context of East-West relations. Arthur Rachwald, who considers the Polish crisis to have been "the last major, protracted cold war battle in Europe", outlines the policies of the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as events in Poland itself.⁷ He considers the United States' policy towards Poland to have been a major success, and the United States to have played a vital part in provoking the eventual downfall of communism in Poland.⁸ Thomas C. Cynkin focuses on the process of signalling between the Soviet Union and the United States in the period leading up to the imposition of

⁶Numerous books and articles have been published on the domestic dimension of the Polish crisis and on the role of the Soviet Union. On the domestic dimension, see for example Neil Ascherson, The Polish August: The Self-Limiting Revolution, UK, Penguin Books, 1982; Kevin Ruane, The Polish Challenge, London, BBC, 1982; Timothy Garton Ash, op. cit and, for the period after martial law, George Sanford, Military Rule in Poland, London, Croom Helm, 1986. On Soviet policy during the crisis see Sydney Ploss, Moscow and the Polish Crisis: An Interpretation of Soviet Policies and Intentions, Boulder, Westview Press, 1986; Richard Weitz, "Soviet decision-making and the Polish crisis", pp. 191-212 in East European Quarterly, vol XXII, no 2, June 1988; Wladimir Wozniuk, "Determinants in the development of the Polish crisis of 1980: the interplay of domestic and external factors", pp. 317-33 in East European quarterly, vol XX no 3, Sept. 1986; Peer H. Lange, "Poland as a problem of Soviet security policy", pp. 330-343 in Aussenpolitik, vol 32, no 41, 1981.

⁷Rachwald, op. cit, p. xii.

⁸Rachwald, op. cit, in particular pp. 47-63.

martial law in Poland.⁹ He is more sceptical about the achievements of US policy. However, both of these studies concentrate exclusively on the interaction between the two superpowers during the crisis. They do not take into consideration the role of the West European states. Consultations with its allies formed an important part of US policy towards the Polish crisis. Indeed, there was concern inside the Western camp from early on in the crisis that it must not split the West. The Alliance dimension also put constraints on US policy-making in the crisis, and in this respect can account for some of the weaknesses in the United States' policy identified by Cynkin. Independent of this, however, the Polish crisis challenged the cohesiveness of the Atlantic Alliance. It is this issue, as well as the efforts of the Western allies to keep a coherent policy line throughout the crisis, that constitutes the central theme of this thesis.¹⁰

⁹Thomas C. Cynkin, Soviet and American Signalling in the Polish Crisis, London, Macmillan Press, 1988.

¹⁰The ability of the Polish crisis to create difficulties for Western Alliance is pointed out in Hugh Macdonald, "The Western Alliance and the Polish Crisis", pp.42-50 in The World Today, February 1982; Dimitri K. Simes, "Clash over Poland", Foreign Policy, no 46, Spring 1982; Martin Sæter, "Polen krisen og vestlig splittelse", Internasjonal Politikk, no 1, jan/mars 1982, pp.45-60. Studies of European Political Cooperation (EPC) sometimes refer to the Polish crisis as part of discussions on EPC crisis mechanisms, see for example, Simon Nuttall, European Political Cooperation, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992, pp. 191-207. The EPC dimension to Western policies receives a more detailed discussion in Neil Winn, The limits of European influence in American crisis policy-making: the cases of Poland 1980-82, Grenada

The thesis examines the Western responses to the Polish domestic crisis from 1980 to 1983. It seeks to assess the extent to which the Western states were able to coordinate their responses to events in Poland, and to sustain an active and cohesive policy throughout the crisis. By the same token it also undertakes to define how the foreign policies were coordinated, as well as to identify and explain any difficulties encountered in this process. It is not the aim to analyse the Polish domestic aspects of the crisis, or its consequences for the Soviet system. These issues are only taken into consideration in so far as they are necessary to explain the policy of the West.

In order to fulfil these objectives, chapter two of the thesis outlines Western policies towards Poland and Eastern Europe from the end of the Second World War and up to the outbreak of the Polish crisis. This chapter identifies the specific factors that, in the post-war world, contributed to pulling the Western states' policies together, or conversely, to separating them. It argues that policy towards Eastern Europe since the Second World War has led to surprisingly few conflicts within the Western alliance. It is suggested that this is due in part to the fact that Eastern Europe was rarely given high priority by Western states. In other words,

1983 and Libya 1986, PhD thesis, European University Institute, Florence, May 1995.

there was not enough at stake in Eastern Europe for any one state to be able to provoke a clash with its allies. Yet, the chapter identifies elements of change in the 1970s. Detente brought East and West in Europe closer together, and the development of detente "unlocked" specific European perspectives on East-West relations, thus making policy towards Eastern Europe a more contentious issue amongst the Western allies by the time of the Polish crisis.

Chapter three of the thesis discusses the institutional networks available to Western policy-makers in their efforts to coordinate their response to Poland. Thus, it not only examines the internal workings of NATO, but also the roles of the European Community and European Political Cooperation, COCOM and G7. The thesis considers the Western "alliance" in fact to constitute a whole configuration of economic trade, political and security relationships. It suggests that none of the Western institutional frameworks were geared towards responding to a type of crisis such as that in Poland. It also suggests that, although Western institutions provide ample opportunities for consultation, they do not always provide a suitable basis for common action. Finally, the chapter points to the fragmentation of the Western institutional framework and the potential for competition between NATO and EC/EPC in particular in the context of a crisis such as the Polish one.

Having looked at the actors and structures involved in Western coordination, chapters four, five and six of the thesis turn to examine the crisis itself and the process of developing a collective Western response to it. These chapters analyse the issues that the Polish crisis raised for the Western states, trace the interaction principally between the four major Western states, identify the Western institutional networks used for Western coordination, and discuss to what extent the Western states managed to provide a coordinated response to events in Poland. They are divided chronologically into three distinct phases. They suggest that there was a gradual spillover from the initially domestic Polish crisis into East-West relations and finally into West-West relations, ultimately provoking an intra-mural crisis in the Western camp.¹¹ During the first phase of the crisis (examined in chapter four), which lasted until early December 1980, the Western states tended to play down the significance of events in Poland for East-West relations.¹² They emphasised that this was an internal Polish issue which should be dealt with at the domestic level. Chapter five

¹¹The concept of an intra-mural crisis is used by Coral Bell, The Conventions of Crisis: A Study in Diplomatic Management, London, Oxford University Press for RIIA, 1971, p. 7.

¹²A special meeting of the Warsaw Pact countries was held in Moscow on 5 December 1980 to discuss the Polish crisis. Although a decision to intervene militarily was not taken, it increased Western concern about the risk of Soviet interference in Poland. Rachwald, op. cit. p.11 and Kramer, op. cit.

looks at the period after December 1980 up to the imposition of martial law. In this phase, the crisis spilled over into East-West relations. The Western states systematically warned that a Soviet intervention in Poland would mean the end of detente. At the same time they carried out contingency planning for this possibility. Chapter six examines the period after the imposition of martial law in Poland on 13 December 1981. During the first two phases, Western cohesion was maintained by a form of 'muddling through' policy in which Western states concentrated on the policies on which they could agree, and put other issues on the backburner.¹³ After 13 December, this compromise broke down. Events in Poland spilled over into West-West relations and provoked one of the most serious crises in the history of the Western alliance.

Chapter seven of the thesis revisits the crisis in the Western camp and examines the causes of the breakdown of Western coordination. The chapter emphasises in particular the importance of domestic politics for understanding Western policies. Contrary to what one might expect bearing in mind the pre-existing transatlantic difficulties, it does not find that there was a deliberate attempt to promote a distinct European response to the Polish crisis.

¹³Charles E. Lindblom, "The science of muddling through", Public Administration Review, Washington, vol 19, spring 1959, pp. 79-88.

The concluding chapter, chapter eight, assesses the record of Western coordination, the performance of the institutional networks and the impact of the Polish crisis on the evolution of the Western alliance.

Some further clarification regarding the scope and approach of the thesis is required. Firstly, the development of strikes in Poland during the summer of 1980 provides the starting point and events up until late 1983 are taken into account. At this date the Western sanctions against Poland and the Soviet Union imposed in response to martial law were substantially scaled down, and transatlantic relations were stabilised. Many studies of the Polish crisis examine only the period up to the imposition of martial law in December 1981.¹⁴ The imposition of martial law was the most important turning point in the crisis, yet the period after martial law was particularly important from the Western perspective. It was after martial law that Western cohesion broke down, and that the differences between the Western positions really came to the surface.¹⁵

¹⁴See for example Cynkin, *op. cit.*

¹⁵Rachwald extends his examination up to 1989, arguing that the Solidarity movement did not disappear after martial law, and that its establishment in 1980 should be seen as the first step in a process that culminated with the breakdown of the communist regime in Poland in 1989. There is still a case for centering the analysis around martial law, however, despite the fact that Solidarity survived beyond this event. It is particularly justifiable for this thesis, which aims to examine how a group of states respond to a particular

The second clarification that needs to be made is regarding the concept of "the West". The thesis does not seek to discuss this concept in itself, or indeed to make any judgement about which states qualify as being part of the West. The term is used against the backdrop of the Cold War, in order to identify and distinguish between the members of the Atlantic Alliance and those of the Warsaw Pact.¹⁶ Thirdly, the thesis looks principally at the position of the four major Western states in the Western alliance (France, Britain, West Germany and the United States).¹⁷ By virtue of their status as major powers, these states were all influential actors in the alliance, and all played an important part in shaping the Western response to Poland. They also, by their different responses to events in Poland, provide sufficient material to enable the thesis to address the problem of coordination, and the tension between common and conflicting interests within an alliance. West Germany

external event, rather than to examine their long term policies toward Poland.

¹⁶Indeed, as Milan Kundera argues, Poland itself is part of Western culture, "The tragedy of Central Europe", New York Review of Books, vol 31, no 1, 1984. Alfred Grosser takes a similar approach to this study in Les Occidentaux: Les Pays d'Europe et les Etats Unis Depuis la Guerre, Paris, Editions Fayard, 1978. For a discussion of the concept and meaning of "the West" see in particular J. M. Roberts, The Triumph of the West, London, BBC, 1985. Also Christopher Coker, War and the 20th Century, London, Brassey's, 1994, pp. 226-257 and Oswald Spengler, The Decline of the West, London, Allen and Unwin, 1938.

¹⁷France, despite having left the military structure of NATO in 1966, was still a member of the Atlantic Alliance.

was particularly affected by the Polish crisis. The crisis threatened to undermine the carefully constructed Ostpolitik and Deutschlandpolitik. The West German government's dissenting views on how to react to martial law created anxiety amongst its allies. France, the traditional dissenter in the Western camp, was initially closer to the United States than to West Germany over martial law. Yet France as well as Britain had a clear interest in stability in Poland. What is more, Britain was particularly important inside the Western camp in the run-up to martial law, because it held the Presidency of European Political Cooperation (EPC) from June until December 1981. Finally, as the hegemonic power in the alliance, the United States was a central player in this drama. It played an important part in formulating Western responses to Poland, as well as in provoking the breakdown in Western cohesion after martial law.

The choice to focus on these four states does not indicate that other states had no policy towards Poland, or that they had no input into the coordination process.¹⁸ It simply

¹⁸Greece became very vocal on foreign policy once it joined the European Community in 1981. Indeed, Greece and Denmark did, in the context of EPC and the European Community, adopt dissenting positions on sanctions against Poland. Italy as well as Canada, which has a large number of Polish immigrants, have always had important relations with Poland. Greece's and Denmark's opposition to EC sanctions is discussed in Simon Nuttall, "Interaction between European Political Cooperation and the European Community", pp. 211-249 in Yearbook of European Law, no 7, 1987 (see in particular pp. 231-2). For Canada's relations with Poland see

reflects the distinction in practice between the United States and its principal alliance partners, on the one hand, and the smaller members of NATO and the European Community on the other, who rarely displayed the capacity for independent initiatives in Eastern Europe. This point is even more salient, bearing in mind that there is an element of "self-legitimation" in relations between the larger states: even if not a formal "directoire", they often attributed more importance to consultation with each other than with the "smaller" allies. Indeed they met regularly in the forum frequently referred to as the "Quad" or "Berlin" group, whereby major NATO states used the special status of Berlin as an excuse for meeting without their smaller and sometimes irritating, partners.¹⁹

Adam Bromke et al, Canada's Response to the Polish Crisis, Toronto, Canadian Institute for International Affairs, 1982 and D.H. Avery and J. K. Fedorowicz, The Poles in Canada, University of West Ontario. Italy's relations with Poland are dealt with in Vojtech Mastny (ed) Italy and East Central Europe, Boulder, Westview Press, 1995.

¹⁹William Wallace, "Introduction: cooperation and convergence in European foreign policy" pp.1-15 in Christopher Hill (ed) National Foreign Policies and European Political Cooperation, London, George Allen and Unwin for RIIA, 1983.

Transatlantic relations and the crisis in Poland

This study examines the problem of coordination in the specific context of the Western alliance in the early 1980s. Transatlantic relations were at this point in a state of flux, with member states developing diverging views on East-West relations, and part of domestic public opinion on both sides of the Atlantic questioning the basis on which the Western alliance was established.²⁰ In addition to highlighting these transatlantic differences, the Polish crisis brought with it particular dilemmas related to Western policies toward Eastern Europe. Thus, this study should provide further insights not only into how states interact inside close institutional networks, but also into the state of transatlantic relations in the early 1980s, as well as the particular dilemmas facing Western states in relation to crisis situations in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Polish crisis was perhaps less dramatic than the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, because of the absence of war.

²⁰Although, with the benefit of hindsight, it might be argued that detente ended with the Soviet intervention of Afghanistan and the United States' reaction to this intervention, European governments were still in favour of a continuation of what they saw as a distinctly European detente. Part of the left in Europe even sought a further extension of detente, through measures such as unilateral disarmament. On the other side of the Atlantic, NATO was questioned from a different perspective, as the idea of a withdrawal of US troops from Europe gained more support.

At the same time it was, in a sense more crucial to the Western alliance because it took place in Europe. In fact, any crisis in Eastern Europe was a two-edged sword for Western policy-makers, and this was even more so with the Polish crisis. Events in Poland corresponded to the aspirations the Western states claimed to have for East European societies. Still, unless the evolution of events was kept under control, the stability of the East-West system in Europe would be under threat. This contradiction between support, in principle, for political change in Eastern Europe, and the risks that such change was perceived to entail for Western security, was a constant dilemma in Western policies toward Eastern Europe. After a decade of detente, which had increased political and economic exchanges between Poland and the West, this dilemma was even more strongly felt, in particular by West Germany. It was no longer possible for the West to stand idly by and do nothing about events in Eastern Europe. However, at the same time, the Western states were never going to fight for Poland, as they had nominally done in 1939. In this sense, the Polish crisis was a half-way house between the Cold War and the post Cold War situation. The Western response to Poland had to be pitched at the right level, in between complete passivity and intervention.

Does this mean that the Polish crisis was also a crisis for the West? The most comprehensive studies of international crises have been produced by Michael Brecher. According to Brecher, a foreign policy crisis is

"a breakpoint along the peace-war continuum of a state's relations with any other international actor(s). It is a situation with four necessary and sufficient conditions, as these are perceived by the highest-level decision-makers of the actor concerned: (i) a change in its external or internal environment which generates (ii) a threat to basic values, with a simultaneous or subsequent (iii) high probability of involvement in military hostilities, and the awareness of (iv) a finite time for response to the external value threat."²¹

The Polish crisis does not fit straightforwardly into the definition of crisis in terms of Brecher. Most difficult to apply is the notion of a threat to the basic values of Western states.²² There was a strange duality in Poland's relations with the Western alliance. There was no risk of direct Western military involvement in Poland, nonetheless

²¹Michael Brecher, "A theoretical approach to international crisis behaviour" pp. 5-24 in Brecher (ed), Studies in Crisis Behaviour, New Brunswick, Transaction Books, 1978, quotation on p. 6. See also his Crisis in World Politics: Theory and Reality, Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1993; Brecher and Jonathan Wilkenfield, Crises in the Twentieth Century, Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1989; Brecher, Wilkenfield and Patrick James, Crisis, Conflict and Instability, Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1989 and Brecher and James, Crisis and Change in World Politics, Boulder, Westview Press, 1986.

²²According to Brecher, "basic values" include "core values" such as survival of the society and population, political sovereignty and territorial independence, and "high priority values", deriving from ideological/and or material interests, as defined by those who wield decision-making authority at the time of a specific crisis. A crisis exists when the high priority values under threat are accompanied by a threat to one or more "core values".

the possibility of a military intervention by the Warsaw Pact would have indirect effects on Western security. In this respect, despite being outside the Western sphere of influence, Poland was integral to Western strategic concerns. A military intervention in Poland would have destabilised the military and political environment in Europe.²³ Cynkin argues that Poland was within the area of "national interest" to the United States but not within the area of "vital interest".²⁴ He still considers the United States to have engaged in "crisis management" in relation to Poland, and he sees Poland as a "low level crisis" for the United States.²⁵ One might add that for West Germany in particular, the prospects of a military confrontation in Poland, involving East German troops, was serious.²⁶ In turn, such an event would, because of their close security relationship, have become a crisis

²³It must be added that the criteria of "involvement in military hostilities" for a foreign policy crisis is contested. See Christopher Hill, "EPC's performance in Crises", pp. 135-146 in Reinhardt Rummel (ed) Toward Political Union: Planning a Common Foreign and Security Policy in the European Community, Boulder, Westview Press, 1992, in particular, p. 136. Indeed, if involvement in military hostilities is a condition for an international crisis, an important turning point in the history of the European Community, such as the 1965 crisis would not be called a crisis.

²⁴The "vital interest" is defined as an area into which the United States is willing to project military force and over which it is willing to fight.

²⁵Cynkin, op. cit., p.4.

²⁶The inclusion of East German troops in Warsaw Pact plans for an intervention in Poland is confirmed in Kramer, op. cit.

also for West Germany's allies. The notion of "finite time" is more easily applicable. The sense that a military intervention in Poland might be imminent was constantly present in Western deliberations. The imposition of martial law provided a turning point at which Western states could no longer sit on the fence but had to make a clear choice about how to respond. Consequently, there was also considerable uncertainty about the direction of events in Poland and in particular about Soviet behaviour. According to Snyder and Diesing:

"... it is this element of uncertainty ...that lends to an event its 'crisis atmosphere', i.e. to feelings of fear, tension and urgency. If each party knew what the other intended to do - and also knew its own intentions in the light of that knowledge, there could be no crisis."²⁷

Most importantly, however, the main focus of this thesis is different from that of other studies of international crises. Most crisis studies focus on relations "between governments who identify each other as enemies, or at least potential enemies".²⁸ The main concern here is the interaction inside one of the "enemy" camps, rather than of relations between two enemies.²⁹ The thesis examines how what started out as

²⁷Glenn Snyder and Paul Diesing, Conflict Among Nations, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1977, p. 9.

²⁸Snyder and Diesing, op. cit, p. 7.

²⁹Examining coordination in the particular context of a crisis is still useful because "a crisis distils many of the elements that make up the essence of politics in the international system". Snyder and Diesing, op. cit, p.4.

a domestic crisis in Poland, in turn created internal dilemmas for the Western camp and ultimately provoked an intra-mural crisis in the West.³⁰ It will examine how the conflicting tendencies inside the Western alliance found expression in the Polish crisis and to what extent they can be seen as responsible for the breakdown of Western coordination. This approach should also provide further insights into the particular state of the transatlantic relationship and enable the study to draw some conclusions about the extent of the differences and divergences between the interests of the Western states both with regard to East-West relations and with regard to the Atlantic Alliance itself. In this context it will pay particular attention to how, or to what extent, Poland's strategic location in the centre of Europe affected coordination amongst Western allies.³¹ Detente in Europe, although it had developed under

³⁰This phenomenon is similar to what Richard Lebow has called "spinoff crises", in other words, "secondary confrontations arising from a nation's preparation for or prosecution of a primary conflict... [they] develop when...action, designed to advance the initiator's interests in primary conflicts, provoke confrontations with third parties." Yet, as with Brecher, Lebow considers the probability of war to be a condition for an international crisis, whereas inside the Western alliance, this was not a possibility. Richard Ned Lebow, Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis, London and Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1981, p. 41.

³¹Throughout the history of Europe, Poland has played a crucial role in the continent's balance of power. Karen Dawisha points to "a peculiarly Polish predicament. The largest country of Eastern Europe, the land link between Russia and Germany, the single most vital geographic buffer against future Western incursions into Russian soil - for all

the wings of superpower detente, had acquired its own momentum by the late 1970s. The thesis will assess how the crisis in Poland highlighted this process and, at the same time, indicated its fragility. It will discuss to what extent events in Poland threatened to expose the divergent views on the purpose and utility of continued detente inside the Western alliance as well as its impact on Alliance consensus.

The divergence between Europe and the United States over detente found expression in several practical issues. Very important in the early 1980s was the question of East-West trade.³² The United States was pressing for a strengthening of the trade export ban through COCOM, and was concerned in particular about preventing the trans-siberian gas pipeline agreement between the West Europeans and the Soviet Union from going ahead. There were also fundamental differences between the two sides of the Atlantic on the use and utility

these reasons and many more Poland always emerged as the most important Soviet ally in Eastern Europe. But...Poland was also the most likely candidate to play the Trojan horse in the socialist community - not the nation that stands between East and West, but rather the one that is the West in the East." Karen Dawisha, Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and Reform, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.75.

³²Richard N. Perle, "The strategic implication of West-East technology transfer", pp. 74-81; Peter Wiles, "Is an anti-Soviet embargo desirable or possible", pp. 91-104 and Dale Tahtinen, "Economic relations between East and West", pp. 105-110. All are papers from the 1983 annual conference of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), published in Robert O'Neill (ed) The Conduct of East-West Relations in the 1980s, London, Macmillan, 1985.

of economic sanctions in East- West relations. Finally, the debate on INF weapons was emerging on the transatlantic agenda. The thesis explores the interconnections between these issues and the Western responses to the Polish crisis.

A change in attitude was also evident at the domestic political level of Western states, as the anti-nuclear movement gained momentum in western, and particular northern, Europe. The bloc division in Europe, as well as the confrontational Cold War policies, were increasingly questioned in parts of Europe, whereas they were regaining support in the United States.³³ The interconnection between these domestic developments and Western attempts to provide a coordinated response to Poland must be explored.

Three additional themes must be highlighted at this point. First is the hybrid nature of the Polish crisis and the problems it raised for Western policy-makers. The Polish crisis was not a pure 'security crisis', but also raised economic and political issues for Western states. Thus, a coordinated response may have been more difficult to achieve. Second is the question of policy fragmentation and, in particular, the question of coexistence or competition between the Atlantic and European institutional networks. The

³³Pierre Hassner, "The shifting foundation", pp. 13-20, Foreign Policy, no 48, Fall, 1982.

development of the Polish crisis coincided with efforts to strengthen European Political Cooperation. The London report of 1981 was particularly important in clearing new ground by reinforcing the consultation mechanisms of EPC and by the setting up of a crisis consultations mechanism.³⁴ The early 1980s also saw moves towards mending the separations between European Community external relations and EPC. The Polish crisis was a particularly important case in this respect because it presented economic as well as political/security issues to the West, and required both an economic and political response, thus encouraging close interaction between EPC and the EC.³⁵ Finally, there were calls for a security dimension to EPC in the early 1980s, with the Genscher Colombo plan.³⁶ This push for a strengthening of EPC, combined with the strengthening of the EC's economic power, was both a sign of the frustration with transatlantic relations and a seed for further difficulties inside NATO. The thesis will consider which Western institutions were seen to be most effective for the coordination of Western policies

³⁴For an overview of the developments of EPC in the late 1970s and early 1980s see Nuttall, 1992, op. cit. pp.149-238.

³⁵Nuttall, 1987, op. cit. pp.225-227.

³⁶Yet it failed to collect the necessary support from a majority of member states. Even France at this stage, although it later changed its mind, opposed the Genscher-Colombo plan. See Henrik Larsen, Discourse Analysis and Foreign Policy: The Impact of the Concepts of Europe, Nation/State, Security and the Nature of International Relations on French and British Policy toward Europe in the 1980s, PhD thesis, London School of Economics, 1993, p. 283.

toward Poland and examine whether or not there was a clash between these different institutional networks, and assess the strength of the pull towards increased European "independence" from the United States.

A final underlying theme is that of different foreign policy orientations, principles and values. The question of whether or not the Western states shared similar values and perceived themselves to be adhering to a set of common norms has already been mentioned with regard to the discussion on how to conceptualise coordination inside an Alliance. In addition to the question of whether or not the Western alliance is different from other alliances, in that its member states adhere to a common set of values and principles when interacting with each other, there is the question of whether or not these states could be seen to promote shared values and principles externally in response to the crisis. The presence or absence of such common values may have functioned as a cement, or conversely, created further divisions, in the process of coordination. The thesis argues that beyond the conflict over how to deal with the Soviet Union, there were differences in foreign policy traditions and values both between the Western states and inside each Western state, thus making cohesion even more difficult.

Coordinating foreign policies

There is no universal, overarching definition of 'coordination' in international relations literature. In the words of A. J. R. Groom and Alexis Heraclides,

"There is surprisingly little theoretical literature about the ways in which governments come together to solve problems or to take advantage of opportunities by working together in concert without prejudicing their sovereignty."³⁷

Karvonen and Sundelius use a general definition which suggests that coordination implies "the creation of a common order for a number of separate elements that are distinct but also somehow linked with regard to their task". They consider the basic motive behind coordination to be "to secure that the output of various parts will not be in fundamental conflict".³⁸ In other words, policy coherence is seen as a basic objective behind all forms of coordination. This

³⁷A.J.R. Groom and Alexis Heraclides, "Integration and disintegration", pp. 174-193 in Margot Light and A.J.R. Groom (eds), International Relations: A Handbook of Current Theory, London, Pinter, 1985, quote on p.181. They also make a distinction between neo-functionalism, regionalism and federalism on the one hand, which they call "state building" theories of integration and, on the other hand, "state by-passing" or "state preserving" modes of integration. The latter are closer to the concern of this thesis.

³⁸They have studied the process of coordination of foreign policy within states (between different agencies of the state), rather than, as this thesis does, between states. Yet, their definition of coordination is sufficiently broad to serve also for the purpose of this thesis. Lauri Karvonen and Bengt Sundelius, Internationalization and Foreign Policy Management, Aldershot, Gower, 1987, p. 82.

definition of coordination does not differ radically from Northedge's. He refers to coordination as "the harmonisation of the foreign policy of one country with that of another".³⁹ Coordination can thus be seen as closely linked to cooperation, in the sense that the latter is a necessary prerequisite for the achievement of the former. In the words of Robert Keohane "cooperation occurs when actors adjust their behaviour to the actual or anticipated preferences of others, through a process of policy-coordination."⁴⁰ Still, in the case of Northedge, it is not clear whether he considers "harmonisation" of foreign policies to produce identical foreign policies or merely compatible policies. This thesis follows Karvonen and Sundelius in that it does not regard successful coordination as requiring identical foreign policies, only policies that are compatible with each other.⁴¹

³⁹F. S. Northedge, "The nation-state and the coordination of foreign policies", pp.25-44 in Werner Link and Werner Feld (eds), The New Nationalism: Implications for Transatlantic Relations, New York, Pergamon Press, 1979, quote on p. 31.

⁴⁰Robert O. Keohane, After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 51. Keohane also makes a useful distinction between "harmony", which refers to a situation in which actors' policies automatically facilitate the attainment of others' goals and "cooperation", which requires some adjustment of policy.

⁴¹Paul Taylor holds a dissenting view on the concept of coordination. He distinguishes between coordination, cooperation and harmonisation. In both coordination and cooperation the state is seen to retain powers and responsibilities, yet in coordination, international institutions are seen to have a stronger influence than in

The particular problem of foreign policy coordination stems from the anarchical nature of the international system.⁴² The absence of an overarching authority which can force coordination to take place makes successful coordination the

cooperation. He considers coordination to "involve the adjustment of government policies by a process of intensive consultation within an international institution in order to establish and maintain a programme which is designed to obtain goals generally regarded as being overwhelmingly important...The international institution has the task of deciding the programme with the advice and consent of member states." Again, it is not clear whether "common policies" are taken to mean a single policy, or a more loose, common set of national policies, similar to what one may observe in the current Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union. Cooperation is defined as "a limited involvement of states in a joint enterprise, limited both in scope and duration, and focused upon a specific predetermined objective". Thus, Taylor's definition of cooperation comes closer to our definition of coordination. "Harmonisation" for Taylor involves the ability of an international institution to identify and exploit existing compatibilities between states. It depends on the existence of actual compatibility of interests and on the reluctance of states to act so as to endanger these compatibilities. Taylor's focus is different from that of this study. His main objective is to examine the role of international organisations, while here, NATO is only one part of the analysis. It will be important for the thesis to be alert to whether or not the Western institutions were capable of "directing" Western coordination, but, from the outset, the states are taken to be the dominant actors who "drive" the coordination process. Paul Taylor, "Coordination in international organization", pp. 29-43, in P. Taylor and AJR Groom, Frameworks for International Co-operation, London, Pinter Publishers, 1990.

⁴²It is worth noting that the meaning of "anarchy", despite being widely used in International Relations literature, is ambiguous. See Helen Milner, "The assumption of anarchy in international relations theory: a critique", pp. 67-85 in Review of International Studies, No. 1, vol. 17, 1991. We refer to 'anarchy' as it is defined by Hollis and Smith, "...the international system is anarchic. By this we mean not that it is chaotic, but simply that there is no government above the states which comprise it", Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, Explaining and Understanding International Relations, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990, p.7.

exception rather than the rule. Yet, when the structures of the international system are broadly constant factors, it becomes important to explain why it is that coordination at some times works better than at other times. The value of successful coordination, in the sense that it can reinforce states' capacity to achieve their objectives, is self-evident. In the particular context of the Atlantic Alliance, the importance of cohesion is always underlined, and considered to be vital to the credibility of the organisation. The failure to coordinate is seen as a failure for the alliance overall. Hence, at the time of the emergence of the Polish crisis, the Atlantic Alliance was undergoing a crisis of confidence. Its purpose and utility were being questioned and its ability to respond to the concerns of its member states was put in doubt. In this context coordination was important, yet even more difficult to achieve.⁴³

Traditional alliance theories, although tending to focus on the origins of Alliances, also recognise the importance of Alliance cohesion.⁴⁴ From their perspective, states are seen

⁴³The crisis in the Alliance in the early 1980s is discussed in Josef Joffe, The Limited Partnership: Europe, the United States and the Burdens of Alliance, Cambridge, Mass., Ballinger Publishing Company, 1987.

⁴⁴For an overview of the literature on alliance theories see James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfalzgraff (eds), Contending Theories of International Relations, New York and London, Harper, 1990, pp. 449-454 and Glenn H. Snyder, "Alliances, balance and stability", pp. 121-142 in International Organization, 45, 1, Winter 1991. According to

to join alliances in response to external threats and to disband the alliance once their objectives are achieved. The cohesiveness of the alliance is seen to depend, ultimately, on the balance sheet of the costs and benefits of collective action for each individual state. The larger the size of a coalition, the smaller the percentage of benefits to each participant, and the less likely the collective action is seen to be.⁴⁵

Recent literature on this issue is dominated by a debate between the so-called neo-realists and neo-liberal institutionalists.⁴⁶ Both perspectives accept that the anarchical nature of the international system puts particular constraints on cooperation. Yet, neo-realists consider international anarchy to represent a greater hindrance to inter-state coordination than the neo-liberal

Snyder, George Liska's Nations in Alliance, Baltimore, The John Hopkins Press, 1962 "...remains the only comprehensive theoretical treatment of Alliances and alignments". See also William H. Riker, The Theory of Political Coalitions, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1962 and Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1965.

⁴⁵This is argued by Mancur Olson, op. cit. p. 48.

⁴⁶For the neo-realist perspective see Kenneth Waltz, Theory of International Politics, New York, Random House, 1979 and Robert Keohane, (ed), Neorealism and its Critics, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986. For the neorealist-neoliberal institutionalist debate, see David Baldwin, (ed), Neo-realism and Neo-liberalism: The Contemporary Debate, New York, Columbia University Press, 1993.

institutionalists do.⁴⁷ The two perspectives also disagree on whether or not states have a common interest in co-operating: the neo-liberal institutionalists stress states' interest in maximising their absolute gains, whereas the neo-realists consider states to be interested mostly in relative gains. Also, the neo-liberal institutionalists have more confidence than the neo-realists in the ability of international institutions to reduce the consequences of international anarchy and increase the probability of co-operation.⁴⁸ They follow in the tradition of the older

⁴⁷The neo-liberal institutionalist perspective builds on "regime theories" which dominated much of International Relations literature in the early 1980s. The concept of "regime" (defined as "recognised patterns of practice around which expectations converge" and representing the "institutional legacy of hegemony") is used to explain how cooperation in international political economy could continue despite the decline of United States' hegemony. Robert Keohane, 1984, op. cit. See also Stephen D. Krasner (ed), International Regimes, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1983; Andrew Moravcsik, "Preference and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach", pp. 473-524 in Journal of Common Market Studies, vol. 31, no. 4, December 1993. Regime theory received criticism, in particular from European academics, for being amongst other things: "a fad;... imprecise and woolly;...value biased, as dangerous as loaded dice...", Susan Strange, "Cave! Hic dragones: a critique of regime analysis", International Organization, 36, 2, Spring 1982, reprinted in Krasner, op. cit, pp. 337-354.

⁴⁸This is based chiefly on Baldwin, "Neoliberalism, Neorealism and World Politics", pp.3-25 in Baldwin op. cit. He also points out that the neo-realists tend to be more interested in studying security issues, whereas the neo-liberals concentrate on economic issues. This, according to Baldwin, might explain why the former find less cooperation in the international system than the latter. In the case of the Polish crisis, the West had to deal with security as well as political and economic issues.

alliance theories in their emphasis on rationality and state behaviour based on a calculation of gains and losses.

Despite the dominant position of the neo-liberal institutionalist/neo-realist debate in international relations literature, several authors have, albeit from different perspectives, pointed to the many similarities between these two positions. According to Steve Smith,

"the two accounts are very similar; ...In an important sense they are part of a specific view of international politics rather than two alternatives that together define the space within which debate about international theory can take place."⁴⁹

According to Risse-Kappen:

"neo-liberal institutionalism should not be regarded as part of the liberal paradigm. This 'cooperation under anarchy' perspective shares all realist core assumptions, but disagrees with structural realists on the likelihood of international cooperation among self-interested actors."⁵⁰

This thesis fits uncomfortably into the straitjacket of the neo-liberal institutionalist/neo-realist debate, although it is in some respects closer to the neo-liberal institutionalist perspective than the neo-realist. It agrees

⁴⁹Steve Smith, "The self-images of a discipline: a genealogy of International Relations theory", pp. 1-37 in Ken Booth and Steve Smith, International Relations Theory Today, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995, quote on p. 24.

⁵⁰Thomas Risse Kappen, Cooperation Among Democracies, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 26. See also, Richard W. Mansbach, "Neo- this and neo- that: or, 'Play it Sam' (again and again)", pp. 90-95 in Mershon International Studies Review, vol 40, April 1996.

that the scope of these approaches is too narrow. Consequently, it draws on different elements of international relations literature. The starting point of the thesis is the states, which are seen to be, ultimately, decisive in shaping the process of coordination.⁵¹ Yet, this does not mean one has to assume that states are not influenced by involvement in institutional networks, and by close, long-term interaction with other states inside such networks. Neither does it mean one has to assume that the state is representative of all inside its borders, or that its actions are at all times rational and pitted against the interest of other states. The thesis will question whether or not an external threat is the only circumstance that can keep states together. It will suggest that other elements might be taken into consideration and provide a further understanding of transatlantic coordination, in particular the domestic political context and the Western institutional networks.

Thus, the thesis emphasises three themes in particular, which are only partially, or not at all, taken into consideration by the neo-liberal institutionalist - neo-realist debate. The first of these is the impact of the Western institutional network. The neo-liberal institutionalists do point to the

⁵¹In the words of Fred Halliday: "The state and its associates have a distinct advantage and can mobilise resources within and beyond state boundaries far in excess of those who challenge them.", Fred Halliday, Rethinking International Relations, London, Macmillan, 1994, p. 85.

importance of institutional structures in facilitating cooperation, yet they still consider the interaction between states inside these structures to be based on self-interested calculations of the costs and benefits of coordination. Two additional aspects of the role of international institutions are explored here. Firstly, the impact on the coordination process of the special nature of an alliance such as NATO, compared to other international organisations, is considered. It may well be that the specific nature of NATO itself, not only makes coordination more possible, but in turn generates its own problems of coordination. Secondly, the possibility that the Western alliance has, over time, produced ties that bind the member states, despite its intergovernmental character, is examined. When entering an alliance, states accept, as well as come to expect, adherence to certain rules and norms, the most important of these being consultation with the other allies on issues of common concern.⁵² This

⁵²Thus the liberal argument that democracies rarely go to war against each other is taken as a "given" - yet this does not mean that there is an absence of conflict between the Western states. The aim of the thesis is to identify the sources of these conflicts, the importance of the conflicts, as well as the extent to which - and how - they were overcome in the context of the Polish crisis. For the "democratic peace" argument see Michael Doyle, "Kant, liberal legacies, and foreign affairs", Philosophy and Public Affairs, no. 3, vol. 12, 1983, pp. 204-35 and no 4, pp. 323-53. See also Risse-Kappen, who argues that "Peace and conflict research has reached a consensus that democracies rarely fight each other", p. 491 in "Democratic Peace - warlike democracies? A social constructivist interpretation of the liberal argument", pp. 491-517 in European Journal of International Relations, Special issue on Democracy and Peace, no 4, vol.1, 1995.

also includes the implicit expectation that other allied states take their perspectives into consideration.⁵³ Consequently, the individual states' policies and outlook cannot be seen as completely immune to the influence of the other allied states.⁵⁴ This does not, however, have to have taken place in such an orderly fashion that the individual national perspectives on foreign policy are replaced by a common perspective.

These questions are often raised in studies of what is now called the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union.⁵⁵ They have received much more limited attention in studies of NATO. Most of the literature on NATO

⁵³Alliance theories do to some extent take this into consideration. They point out that a "sense of community" may reinforce alliances. They also recognise that periodic consultation contributes to the development and preservation of alliance cohesion.

⁵⁴The thesis does not aim to dispute that the primary motivation for the creation of NATO was the perception of a Soviet threat. What it wishes to discuss is the possibility that membership of the Alliance has had unintended consequences for the foreign policy orientation of member states.

⁵⁵For this see Wolfgang Wessels, "EPC After the Single European Act: Towards a European Foreign Policy via treaty Obligations?", pp. 143-160, in Martin Holland (ed) The Future of European Political Cooperation, London, MacMillan, 1991; Françoise de la Serre, "The scope of national adaptation to European Political Cooperation", pp. 194-210, in A. Pijpers, E. Regelsberger and W. Wessels (eds), European Political Cooperation in the 1980s: a Common Foreign Policy for Western Europe?, London, Martinus Nijhoff, 1988, and Christopher Hill (ed), The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy, London, Routledge, 1996.

focuses on military strategic issues, and hardly discusses the political aspects of the Alliance. Karl Deutsch's concept of a "pluralistic security community" and Richard Neustadt's study of alliance politics are exceptions, but these works date back more than twenty-five years.⁵⁶ When political issues are discussed, this is done with reference to divergences between member states, and with little consideration for the possibility that membership in the Alliance might over time have had an impact on individual states' foreign policies, and created ties that are not so easily broken.

The second issue that the thesis will bring into the equation is the impact of domestic politics. According to Skidmore and Hudson,

"Foreign policy decision-makers are not simply agents of the national interest but political animals who must worry about their survival in office and the viability of their overall set of political goals, domestic and foreign. There exists little reason to expect that the pattern of domestic and international rewards and punishments for various sorts of foreign policy choices will naturally coincide. Where they do not, foreign

⁵⁶Karl Deutsch et al., Political Communities and the North Atlantic Area, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1957 and Richard Neustadt, Alliance Politics, New York, Columbia University Press, 1970. A recent adaptation is found in Emmanuel Adler, "Europe's new security order: a pluralistic security community", pp. 287-327 in Beverly Crawford (ed), The Future of European Security, Center for German and European Studies, Univ. of California at Berkeley, 1992. Adler applies the concept to a study of the CSCE. His conception of the ability of institutions such as the CSCE to ensure 'global peace' is more optimistic than the perspective of this thesis.

policy officials may be compelled to choose between domestic rewards at international cost or international rewards at domestic cost."⁵⁷

The importance of domestic politics for states' foreign policy was first emphasised by students of foreign policy analysis.⁵⁸ It has now been accepted more widely.⁵⁹ There is no reason to exclude the domestic political dimension when looking at how states coordinate their foreign policies. Most foreign policy analysts consider the internal workings of the state, in other words the decision-making process.⁶⁰ It is not enough to look at the decision-making process itself. The environment beyond the state structures themselves must also be taken into consideration. In the words of Chris Farrands,

⁵⁷Davis Skidmore and Valerie M. Hudson, "Establishing the limits of state autonomy", pp. 1-22 in Skidmore and Hudson (eds), The Limits of State Autonomy, Boulder, Westview Press, 1993, quote on p. 3/4.

⁵⁸Margot Light, "Foreign Policy Analysis", pp. 93-108 in Light and Groom (eds), Contemporary International Relations: A Guide to Theory, London, Pinter, 1994, p. 93.

⁵⁹See for example Fred Halliday, op. cit, p. 35 and Marcel Merle, Sociologie des Relations Internationales, Paris, Dalloz, 1982, p. 328.

⁶⁰One of the first to highlight the importance of opening up the 'black box' of the state was Graham Allison in his now classic study, Essence of Decision, Harper Collins, 1971. See also William Wallace, The Foreign Policy Process in Britain, London, Allen and Unwin for RIIA, 1976; Michael Clarke and Brian White (eds), Understanding Foreign Policy: The Foreign Policy Systems Approach, Aldershot, Edward Elgar, 1989.

"Foreign policy is a process. The members of a decision-making elite receive their values, assumptions and expectations about the world from a wider society".⁶¹

This must also include the particular historical experiences of the "domestic community" and the way in which these are reflected in the domestic political debate at any particular time. Western policies and reactions to the Polish crisis were embedded in longer term concerns, and should not be seen as entirely separate from them.⁶² An a-historical approach to foreign policy limits the possibility for understanding states', as well as other actors', behaviour.

It follows logically from the emphasis on domestic politics, as well as from the concern about the impact of common institutions on the foreign policy of states, that this thesis also questions the neo-liberal institutionalist and neo-realist assumptions of rationality.⁶³ From both these perspectives, states are seen to act rationally, with the aim

⁶¹Chris Farrands, "State, Society, Culture and British Foreign Policy", pp.50-70 in Brian White, Michael Smith and Steve Smith (eds), British Foreign Policy: Tradition, Change and Transformation, London, Unwin Hyman, 1988, quote on p.51.

⁶²For the importance of history for states' foreign policy, see for example Christopher Hill, "The historical background. Past and present in British foreign policy", pp. 24-49 in Michael Smith, Steve Smith and Brian White (eds), op. cit. See in particular p. 25.

⁶³A useful overview of the rational choice approach is found in Hugh Ward, "Rational Choice Theory", pp. 76-93 in David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds), Theory and Methods in Political Science, London, Macmillan, 1995.

of maximising their goals, and to bargain amongst themselves, on the basis of clearly defined interests. The probability of coordination is assessed on the basis of its costs and benefits for individual states. It is difficult to conceive of coordination as proceeding exclusively on the basis of calculations of self interest, in particular when one decides to open up the black box of the state.⁶⁴ The rational actor perspective presupposes that states' interests and objectives are clearly identifiable, and almost self-evident. It ignores the possibility that each state might "contain" a variety of interests and objectives as well as the possibility that foreign policy objectives could be mutually irreconcilable. Furthermore, it excludes the possibility that foreign policy objectives might emerge or change in the process of policy-making and in the process of interaction between states. Finally, it does not take into consideration the impact of values and beliefs on foreign policy, let alone any discussion of the shared objectives of a group of states. The neo-realist and neo-liberal institutionalist analysis of international bargaining might be a useful approach when examining a situation in which states face a negotiating

⁶⁴An exception is Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games", first published in International Organization, 42, summer 1988, pp. 427-460, reprinted in Peter Evans, Harold Jacobson and Robert Putnam (eds), Double-Edged Diplomacy, London, University of California Press, 1993, pp. 431-486. Putnam uses rational choice theory to analyse the combined impact of domestic and international factors on international bargaining.

agenda which is clearly defined and limited in scope. In a complex situation such as the Polish crisis, which involved economic, political and security matters, and was characterised by considerable uncertainty and volatility these images of rational "bargaining" are less useful. What is more, it may well be that these notions of international bargaining are most valuable when applied to economic negotiations, such as those in the GATT, where goals can be defined more clearly from the outset and where gains and losses are more easily calculated.⁶⁵

Conclusion

Any attempt at coordinating the foreign policies of a group of states provokes tension between the particular interests of each state and the common interest of the group as a whole. Attempts at coordination raise issues of sovereignty

⁶⁵The Realists criticise Putnam's article for drawing mainly on examples of bargaining about economic cooperation between advanced industrialised democracies - a subset biased toward domestic theories by the preponderance of economic issues. Yet, these examples may also be biased in the sense that rational bargaining is more likely to take place over purely economic issues. Andrew Moravcsik argues that the Realist critique is not convincing, yet, the cases he quotes involving bargaining on political and security issues still involve a narrowly defined agenda, thus excluding large sections of international interaction, see his "Introduction. Integrating international and domestic theories of international bargaining", pp. 3-42 in Evans, Jacobson and Putnam (eds), op. cit.

and conflicting national foreign policy traditions and aspirations. This thesis will discuss the possibility that foreign policy coordination can be further complicated by inputs from domestic politics, and furthermore, that the existence of common Western institutions might not only temper conflict but also generate their own problems of coordination. In addition to constituting an important turning point in Polish and European politics, the crisis in Poland is a logical case for exploring these issues. This study should also provide some conclusions about the meaning and importance of the Atlantic "crisis" in the early 1980s. Finally, as a halfway house between the Cold War and the 1989 revolutions, the Polish crisis and the Western responses to it, should produce further insight into the Western dilemma of striking the right balance between intervention, which was impossible, and passivity, which had, by the early 1980s, become unacceptable.

CHAPTER TWO. WESTERN POLICIES IN EASTERN EUROPE

Introduction

This chapter raises three analytically separate yet, in practice, closely intertwined issues. Firstly, and most importantly, it seeks to identify the distinctive elements in each of the major Western states' relations, primarily with Poland, but also with the rest of Eastern Europe. Secondly, it explores to what extent Poland, as well as the rest of Eastern Europe, played a special role in Western states' East-West policy. Thirdly, it assesses the interaction between individual Western states' relations with Poland and Eastern Europe and their role in the Western alliance, with particular reference to alliance cohesion. It does not aim to present a detailed chronology of relations between each of the four major Western states and Eastern Europe. Neither does it aim to present an overview of the history of the Cold War, of the evolution of East-West relations or of Western relations with the Soviet Union.

The starting assumption is that the historical experience of states does influence their foreign policy, even if the "lessons" that policy-makers learn from history are not

always the right ones.¹ As Christopher Hill has argued, "States' past successes and failures, friendships and enmities live on in the minds of present-day decision-makers both at home and abroad".² Thus, this examination of long-term trends in Western relations with Poland and Eastern Europe should enhance the understanding of Western reactions to the Polish crisis in the early 1980s, and of the problems encountered in coordinating these reactions. The chapter concentrates on the period after the end of the Second World War, although it does also refer back to earlier periods. It deliberately takes a broad perspective, looking not only at policies towards Poland, but towards what will be termed Eastern Europe.³

Examining the above issues is not an altogether straightforward task. On the one hand, Poland's position at the heart of Europe has, historically, given it a strategic importance both for its Eastern and Western neighbours. Indeed, it has played a decisive role in the making and breaking of the balance of power in Europe. Polish

¹See Ernest May, Lessons From the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American foreign policy, London, Oxford University Press, 1973.

²Christopher Hill, "The Historical Background: Past and Present in British Foreign Policy", pp. 24-49, in M. Smith, S. Smith and B. White, British Foreign Policy, London, Unwin Hyman, 1988, p. 33.

³Eastern Europe is defined as the member states of the Warsaw Pact, with the exclusion of the Soviet Union.

sovereignty has been the main obstacle to Russian and later Soviet excursions westwards and into Europe and conversely, it represented a shield against Western aggression towards Russia and the Soviet Union. As a result of its strategic position, Poland was not only a buffer state, but also an object of dispute amongst Western powers, and in particular France and Germany. Norman Davies has argued,

"In each of the major crises of modern Europe, the Polish issue has proved a bone of contention between the great powers."⁴

The Polish question was central to the outbreak of the Second World War, to the breakup of the wartime alliance, as well as to the onset of the Cold War.⁵ On the other hand, it could be argued that the onset of the Cold War altered the conditions of interaction between East and West in Europe so much that previous conflicts of interest amongst Western states over Eastern Europe became irrelevant or insignificant.⁶ The Cold War and the division of Europe provided the West with an overall unity of purpose - the defence against a perceived

⁴Norman Davies Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 433.

⁵A.W. DePorte, Europe Between the Superpowers: The Enduring Balance, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1986 p. 92.

⁶A corresponding argument for the post-cold War period is put forward by the neo-realists, who argue that with the end of the Cold War, Europe will return to conflict, as old enmities and conflicts were only kept "on hold" because of bipolarity. See in particular John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War", International Security, Summer 1990, vol 15, no.1, pp. 5-56.

Soviet threat - which had not previously existed, and which might have made the historical conflicts of interest in Eastern Europe immaterial.⁷ Furthermore, it could be argued that there were no specific Western policies towards Eastern Europe during the Cold War, that they were only footnotes in Western policies towards the Soviet Union, or in overall East-West relations. The division of Europe into two military and ideologically antagonistic blocs may have eliminated Western interests in conducting a separate policy, distinct from their Soviet policy, towards Eastern Europe.

The chapter seeks, against the backdrop of the Cold War and Western relations with the Soviet Union, to bring out what was particular about Western relations with Eastern Europe and Poland. In the same context, it also aims to establish what was distinctive to individual Western states' relations with Eastern Europe. It takes the view that, although Western policies towards Eastern Europe cannot be seen in isolation from the overall developments in East-West relations, it remains worthwhile and important to attempt to single out

⁷Some argue that the Cold War had already begun in 1917. See for example H. Higgins, The Cold War, London, Heineman Educational Books, 1984 and André Fontaine, Un Seul Lit Pour Deux Rêves: Histoire de la "Détente", Paris, Fayard, 1981. The distrust of Soviet communism is already evident in British and French deliberations about how to deal with Hitler in the 1930s. However, it was only after 1948/9 that it became an all-consuming theme in Western politics. Before World War Two there were other issues that were of equal importance or greater importance and bipolarity came only after the Second World War.

what was distinctive in their relations with Eastern Europe. Furthermore, it is by no means certain that the perception of a Soviet threat, in itself subjective and open to various interpretations, would lead to homogenous policies on Eastern Europe, or to policies that were subordinated to relations with the Soviet Union.

Britain's relations with East and Central Europe are discussed first, then France, West Germany, and finally the United States are examined. Each section focuses on the most salient elements and phases in each state's policy towards Eastern Europe since World War Two, rather than attempting to provide a detailed chronology of their policies towards the region. Organising the material in this way might predispose towards Realist conclusions, and in particular to the conclusion that the Western states were domestically coherent and had a static "national interest" in Eastern Europe. The alternative would be to organise the chapter chronologically, thus focusing on the evolution of Western relations with Eastern Europe. This would, in turn, encourage the conclusion that there was such a thing as a "Western" policy towards Eastern Europe, and that the "West" can be seen as a unitary actor with regard to Eastern Europe in the post-war period. Although the thesis questions some of the Realists' assumptions, it considers that the fate of coordination rests with individual states. Consequently, an examination of the

distinctive elements in Western states' approaches to Poland and Eastern Europe is a useful starting point.

Western policies in Eastern Europe: national trends and traditions

Britain

"France's drama is the discrepancy between a broad vision and limited means. Britain's great enigma lies in the deficiency of the vision."⁸

Although this quote refers to the overall characteristics of French and British foreign policy, it also applies to their respective policies in Eastern Europe. For Britain, the "deficiency of the vision", is accompanied, in the case of Eastern Europe, by an absence of any serious interest in the region.⁹ After the Second World War, policy towards Eastern Europe became part and parcel of British policy towards the

⁸Stanley Hoffmann, Gulliver's Troubles, Or the Setting of American Foreign Policy, New York and London, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968, p. 439.

⁹Alex Pravda points to the limited number of academic works examining British-Soviet relations during the Cold War. He argues that this sparseness of literature reflects the nature of British-Soviet relations, and that Britain has had a less discernible role in relation to the Soviet Union than West Germany and France. This is even more true with reference to Eastern Europe. Alex Pravda, "Introduction: pre-perestroika patterns", pp. 1-16 in Alex Pravda and Peter Duncan (eds) Soviet-British Relations Since the 1970s, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 1.

Soviet Union. This policy was in turn firmly anchored in a commitment to the Western alliance – in particular the alliance with the United States. Still, as the country for which Britain declared war in 1939, Poland had some resonance with British policy-makers.

Britain, Poland and the legacy of Yalta

It is difficult to achieve a clear understanding of British policy towards Poland at the time of the Second World War.¹⁰ Historians disagree on the significance of Britain's guarantee to Poland in March 1939. The orthodox view has tended to be that the guarantee represented a radical departure in Britain's foreign policy, not only because it signalled the abandonment of Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, but also because Britain had traditionally led a policy of disengagement in Eastern Europe. This perspective has since been challenged in at least two respects. Simon Newman argues that the Polish guarantee was not a new departure in British policy, but rather the ultimate manifestation of Britain's continued determination to prevent

¹⁰On the outbreak of the Second World War, see for example Nicholas Bethell, The War Hitler Won, London, Allan Lane The Penguin Press, 1972; Donald Cameron Watt, How War Came: The Immediate Origins of the Second World War, 1938-1939, London, Heinemann, 1989; John Lukacs, The Last European War, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976; A. J. P. Taylor, The Origins of the Second World War, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1961.

German expansion in Eastern Europe.¹¹ Anita Prazmowska, on the other hand, sees the guarantee as a continuation of the "traditional and long-term policy of successive British governments of disengagement from the affairs of Central and Eastern Europe".¹² She stresses that Britain had no interest in Central and Eastern Europe, neither in economic nor military terms, in the inter-war period. She emphasises the "haphazard nature of British considerations and plans made in March."¹³ Thus, she argues that, although the Polish guarantee indicated British resolve to deter German aggression, it reflected continuity in British policy towards East and Central Europe: Not only was it not intended as a direct commitment to defend Polish territory, it was also a retreat from an initial proposal, emerging after the German

¹¹Newman argues that : "...the appeasers were anxious to maintain the balance of power in Europe in 1938-9. The reasons given were traditional: ...it has always been the tradition of his Majesty's government to prevent one power from attaining a predominant position on the continent." P. 218 in Simon Newman, March 1939: The British Guarantee to Poland, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976. See his introduction for an outline of the traditionalist assumptions on the Polish guarantee, pp. 1-7.

¹²Anita Prazmowska, Britain, Poland and the Eastern Front, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 2.

¹³A similar perspective is taken by Elisabeth Barker: "...the decision to accept the entanglement in the Balkans was not the outcome of serious political or military planning. It was a hastily improvised reaction...and followed on the heels of the equally improvised decision to guarantee Poland." British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War, London, Macmillan, 1976, p. 3-4.

occupation of Czechoslovakia, of a British guarantee to all the states in Central and Eastern Europe.¹⁴

What is important for this thesis, however, is the agreement between Prazmowska and Newman, as well as the orthodox perspective, that Eastern Europe was not central to British foreign policy between the wars. According to Newman, the aim of the Polish guarantee was to maintain a certain balance between the great powers on the European continent, and to stop German expansionism. Thus, it was not an indication of a strong commitment to Polish territorial integrity in its own right.¹⁵

The controversy over Britain's commitment to Poland and Eastern Europe is equally strong in the literature on the end of the Second World War, and the beginning of the Cold War.

¹⁴Prazmowska, op. cit. p.56. The first point is contradicted by Christopher Hill, who shows that the British Cabinet, as well as Chamberlain himself, did not, in September 1939 consider reneging on the Polish guarantee. Christopher Hill, Cabinet Decisions on Foreign Policy, Cambridge, Cambridge University press, 1991, pp.85-99. It might, of course still be true that, in the minds of policy-makers, the guarantee, when it was formulated in March, was not expected to lead to war, and that as a result of subsequent events, British perceptions changed to such an extent that by September there was a commitment to use force which had not existed previously.

¹⁵Hill also argues that "The criterion on which British policy at this stage was assessed was not so much the absolute territorial integrity of Poland, but rather whether or not Germany was bent on European hegemony", Hill, 1991, op. cit, p. 94.

The debate over Britain's commitment to Poland at the end of the Second World War reflects the wider debate over the causes of the division of Europe, and the role and responsibility of the wartime allies for this turn of events.¹⁶ The conference between Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill in Yalta in February 1945 has emerged as a symbol of this division, and conjures up the image of great powers bargaining over the fate of the people of Eastern Europe, dividing the continent amongst themselves into spheres of influence. In the words of Brzezinski, "The myth is that at Yalta the West accepted the division of Europe".¹⁷

Amongst the strong critics of British policy after the Second World War is Nikolai Tolstoy, who in accordance with the

¹⁶The literature on the Cold War focuses almost exclusively on the role of the two Superpowers. Its significance for the understanding of Western policies towards Eastern Europe will be discussed in the section on the United States. An exception is Wilfried Loth, "Which Yalta? Reflections on the division of Europe", pp. 419-433, Atlantic Quarterly, vol 2, issue 4, Winter 1984. He emphasises the responsibility of the West Europeans in particular for the establishment of the two military blocs. See also Elisabeth Barker: "In a dangerous world, an impoverished and weakened Britain, faced by seeming Soviet hostility and aggressiveness ...had inevitably to cling to the hope of American economic and military support." The British Between the Superpowers, 1945-1950, London, Macmillan, 1983, p. 27.

¹⁷Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The future of Yalta", Foreign Affairs, 63, no 2, Winter 1984-5, pp. 279-280, 294-302. Reprinted in Robbin Laird and Erik Hoffmann (eds), Soviet foreign policy in a changing world, New York, Aldine Publishing Company, 1975, pp.949-956, quote on p.949.

"myth" of Yalta considers Britain to have sacrificed Eastern Europe for its own interests:

"Eden's policy towards the Soviet Union rested on the belief that any concession to Soviet demands, however base or cruel, that did not in his view affect British strategic or political interests was necessary to furtherance of good relations between the powers"¹⁸

Further reinforcing the image of Britain knowingly abandoning Eastern Europe to Stalin, is the account of Churchill's meeting with Stalin in Moscow in 1944. During the meeting, Churchill produced a piece of paper on which the East European states were listed together with a percentage indicating the influence that the Soviet Union and the West would have in each state.¹⁹

¹⁸Nikolai Tolstoy, Stalin's secret war, London, Jonathan Cape, 1981, p. 323. See also his reference to Churchill's reaction to the massacre of Polish officers in Katyn, p. 179 and Nicolas Bethell, The Last Secret, London, André Deutsch, 1974, on the forced repatriation of prisoners of war to the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War.

¹⁹The following division was suggested by Churchill: Rumania: Russia 90%, others 10%; Greece: Britain/USA 90%, Russia 10%; Yugoslavia: 50-50; Hungary: 50-50; Bulgaria: Russia 75%, others 25%. See Curtis Keeble, Britain and the Soviet Union, 1917-89, London, Macmillan, 1993, pp. 190-1. According to Keeble these percentages were meant to be "an indication of the relative interest and sentiment of the British and Soviet governments". They were, in his view, not meant to define rigid spheres of interest. The "agreement" is also outlined in John Lukacs, Decline and Rise of Europe, West Port, Greenwood Press, 1965, pp. 33-4. Lukacs argues that the agreement had some merit, in particular because it ensured that Greece remained within the Western sphere of influence.

Yet the issue is far from straightforward. The British government devoted considerable time and effort to negotiating the future composition of the Polish government, both at Yalta and on other occasions.²⁰ The proceedings of the Yalta conference itself indicate that the decisions reached, in particular the commitment made by all three participants to free elections in Eastern Europe, did not amount to the division of Europe and thus had little influence on the fate of Eastern Europe.²¹ In fact, it is often argued that Britain was simply de facto defeated by the balance of military forces in Eastern Europe. According to Curtis Keeble,

"It was plain that, in practical terms, Britain had little more chance of securing the independence of Poland in 1945 than in 1939."²²

²⁰Lukacs argues that Britain, from 1940, considered the tacit acceptance of Soviet territorial demands in the Baltics, Bulgaria and Rumania as the price necessary to pay for Soviet co-operation against Hitler. Yet, he argues that with Poland, Churchill hoped that "an essentially democratic regime" would be allowed to exist. pp. 33-4, Lukacs, 1965, op. cit. Britain's lukewarm support for Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria is confirmed by Elisabeth Barker. She argues that Britain did, after 1944, only make half-hearted attempts at keeping them from falling into the Soviet sphere, p. 216. "British policy toward Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary, pp. 201-219 in Martin Mc Cauley, (ed), Communist Power in Europe, 1944-49, London, Macmillan, 1977.

²¹See Loth, op. cit. p 419. For the Yalta conference, see also Jean Laloy, Yalta: Hier, Aujourd'hui, Demain, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1988.

²²Keeble, op. cit., p. 196. The same argument is presented by DePorte, op. cit. p. 95.

Others again have argued that it was too late by the time of the Yalta conference to "save" Poland, and consequently that Churchill's efforts at negotiations at the end of the War were futile:

"...there was never any need to impose communism in Poland by brute force ... all the elements which might conceivably have mounted organised resistance [against the USSR] had already been eliminated by the course of prior event. They had been discredited by pre-war or wartime failures, deserted by allied powers, or destroyed by the Warsaw rising. In 1944-5 there was no one left ... Stalin was given what he wanted without a struggle".²³

Perhaps most convincing is Lundestad's view that although Britain, together with the United States, did attempt to prevent Soviet control in Poland, these countries' main interests did not lie in this region:

"... two overriding facts determine[ed] the situation in Eastern Europe, namely that the Red Army was already in control of most of the region and that the Western Powers had their most important interests elsewhere..."²⁴

Brzezinski argues that "Yalta remains of great geopolitical significance because it symbolises the unfinished struggle for the future of Europe."²⁵ It also remains significant

²³Norman Davies, "Poland", pp. 39-57 in McCauley (ed), op. cit.

²⁴Geir Lundestad, The American "Empire", Oslo, Norwegian University Press, 1990, p.152.

²⁵Brzezinski, op. cit, p. 949.

because it symbolises the moral ambiguity in Western policies towards Eastern Europe at the end of the War. The question of whether or not more could have been done at the end of the war, or at an earlier stage, to prevent a Soviet takeover in Eastern Europe, is essentially unanswerable. What is important for this thesis is that Britain and the West has never managed to escape totally from the sense of responsibility for the fate of Eastern Europe. Its dilemmas are reflected in Western relations with Eastern Europe in the post-war era. Both Poland and Britain were central to the decisions made at Yalta with Poland as a 'victim' of Yalta and Britain as one of its principal architects.

Defence and disengagement: Britain and the Cold War

Having failed to achieve the independence of Poland and the other East European states, Britain's foreign policy in the post-war period was designed to fit in with geopolitical realities in Europe. These early years of the Cold War set a pattern for Britain's East-West policy in the post-war period.²⁶

Britain was influential in establishing the Cold War structures in Europe. Churchill's famous speech in Fulton, in which he talked about an "iron curtain" having descended over

²⁶Brian White, Detente and Changing East-West Relations, London and New York, Routledge, 1992, p. 48.

Europe, was the first publicly to alert attention to the political evolution in Eastern Europe. Britain also played a key role in the establishment of the Western alliance.²⁷ With regard to Eastern Europe, Northedge argues that:

"..the expansion of Soviet power in Eastern Europe at the end to the Second World War was to a large extent inescapable, whatever its moral quality, and ...the rest of the world could not be expected to commit suicide in a vain attempt to reverse it."²⁸

Soviet dominance of Eastern Europe was, although somewhat ambiguously, accepted even by Churchill, in a speech to the House of Commons after Stalin's death in 1953:

"Russia has a right [he said] to feel assured that as far as human arrangements can run the terrible events of the Hitler invasion will never be repeated, and that Poland will remain a friendly Power and a buffer, though not, I trust, a puppet state."²⁹

Britain did not, unlike the United States, adopt confrontation as a political strategy towards the Soviet bloc. Britain was critical of the American tendencies to embrace a rhetoric of "liberation". It considered the cost of such a policy far too high. White points out that

"For the Americans, the Cold War had become synonymous with political warfare between ideologically opposed

²⁷Loth, op. cit. especially p. 432. See also Anne Deighton (ed), Britain and the First Cold War, London, Macmillan, 1990, for a discussion of British policy on East-West relations in the early post-war years.

²⁸F.S. Northedge and Audrey Wells, Britain and Soviet Communism, London and Basingstoke, The Macmillan Press Ltd, p. 133.

²⁹Quoted in Northedge and Wells, op. cit. p. 128.

blocs. ... The more pragmatic British, however, could not wholly accept this overtly ideological approach to East-West relations. Containment was regarded as a short-term strategy and the Cold War as a necessary but temporary phase in relations. It soon became clear that the longer-term objective of British policy was the normalisation of relations with the Soviet bloc."³⁰

In the same way as "realism" had led Britain to encourage the creation of a strong Western defence, it led to a search for normalization and stabilisation of the international situation in the post-war era, rather than to an attempt to overthrow it.

In the same vein, Britain considered it important to make it clear that NATO's role was to defend its member states from a Soviet attack, and not to expel communism in Eastern Europe.³¹ Hence, British governments, both Labour and Conservative, took the lead in efforts to create detente with the Soviet Union in the early 1950s, by pushing for East-West negotiations. The first British attempts at improving relations with the Soviet Union were related to the German question, but it also affected Central and Eastern Europe. British foreign minister Eden proposed a demilitarised area between East and West at the Geneva summit in 1955. This proposal was expected to encourage a reduction on the Soviet

³⁰Brian White, "Britain and East-West relations", pp. 149-167 in Brian White, Michael Smith and Steve Smith, op. cit, quotation on p. 156.

³¹Northedge and Wells, op cit, p. 126.

Union's grip on East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. According to Northedge,

"This conception continued to interest the British Foreign Office throughout the 1950s and became the inspiration of many schemes for 'disengaging' the armed forces of East and West from the line in Central Europe where they confronted each other."³²

The British search for what Northedge calls "disengagement" was not diverted by disturbances in Poland and Hungary in 1956 and the subsequent Soviet intervention in Hungary.³³ Rather than a cause for strengthening the fight against communism, Hungary was seen as a reason for continuing the policy of disengagement, and for establishing a more acceptable security system in Europe.³⁴ It was against this backdrop that Britain in 1957 expressed interest in the plan of the Polish Prime Minister, Adam Rapacki, presented to the UN, for a nuclear arms free zone in Central Europe.³⁵

³²Northedge, 1974, op. cit. p.243.

³³It must be added that there was a feeling in Britain that the situation was partly caused by US rhetoric about a 'liberation' in Eastern Europe. Also, Britain was virtually paralysed in 1956 because of the Suez crisis, and thus not in a position to influence events. See Keeble, op. cit. p. 255 and Northedge and Wells, op. cit. p.126.

³⁴Keeble argues that "deplorable though the Soviet action in Hungary... had been, th[is] countr[y] had been accepted by the Western powers as falling within the imperial ringfence of the Soviet Union.", op. cit. p. 291.

³⁵The Rapacki plan proposed a nuclear free zone in Central Europe. The plan was eventually rejected by the British Foreign Secretary, Selwin Lloyd, apparently as a result of pressure from the United States and West Germany. Northedge and Wells, op. cit, p. 130. For West German opposition to the Rapacki plan, see Helga Haftendorn,

Britain's policy of disengagement was perhaps inspired by a tradition of "realpolitik", yet it was also aimed at providing a special role for Britain in a world dominated by the Superpowers. Brian White has argued that:

"The perceived linkage between a detente policy and Britain's position in the international hierarchy became most explicit when the United States directly challenged Britain's leading role in East-West relations. Macmillan's understandable concern...was that direct superpower contact might diminish the status that had accrued from a mediating role and reveal Britain as a 'second rate power'.³⁶

As a direct dialogue developed between the superpowers in the 1960s, Britain's role as a bridge builder was bound to diminish. Although, Macmillan's diplomatic initiatives in the early 1960s were crucial to the Soviet and American signing of the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963, British initiatives had few tangible results, in particular for Eastern Europe.³⁷

Britain, the Western alliance and Eastern Europe

By the early 1960s, Britain had been overtaken in its efforts to create detente by the United States at Superpower level, and at the European level by the French President De Gaulle.

Security and Detente: Conflicting Priorities on German Foreign Policy, New York, Praeger, 1985, pp. 61-68.

³⁶White, 1992, op. cit. p. 73.

³⁷White in White, Smith and Smith, op. cit. p.160-1.

The Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia did not change this, despite signalling the end of France's ambitions of a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals.³⁸ Prime Minister Harold Wilson's statement to Parliament, which was recalled as a result of the intervention, reflected Britain's continued commitments to what Light describes as "vigilance and agreement", as well as its commitment to the Western alliance:

"The lesson for us is that not only must our posture in the North Atlantic Treaty be flexible in its definitive postures; it must be flexible equally in its readiness to respond to the opportunities of detente..."³⁹

The British emphasis on its relationship with the Western alliance and in particular the United States, resulted in British policy towards Eastern Europe being conducted largely through multilateral institutions, and with a deliberate search for co-operation and cohesion with the other Western allies.⁴⁰ Britain did not, as did the French and the West

³⁸Both public opinion and government reaction in Britain to the intervention in Czechoslovakia was strong, not less so because of the symbolic significance Czechoslovakia held in Britain after 1938. Yet, sanctions were not an issue for the British government in 1968. For a discussion of Britain's reaction to Czechoslovakia see Elisabeth Barker, Britain in a Divided Europe, 1945-1970, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971, especially pp. 275-278.

³⁹Harold Wilson, The Labour Government, 1964-1970, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971, p. 554.

⁴⁰White has also argued that in addition to security concerns, economic considerations were important for Britain's emphasis on the Atlantic Alliance from the early

Germans, attempt to adopt an autonomous policy towards the Soviet Union and even less so towards Eastern Europe.⁴¹

Michael Clarke has argued that:

"Its [Britain's] policy towards the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is reactive rather than initiatory, ...It is concerned, above all, with Western unity as a prerequisite for any dealings with the Eastern bloc."⁴²

In the 1970s, Britain took part in the CSCE process, yet it was far more sceptical of it than were the French and the Germans. Britain had fewer interests at stake, yet according to Pravda, British scepticism over the CSCE process was also due to the potential it had for weakening the Atlantic links and Britain's Euro-Atlantic role.⁴³

days of the Cold War. white, 1992, op. cit. p. 47. See also Angela Stent, "The USSR and Western Europe", pp. 443-456 in Laird and Hoffmann, op. cit.

⁴¹Margot Light suggests that this was partly due to Britain's traditional emphasis on international cooperation and partly a response to the realisation of Britain's declining power, and the limits this imposed on British foreign policy, Margot Light, "Anglo-Soviet Relations: Political and Diplomatic", pp.120-146 in Alex Pravda and Peter Duncan, Soviet-British Relations Since the 1970s, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.129.

⁴²Michael Clarke "The Debate on European Security in the United Kingdom", p. 129, pp.121-140, in Ole Waever, Pierre Lemaitre and Elzbieta Tromer (ed), European Polyphony: Perspectives beyond East-West Confrontation, Macmillan, London 1989.

⁴³Pravda, op. cit, p. 10. For a discussion of Britain and the CSCE see Philip Williams, "Britain, detente and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe", pp. 221-253 in Kenneth Dyson, European Detente: Case Studies of the Politics of East-West Relations, London, Frances Pinter, 1986; Michael Clarke, "The implementation of Britain's CSCE policy, 1975-1984", pp. 142-165 in Steve Smith and Michael Clarke (eds), Foreign Policy Implementation, London, George

In summary, Poland remained symbolically important to Britain in the post-war era, yet at the same time, Britain's main interests continued to lie elsewhere. To the extent that Britain had a policy in Eastern Europe, it was part and parcel of its Soviet policy and closely interconnected with Britain's attachment to the Western alliance and the United States in particular. If in its approach to Eastern Europe, Britain did not adhere to the universalistic tendencies of the United States, its policy was firmly Atlanticist, and slightly sceptical of the 1970s detente. Despite the disagreement with West Germany over its attempt at "disengagement" in the 1950s, Eastern Europe was not, for Britain, an issue worth controversy with its allies.

France

Much of France's policy towards Central and Eastern Europe has been influenced by its relations with Germany. Historically, France has shared with the East European countries, and with Poland in particular, a deep suspicion of German intentions, and fear of German power. As a result, at some points in history, France and the East European countries have been "natural allies". Immanuel Geiss has described the relationship between Germany, France and their Eastern neighbours in the following terms:

Allen and Unwin, 1985.

"The relationship of Germans, Poles and Russians will become even clearer, if the French to the West are included as well: As Germany's neighbours to the West they had become the 'arch enemy' of the Germans in the 19th century and were, therefore, the 'natural' allies of the Poles (whenever they had an independent state) and of the Russians (when the Polish question had disappeared). The Russians, whenever they had as their Western neighbours an independent Poland, co-operated with the Germans in crushing Poland. When that had been achieved, the Germans as new neighbours also became sooner or later the enemies of the Russian/Soviets, who found their 'natural' allies further to the West."⁴⁴

However, in addition to its continuous concern about German power, French policy towards Eastern Europe has also been influenced by the French perception of itself as a country representing the ideals of self-determination, national independence and individual freedom, as they were expressed in the French Revolution. According to Pierre Hassner, France sees itself as a country with a mission: "a country that is not itself if it does not defend a goal beyond itself - whether a principle, or a vision of European or world order".⁴⁵ Finally, the continued effort made by France to maintain its status as a great power has also been important in its policy towards Eastern Europe.

⁴⁴Immanuel Geiss, "German Ostpolitik and the Polish Question", East European Quarterly, XIX, no. 2, June 1985, pp. 210-218. Quotation from p. 202-3.

⁴⁵Pierre Hassner, "The view from Paris", pp. 188-231 in Lincoln Gordon (ed), Eroding Empire: Western Relations With Eastern Europe, Washington DC, The Brookings Institution, 1987, p.204.

France, Eastern Europe and the German question

Napoleon III's brief restoration of Poland's sovereignty in the form of the Duchy of Warsaw, in 1807, is often quoted as the first example of revolutionary France defending the ideals of national independence in Eastern Europe. It is also seen as the starting point of a long "friendship" between France and Poland. The importance of Franco-Polish relations is frequently emphasised in French texts on relations with Poland:

"La France pour la Pologne représente un peuple ami libre, qui fut, pendant plus d'un siècle de partage, le symbole de l'espoir pour les patriotes d'un Etat qui avait disparu en tant que tel de la carte de l'Europe, et dont l'unité nationale ne subsistait que dans le ^{cer} de sa population."⁴⁶

However, the "romance" between France and Poland never produced the desired outcome for either side. France was never strong enough to guarantee the security of Poland, indeed, when it considered it more convenient, France turned to the Soviet Union to further its aims. Likewise, from the French perspective, links with Poland, or other East European states, never guaranteed France the desired status as a great power, and never provided sufficient counterforce for France to withstand the power of Germany in Europe.

⁴⁶Jadwiga Castagne, "Les Relations Franco-Polonaises (1945-97)", Notes et Etudes Documentaires, no. 3922, 25 Sept. 1972, p.5. See also Zbigniew Mazur, "Les Relations Polono-Françaises dans la Période d'Après-Guerre", La Pologne et les Affaires Occidentales, Vol. 12, no.1, 1977.

French policy in Eastern Europe was most active in the inter-war period and in the first years of the Fifth Republic. In the new European order that emerged at the end of the First World War, an important issue for France was to manage its relations with Germany. This was a concern it shared with the East European states.⁴⁷ In order to achieve the objectives of keeping revisionist Germany in control and maintaining the status quo of Versailles, France developed the system of "alliances de revers". In 1921, a defensive alliance was signed with Poland. A similar alliance was concluded with Czechoslovakia in 1924. France also acted as the patron of the Petite Entente between Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia.⁴⁸ However, the system of "alliances de revers" was fragile. Having little, if any, experience of democratic government and suffering from ethnic disputes both domestically and externally, the newly created East European regimes were weak and unstable. Furthermore, and more importantly in this context, France did not really have the capacity to uphold its commitments in Central and Eastern

⁴⁷In fact, Geiss argues that the continuing weakness of Germany (as well as the Soviet Union) in the interwar years was the basic precondition for Poland's future as an independent state, op. cit.p. 212.

⁴⁸For France's relations with Eastern Europe in the inter-war period see Piotr S. Wandycz, France and Her Eastern Allies, 1919-1925, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1962; The Twilight of French Eastern Alliances, 1926-36, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1988; and Nicole Jordan, The Popular Front and Central Europe: The Dilemmas of French Impotence, 1918-1940, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Europe. Finally, the strategy of "alliances de revers" was in flagrant contradiction with the guiding principle of French security policy at the time, that of the Maginot line, which was purely defensive:

"The divorce between the defensive strategy of France incarnated by the Maginot Line and the diplomacy of support to the Eastern European countries is still used today in military schools as the best example of discrepancy between strategy and diplomacy."⁴⁹

As Germany regained its strength and began to reassert its ambitions in East and Central Europe, the contradictions in the French position increased. Gradually, French diplomacy in the area disintegrated.⁵⁰ In 1935 France signed a mutual assistance pact with Poland's arch-enemy, the Soviet Union, further underlining the inconsistencies of its Eastern diplomacy.⁵¹ In 1938 it proved incapable of guaranteeing the independence of Czechoslovakia, and in September 1939, despite declaring war on Germany, it remained immobile while

⁴⁹Dominique Moisi, "French Policy Towards Central and Eastern Europe", in William Griffith (ed), Central and Eastern Europe: The Opening Curtain?, Boulder, San Francisco and London, Westview Press, 1989, pp. 353-365.

⁵⁰For a review of French policy in Eastern Europe in the 1930s, see Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, La Décadence, 1932-1939, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1979. French foreign policy leading up to the Second World War is dealt with in Anthony Adamthwaite, France and the Coming of the Second World War, London, Cass, 1977.

⁵¹For a study of the history of Franco-Soviet relations see Maxime Mourin, Les Relations Franco-Soviétiques, 1917-1967, Paris, Payot, 1967.

Poland was absorbed by its two traditional enemies, the Soviet Union and Germany.

In the post-war period, an alliance with the Central and East European countries was no longer an option for French policy-makers.⁵² Efforts to contain Germany expressed themselves chiefly by attempting to tie the Federal Republic to Western institutions, first through the failed European Defence Community (EDC), then in the West European Union (WEU) and NATO, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), and later the European Community.⁵³ This does not mean, however, that Eastern Europe disappeared completely from the French foreign policy agenda. In fact, French "designs" in Eastern Europe disappeared during the Fourth Republic only to return in force under the Fifth, at the initiative of de Gaulle.⁵⁴

⁵²For a record of the bilateral relations between France and the Eastern European countries since the Second World War, see Thomas Schreiber, "Les Relations de la France Avec les Pays de l'Est" (1944-1980), La Documentation Française, 30 Avril, 1980.

⁵³France signed an anti-German alliance with Stalin in 1944, inspired by the belief "that co-operation with all big three powers was essential to French interest". Yet, in the subsequent five years, the assumptions of France's foreign policy were radically transformed. France joined NATO in 1949, largely in response to the threat from the USSR and the need for US financial assistance. See John W. Young, France, the Cold War and the Western Alliance, London, Leicester University Press, 1990, quote on p. 222.

⁵⁴The Fourth Republic was almost paralysed by the combined effect of the war in Indochina and the domestic instabilities of the regime, and did not have a very active foreign policy. See Alfred Grosser, La Quatrième République et sa Politique Extérieure, Paris, Librairie Armand Colin,

However, once again, Eastern Europe was not an objective entirely in its own right, but was part of a larger vision of the balance of power and security in Europe and most importantly, it was part of a vision of France's role in a new European order.⁵⁵

Europe without the United States, from the Atlantic to the Urals

De Gaulle's Ostpolitik was launched in the context of superpower detente. For the first, and also the only time in post-war history, France was actually leading the way in East-West relations. De Gaulle's vision of a "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" was based on the principle of a gradual disengagement of both superpowers in Europe and the expectation that West and East European countries would slowly converge, and thus the political divisions of the Cold War would be overcome. It was, as most aspects of de Gaulle's foreign policy, a non-ideological approach to East-West relations, inspired by a geopolitical vision of Europe, and underlining the importance of the historic links between France and Eastern Europe.

1961.

⁵⁵This is also the argument of Pierre Hassner, *op. cit.*, p. 189 and Michel Tatu, Eux et Nous: les Relations Est-Ouest entre Deux Détentes, Paris, Fayard, 1985, p. 106-7.

De Gaulle's policy was introduced gradually. The first steps of his policy were visits between Soviet and French officials in 1964. In November the same year de Gaulle received the foreign ministers of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia to discuss the development of economic and cultural relations. The highpoints of the policy were the visits of de Gaulle to the Soviet Union in 1966, to Poland in 1967 and to Rumania in 1968.⁵⁶

The vision of "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" was the last of several attempts by de Gaulle since his arrival in power in 1958 to reshape the post-war order in Europe and to increase French influence and prestige. De Gaulle's first attempt in this direction came in 1958, when he proposed a "Directoire des trois Grands", in a memorandum to the American President Eisenhower and British Prime Minister Macmillan.⁵⁷ Having failed to achieve support for this

⁵⁶On de Gaulle's visit to Poland see Jean Parandowski, "Les Polonais et de Gaulle", pp.30-33 and G. Boud'hors, "Le voyage du général de Gaulle en Pologne. 6 au 12 Septembre 1967", pp.34-45 in Espoir. Revue de l'Institut Charles de Gaulle, March 1976, no 14.

⁵⁷The main idea of his proposal was that NATO would be run by the three "Great powers", France, Britain and the United States. For a discussion of this proposal see Alfred Grosser, The Western Alliance: European-American Relations Since 1945, London, The Macmillan Press, 1980, pp.183-208. The text of de Gaulle's letter to Eisenhower and Macmillan is reprinted on p. 187. It was first published in Espoir. Revue de l'Institut Charles de Gaulle, no. 15, June 1976. For de Gaulle's Atlantic and European policies see also Guy de Carmoy, Les Politiques Etrangères de la France, 1944-66, Paris, La Table Ronde, 1967.

scheme, he proceeded to attempt to transform the existing European Community into a forum for foreign policy coordination, in order to obtain greater independence from the United States. Yet he failed to get the "Fouchet plans" adopted by the other members of the European Community.⁵⁸ Essential both to the "Directoire à Trois" initiative and the Fouchet Plans, was the aim of enhancing French influence, and the idea that in order to achieve this, relative independence from the United States was necessary.⁵⁹ These same ideas were an integral part of de Gaulle's diplomatic bid in Eastern Europe. According to French Prime Minister, Maurice Couve de Murville:

"Le voyage du général de Gaulle en URSS couronnait l'évolution qui s'était produite depuis deux ou trois années. Il donnait sa marque finale aux rapports vraiment renouvelés que la France avait voulu créer dans un contexte international qui rendait désormais possible une politique conforme au rôle qu'il lui appartenait de jouer en Europe et qui, à notre sens - c'est une autre façon d'exprimer la même pensée - servait au mieux les intérêts de la paix."⁶⁰

⁵⁸The Fouchet plans suggested a return to the principle of a "Europe of nation states" and the development of foreign policy co-operation as the most important task of the European Community. See Pierre Gerbet La Construction de l'Europe, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1983, pp. 271-291.

⁵⁹Perhaps paradoxically, de Gaulle was, at the same time conscious of the importance of the US commitment to the defence of Europe. Hence, in the Cuban crisis, he was the first West European leader to rally behind Kennedy. What this confirms most of all, is the importance of de Gaulle's geopolitical outlook on international politics.

⁶⁰Couve de Murville, Une Politique Etrangère, 1958-1969, Plon, 1971, p.222, quoted in Thomas Schreiber, op. cit., p. 62.

This quotation serves to underline the point that attempts to enhance French prestige and influence were an integral part of de Gaulle's Ostpolitik. Furthermore, it emphasises the notion that France had a sense of being a country with a "mission": hence Couve de Murville assimilates France' role as a great power with the maintenance of peace in Europe.⁶¹ However, as Kolodziej clearly underlines, the idea of a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals was highly controversial. Its success depended on a large number of conditions, most of them unlikely to materialise:

"For de Gaulle, the conditions of European peace were as many as they were complex: liberalisation of the Russian regime and the East European empire, Germany's settlement of its frontiers and its agreement on armaments, West European economic integration and political union, including a common defence policy, and the establishment of a European system of states from the "Atlantic to the Urals in harmony and cooperation with a view to the development of her vast resources."⁶²

With the Soviet intervention in Prague in 1968, de Gaulle's strategy for overcoming the division of Europe failed. Events in Czechoslovakia made it clear that the Soviet Union would

⁶¹According to Philip Cerny and Jolyon Howorth, French foreign policy in the Cold War associated "French national interest and the wider global interest with their own version of the European interest". See "National Independence and Atlanticism: the dialectic of French Politics", pp.198-221, in Kenneth Dyson (ed), European Détente, Pinter Publisher, 1986, quote on p. 200.

⁶²Edward A. Kolodziej, French International Policy Under de Gaulle and Pompidou, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, p.320.

not tolerate a change in the status quo in Europe, neither would it tolerate a political evolution that might be interpreted as weakening Soviet control in Eastern Europe.⁶³

The rise of the Ostpolitik and the decline of France's role in Eastern Europe

After Czechoslovakia in 1968 and after de Gaulle's resignation in 1969, French policy in Eastern Europe never really recovered. Under the new President, Georges Pompidou, France's European policy turned to focus on the West and, in particular, on the European Community. It continued to cultivate its relations with Eastern Europe, but West Germany took the lead in expanding relations with this region:

"De Gaulle's détente policy was not so much abandoned as it was subordinated to a newly manifested French interest in building and participating within a larger West European grouping. The shift,..., was logical enough since Germany and the United States assumed, not always in harmony with each other, Western leadership for the détente process."⁶⁴

Officially France supported Brandt's new Ostpolitik, however, in private there was some irritation in Paris of being

⁶³For the Czechoslovak crisis see Philip Windsor and Adam Roberts, Czechoslovakia 1968, London, Chatto & Windus for IISS, 1969; Jiri Valenta, Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia, 1968: Anatomy of a Decision, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, 1979; and Karen Dawisha, The Kremlin and the Prague Spring, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984.

⁶⁴Kolodziej, op.cit., p.440.

bypassed by West Germany, and concern lest it be a more interesting interlocutor for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe than France had been.⁶⁵ What is more, the spectre of Rapallo, symbolising "Germany's historic propensity for manouvering between East and West" had not completely vanished from Franco-German relations.⁶⁶

There had been no attempt to coordinate de Gaulle's initiatives towards Eastern Europe with West Germany. Indeed, the idea of "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" followed a different logic from West Germany's East European policy at the time. Also, the West Germans were suspicious of French intentions and concerned that they would lead to their exclusion from discussion on any future arrangements of the European order.⁶⁷ In fact, the intervention in Prague in 1968

⁶⁵Alfred Grosser, Affaires Extérieures: La Politique Extérieure de la France, 1944-84, Paris, Flammarion, 1984, p.243-5.

⁶⁶Timothy Garton Ash, The Uses of Adversity, Granta Books, Cambridge, 1983, quote on p. 64. For a discussion of the role of the Rapallo myth in France in the interwar period see Renata Fritsch-Bournazel, Rapallo: Naissance d'un Mythe: La Politique de la Peur dans la France du Bloc National, Paris, A. Colin, 1974. See also Renata Fritsch-Bournazel, L'Allemagne un Enjeu Pour l'Europe, Editions Complexe, Bruxelles, 1987. For the diplomatic manouvers leading to Rapallo see Stephen White, The Origins of Détente, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 147-168.

⁶⁷Hanrieder and Auton argue that "Paris and Bonn were pursuing policies based on fundamentally different concepts of a desirable political order...", Wolfram Hanrieder and Graeme Auton, The Foreign Policies of West Germany, France and Britain, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1980, p. 129.

had provoked a row between West Germany and France. De Gaulle blamed West Germany for the invasion, arguing that West Germany's economic policy and economic power had exercised a strong attraction on Czechoslovakia. Thus, France in fact backed the Soviet position which consisted in justifying its intervention by arguing that West German credits and favourable trade terms to Prague "...exerted an irresistible drawing power on an independent Czechoslovakia". West Germany in turn argued that de Gaulle's policy had encouraged diversity in Eastern Europe and was thus equally to blame.⁶⁸

French leaders continued after de Gaulle to stress the importance of good relations with the Soviet Union and with Eastern Europe. Pompidou, for example, met Brezhnev five times during his presidency. This did not, however, as under de Gaulle, appear to be inspired by a specific vision of Europe. Also, these policies were not aimed specifically at Eastern Europe, but were rather part of a broader approach to East-West relations. Eastern Europe was also expected to benefit from the policy, although the objective was not Eastern Europe itself. The emphasis on relations with the Soviet Union continued after the election of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing to the Presidency in 1974. Giscard is considered to have had a strong belief in the policy of detente and in

⁶⁸Wolfram Hanrieder, Germany, America, Europe, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1989, p. 450, note 48.

trade and economic relations as a means of maintaining peace and stability.⁶⁹ In his memoirs, Giscard underlines in particular the importance of his good relations with the Polish Secretary General Edward Gierek, a personal friendship which was no doubt strengthened by the fact that Gierek, as the son of Polish immigrants, had spent his childhood in the north of France and received most of his education in French.⁷⁰ It was also Gierek who acted as an intermediary in Giscard's much criticised meeting with Brezhnev in Warsaw in the spring of 1980, which apparently took place in an attempt to mediate in the conflict over Afghanistan. Still, France was no longer at the forefront of West European relations with Eastern Europe.

To summarise: historically, France entertained closer links with Poland and Eastern Europe than Britain did. Central to France's relations with Eastern Europe has been its concern with the German question. Furthermore, French initiatives towards Eastern Europe in the post-war period were influenced by a search for a Europe-wide settlement which would overcome Cold War divisions. France saw European independence from the

⁶⁹See Michel Tatu, "Valéry Giscard d'Estaing et la Détente", in Samy Cohen and Marie-Claude Smouts (eds), La Politique Extérieure de Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Paris, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1985, pp. 196-218.

⁷⁰Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Le Pouvoir et la Vie, Paris, Compagnie 12, 1988, p. 169.

US as a precondition for achieving this goal. In this respect its approach differed radically from both Britain's and West Germany's. Consequently, the close Franco-German cooperation in the post-war period, in particular in the context of the European Community, did not expand into coordination of French and West German approaches to Eastern Europe.

Germany

Germany distinguishes itself from the other Western states as the only country with close interests in Poland, as well as in the rest of Eastern Europe.⁷¹ A brief look at a map of Europe suffices to underline the importance of German-East European relations. Historically, to the extent that modern, post-1870 Germany can be considered as the successor state of Prussia, it was part of the group of countries traditionally referred to as Central European. It was only with the German defeat in 1945, and its subsequent partition, that Germany, or more precisely its Western half, the Federal Republic, became a "Western" power. Since then, West Germany's policy towards Eastern Europe has been closely intertwined with, and often determined by, its policy towards the other German state.⁷² Nonetheless, this has only been possible against the

⁷¹Timothy Garton Ash, In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent, London, Vintage, 1994, p. 28.

⁷²In the following "Ostpolitik" will be used to denote policy towards Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and "Deutschlandpolitik" to refer to policy towards East Germany and Berlin. According to Timothy Garton Ash, this division

backdrop of a close partnership between West Germany and the Western alliance.

Between East and West

According to Josef Joffe,

"Germany is Central Europe....In the past 40 years the Federal Republic of Germany has been of the West, but in the flow of history this is a novel development."⁷³

Closeness does not indicate that relations between Germany and the Central/ East European states have always been of a friendly nature. From the perspective of Poland in particular, but also the other East European states, German power and the fear of German/Prussian expansion goes back several centuries:

"While the other West European states colonized beyond the seas, and Russia colonized Siberia, Germany colonized its immediate eastern neighbours".⁷⁴

between "Ostpolitik" and "Deutschlandpolitik" is not, however, entirely clear. Some issues, in particular that of the recognition of the Oder-Neisse line, which was considered to be German territory, could, in principle, be both Ostpolitik and Deutschlandpolitik simultaneously. See Garton Ash, 1994, op. cit., p. 37. Still, Joffe argues that Deutschlandpolitik was in practice used by West German policy-makers to refer to policy towards the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Josef Joffe, "The view from Bonn: the tacit alliance", [pp. 129-188] in Gordon, op. cit. p. 133.

⁷³Joffe in Gordon, op. cit, p. 129.

⁷⁴William Griffith and Wolfgang Berner, "West German Policy Toward Central and Eastern Europe", in Griffith (ed), op. cit., [pp.338-352, quotation on] p. 339.

At the end of the First World War, Germany contested the outcome of the Versailles treaty in which it lost territories in the east to Poland and Czechoslovakia. With the arrival of Hitler in power in 1933, expansion to the East became a primary goal in German foreign policy.⁷⁵ The advent of the Cold War and the partition of Germany into two states, one tied to the West and the other to the Soviet Union and the East, radically altered the country's relations with Poland, as well as with the rest of Eastern Europe.⁷⁶ Divided in two, and carrying the burden of its nazi past, West Germany was not a "normal" state. Most importantly perhaps, not being allowed an independent defence capability, it became dependent on its Western allies for protection against the perceived Soviet threat. According to Michael Stürmer:

"As there was no longer anything worthy, at least politically, of the name of Central Europe, West Germany's Western orientation came about almost as a matter of course. There was simply nothing there that the idea of a Central European identity could be built upon. There was only the dividing line."⁷⁷

⁷⁵For a study of this period in German history see, Michael Burleigh, Germany Turns Eastward: a Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988.

⁷⁶For the events leading to the division of Germany see for example Avi Shlaim, "The partition of Germany and the origins of the Cold War", Review of International Studies, 1985, 11, pp. 123-137.

⁷⁷Michael Stürmer, "The evolution of the contemporary German question", in Edwina Moreton (ed), Germany Between East and West, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 21-32, quotation on p. 25.

"Westernisation" was, nevertheless, also a deliberate policy-choice, made by the West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer, who himself considered Germany's roots to be in Western Europe.⁷⁸ What is more, close co-operation with the other Western states and active participation in Western institutions were the means by which Adenauer's West Germany sought to shed its past and re-insert itself into international society. In the words of Reinhard Rummel:

"For reasons of legitimation and credibility, Germany needs Western partners and institutions to protect itself against political pressure and to operate internationally without being suspected - by proponents in the East as well as in the West- of renewed German hegemonical ambitions."⁷⁹

With the partition of Germany at the end of the Second World War, and West Germany's inclusion in the Western camp, Germany's colonial ambitions in Eastern Europe were ended. West Germany's policy towards Eastern Europe became inextricably linked with the question of its relations with its East German counterpart, and, for a long time, subordinated to the goal of reunification.⁸⁰

⁷⁸William Griffith, The Ostpolitik of the Federal Republic of Germany, Cambridge, MASS, The MIT Press, 1978, pp.43-8.

⁷⁹Reinhard Rummel, "Germany's role in the CFSP: 'Normalitat or 'Sonderweg'?", pp. 40-67 in Christopher Hill (ed), The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy, London, Routledge, 1996, quotation on p. 42.

⁸⁰The declared goal of German unity as formulated in the Federal Republic's Basic Law. Until 1972, West Germany considered itself to be the only representative unit of the German people and refused to recognize the legitimacy of the

Combining territorial claims and multilateral ties:
contradictions in Adenauer's "policy of strength"

In the first years after the creation of the Federal Republic (in 1949) its policy towards Eastern Europe was, under the leadership of Adenauer, centred around the explicit statement of the goal of reunification and the refusal to accept the existing borders in Europe. This policy was institutionalised through the Hallstein doctrine of December 1955 in which the West German Minister of Foreign Affairs declared that West Germany would break its diplomatic relations with any country (except the USSR), that recognized East Germany. During the negotiations on the dismantling of the occupation regime of the Western Zones of Germany and the entrance of the Federal Republic into NATO in 1955, West Germany succeeded in imposing its position on the German question also on its Western Allies. This policy, often referred to as the "policy of strength", was based on the following two assumptions:

"(1) that Washington and Moscow held the key to the German question, and (2) that with the passage of time the balance of power between the Cold War blocs would shift in favour of the West, thus allowing negotiations "on the basis of strength" that would induce the Soviet Union to settle the German question on Western terms."⁸¹

other German state. Until 1990, it refused to recognize its postwar borders. Garton Ash, op. cit. p.34; Joffe in Gordon, op. cit p.133; Hanrieder, 1989, op. cit. p. 196.

⁸¹Hanrieder and Auton, op. cit, p.51.

The consequence of the agreement between West Germany and the Western allies on the Hallstein doctrine was twofold. Firstly, it led to a revisionist position of the West towards Eastern Europe, and secondly, it gave the key control, or the power of veto, on this policy to West Germany.⁸²

West Germany's revisionist stand on Europe's borders also had important consequences for Poland. Poland was the country that had suffered most from German occupation. In the words of Wladislaw Kulski, "Poland and Germany emerged from the Second World War animated by mutual animosity".⁸³ Relations were not improved by the fact that Poland inherited the territories of Eastern Prussia and proceeded with forced expulsion of ethnic Germans from the former German provinces.⁸⁴ The roots of Polish-German animosity did, however, go even further back:

⁸²Joffe, in Gordon, op. cit, p.141. Joffe also argues that Adenauer's main concern was to avoid a four power agreement on a neutral Germany being signed without West Germany's participation. Windsor also emphasises the West German government's ability to influence US foreign policy in this area: "...Germany's growing importance within the Alliance forced certain modifications of policy on the Federal government as well as helping to shape the policies of the United States. But in return Germany acquired something of a veto over those aspects of American policy which involved her own interest", op. cit., p. 41.

⁸³Wladislaw Kulski, "German-Polish relations since World War Two", pp. 64-69 in The Polish Review, vol 24, no 1, 1979.

⁸⁴Garton Ash, 1994, op. cit, pp. 219-20, Norman Davies, God's Playground: A History of Poland in Two Volumes, Oxford, Clarendon, 1981, pp. 563-564.

"Men and women of goodwill on both sides of the Oder-Neisse line have tried to evoke the happier moments of German-Polish relations. They recall the rich cultural and technological interchanges in the late middle ages and the period of German liberal enthusiasm for the cause of Polish independence in the 1830s ...yet the sad truth is that long before 1939 the German-Polish relationship was one of the most tense and difficult in Europe."⁸⁵

West Germany's refusal to recognise Poland's territorial integrity fuelled Polish fear of German imperialism. In turn, this allowed the Soviet Union to justify its presence in Poland, by presenting itself as the guarantor against future German claims on Polish territory.⁸⁶ Although, on the face of it, the Polish and Hungarian crises of 1956, and the Warsaw Pact intervention in Hungary, did not change anything in West Germany's Ostpolitik, they did signal that the Soviet Union's position was not weakening the way Adenauer had expected. Thus, the assumptions underlying the 'policy of strength' emerged as increasingly unrealistic:

"A Western policy of 'rollback' and liberation of Eastern Europe, or even of applying strong pressure on the Kremlin, became inconceivable in light of the retaliatory power the Soviet Union was acquiring - as demonstrated by events in Hungary in 1956. Adenauer's 'policy of strength', encouraged by the rhetoric of the

⁸⁵Garton Ash, 1994, op. cit., p.218.

⁸⁶Karen Dawisha, Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and Reform, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 69-70. Norman Davies argues that it was a deliberate policy on the part of the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War to insist that Poland be awarded former German territories "beyond anything the Poles considered Polish". The Soviets expected this would guarantee post-war German revanchism and a long term need for Soviet protection against Germany. Davies, op. cit, 1984, p. 32.

first Eisenhower administration, had become illusory because the developing nuclear standoff was reflected in an East-West standoff on the German question."⁸⁷

In addition to unrealistic expectations that the Soviet Union would accept to settle the German question on Western terms, there were several contradictions in West German policy during these years. Hanrieder points to "a certain anachronistic flavour" in Bonn's eastern policy, dominated by territorial claims and the aim of reversing existing political arrangements in Europe. He contrasts this with "the modernity of its [the Federal Republic's] Western diplomacy", which emphasised the importance of economic and political interdependence and multilateral cooperation.⁸⁸ Windsor highlights the increasing contradictions not in West Germany's policy-style, but in its national interest. He argues that the success of Adenauer's policy was due to its ability to unite all West German interests into the overriding interest of integration into the Western camp. This was "based on the attempt to define Germany's immediate future in terms of overcoming its past".⁸⁹ In turn, it was expected to prepare West Germany for reunification. Yet, in the early 1960s, it was becoming more and more difficult to

⁸⁷Hanrieder and Auton, op. cit. p.54.

⁸⁸Hanrieder, op. cit. 1989, p. 148.

⁸⁹Philip Windsor, Germany and the Management of Detente, London, Chatto and Windus for IISS, 1969. 1971, op. cit. p.34.

contain the aspirations of German society within this one policy. West Germany's allies, and the United States in particular, were becoming increasingly reluctant to support West Germany's revisionist stand on East Germany, thus the Westpolitik was no longer seen to forward the aim of reunification. Furthermore, the French-American disputes in the Atlantic alliance meant that there was no longer a one-dimensional Westpolitik. In turn, this produced a domestic fragmentation of West Germany's interest and contributed to provoking a gradual change in West Germany's policy towards Eastern Europe.

Continuity and change: the Ostpolitik of Willy Brandt

The first steps towards a change in West German policy on Eastern Europe came with the so called "policy of movement", initiated by Gerhard Schröder, Foreign Minister during the last years of Adenauer's administration. It was continued under the new Chancellor, Ludwig Erhard, from 1963, but the changes introduced were considered insufficient. West Germany did not abandon the Hallstein doctrine, nor did it accept the Oder Neisse line. It was only under the new leadership of the SPD and Willy Brandt that West Germany radically altered its Ostpolitik. With this change of policy, West Germany

successfully re-acquired its place at the heart of Western relations with Eastern Europe.⁹⁰

According to Hanrieder, the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 was important in provoking change in West Germany's policy.⁹¹ It has already been pointed out that Czechoslovakia was the final blow to de Gaulle's policy of a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. At the same time then, it marked the beginning of an active engagement of West Germany in Eastern Europe:

"The invasion had proved that although what de Gaulle called 'la force des choses' in Eastern Europe - nationalism, liberalization, and economic reform - favoured the new Ostpolitik, 'la force soviétique' would block or reverse its gains. Moscow remained decisive for Eastern Europe."⁹²

Brandt's new policy was based on the assumption that the split between East and West Germany could only be narrowed as a result of East-West accommodation. The new Ostpolitik represented a reversal of West Germany's previous policy in Eastern Europe, which had been that progress on the question

⁹⁰For a discussion of the first years of Brandt's Ostpolitik, see Lawrence Whetten, Germany's Ostpolitik, Oxford University Press, London, 1971.

⁹¹Hanrieder, 1989, op. cit. pp. 191-94.

⁹²Griffith, 1978, op. cit. 1978, p.160. Josef Joffe and Philip Windsor identify the Berlin crisis of 1962 as the turning point for West Germany's position on East Germany, Josef Joffe The Limited Partnership: Europe, the United States and the Burdens of the Alliance, Cambridge, Mass., Ballinger Publishing Company, 1987, p. xii; Windsor, 1969, op. cit. p. 45.

of German reunification would have to precede a fundamental East-West accommodation on Europe. The goal of reunification was no longer explicitly mentioned. It was replaced by that of achieving a "rapprochement" between the two Germanies. Nevertheless, in the same sense that reunification was the ultimate aim of Adenauer's revisionist stand, improving relations with East Germany was at the centre of Brandt's new Ostpolitik. In other words, although the goal of reunification was no longer expressed, relations with the GDR continued to be the leitmotif of West Germany's Ostpolitik. The objective was to change the conditions in which relations with the GDR were developed, thus making reunification unnecessary.⁹³

The Ostpolitik led to the signing of a number of treaties between West Germany and, firstly, the USSR, then Poland, the GDR and Czechoslovakia. Essential to these agreements was a declaration of mutual renunciation of the use of force, as well as a West German declaration that it regarded the existing borders in Europe, including the Oder-Neisse line and the border between the FRG and the GDR, as inviolable.⁹⁴

⁹³Joffe in Gordon, op. cit., p. 135.

⁹⁴The treaty between the Soviet Union and West Germany was signed in August 1970, the Warsaw Treaty with Poland in December 1970 followed by the quadripartite treaty on Berlin and the Basic Treaty between the FRG and the GDR in 1972. A treaty with Czechoslovakia was signed in 1973. Griffith, 1978, op. cit., chapter 5. For the two Germanies' relations with the Soviet Union, see Renata Fritsch-Bournazel, L'Union Soviétique et les Deux Allemagnes, Paris, Presses de la

Negotiations with Poland proved particularly difficult.

According to Haftendorn:

"...the difficulties that had accumulated between Poland and Germany as a result of a calamitous past necessitated laborious detailed work to produce solutions that were at once politically and morally convincing..."⁹⁵

The border question was particularly sensitive, but the negotiations also raised Polish claims for indemnification for crimes of nazism, as well as the issue of the rights of remaining Germans to emigrate from Poland. The Warsaw Treaty, finally signed in 1970, stated that "the Oder Neisse line laid down in the Potsdam Agreement shall constitute the Western state frontier of the People's Republic of Poland."⁹⁶ Both Poland and West Germany committed themselves to respecting the others' territorial integrity and renounced territorial claims. In the aftermath of the Warsaw treaty, an agreement linking Polish compensation claims and the granting of emigration permits for Germans in Poland was negotiated.⁹⁷

Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1979.

⁹⁵Haftendorn, op. cit, especially pp. 199-206, quote on p. 204.

⁹⁶Ibid, p. 203.

⁹⁷The Federal Republic recognised the Oder-Neisse line as Germany's Eastern border in the Warsaw Treaty with Poland in 1970 as well as in the Moscow Treaty of that same year. Yet, there was disagreement over the significance of this recognition. The Federal Republic argued that it had recognised the border only for the duration of the Federal Republic and that it was not binding on a future unified Germany. After German reunification, Chancellor Kohl delayed confirmation of the inviolability of Poland's western border

Westpolitik and Ostpolitik: towards 'decoupling'?

It was pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, that Western policies towards Eastern Europe cannot be seen in isolation from East-West relations. This was particularly so in the case of West Germany. The partition of Germany was both a symbol and a consequence of the East-West division:

"The German problem was central to the outbreak of the cold War, central to its continuation and central to its decline. So close, in fact is the inter-connection between the German problem and the Cold War that it becomes difficult to distinguish cause and effect."⁹⁸

Because the dividing line between East and West in Europe went through Germany, West Germany's allies were also particularly sensitive to events in intra-German relations and in West Germany's Ostpolitik in general. At the same time, West Germany's Ostpolitik was vulnerable to pressure from the other Western states. In the words of David Marsh, West Germany had had to

"...become an eminently humble partner: subsuming its interests to those of the Western alliance, eschewing independent use of military force, reassuring its allies that it was its destiny in European rather than national terms, ostentatiously playing down the practical possibilities for reunification."⁹⁹

until March 1990. According to Ash, the delay was a tactical move aimed at curbing opposition to recognition from the nationalist right in Germany. Garton Ash, 1994, op. cit. p. 230.

⁹⁸Avi Shlaim, op. cit.p. 123.

⁹⁹David Marsh, Germany and Europe: The Crisis of Unity, London, Mandarin, 1994 p. 32.

The changes in West Germany's position on relations with Eastern Europe must be understood against the backdrop of this fragile position in the Western alliance. In fact, whenever West Germany's policy on Eastern Europe was seen as evolving too far out of step with broad trends in the Alliance, it encountered difficulties. It has already been pointed out that West Germany's abandonment of the Hallstein doctrine, and the development of Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik, was not only a result of West Germany's realisation that its strategy of negotiating with the Soviet Union from a position of strength would not work. It came about most of all as a result of pressure from West Germany's allies:

"It was not the loss of the tenuous hope of reunification which forced the FRG to adapt. It was the fact that its earlier policy towards Eastern Europe was producing stresses and contradictions in the Western alliance..."¹⁰⁰

As detente gained momentum in the late 1960s, the United States was increasingly reluctant to support West Germany's revisionism. West Germany had previously clashed with Britain over its efforts to develop "disengagement" with Eastern Europe. The potential for a conflict with the United States was far more serious. With the United States' declining support for German reunification, France's position on the issue increased in importance. Yet, France was, itself, developing a more active East European policy. Hence, West

¹⁰⁰Windsor, 1971, op. cit, p. 46.

Germany was facing pressure from its two most important allies to change its position on Eastern Europe. At the same time, it was presented with competing alternatives, both of which were unacceptable to it: the United States because it implicitly accepted the division of Europe, the French because although challenging the division of Europe, the West German government suspected the French project would lead to undermining the goal of German reunification. What is more, the French proposal sought to exclude the United States from a European settlement.¹⁰¹ This was still unacceptable to West Germany. As the section on France showed, Franco-German disagreements over policy in Eastern Europe came to a climax after the intervention in Prague in 1968, with each country blaming the other for the invasion.

West Germany's dilemmas were not resolved with the launch of Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik. In fact, although it fitted in with the overall climate of detente, West Germany's Ostpolitik did to a large extent follow its own logic. Thus, it sowed the seeds of future misunderstandings within the Western alliance about West Germany's "true" aims in Eastern Europe. It was not entirely clear to West Germany's allies to what extent the new Ostpolitik meant the abandonment of the objective of reunification and whether or not West Germany

¹⁰¹Hanreider, 1989, op. cit. p. 185.

was still a revisionist power in Europe.¹⁰² According to Joffe, reunification was still the main objective of the Ostpolitik, what had changed was the way in which West Germany went about achieving this aim.¹⁰³ Pierre Hassner appears to take a slightly different view:

"Ostpolitik meant adjustment to realities, including that of detente policies of other Western powers, and carried no expectations either of national reunification or ideological convergence with the East."¹⁰⁴

In fact, although the partition of Germany and the constraints this put on West Germany's foreign policy was the result of the Cold War, Western attachment to Germany's partition was also a result of anxiety about the potential power of a unified Germany. Consequently, Germany's aspirations to overcome its division through a rapprochement with the East would almost inevitably provoke some disquiet amongst its Western allies, despite West Germany's assurances about its commitment to Western institutions. As West Germany's Ostpolitik accelerated in the 1970s, and global detente lost its momentum, West Germany's allies became

¹⁰²According to Hanrieder, "There was always the question of whether Ostpolitik was merely a remnant of the former efforts at reunification or the beginning of an evolutionary process", Hanrieder, 1989, op. cit.p. 20.

¹⁰³Joffe in Gordon op. cit., p. 149-150.

¹⁰⁴Pierre Hassner, "Western perceptions of the USSR", Daedalus, Winter 1979, vol 108, no 1, pp. 113-150. Quote on p. 126.

increasingly concerned about its commitment to Western institutions.

In summary, West Germany was a central, perhaps the central, actor, in the Western alliance's relations with Central and Eastern Europe. Relations with Poland were particularly difficult for West Germany. Against the backdrop of centuries of Polish-German/Prussian conflict, as well as the legacy of the Second World War, efforts at reconciliation, symbolised by Willy Brandt's visit to Auswich in 1972, were important factors in the Ostpolitik. Nonetheless, the key issue in West Germany's relations with Eastern Europe remained that of its relations with the GDR. Because of the close interconnection between the German question and the East-West balance, as well as West German efforts to remain at the forefront of Western approaches to Eastern Europe, there were some disagreements, firstly with Britain, and later with France. These were, however, bilateral disagreements. They never amounted to an intra-mural crisis, mostly because, although there was tension, until the late 1970s, there was no direct clash between West Germany and the alliance hegemon, the United States, over Eastern Europe.

USA

There is no long-term tradition of relations between the United States and Eastern Europe comparable to those of Germany or even France. Indeed, strategically, Central and Eastern Europe has virtually no importance for the United States. It was only with the United States' entry into the First World War that Eastern Europe appeared on its foreign policy agenda, and then again, it only stayed there for a brief period. Eastern Europe received US attention again with the advent of the Second World War, although it was not, as in the case of France and Britain, over Eastern Europe that the United States entered the War. After the Second World War, there was constant concern for Eastern Europe in the United States, usually, as a factor in the overall framework of US relations with the Soviet Union.

The United States and Eastern Europe: combining universal principles and national foreign policy objectives

An important theme running through most of the United States' dealings with Central and Eastern Europe is the proclaimed concern for the principles of national self-determination and liberal democracy. The United States President Woodrow Wilson's actions were fundamental to the creation of the successor states in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the First World War. His actions were not wholly the result

of a specific concern for the fate of the Central and East European peoples, but rather, a result of what Northedge has called "the messianic ideals of Wilson".¹⁰⁵ Wilson's position on this issue was made public in his address to the US Congress on 8 January 1918 where he presented the war aims of the United States in fourteen points. Wilson's Fourteen Points achieved status as a basic charter for freedom among the European peoples.¹⁰⁶ Overall, however, the United States did not appear to have a clear design for Eastern Europe or any clear idea of what should take place or be done there at the end of the First World War. Furthermore, US foreign policy showed little knowledge or understanding of the geopolitical realities of Eastern Europe. Already at the peace conference in Versailles it proved difficult to reconcile Wilson's principles of national self-determination with ethnic disputes, as well as with economic and strategic considerations in Eastern Europe. As a consequence, the successor states to the defeated Empires, suffered both from internal and external fragilities.¹⁰⁷ With the defeat of

¹⁰⁵Fred Northedge, The Troubled Giant, London, Bell & Sons Ltd., 1966, p.33.

¹⁰⁶See Alan Palmer, The Lands Between: A History of East-Central Europe since the Congress of Vienna, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970, pp. 120-149.

¹⁰⁷Christopher Coker argues that "At Versailles in 1919, President Wilson had insisted on an outdated nineteenth-century understanding of self-determination, which had condemned Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland to become economic satellites of either Germany or the Soviet Union.", Reflections on American Foreign Policy Since 1945, London,

Wilson in the 1920 US Presidential election, and the subsequent refusal of the United States to enter the League of Nations, the United States was not in a position to support the survival of these states.

The discrepancy between ideals and practical political and military commitment in the United States' relations with Eastern Europe was also evident during and at the end of the Second World War. According to Coker:

"In retrospect, the United States cut the unfortunate figure of a country which had severed itself from the outside world in the inter-war years and thus had cut itself off from reality. The US was essentially a one-dimensional power which treated Eastern Europe as it had under Wilson, as raw material for its mission."¹⁰⁸

The debate between historians about the importance attributed to Poland and Eastern Europe in British policy at the end of the Second World War is matched by a similar debate about US foreign policy. The importance of this debate for US policy towards Eastern Europe is underlined by Garrett:

"The Yalta controversy has shadowed the American policy process and the careers of individuals for some forty years now...Any discussion of future American policy options with respect to Eastern Europe presumably has to give at least some attention to the ghost of Yalta".¹⁰⁹

Pinter Publishers, 1989, p. 42.

¹⁰⁸Coker, op. cit. p. 44.

¹⁰⁹Stephen Garrett, From Potsdam to Poland, New York, Praeger, 1986, p. 213.

This issue is dealt with, indirectly, in the debate about the origins of the Cold War. Essentially, revisionists and traditionalists disagree on the degree of the United States' responsibility for the break-up of the war-time alliance and the onset of the Cold War. This debate casts light indirectly on the pretensions of the Superpowers in Eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War.¹¹⁰ Gaddis, in his effort to transcend the revisionist-traditionalist division, argues

¹¹⁰Traditionalist authors tend to argue that US initiatives in Eastern Europe came too late or were insufficient to "save" Eastern Europe. The revisionist argument considers US foreign policy as a deliberate effort to impose US hegemony on the rest of the world. Moving beyond the discussion of apportioning blame, the "post-revisionist" perspective, introduced by Gaddis, pitch their explanation in the complex interaction between US and Soviet policies. Halliday makes a further distinction between what he calls the argument amongst historians about the origins of the Cold War and the debate within international relations and the peace movement, which emphasise the "underlying dynamic of the conflict". Here he identifies four categories: the realist, the subjectivist, the internalist and the inter-systemic. Arguably, however, there is an element of overlap between these two debates. The post-revisionists, for example, seem to a large extent to be inspired by the same motives as the "subjectivists", by emphasising elements such as misperception. Sections of the traditionalist literature would fit into the realist category. The difference between the two debates, then, would be that one emphasises theory more explicitly than the other, rather than that they present fundamentally different interpretations of the Cold War. Fred Halliday, Rethinking International Relations, London, Macmillan, 1994, pp. 171-7. Gaddis "post-revisionist" thesis is found in "The emerging post-revisionist synthesis on the origins of the Cold War", pp. 171-90 in Diplomatic History, vol. 7, summer 1983. For the revisionist perspective see Gar Alperovitz, Cold War Essays, New York, 1970; William Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy, New York, 1962; Walter LaFeber, America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-67, New York, 1967. A critical view of the revisionist position is found in Charles Maier, "Revisionism and the interpretation of Cold War origins", Perspectives in American History IV, 1970, pp. 313-47.

that Roosevelt did attempt to maintain the independence of the East European states. He underlines that Roosevelt's policy originated in a rejection of the idea of spheres of influence, and in the desire to continue the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union also after the end of the Second World War:

"Throughout the war he [Roosevelt] worked to convince the East Europeans that they had nothing to fear from Russia and that they could afford to choose governments acceptable to Moscow. Simultaneously he sought to persuade Stalin that the defeat and disarmament of Germany together with the maintenance of big-power unity into the postwar period, would do more to guarantee Soviet security than would territorial gains and spheres of influence in Eastern Europe."¹¹¹

Lundestad agrees that there was a genuine concern for Eastern Europe in the United States, and that Roosevelt did attempt to achieve the setting up of democratic, independent regimes in Eastern Europe.¹¹² However, he also argues that the

¹¹¹John Lewis Gaddis, The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-47, New York, Columbia University Press, 1972, p.133-4. Gaddis' research also emphasises the domestic pressures on US foreign policy in the early years of the Cold War, and suggests that similar pressures were evident also in the Soviet Union. Thus, although leaders in both camps wanted peace, they failed to provide it.

¹¹²This is contested by Richard Lukas: "As this study has shown, the communization of Poland in the period 1945-47 was less the result of communist defensive reactions to American challenges than it was the consequence of Washington's having habituated the Kremlin to deal with political issues in Eastern Europe without the United States during the war years. Such was the bitter legacy for the US and Poland." Richard Lukas, Bitter Legacy: Polish-American Relations in the Wake of World War II, Lexington, Kentucky, The University Press of Kentucky, 1982, p.138.

region was not essential to US foreign policy and that therefore, in the end, the United States reluctantly accepted Soviet power in Eastern Europe:

"The United States did work to set up democratic regimes and the principles of freer trade in Eastern Europe, as in many other regions in the world. ...[However] American policy-makers were forced to admit throughout that when it came to practical politics Eastern Europe could not be considered an absolutely crucial area to the United States".¹¹³

The final arbiter, according to Lundestad, was the Red Army, which was in control of most of Eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War. This is strongly disputed by Loth, who emphasises the importance of political forces in the emergence of bipolarity:

"The strategic military decisions of the war, the result of which was noted at Yalta, did not of course determine that the Soviet controlled territories would be governed according to the model of Stalinist Soviet Union; it was not yet certain that the frontiers of occupation in Europe would be consolidated into the frontiers of economic and military blocs; it was not yet certain that the joint administration of the European power vacuum left behind by Hitler would lead to worldwide East-West polarisation. For all this political forces which later declared themselves for the West bear a great degree of responsibility."¹¹⁴

The importance of "universalism" in US initiatives is underlined in most of this literature, although Lundestad considers "American universalism" to mean little more than

¹¹³Geir Lundestad, The American Non-Policy Toward Eastern Europe, 1943-47, Oslo, Universitetsforlaget and New York, Humanities Press, 1975, pp.34-5.

¹¹⁴Loth, op. cit. pp. 432-3.

the universal implementation of American ideals and principles.¹¹⁵ It is possible then to argue that a distinguishing mark of the United States approach to Eastern Europe, compared to the West European approaches, was a greater emphasis on liberal ideals and difficulty in justifying a policy based on spheres of influence.¹¹⁶ In addition, it is often argued that US policies suffered from a general lack of knowledge about Eastern Europe:

"A general lack of interest and knowledge about conditions in Eastern Europe pervaded the American public and government. The remoteness and chaos of this region, combined with competing events and issues, led to little sustained interest. The individual questions in dispute in Eastern Europe never seemed terribly important. During the war, the events in Eastern Europe were not considered to be as crucial as from hindsight it might appear that they should have been."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵Lundestad also argues that "Most European observers have been rather sceptical about the American claim to uniqueness, particularly as it usually implied American superiority. To many Europeans, what was unique about America was its uncanny ability to make the most inspiring idealism coincide almost perfectly with rather ordinary national objectives", Geir Lundestad, The American "Empire", Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1990, p. 41.

¹¹⁶Yergin argues that these two were reconciled through the doctrine of "national security", which enabled "...America's post-war leader to be democratic idealists and pragmatic realists at the same time. So emboldened, American leaders pursued a global, often crusading, foreign policy, convinced that it was made urgent by something more earthly than the missionary impulse of Woodrow Wilson", p. 13 in Daniel Yergin, Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State, London, André Deutsch, 1978.

¹¹⁷Lynn Davis, The Cold War Begins: Soviet American Conflict Over Eastern Europe, Princeton and London, Princeton University Press, 1974, p.378.

"Containment" versus "liberation" in Eastern Europe

Gradually, at the end of the Second World War, rather than multiplying its interventions on behalf of Eastern Europe, the United States turned to concentrate on strengthening its support for Western Europe. After the coup in Prague in 1948 and the Berlin blockade, the US Senate endorsed the Vandenberg resolution, calling for an expansion of US military strength and military assistance to Western Europe, thus allowing for US participation in a military alliance with Western Europe.¹¹⁸ At this point, what emerges is the US concern with preventing the further expansion of Soviet communism into Western Europe through the policy of containment, rather than any attempt at changing the course of events in Eastern Europe, by that time considered a fait accompli.

The basic guidelines for US policy towards Eastern Europe in the Cold War were set out in 1949 in NSC 58 "United States Policy Towards the Soviet Satellite States in Eastern Europe".¹¹⁹ The objective of this document was to discuss

¹¹⁸DePorte, op. cit. p. 138.

¹¹⁹National Security Council "United States Policy Toward the Soviet Satellite States in Eastern Europe", NSC 58, September 14, 1949. Quotes are from Thomas H. Etzold and John Lewis Gaddis (eds) Containment: Documents on American Policy and Strategy, 1945-1950, New York, Columbia University Press, 1978, pp.211-223.

"means ... to cause the elimination of dominant Soviet influence in the satellite states of Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Rumania"¹²⁰ It argued that overturning Soviet control in Eastern Europe was principally a long-term objective:

"The ultimate aim must, of course, be the appearance in Eastern Europe of non-totalitarian administrations willing to accommodate themselves to, and participate in, the free world community. Strong tactical considerations, ..., argue against setting up this goal as an immediate objective".¹²¹

Hence, the recommended action was for the United States to encourage the emergence of

"...schismatic Communist regimes... fostering a heretical drifting-away process on the part of the satellite states".¹²²

This establishes a direct link between the Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union and the role of the East European states. It was primarily as Soviet satellites that these countries were important for the United States:

"These states [Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Rumania] in the current two-world struggle ... have meaning primarily because they are in varying degrees politico-military adjuncts of Soviet power and extend that power into the heart of Europe".¹²³

¹²⁰Ibid, p. 212.

¹²¹Ibid, p.219.

¹²²Ibid, p.220.

¹²³Ibid, p.212.

What is less clear in reading this document, is what kind of instruments the US government considered should be used to obtain the objective of encouraging "schismatic East European regimes". There is room for a relatively aggressive policy in the sense that the intention of the policy clearly goes beyond that of containing Soviet power and expresses the wish ultimately to remove the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. At the same time there is room for a more low key approach, using "carrots" instead of "sticks".

In the first years of the Cold War, US policy-makers were hesitating in their approach to Eastern Europe between a policy of 'containment' and one of 'liberation' or 'roll back'. The concept of containment, first expressed in George Kennan's article "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" published in Foreign Affairs in 1947 under the pseudonym "X", consisted essentially of recommending a policy aimed at preventing further expansion of Soviet communism.¹²⁴ As US-Soviet relations deteriorated and anti-communist sentiment increased in the United States, some elements, in particular in the right wing of the Republican Party, denounced the policy of containment as "too soft". The notion of a policy of

¹²⁴Foreign Affairs, July 1947, pp. 566-582. It must be noted that Kennan himself, although considered the father of the concept, never approved of the policy of containment. He argued in retrospect that its aim should not have been to perpetuate conflict with the Soviet Union, but to encourage negotiation. Coker, op. cit pp. 56-63, DePorte, op. cit. p. 127.

'liberation' or 'roll back', representing a more 'active' alternative was advocated. During the 1952 electoral campaign the debate over containment and liberation was an important issue. According to Kovrig it is the only time that Eastern Europe has been a subject of discussion under the presidential elections.¹²⁵ A prominent advocate of the policy of liberation was then future Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles. He argued that the Republicans should;

"...repudiate all commitments contained in secret understandings such as those of Yalta which aid Communist enslavements and replace the negative, futile and immoral policy of containment with a message of liberation that would set up strains and stresses within the captive world which will make the rulers impotent to continue in their monstrous ways and mark the beginning of the end."¹²⁶

The theme of 'liberation' continued to be part of the foreign policy vocabulary after the election of Eisenhower and Dulles arrival in office. However, it is unclear what the exact content of this policy was supposed to be, and in what way it differed from the policy of containment.¹²⁷ The emptiness of the concept of liberation was exposed for the first time

¹²⁵Bennett Kovrig, Of Walls and Bridges: The United States and Eastern Europe, New York University Press, New York and London, 1991, p. 48.

¹²⁶Council on Foreign Relations, Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1952, New York, Harper, 1953, pp.80-83, quoted in Kovrig, 1991, op. cit., p.47.

¹²⁷According to Garrett it is the potential for military involvement that distinguishes 'liberation theory' from containment, op. cit. p. 181.

during the uprising in East Germany in 1953.¹²⁸ During the uprising the US government underlined that the aggressive objective of liberation could only be obtained by "peaceful means".¹²⁹

The liberation rhetoric received its final blow with the Hungarian uprising in 1956.¹³⁰ In this instance it has been argued that the United States contributed to the raising of Hungarian expectations of military action against a Soviet intervention in Hungary by its policy. The following words from an essay by Istvan Bibo, a minister in the last Nagy government, testifies to the expectations of the Hungarians:

"The Western world did not promise to start an atomic war in their [the Hungarian people] interest, nor did it call on them foolishly to take up arms. Their encouragements, however, did say that if ever the international political situation and the attitude of

¹²⁸Still, assessments of the notion of 'liberation' vary. Coker refers to it as a dishonest and bankrupt policy, op. cit. p. 66. Garrett argues that it is ideally an attractive concept because of the absence of moral ambiguity, yet concludes that it was never a realistic policy option. op. cit. pp. 179-185. Yet surely, if the political rhetoric was not applicable in practice, it could not be devoid of moral ambiguity.

¹²⁹Kovrig op. cit. 1991, p. 89-102.

¹³⁰See Kovrig, 1991, op. cit, pp.99-100; House report, op. cit, p. 14 and Jiri Valenta "Soviet decision making and the Hungarian revolution" pp. 265-278, Bennett Kovrig, "Rolling back liberation: the United States and the Hungarian revolution", pp. 279-290 and Brian Mc Cauley, "Hungary and Suez, 1956: the limits of Soviet and American power", pp. 291-315, in Béla Király, Barbara Lotze and Nándor Dreisziger (eds), War and Society in Central Europe, vol. XI, "The first war between socialist states: the Hungarian revolution of 1956 and its impact", New York, Brooklyn College Press, 1984.

these peoples justify it, the Western world will use all its economic, political and moral weight to bring these issues up for consideration and satisfactory solution. The Hungarian Revolution brought about all the requisite conditions and legal claims. The gravest consequences the Western world must face as a result of the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution are that a ten year long policy and propaganda referring to principles and morals can now be contested not only in terms of its effectiveness and true meaning, but in terms of its honesty as well".¹³¹

Towards "differentiation"

After the Soviet intervention in Hungary the rhetoric of 'roll-back' and 'liberation' in Eastern Europe disappeared from the foreign policy vocabulary of the United States.

The new approach to Eastern Europe became one of encouraging gradual pluralism within the Warsaw Pact. This new approach was first advocated by Zbigniew Brzezinski and William E. Griffith in an article in *Foreign Affairs* in 1961, entitled "Peaceful engagement in Eastern Europe". The authors suggested that this policy should:

"(1) aim at stimulating further diversity in the Communist bloc; (2) thus increasing the likelihood that the East European states can achieve a greater measure of political independence from Soviet domination; (3) thereby ultimately leading to the creation of a neutral belt of states which, like the Finnish, would enjoy genuine popular freedom of choice in internal policy

¹³¹Quoted in Kovrig, The Myth of Liberation, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1973, p. 214-5. The quote is taken from Imre Kovacs (ed) Facts About Hungary: The Fight for Freedom, New York, 1966, pp.307-8.

while not being hostile to the Soviet Union and not belonging to Western military alliances."¹³²

Gordon and Kovrig argue that although presented under slightly different headings: 'peaceful engagement', 'bridge building' and 'differentiation', US foreign policy towards Eastern Europe did not change fundamentally after the early 1960s. Although the limits to East European independence were illustrated by the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, according to Kovrig, the reason why there was no significant change in the policy towards Eastern Europe is that there were no alternative policy options.¹³³ Following the logic of Brzezinski's and Griffith's article, the key features of the policy of 'differentiation' were:

"... that East European countries are not regarded as members of a monolithic Soviet bloc, like component republics of the Soviet Union itself, and that they are to be treated differently from each other. The grounds for favourable treatment have consistently been two: East European foreign policies at variance with those of the USSR and favourable to Western (or U.S.) interest, and measures of domestic economic, political and cultural liberalization"¹³⁴

¹³²Zbigniew Brzezinski and William Griffith, "Peaceful Engagement in Eastern Europe", pp. 642-654 in Foreign Affairs, Vol. 39, no 4, July 1961, quote on p.644.

¹³³Kovrig, 1973, op. cit. p.285.

¹³⁴Lincoln Gordon, "Interests and Policies in Eastern Europe: The View from Washington", pp. 67- 129 in Gordon (ed), op. cit., p.74

Poland became a principal target for the policy of differentiation, which tended to rank the East European states according to their autonomy from the Soviet Union and the measure of internal liberalisation. In 1977 it became the only country of the Soviet bloc that Jimmy Carter visited during his time as President of the United States. In fact, economic aid to Poland in 1957 can be seen as an early manifestation of such a policy. US aid was a direct response to Wladyslaw Gomulka's successful defiance of the Soviet Union in the 1956 uprising.

The development of concepts such as 'differentiation' and 'peaceful engagement' indicate an effort to develop a separate foreign policy approach to Eastern Europe. Still, there were several ambiguities in this strategy. Firstly, the implicit assumption that independence from the Soviet Union would also mean a more liberal domestic policy was challenged by the case of Rumania.¹³⁵ As Garthoff has underlined:

"American policy towards the communist states of Eastern Europe and differentiation in our policy and posture towards each state, has been based to a significant

¹³⁵Rumania received MFN status in 1975 as a reward for Ceausescu's independence from the Soviet Union in foreign policy and encouragement to continue this. Hungary only received the MNF status in 1978, in response to accomplished political reality. Garrett, op. cit. p. 88.

extent on the relations of each country to the Soviet Union"¹³⁶

Secondly, US policy in Eastern Europe cannot be seen as independent from the policy towards the Soviet Union.

Garthoff points out that:

"With respect to the US, its largely abortive proclamation about stimulating peaceful engagement and bridge-building in the mid-1960s looked suspiciously like continuous attempts to curtail Soviet political influence in Eastern Europe and to introduce American influence as a counter."¹³⁷

Thirdly, the ambiguities in the US position on Eastern Europe and the difficulty US policymakers had in reconciling foreign policy ideals and political reality remained with the strategy of differentiation. The confusion on this issue was demonstrated by the uproar caused by a statement made by State Department Counsellor Helmut Sonnenfeldt in a private conference for American ambassadors in London in 1975. During this meeting Sonnenfeldt said the United States should "strive for an evolution that makes the relationship between the East Europeans and the Soviet Union an organic one." Sonnenfeldt also said that the existing relationship was "unnatural" and that "our policy must be a policy of

¹³⁶Raymond L. Garthoff "Eastern Europe in the context of US-Soviet relations", in Sarah Meiklejohn Terry (ed), Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1984, pp. 315- 348. Quote on p. 320-21.

¹³⁷Raymond Garthoff, Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan, Washington, DC, The Brookings Institution, 1994, p. 140.

responding to the clearly visible aspirations in Eastern Europe for a more autonomous existence within the context of a strong Soviet geopolitical influence".¹³⁸ His statement was widely interpreted to mean that the United States endorsed Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe and accepted the principle of spheres of influence rejected by Roosevelt in the aftermath of the Second World War. In reality, however, most observers agree that Sonnenfeldt essentially restated what was in reality already US policy. In the words of Garrett the "doctrine" was "unexceptional".¹³⁹ Garthoff argues that:

"The United States did not accept Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe as a political right. At the same time, it did accept it as the prevailing political condition."¹⁴⁰

It was on the basis of this prevailing political condition that US policy of differentiation had first developed.

Finally, although there was an effort to conceive a separate approach to Eastern Europe, the region remained a low priority for US policy-makers. In other words, although there

¹³⁸Garthoff in Terry, op. cit., p. 323, quotes taken from "United States security policy vis-a-vis Eastern Europe (The 'Sonnenfeldt Doctrine')", Hearings Before the Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, 94th Cong., 2d sess., Apr. 12, 1976 (Washington, D.C.:GPO, 1976).

¹³⁹Garrett, op. cit, p. 211.

¹⁴⁰Garthoff, 1994, op. cit p. 551.

was a strategy, there was not a very active policy to follow it up. Lundestad argued that US policy towards Eastern Europe in the immediate post-war years was a "non-policy".¹⁴¹ Arguably, this continued to be true throughout the postwar period. Symptomatic is the trend in writings about US relations with Poland and Eastern Europe which tend to stress what should be done by the United States instead of analysing the policy itself.¹⁴²

Conclusions

Several conclusions can now be drawn regarding Poland's place in Western policies on East-West relations, about the differences and similarities between the Western states' approaches to Poland as well as about the interconnection between these policies and intra-alliance relations.

The onset of the Cold War and bipolarity changed the role of Poland in Europe. Politically, it became part of the Soviet

¹⁴¹Lundestad, 1975, op. cit.

¹⁴²See for example Brzezinski and Griffith, op. cit; Charles Gati, "The Forgotten Region ", pp. 135-145 in Foreign Policy, no 19, Summer 1975,; Paul Marer and Wlodzimierz Siminski (eds), Creditworthiness and Reform in Poland, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1988, especially chapters by Brzezinski, "US Policy Towards Poland in a Global Perspective", pp. 323-334; Thomas W. Simons Jr., "Strategy and Tactics in US Foreign Policy Towards Eastern Europe", pp. 305-314; Jerry Hough, The Polish Crisis: American Policy Options, Washington DC, The Brookings Institution, 1982.

bloc, and thus no longer an object of dispute between the Western states. Western states shared an underlying set of guidelines and principles, determined by the Cold War context and by their membership in the Western alliance, which also influenced their policies towards Poland and Eastern Europe. This did not mean that their distinctive national approaches to Poland and Eastern Europe were completely wiped out by the Cold War. In fact, individual Western states were striking out with independent initiatives towards Eastern Europe at various points in the post-war period and with various degrees of success. There was little deliberate effort to develop a coherent political strategy amongst Western states towards Poland and Eastern Europe. Indeed, because Poland, as well as the rest of Eastern Europe, was essentially off limits politically, the West had never really needed to develop a coherent political strategy towards it, and this had its advantages. Thus, it is more useful to think of parallel national Western approaches to Poland, with the various states adopting different policy rhythms and having different priorities, than an overall "Western" policy.

Britain, whose interest in Poland and Eastern Europe had traditionally been limited, played an important role in Eastern Europe through the Polish guarantee in 1939 and in the early post-war years. During the rest of the Cold War period, it is difficult to distinguish British policy towards Eastern Europe from its Soviet policy. France developed an

active, although ultimately disappointing, policy towards Central and Eastern Europe in the 1960s, under de Gaulle. The failure of a "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" was confirmed with the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. After this date, West Germany emerged as the most important actor in Western relations with Eastern Europe. Although West Germany's Ostpolitik developed against the backdrop of Superpower detente, it followed its own logic and by the late 1970s, it had acquired its own momentum.

Taken together, the West Europeans only had a limited interest in the ideological conflict with the Eastern bloc. The West European states, all by different means and in different phases of the Cold War, attempted to ensure some form of "peaceful coexistence" between East and West in Europe. In the United States, on the other hand, there was a stronger tendency to emphasise the ideological confrontation between the two blocs. Indeed, it was when the United States' policy swung most strongly in this direction, and engaged in a rhetoric of "liberation", such as in the 1950s, and again, as we shall see later in the thesis, in the early 1980s, that transatlantic disagreement over Eastern Europe became the strongest. Paradoxically, although the United States had a distinct foreign policy strategy towards Eastern Europe, with the principle of "differentiation", its relations with Eastern Europe tended to be dominated by the Superpower

relationship, and never reached the same level as West European relations with Eastern Europe.

There was a close connection between transatlantic relations and Western relations with Eastern Europe. Nonetheless, this interconnection took on a different pattern in each of the Western states. Britain emerges as the country that most explicitly linked its own policy towards Eastern Europe to that of the Western alliance and the United States. It considered that policies towards Eastern Europe had to be part of the Alliance's East-West strategy. France took the opposite view. It regarded its ability to influence East-West relations as hampered by a close relationship with the United States. De Gaulle's attempt at building bridges between the two blocs in Europe also involved reducing European links with the United States. West Germany was most dependent on the approval of its allies for its own initiatives in Eastern Europe, and also more vulnerable to changes in its allies' policies towards the region. At the same time, concern about West Germany's position on Eastern Europe was an important factor, in particular in France's, policies towards the region. What this meant was that once West Germany's Ostpolitik gained momentum, it also represented a potential issue for Western disagreement. As the alliance hegemon, the United States' relations with Eastern Europe were much less affected by the positions of the West Europeans.

Although sometimes in competition and even in conflict over Eastern Europe, an outright Western crisis was avoided. The findings of this chapter suggest that this was not due exclusively to the constraints of the Soviet threat, but also to the fact that Eastern Europe was never high on the list of Western priorities. Not enough was at stake in Eastern Europe for any one state to provoke a clash with its allies. It follows from this that, rather than a direct conflict of interest in Eastern Europe, the differences of approach to Poland and Eastern Europe amongst Western states had as much to do with conflicting perspectives about European order, or wider East-West relations.

This leads us to a final aspect of Western relations with Poland and Eastern Europe which has to do with an underlying ambiguity in Western policies towards this region. Although central to the strategic balance in Europe, or perhaps because of its centrality, it was rarely in a position to determine the course of its own history. According to Kundera the East Europeans: "... represent the wrong side of this history; they are the victims and the outsiders."¹⁴³ In the postwar world, this sense of Poland as the "underdog" was reinforced by the image of the West's betrayal at Yalta. Although Poland was a major cause of the onset of the Cold War, it was not its main object. Sympathy

¹⁴³Kundera, op. cit., p. 36.

for Poland, and a corresponding criticism of Western policies in Poland, is reflected in the writings of many western historians. Norman Davies writes that:

"It is a curious phenomenon. But after two hundred years of 'tragic repetitions' the Poles have not yet learned how to lie down flat and avoid their periodic thrashings; and Western opinion in general has still not learned to give them credit for standing up to resist."¹⁴⁴

The main difficulty, shared by all Western states, in relations with Poland, was the need to combine an official posture of rejecting Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe with practical policies towards the region.

The interdependence between Western relations with Eastern Europe and the wider context of East-West relations points to the potential ability of specific events in Eastern Europe such as the Polish crisis to affect wider East-West issues on which the Western allies disagreed. What it also suggests is that if the general climate inside the Western alliance deteriorated, maintaining cohesion on relations with Eastern Europe would also be more difficult. Before examining how these long term trends found expression in Western responses to the Polish crisis, the institutional frameworks available to coordinate Western policies must be examined.

¹⁴⁴Davies, 1984, op. cit. p. 431.

CHAPTER THREE. THE WESTERN ALLIANCE: RUDIMENTS OF A COORDINATION SYSTEM

Introduction

Having looked at the different national traditions of the four major Western states in relation to Eastern Europe, we now turn to examine the framework available for coordinating the policies of these states and for enabling the Western allies to respond cohesively to tensions or crises in Eastern Europe.

Although the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is no doubt the dominant institution with regard to coordinating Western policies, a study of the structures and processes of Western foreign policy coordination that looks at this organisation alone would be only of limited interest. As Sir Clive Rose, former British Ambassador to NATO, has pointed out:

"Consultation 'in the Alliance' is of course by no means confined to this [the NATO] machinery. Consultation between members takes place, not only in many other multilateral fora, but also continuously on a bilateral basis, as part of the normal diplomatic exchanges outside the formal network of the Alliance."¹

The Western alliance is considered here to be a whole configuration of economic, trade, political and security

¹Sir Clive Rose, "Political consultation in the Alliance", pp.1-5 in NATO Review, vol 31, no 1, 1983, quotation on p. 2.

relationships. Indeed, the problems facing Western policy-makers, in particular in relations with Eastern Europe, include economic, political and security issues, and these are dealt with inside different institutional frameworks. Consequently, in addition to NATO, this chapter looks at CoCom, the G7 group, the European Community (EC) and European Political Cooperation (EPC). This approach also makes sense bearing in mind that the main theme of the thesis is not the study of international institutions but the study of the process of coordination of foreign policies of allied states. Hence, our starting point was the states themselves, and this particular chapter looks at the main structures inside which the Western states interacted. It looks at the main institutions available to assist these states in an attempt to coordinate their policies in a situation of crisis or high tension in Eastern Europe.

Although the thesis does not study the role and efficiency of one Western institution in particular, it does not consider states to be the only actors of importance in international affairs. Neither does it reject the point that international institutions can develop a capacity to influence the foreign policies of its member states. Indeed, it has already been pointed out in chapter two that membership of the Alliance did constitute a constraint on Western policies in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the thesis does not subscribe to the notion that a common threat

necessarily leads to a common policy, or that a divergence of interest will necessarily lead to a breakdown of coordination. As William Wallace has observed,

"There is no self-evident harmony of interests and understandings between France and Germany on the major issues of foreign policy. Indeed, on many issues, it has been easier to find common ground between London and Bonn, or even between London and Paris, than between Paris and Bonn. To the extent that foreign policy differences have been more successfully managed between Paris and Bonn than between Paris and London, that success must be attributed to the efforts made on both sides to mitigate conflict - or to the underlying commitments to collaborate in spite of their differences."²

Finally, the relationship between allied states is considered to be qualitatively different from that between states who do not share similar values, interdependent economies and close political and security ties.³ As Christopher Hill has argued,

"To neglect power is like neglecting to breathe, but to centre one's foreign policy on it is to take a very blinkered view of how constructive change is achieved at the international level. In all major areas of policy the individual actors (who are naturally self-regarding groups of separate interests) have to strike a balance between pursuing their own distinctive goals and ensuring that the fabric of international society is not endangered."⁴

²William Wallace, "Foreign policy: the management of distinctive interests", pp. 205-224, in Morgan and Bray (eds), Partners and Rivals in Western Europe: Britain, France and Germany, Aldershot, Gower, 1986, quotation p. 205.

³For this approach see Richard Neustadt, Alliance Politics, New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1970 and Sheri Wassermann, The Neutron Bomb Controversy: A Study in Alliance Politics, New York, Praeger, 1983.

⁴Christopher Hill, "Against Power Politics: Commentary on 'Reflections on the Future of Western Europe', by Johan K. De Vree", pp. 19-31, in Johan K. De Vree, Towards a European Foreign Policy, Dordrecht, Martinus Nijhoff, 1987,

The importance of balancing national and collective interests is even stronger inside an alliance. Consequently, power politics assumptions are not entirely suitable when the aim is to understand the success or failure of the Western states to coordinate their policies.

Several issues and problems involving the framework of Western coordination will be discussed. Some of these are general concerns related to the alliance framework as such, which also have an impact on the process of coordinating policies towards Eastern Europe. Others are particular to the question of Eastern Europe and Poland. The main argument here is that despite the existence of a network of Western institutions or agencies, the Western institutional framework was not entirely appropriate in terms of providing mechanisms for coordinating a rapid and cohesive response to an East European crisis. In order to support this view, several interrelated themes will be highlighted. The first theme is that of the importance of Eastern Europe for the individual Western institutional frameworks. The second theme relates to the tendency towards institutional fragmentation. Western institutions or agencies are to a large extent compartmentalised. Each agency is specialised to deal with a specific issue area. The chapter examines the interaction between the different institutional networks and the links between them. It discusses whether or not, against the backdrop of this

quote on p. 23.

fragmented institutional network, it is possible to achieve an overall approach to a crisis involving not only security issues, but also economic and political matters. As a result of the institutional multiplicity, the Western institutions sometimes inevitably overlap in their areas of activities. A third issue discussed is to what extent the coexistence of several institutions create frictions which would not be there in the case of a single overarching framework. Here, the question of relations between EPC and the United States, and also the role of EPC inside the broader Atlantic framework is particularly important. Fourthly, the extent to which the Western institutional framework provides opportunities not only for consultation, but also a basis for common action will be discussed. Rose has outlined five levels at which consultation takes place inside the context of the Western alliance:

1. Exchange of views or information, with or without analysis;
2. Communication of actions or decisions which have already been taken or are imminent;
3. Advance warning of actions, or decisions, with a view to receiving the comments of allies and/or their endorsement;
4. Discussion with the aim of reaching a consensus on policies to be adopted or actions to be taken in parallel by all allies concerned;

5. Consultation for the purpose of arriving at Alliance agreement on collective decision or action. Rose further argues that it is when something more than consultation is required that the NATO machinery encounters difficulties:

"Most of the problems arise when the Alliance is trying to agree on parallel policies or actions (Category 4.) The two subjects which have caused most trouble in recent years have been East-West relations and "out-of area" issues."⁵

Chapter two attempted to distinguish between general East-West relations on the one hand, and Western policies towards Eastern Europe on the other. When looking at the Western institutional framework it becomes virtually impossible to make such a distinction. The Western institutional framework was created in the context of the Cold War and as a result, looking at their approach to Eastern Europe becomes equal to looking at their policies with regard to East-West relations. Henceforth, the fifth and final issue discussed in this chapter is to what extent it would be reasonable to assume that a certain organisational predisposition would lead the Western institutions to perceive the particular aspect of events in Eastern Europe that corresponded to its area of interest as the most important (such as security in the case of NATO, economics in the case of the European Community).

One important reservation must be made with regard to the approach taken. As Helen Wallace has pointed out, the

⁵Rose, op. cit., p.4.

institutional structures are only the most visible part of relations between states and do not in themselves provide an absolute view of these relations. They will always need to be complemented by political factors:

"There is often a disjunction between structure and process - in other words formal structures are sometimes empty of content and of supportive attitudes - just as constructive cooperation may take place virtually without formalisation."⁶

Although we believe political factors to be more important for the success of coordination than institutional provisions, we consider that, by looking at the institutional structures, it is possible to evaluate to what extent there was a certain potential for cooperation. This is not only because the very existence of institutional frameworks manifests a political commitment to cooperate, but because they also facilitate the process of coordination. Furthermore, the very existence of institutions such as NATO, or even more so the European Community, gradually, although not necessarily deliberately, strengthens ties between the member states and make coordination more likely.

The question of bilateral relations between France, Britain, the United States and the Federal Republic is not discussed. The importance of these in the process of coordination should, however, not be underestimated. It is

⁶Helen Wallace, "The conduct of bilateral relationships by governments", pp. 136-155 in Morgan and Bray, op. cit., p. 137-8.

clear that multilateral structures of consultation only reflect part of reality. Of the bilateral relationships between France, Britain, West Germany and the United States, the Franco-German relationship is perhaps the closest one, and the most institutionalised. Nonetheless, many authors also emphasise the importance of the 'special relationship' between the United States and Britain.⁷

In an attempt to avoid being too descriptive and to stress certain general arguments, the chapter is organised thematically. The alternative would be to look at each institutional framework in turn. The different themes are however all closely interrelated, and making a clear distinction between them is difficult. As a result, there is a risk of creating an overlap between the different sections of the chapter. The first section looks at the extent to which the Western institutions have dealt with Eastern Europe. The next section discusses the provisions available for coordinating Western policies in times of tension or crisis in Eastern Europe. After this, the particular problem of relations between the United States and the European Community/ European Political Cooperation inside the Atlantic framework is examined and the extent to which the coexistence of EPC and NATO might make coordination difficult is discussed. Finally, before concluding, the suggestions that were made in the late

⁷See for example Donald C. Watt, Succeeding John Bull: America in Britain's Special Place. 1900-1975, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984.

1970s and early 1980s with regard to improving the weaknesses of the Western institutional framework, are examined, together with the attempts to use the G7 summits of the industrialised nations for this purpose.

Eastern Europe: a marginal preoccupation for Western institutions

There is no lack of institutional frameworks aimed at promoting cooperation between the Western states. A wide network of institutions deals with economic, political as well as military and security matters that are of common concern to the West. Some of these institutions are chiefly geared towards intra-Western cooperation, others have a more explicitly external purpose. The main objective here is to establish to what extent these agencies, each within their own area of competence, have dealt with coordinating Western policies towards Eastern Europe.

NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has been the chief point of reference for Western solidarity since the end of the Second World War and the main institutional framework promoting political and security cooperation between the Western states. It is first and foremost a military alliance, created in the early days of the Cold War, with

the specific objective of countering the perceived Soviet military threat.⁸ NATO distinguishes itself from traditional military alliances by functioning also as a permanent forum for diplomatic exchanges and foreign policy consultations between the Western allies in times of peace as well as war. Its civilian structure developed gradually, starting at the summit in Lisbon in 1952, with the agreement to make the North Atlantic Council a permanent institution. Meeting either at the level of the Permanent Representatives or at Ministerial level, the North Atlantic Council is the chief forum for political consultation inside the alliance.⁹ It is assisted by the Political Committee which meets at least once a week to keep up with political developments of interest to NATO in all areas of the world. The Political Committee prepares studies of political problems for discussion by the Council and

⁸There are a vast number of books about NATO and its history, but this account is chiefly based on, Stanley Sloan, NATO's future: Towards a New Transatlantic Bargain, Washington DC, National Defence University Press, 1985; Robert Osgood, NATO: the Entangling Alliance, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1962; William Par, Defending the West: A History of NATO, Brighton, Wheatsheaf, 1986. See also Joseph Smith, The Origins of NATO, Exeter, Exeter University Press, 1990 on the first years of NATO.

⁹The general literature on NATO rarely discusses the framework for political cooperation in NATO, or indeed the structures or decision-making process of NATO. Two exceptions are Dan Smith, Pressure: How America Runs NATO, London, Bloomsbury, 1989 and Robert S. Jordan, Political Leadership in NATO: A Study in Multinational Diplomacy, Boulder, Westview Press, 1979. See also Fredo Dannenbring, "Consultation: the political lifeblood of the Alliance", NATO Review, no 6, Dec. 1985, vol 33, pp. 5-11; Macguigan, "Political Consultation and the Alliance", NATO Review, no. 4, Aug. 1981, vol. 29, pp. 1-3; Frydenlund, "Thirty years of political cooperation", NATO Review, no. 6 December 1986, vol. 34, pp. 1-5.

submits reports to it.¹⁰ Ad hoc political working groups and regional expert groups also contribute to NATO's political activities.¹¹

However, despite the political consultation procedures and the civilian structures of NATO, it remains essentially a military alliance. It was from the perspective of military/security and with the purpose of strengthening Western security that NATO policy and NATO interest in political issues developed. It is also chiefly from this perspective that NATO has dealt with Eastern Europe.

The role of Eastern Europe in NATO's strategy, has evolved in the years since NATO's creation in 1949. Schweitzer argues that in the 1950s, the political situation in Eastern Europe was considered by NATO to be an important cause of East-West conflict:

"Unlike today [the late 1980s], it was not the spiralling growth of armaments ... that was seen as responsible for the widening gulf between East and West but rather the actual policies pursued by the

¹⁰During the Polish crisis it was the Political Committee that issued statements on Poland and that coordinated the efforts of making contingency planning in case of a Soviet intervention in Poland.

¹¹Emphasising the complexity of the NATO structure Smith argues that there are at least 435 committees in NATO: "...there is a forest of [NATO committees], creating a structure so complex that I would defy anybody to produce a comprehensive and comprehensible organisational chart of NATO on anything smaller than a pretty large wall." Thus, no doubt, there would be an ad hoc group dealing with Eastern Europe, but no standing group dealing with long-term planning of policies towards this region in particular. Op. cit. p. 9.

Soviet Union in Europe which had led to the arms race."¹²

By 1968 this had changed. The intervention in Prague did not provoke an intensification of East-West conflict, but a continuation and even strengthening of detente.¹³ The Harmel Report of 1967 had codified a change of direction in NATO's approach to East-West relations, ensuring a continued concern at NATO level with protection of the military balance, yet, allowing member states individually and collectively to explore policies of detente with the Warsaw Pact.¹⁴

When seeking to determine to what extent NATO dealt with Eastern Europe, it might be interesting to make a comparison between NATO's policy on "out of area" issues. Although there were increased calls for more Atlantic cooperation in "out of area" policies in the early 1980s,

¹²Carl-Christoph Schweitzer (ed), The Changing Western Analysis of the Soviet Threat, London, Pinter, 1990, p. 52.

¹³This must, at some level have produced a dilemma, because although the peoples of Eastern Europe may not have chosen the military alliance with the Soviet Union, the armies of the East European states were part of the Warsaw Pact, and henceforth they also represented a security threat to the NATO allies. It is, however, a dilemma which can be reproduced at all levels of Western dealings with Eastern Europe during the Cold War, not only in NATO.

¹⁴For the Harmel report see David P. Calleo, Beyond American Hegemony: The Future of the Western Alliance, New York, Basic Books, 1987, pp. 44-64.

the Allies failed to provide a convincing common strategy.¹⁵ This was due in particular to divergent perspectives and interests, and the limited institutional guidance from the NATO structures on "out of area" issues. This limited ability of NATO to deal with the so-called "out of area" issues was considered one of the principal weaknesses on NATO in the early 1980s.¹⁶

It is clear that regions such as Africa or the Middle East must be seen as out of area. However, bearing in mind that Eastern Europe was considered to be inside the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union, in what category would it be placed? There is no clear definition in the Atlantic Charter as to what is outside and what is inside NATO's 'area', apart from the territory of the members of the Alliance. According to article VI of the North Atlantic Treaty:

"...an armed attack on one or more of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack on the territory of

¹⁵Douglas Stuart and William Tow (eds), The Limits of Alliance: NATO Out-Of-Area Problems Since 1945, Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990, p. 101.

¹⁶For a discussion of the out of area problem with regard the Middle East, see Joseph Coffey and Gianni Bonvicini, The Atlantic Alliance and the Middle East, London, Macmillan Press, 1989. On the military aspects of the out of area issue see Christopher Coker, The Future of the Atlantic Alliance, London, Macmillan Press, 1984, pp. 95-120. The problem is also raised in Reinhardt Rummel, "Coordination of the West's crisis-diplomacy", Aussenpolitik, vol 31, no 2, 1980, pp. 123-133 and in Karl Kaiser, Winston Lord, Thierry de Montbrial and David Watt, Western Security: What Has Changed? What Should Be Done?, The Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Council on Foreign Relations, 1981; and Stuart and Tow, op. cit.

any of the parties in Europe or North America, on the occupation forces of any Party in Europe, on the islands under the jurisdiction of any Party in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer or on the vessels or aircraft in this area of any of the Parties."¹⁷

Even though it might seem provocative to categorise Eastern Europe as "out of area", it is doubtful whether it fell, during the Cold War, within the category of 'genuine NATO cases'. The important point is that of the ambiguity of Eastern Europe's place in NATO's policies. Although politically out of reach, because inside the Soviet sphere of influence, events in Eastern Europe had the undoubted capacity for affecting the strategic balance in Europe. Thus, the East European question was both ring-fenced away from and integral to Western strategic concerns. As NATO states' political involvement in Eastern Europe increased in the context of detente, the dilemmas that this entailed for NATO were further exacerbated.

Another difficulty in NATO dealings with Eastern Europe emerges from the fact that NATO was firstly and foremostly structured in order to deal with military and security issues. Even political consultation in NATO is closely interlinked with security concerns. Events in Eastern Europe that do not automatically fall into the category of pure military or security issues, but would involve both

¹⁷The North Atlantic Treaty, April 1949, article VI. The full text of the Treaty is found in appendix 2: Jordan, op. cit. pp. 277-280.

political and economic matters, would be difficult for the NATO structure to master.

Further, it may well be that there is an inherent 'organisational reflex' to deal swiftly with such issues that fit into the traditional mould of NATO consultation, and that it is more difficult for the Alliance to gear itself into action on different issues. Most importantly, however, NATO's preoccupation with Eastern Europe emerges primarily in the broader context of East-West relations, and with reference to security issues.

CoCom (Coordinating Committee on Multilateral Export Controls)

Complementing NATO, COCOM was the main economic arm of Western Cold War policies. Consequently, in the same way as NATO, it did not deal with Eastern Europe as an entity separate from the Soviet Union. COCOM's main task was to coordinate the control of Western exports to the member states of the Warsaw Pact (as well as China, Albania, Mongolia, Vietnam and North Korea). Its creation in 1949 was a reflection of concern both in Western Europe and in the United States that the export of certain items to the Soviet Union and its allies might increase their war-

potential and consequently threaten the security of the West.¹⁸

All NATO members, with the exception of Iceland, also became members of COCOM. Operating from a small annex to the US embassy in Paris, the organisation's primary activity consisted in agreeing, amongst the national delegations, on a list of products and technologies that would be controlled in their trade with the communist states. Three different lists were in operation: List I was composed of items to be embargoed unconditionally. List II included items for which members agreed they would restrict their exports to Eastern Europe to "reasonable quantities" and exchange information on what was actually exported. List III contained items still under consideration, for which agreement to control had not been reached. For items to be placed on or removed from the control lists, the unanimous consent of the member states was required. The enforcement and administration of controls were the

¹⁸There are few academic studies of Cocom itself, although the general issue of a trade embargo is dealt with in the literature on international economics. This account is based chiefly on Michael Mastanduno, Economic Containment: COCOM and the Politics of East-West Trade, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1992. Stephen Woolcock also discusses COCOM in his book Western Policies on East-West Trade, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1982. See also Gunnar Adler Karlsson, Western Economic Warfare 1947-1967: A Case Study in Foreign Economic Policy, Stockholm, Almqvist and Wisell, 1968. A chronology of the main initiatives taken in the context of COCOM is provided in Gary Clyde Hufbauer, Jeffrey J. Schott and Kimberley Ann Elliott, Economic Sanctions Reconsidered: History and Current Policy, Washington DC, Institute for International Economics, pp. 125-130.

responsibility of each member state itself. This sometimes led to allegations of disparities between the practice of the different states.

The same lists applied for all the communist states.¹⁹ In other words, in the same sense as NATO, COCOM's approach to Eastern Europe was to consider it as the 'enemy-camp', and to concentrate on the security-side of the relationship. On the other hand, COCOM was actively engaged in coordinating an aspect of Western economic policies towards the East European countries.

COCOM was a controversial institution from the start. Part of the compromise that led to its creation in 1949 were the principles of informality and confidentiality. This was requested chiefly for reasons of domestic politics, rather than as a precaution with regard to the Warsaw Pact. Participation in a system of economic discrimination targeted against Communist states was of dubious legality and potentially explosive politically. Some of the West European states, France and the Netherlands in particular, would only agree to participate in the framework if it was kept informal and confidential, so that, if necessary, they could deny its existence.²⁰ As a result, Cocom's deliberations and decisions have not been made public:

¹⁹No doubt, a policy of 'differentiation' would soon lead to leakages throughout the Warsaw Pact area.

²⁰Mastanduno, op. cit., p. 6.

"The formulation of the framework of [CoCom]...is thus shrouded in secrecy. It is in fact doubtful whether any written understanding has ever existed; most likely a gentleman's agreement was undertaken, member agreeing to follow the licensing rules laid down by unanimous decisions amongst the group".²¹

Likewise, the Cocom list was not publicly announced. The member states did, however, publish their own guide to national firms.²² Another aspect of the compromise that allowed the creation of CoCom was its institutional separation from NATO. Despite obviously being part and parcel of the same East-West policy, NATO and Cocom had no formal relationship in the post-war era. What is more, different domestic ministries took the lead in different states in implementing CoCom restrictions.²³

Although CoCom's activities provide an example of tangible coordination of one part of Western states' policies towards Eastern Europe, this did not take place without controversy, and it did provoke political disputes between the Western allies. The main dividing line was between the West European governments, who were strongly opposed to

²¹US Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, "Technology and East West Trade", 1979, p. 153, quoted in Hufbauer et. al., op. cit. p. 133.

²²For an example of such a list see Michael Mastanduno, "What is CoCom and how does it work?", in Robert Cullen (ed), The Post-Containment Handbook: Key Issues in US-Soviet Economic Relations, Boulder, Colo, Westview Press, 1990, pp.75-105.

²³In the case of Britain, Customs and Excise were as active as the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on control of strategic goods.

applying any controls that suggested, either in appearance or in actuality, a strategy of economic warfare, and the United States, who at times seemed to favour this approach. There was a brief phase during the Korean war in the early 1950s when items of general economic significance were actually added to the lists of embargoed items, thus in reality changing CoCom's policy from that of a selective embargo into economic warfare. However, by 1958 lists were reduced again to focus on items of military utility. This more restricted approach was maintained throughout the 1960s and 70s. During the detente period the difference in US and West European views on East West trade increased. Pressure mounted from the United States to tighten controls of exports. After the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979, the United States tightened export licensing procedures for high technology products and adopted a policy of not requesting "exceptions" for sale of items on CoCom's "dual use" list to the Soviet Union. This was a significant change in US policy.²⁴ Once Reagan was elected, a review of CoCom's controls was put high on the US foreign policy agenda. As we shall see later, this became an issue of great importance during the Polish crisis.

²⁴Hufbauer op. cit. p. 127.

European Political Cooperation (EPC)

Being part of the overall project of European integration, European Political Cooperation (EPC) is not, unlike NATO and CoCom, a Cold War institution. Emerging in the early 1970s, the development of EPC must be seen as part of the wider movement towards increased European integration, and, as such, a natural extension of the EC's increasing influence in external trade into foreign policy. The creation of EPC was no doubt also a reflection of a perceived need for Europe to develop its own voice in international affairs, against the backdrop of increased concerns about developments in US foreign policy. Still, foreign policy cooperation developed on a purely voluntary basis, and aimed in the first instance to achieve consultation amongst member states of the EC on issues of common concern. Although the EPC machinery was gradually strengthened throughout the 1970s, cooperation continued to take place on an intergovernmental basis, outside the EC treaties, and imposed relatively few constraints on individual states' foreign policies.²⁵

²⁵The are numerous studies of EPC in the 1970s and early 1980s. See for example, David Allen, Reinhardt Rummel and Wolfgang Wessels (eds), European Political Cooperation: Toward a Foreign Policy for Western Europe, London, Butterworth, 1982; Philippe de Schoutheete, La Cooperation Politique Européenne, Bruxelles, Editions Labor, 1980; Panayiotis Ifestos, European Political Cooperation: Toward a Framework of Supranational Diplomacy?, Aldershot, Avebury, 1987; Christopher Hill (ed), National Foreign Policies and European Political Cooperation, London, Allen and Unwin for RIIA, 1983; Simon Nuttall, European Political Cooperation, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992.

Perhaps paradoxically, the coordination of policies towards Eastern Europe, through the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), was one of the early successes of EPC.²⁶ It contributed considerably both to enhancing EPC's status on the international scene and to increasing the efficiency of the EPC machinery itself.²⁷ Throughout most of the Helsinki process, the Nine in EPC took the lead over NATO and provided a majority of the input on the Western side of the negotiating table. In order to agree on a common European position inside the alliance, the EPC states usually convened before a meeting in the context of NATO.

A special working group had already been set up by EPC in February 1971 to prepare for the Helsinki process. It was split into two groups in July the same year. In the two groups, respectively the 'Sous-Comité CSCE' and the 'Groupe-ad hoc CSCE', the former dealt with the political issues, and was therefore composed of representatives from the member states, whereas the latter, which dealt with economic issues, had representatives both from the member

²⁶The general issue of the CSCE has been dealt with in detail in Victor-Yves Ghebali, La Diplomatie de la Détente: La CSCE 1973-1989, Bruxelles, Emile Bruylant, 1989; John Maresca, To Helsinki: The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe 1973-1975, Durham, Duke University Press, 1985 and Vojitec Mastny, Helsinki, Human Rights and European Security, Durham, Duke University Press, 1986.

²⁷For details on EPC and the CSCE in general see Von Groll, "The Nine at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe", in Allen et. al. (eds), op. cit., pp.60-68.

states and from the European Commission. Later in the conference, the Europeans further expanded their coordination by agreeing also on a division of labour between the member states, giving each state the prime responsibility for a certain subject area (usually referred to as the "chef-de file system"). The responsibility of the "chef de file" included reporting on its particular subject to the other member states, making suggestions for common viewpoints and maintaining contacts with the other states participating in the conference. One of the main reasons why EPC was more successful than NATO in putting its personal mark on the CSCE was its institutional provisions.²⁸ NATO coordination did not lead to the same extensive common preparations. It did not have the equivalent infrastructure enabling the drafting of common proposals and reports. As a result, NATO consultation took place chiefly in the conference itself and with very little participation from the NATO organs.²⁹

EPC's role in the CSCE might, however, have had more to do with the particular characteristics of the CSCE-process and less to do with a specific EPC interest in Eastern Europe. The United States took little interest in the Conference,

²⁸Alfred Pijpers, "European Political Cooperation and the CSCE process", Legal Issues of European Integration, (1984/1), pp. 135-184, p.140.

²⁹The importance of EPC is also underlined by the leader of the Norwegian delegation to the CSCE from 1973 to 1988, see Leif Mevik, Underveis Europa, Aventura Forlag AS, Oslo, 1990, p. 78.

in particular in its earlier phases, thus giving more space for the Europeans to take charge on the Western side. At a later stage in the CSCE process, during the follow-up meeting in Belgrade and even more so in Madrid, the United States took much more interest in the process, and as a result, the role of EPC as initiator of Western proposals diminished to some extent.³⁰ Furthermore, the issue areas of the Conference were particularly suitable for EPC because they concerned political and economic issues, and excluded the military aspects of security, which were not within EPC competence. In military matters, such as the negotiations on Confidence Building Measures, NATO took over as the dominant institution inside which preparations for the Western position were made. Also important in making the CSCE a suitable activity for EPC, was the fact that these subject-matters, "security, cooperation and the continuation of detente" were concerns not only shared by all the EPC states but also a priority for all of them, thus obviously facilitating close coordination.

Indeed, apart from the CSCE-conference, EPC activity in Eastern Europe was practically non-existent. Even though there had been an East European Working Group in existence since the early days of EPC, its activities were never allowed to develop into policy-initiatives.³¹ Hence, West

³⁰Pijpers, *op. cit.* p. 144.

³¹Simon Nuttall, *op. cit.*, 1992, p. 118 and pp. 150-51.

Germany's Ostpolitik, for example, arguably the main West European initiative towards Eastern Europe in the 1970s, was very much a national one, conducted with the approval of the other Western states, but not as a common Western or EPC initiative. It must be noted, however, that EPC provided support for West Germany's Ostpolitik.³²

In defence of EPC, it could perhaps be argued that the CSCE was, apart from the Ostpolitik, which was mostly concerned with the German question, the main vehicle of Western diplomatic relations with Eastern Europe in the 1970s. Furthermore, there had been few other occasions for EPC to manifest its interest in Eastern Europe since its creation in the early 1970s. The Polish crisis was in this sense to be the first "test" for EPC in terms of its ability to coordinate policies towards Eastern Europe. Finally, introducing a major policy-initiative similar to, for instance, the Euro-Arab dialogue, with Eastern Europe, would have been practically impossible because of the refusal of the Soviet bloc to recognise the existence of both of the EC and EPC.³³

Still, the main reason for the limited EPC activity in East-West relations was the importance of the

³²William Wallace, "Common Foreign and Security Policy", pp. 411-435 in Helen Wallace and William Wallace (eds), Policy-Making in the European Union, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996.

³³Soviet recognition of the European Community came only in 1988.

military/security aspects of this issue. As Rummel has pointed out,

"So far, EPC's role in East-West relations remains selective. It is preoccupied with cooperation matters and excludes most of the antagonistic military issues, leaving them to NATO to deal with."³⁴

But the fact that EPC was at a disadvantage to NATO in East-West relations, because security or military matters were not part of its area of competence, can not be a sufficient explanation for the absence of any discussion of these matters in EPC. Bearing in mind the international climate of the late 1970s, it is even more surprising that at least the political aspects of these relations were not on the EPC agenda. Not only was the process of detente, dear to most of the Nine, in rapid decline. Also, Euro-American relations were deteriorating under the leadership of Carter. In this context there must have been scope for a discussion of the basic principles of East-West relations despite the exclusion of military issues. EPC could have provided a useful forum for European discussions on relations with Eastern Europe. Nuttall attributes EPC's abdication on East-West relations to the general lack of dynamism in EPC after 1978, and to national resistance, in

³⁴Reinhardt Rummel, "Speaking with one voice - and beyond", pp. 118-142 in Alfred Pijpers, Elfriede Regelsberger and Wolfgang Wessels (eds.), European Political Cooperation in the 1980s: a Common Foreign Policy for Western Europe? London, M. Nijhoff, 1988, quote on p. 134.

particular from France and Denmark, to promoting a common approach towards Eastern Europe.³⁵

The European Community (EC)

As detente developed in the 1970s, economic and trade relations became important policy-instruments in Western relations with Eastern Europe. According to article 113 of the Treaty of Rome, these policies should be governed by the common external policy of the EC. It is therefore important to examine the European Community's role in Western relations with Eastern Europe.

In the early days of European integration, EC trade with the COMECON states was relatively low compared to trade with other states. Consequently, it was not given priority treatment by the European Commission or individual member states. With the considerable increase in trade between Western and Eastern Europe in the 1970s, the Commission turned its attention to this region and attempted to impose a common trade policy in accordance with the requirements of the Treaty of Rome.³⁶ The increased trade with Eastern

³⁵Nuttall, 1992, op. cit. pp. 149-181.

³⁶For an overview of the development of trade relations between Eastern Europe and the Community in the 1970s see Avi Shlaim and G.N Yannopoulos (eds), The EEC and Eastern Europe, London, Cambridge University Press, 1978, Shlaim and Yannopoulos, especially pp.1-23; Yannopoulos, "European Community External Commercial Policies and East West trade in Europe", Journal of Common Market Studies, no.1, Sept. 1985, Vol. XXIV, pp.21-38; Werner Feld, "The CMEA and the European Community: a troubled courtship",

Europe had resulted in what Peter Marsh has called "a scramble to enter the communist market".³⁷ The member states resisted the Commission's proposals for a common trade policy, and it was only when the United States and Japan also entered the competition for access to East European markets that they accepted to coordinate their trade policies towards Eastern Europe. By the end of 1974, a common commercial policy towards Eastern Europe was finally in place. From 1975 onwards, all new trade agreements with Eastern Europe had to be made with the European Community, and no longer with the individual member states.

There were, however, clear limits to the EC's common trade policy towards Eastern Europe. The transfer of control of trade policy was only partial, leaving Western Europe with coexisting national and EC controlled economic policies towards Eastern Europe. Firstly, the East European states did not recognise the authority of the European Commission. Consequently, the common commercial policy was based on a specimen agreement made by the Commission, and implemented unilaterally by the EC states. The Commission was still facing the task of convincing the East European states to negotiate directly with it instead of with individual

Journal of European Integration, 1984, VII, nos 2-3, pp. 197-219.

³⁷Peter Marsh, "The development of relations between the EEC and the CMEA", pp. 25-69, in Shlaim and Yannopoulos, op. cit., quotation on p. 38.

states.³⁸ Secondly, the scope of the common commercial policy was limited. It did give the Commission the power to control conventional trade activities such as import quotas, tariffs- and most favoured nation treatment. However, a majority of trade relations with Eastern Europe were ruled by so-called cooperation agreements or joint ventures in which the Western states supplied the capital, technology and know-how. These projects were often supported by credit guarantees provided by national governments. The European Community failed to take control of these policies. Despite a ruling by the European Court of Justice in November 1975 that the Community had the right according to article 113 of the Treaty of Rome to control export credit policy, the main Western states refused to comply and preferred to establish a so-called "gentleman's agreement" amongst themselves and with the United States and Japan in the context of the G7. The only commitment achieved at the EC level was for a preliminary consultation between member states before they entered into a cooperation agreement.³⁹ John Pinder has argued that as

³⁸For a detailed discussion on the problem of the recognition of the EEC by the Soviet and East European states and the development of institutional relations between the EEC and COMECON see for example Sophie Verny "CEE-CAEM: le problème de la reconnaissance mutuelle", Courrier des Pays de l'Est, no 305, avril 1986, pp.30-41; Robert M. Cutler, "Harmonizing EEC-CMEA relations: never the twain shall meet?", International Affairs, 63 (2), Spring 1987, pp. 259-270; Branko Tomsa "Les relations de la CEE avec les pays de l'Europe de l'Est", Etudes Internationales, 1978, no.1, pp. 87-105; Axel Lebahn, "Alternatives in EC-CMEA Relations", Aussenpolitik, vol.31, no. 2, 1980, pp.147-165.

³⁹Marsh, op. cit, p. 59.

a result of this, the European Community's influence on East-West economic relations was negligible, or non-existent:

"The crucial difficulty is that the common external tariff, which is the only major instrument of external economic policy that is unambiguously common, is no longer of much importance; and no member government seems ready to place other substantial instruments in the hands of the Community. But until they do so, the Community is condemned to play a minor role in East-West relations;"⁴⁰

Still, the Community's capacity to contribute to an economic response to events in Eastern Europe should not be overlooked.⁴¹ What is more, the advantages of using the Community structure to support EPC declarations were slowly being recognised in the late 1970s. The CSCE provided the first indication of the potential for cooperation between the Community and EPC. The Commission had been closely involved with the activities of the second basket on economic cooperation, with its representatives conducting the negotiations on behalf of the Nine. Also, the Final Act and the Concluding Documents were adopted by both the individual member states and by the Commission. However, the CSCE was, in the 1970s, still the exception rather than the rule. In general, since EPC's creation, it had been kept clearly separated from the wider EC framework. The

⁴⁰John Pinder, "A Community policy towards Eastern Europe", The World Today, vol 30, no. 3, March 1974, pp. 119-128, quotation on p. 121.

⁴¹Indeed, in 1989 this capacity was to become recognised, when the G7 charged the European Commission with coordinating Western aid to Eastern Europe.

Commission was carefully excluded from EPC business and there were no explicit links between the commercial activities of the Community and EPC's foreign policy initiatives.⁴² Member states were concerned that the intergovernmental EPC might be 'contaminated' by the supranational characteristics of the Community framework if contact between the two was too close.⁴³

In the late 1970s and early 1980s there were some signs of change on this issue. At the same time, the question of sanctions as a foreign policy instrument was becoming increasingly important, and the utility of the EC structure for EPC in this context was clear. As Hill has pointed out,

"What the Community can give, so the Community can take away ... Since the Ten are extensively linked to most areas of the world through commercial and aid agreements, so they have the capacity to break, slow down, re-interpret or simply ignore existing arrangements in a more or less delicate attempt to make political points."⁴⁴

However, France and Denmark still opposed the use of Community instruments to support EPC, and only timid

⁴²See Nuttall, "Where the Commission comes in", pp.104-117 in Pijpers et al., op cit. for details of when the Commission was included in EPC-work.

⁴³Simon Nuttall, "Interaction between European Political Cooperation and the European Community", Yearbook of European Law, Oxford, Clarendon Press, no 7, 1987, pp. 211-249, the point referred to here is on p. 212.

⁴⁴Christopher Hill and James Mayall, "The sanctions problem: international and European perspectives", EUI Working Paper, no. 59, Badia Fiesolana, San Domenico, July 1983, p. 22.

attempts had been made to change this.⁴⁵ After the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, the Community/EPC acted negatively on the question of sanctions by making sure that Community trade did not interfere with United States action. They did not, however, take positive action themselves. A decision to impose sanctions against Iran after the taking of American hostages was made at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers in Naples in May 1980. Still, the measures were implemented through the national Parliaments, and not by the European Community.⁴⁶ The utility of the European Community for the West in a situation of tension in Eastern Europe is clear. And as we shall see, with the imposition of martial law in Poland the Community members resolved to use the Community framework both for positive inducements and for imposing sanctions.

Before turning to the next section, one conclusion can be drawn and two questions must be raised. It can be concluded that Eastern Europe had not been a main concern for any of the Western agencies looked at in this chapter. None of these agencies were created with the aim of coordinating policies towards Eastern Europe, and to the extent to which they dealt with Eastern Europe, their approach and policies were influenced by the specific origins and purpose of the institution itself. In turn, this means that there was no

⁴⁵Nuttall, 1992, p.262.

⁴⁶Hill and Mayall, *op. cit.*, pp.13-17; Nuttall, 1987, *op. cit.* pp. 222-225.

provision for coordination of the economic, diplomatic and security aspects of Western policies in Eastern Europe. The Western security relationship with Eastern Europe was dealt with through NATO and CoCom. Attempts were made by the European Community to coordinate, or even control, trade relations with the East European states, but were not overwhelmingly successful. As for EPC, it provided a forum for some political/diplomatic discussions, yet, as with the EC proper, did not to any extensive degree concern itself with Eastern Europe.

Two questions also emerge as a result of this brief overview. Firstly, to what extent might these institutions be able to go beyond their activities of long term cooperation, to coordinating a Western reaction to an external crisis or situation of tension in Eastern Europe which involved economic, political as well as security issues. Secondly, to what extent was there an overlap in the activities of these institutions, in particular of the European Community/European Political Cooperation and NATO. And furthermore, would such an overlap lead to competition, and ultimately to a fragmentation, of Western cohesion and to a weakening of its ability to react efficiently and cohesively to an external crisis, or alternatively to an interlocking and strengthening of Western foreign policies?

The issue of coordination in a situation of crisis is addressed first, and then, the question of competition

between the European and the Atlantic frameworks is examined.

Consultation, coordination and crisis

The previous section looked at the general orientation of Western institutions and discussed the extent to which their activities had been geared towards Eastern Europe. This section examines whether or not there were specific institutional provisions in the West for situations of crises or high tension in Eastern Europe. It argues that although provisions for consulting about a crisis situation were ample, Western institutions did not provide a basis for agreeing on coordinated action towards a region such as Eastern Europe in times of crisis.

The obvious place for the Western states to coordinate their policies in a time of tension or crisis is NATO. The military aspects of NATO's operations are closely coordinated, with clearly defined responsibilities attributed to the SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander Europe), based in Brussels. According to official NATO documents, NATO arrangements for crisis-management are provided by the NATO situation centre (SITCEN) which operates on a continuous basis. The primary task of SITCEN is to assemble, collate and disseminate all intelligence and information made available by member states and by the NATO

Military Authorities with regard to developing situations. In other words, SITCEN is supposed to provide the technical means for effective and rapid consultation between NATO states. Yet, these crisis mechanisms are designed to keep NATO alert towards military risks. It remains an open question, however, how useful these mechanisms would be in the case of a crisis in Eastern Europe.⁴⁷ It is quite clear that any disturbance in Eastern Europe, including a Warsaw Pact intervention, would not be justification enough for the NATO-military to be mobilised. As for the civilian aspects of NATO crisis-mechanisms, according to Smith, the principal characteristic of NATO is the unstructured way in which the organisation is structured. He describes NATO's policy-making process as an extended process of consultation which makes it extremely difficult to arrive at decisions quickly: "By the time the Council reflects on a crisis... the worst is over."⁴⁸ He also emphasises the weaknesses of interaction between NATO's political institutions and its military structure.

In order to achieve a clear understanding of NATO's ability to respond to a crisis in Eastern Europe, it is useful to look at NATO's policy and activities during the crisis in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The main point that emerges is that the crisis-mechanisms were

⁴⁷See The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, Facts and Figures, NATO Information Service, Brussels, 1989, pp.194-195.

⁴⁸Dan Smith, op. cit. p. 20.

effective chiefly in the aftermath of the crisis, and mainly with the aim of evaluating the effect of the crises for Western security. In the early days of the crises, the NATO apparatus served only as a forum for consultation between the member states and did not provide a basis for coordinating policies.⁴⁹

In the aftermath of the Hungarian crisis, a report from the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives strongly condemned the United States for failing to be prepared for events there, and for failing to provide Western leadership in the crisis:

"The failure of the United States to have a plan or plans of action concerning the Hungarian events indicates either serious weakness in our intelligence service or a serious misapplication by the administrators of our foreign policy of facts reported."⁵⁰

By implication, this is also a criticism of NATO. If the United States had no contingency plans, it is unlikely that NATO had any either.

It was, however, not only in 1956 that NATO was unprepared. According to Kovrig, the Western response to the Prague spring "bordered on paralysis":

⁴⁹It must of course be added that on their own, Western institutional mechanisms are not enough to ensure a coordinated response. There must also be a political will to coordinate.

⁵⁰"Report of the special study mission to Europe on Policy toward the satellite nations", Committee of Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, 85th Congress, 1st session, June 1957, p. 7.

"An early warning from West German intelligence of the Soviet decision to intervene had met with conditioned scepticism in Bonn and in NATO headquarters. American intelligence even managed to lose track of a Soviet combat group in Poland, only to discover it two weeks later in the invasion force. And when CIA Director Richard Helms belatedly tried to raise the alarm at a White House meeting shortly before the invasion, his attempts at persuasion were futile..."⁵¹

According to official NATO sources, the evolution of events in Czechoslovakia were closely observed by NATO.⁵² It is even more surprising then that the allies were taken aback by the intervention in the same way as they were in 1956.

According to Schweitzer:

"Despite the warning signs and some hints by Moscow to Washington, the WTO action appears to have taken NATO by surprise."⁵³

The surprise element of the Warsaw Pact intervention in Prague is also underlined by Harlan Cleveland.⁵⁴

⁵¹Bennett Kovrig, Of Walls and Bridges: The United States and Eastern Europe, New York, New York University Press, 1991, p. 114.

⁵²NATO Speakers' notes, October 1968, "Czechoslovakia: some questions and answers".

⁵³Schweitzer, op. cit., p.37.

⁵⁴Harlan Cleveland, "NATO after the invasion", Foreign Affairs, January 1969, vol. 47, no.2., pp.251-265, in particular p.253. Cleveland was the US Permanent Representative on the Atlantic Council at the time of the Czechoslovak crisis. The same point is made by Kaplan, who quotes the then SACEUR, Lemmitzer's description of the absence of political advice from the NATO Council on how to place allied installations and forces on alert in 1968 without provoking the Warsaw Pact, as "one of the most serious breakdowns in the political-military mechanisms of the Alliance that occurred during my term as SACEUR". Lawrence S. Kaplan, NATO and the United States: The Enduring Alliance, New York, Twaine Publishers, Macmillan, 1994, p. 105.

Both interventions were publicly condemned by NATO. The official reaction to Hungary was particularly strong:

"The Council Members have followed the course of events in Hungary with shock and revulsion. The brutal suppression of the heroic Hungarian people stands in stark contrast with Soviet public professions. The Council reaffirmed the conviction of its member governments that the United Nations should continue its efforts, through the pressure of world opinion, to induce their forces to withdraw their forces from Hungary and to right the wrongs done to the Hungarian people. The peoples of Eastern Europe have the right to chose their own government freely, unaffected by external pressure and the use or threat of force, and to decide for themselves the political and social order they prefer."⁵⁵

After Prague, the Western Foreign Ministers, meeting in the North Atlantic Council, stressed that the Soviet Union had violated the principle of sovereignty and non-intervention. They also

"...urged the Soviet Union, in the interest of world peace, to refrain from using force and interfering in the affairs of other states. Determined to safeguard the freedom and independence of their countries, they [the NATO states] could not remain indifferent to any developments which endangers their security."⁵⁶

When discussing the reasons for the limited Western preparation in the two crises a distinction must be made between 1956 and 1968. It is clear that in 1956 NATO was severely hampered by the Suez crisis. The British and the French no doubt had their attention on Suez rather than

⁵⁵NATO Final Communiques, 1949-1974, NATO Information Service, Brussels, Paris, 11-14 December 1956, pp. 101-104, quote on p.102.

⁵⁶NATO Press Communiqué, 16 November 1968, "Final Communiqué".

Hungary. Furthermore, the Europeans and the United States were divided over Suez, making an effective NATO reaction to Hungary not only difficult, but probably altogether impossible. As Kovrig argues

"... any UN response to the Hungarian crisis was dependent on the political will of the Western allies, and their divisions over Suez undoubtedly weakened this will. When on November 2 Lodge reported that the British and French were pressing for a condemnation of the Soviet Union, Dulles retorted that 'it is a mockery for them to come in with bombs falling over Egypt and denounce the Soviet Union for perhaps doing something that is not quite as bad'."⁵⁷

In addition, there were European misgivings over Dulles' roll-back policy of that same period. At their return from Europe, the Committee of the House of representatives reported a

"lack of comprehension in Europe of the statement by Secretary Dulles urging reliance on moral pressures to overcome the power of Soviet despotism and an inability to reconcile the statement with United States policy towards Formosa and the recent dispatch of the Sixth Fleet to the Middle East."⁵⁸

Over Czechoslovakia, there appears on the other hand to have been a NATO consensus on passivity⁵⁹ (which is, of course, also the easiest way to maintain cohesion):

"The first reaction of the North Atlantic Alliance to the mounting Czech crisis - before the invasion - was to watch carefully but lie low....the political

⁵⁷Kovrig op. cit., p. 100.

⁵⁸Report of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House, op. cit., p. 7.

⁵⁹However, in the aftermath the intervention led to mutual recriminations inside the alliance, as de Gaulle attributed American passivity to a pact to maintain the division of Europe. This is argued by Kovrig on p. 115.

judgement ...led to agreed Allied policy: scrupulously to avoid giving the Russians any Western excuse to move into Czechoslovakia. This restraint was not, as restraint so often is, the paralysis of timidity. It was a conscious policy consensus in the North Atlantic Council. It did not save the Czechs, of course; nor was it supposed to."⁶⁰

It was really after the intervention that the NATO crisis-machinery was set to work. The intervention in Czechoslovakia had left the Alliance uncertain about the nature of Soviet intentions.⁶¹ The intervention was considered to challenge the assumptions on which Western policy was based.⁶² The purpose of the crisis machinery then was to evaluate the effect of the invasion on Western security.⁶³ In the immediate aftermath of the invasion several reports were commissioned by the North Atlantic Council in order to assess the effects on Western security.⁶⁴ Also, the end of year meeting of the North Atlantic Council was moved forward from mid-December in

⁶⁰Cleveland, op. cit. p.257. With specific reference to the Brussels machinery, Smith puts it even more bluntly: "I was told that the Dutch government was informed by the Soviet embassy of the invasion a few hours in advance; one presumes other governments were also told. In any event, nobody in Den Haag or anywhere else thought to inform NATO HQ. The news was learned from the radio.", op. cit. p. 21.

⁶¹Cleveland, op. cit., p. 256.

⁶²Anatole Shub, "Lessons of Czechoslovakia", Foreign Affairs, Jan. 1969, no. 2, vol. 47, pp. 266-280.

⁶³Cleveland, op. cit. p. 258; NATO after Czechoslovakia, Center for Strategic International Studies, Georgetown University, Washington DC, Special Report Series, no 9, April 1969.

⁶⁴NATO latest, 16 Nov. op. cit. and Cleveland, op. cit. p. 257-8.

order to discuss the impact of events.⁶⁵ The main outcome of these reports was an agreement on modest improvements in the quality, effectiveness and deployment of NATO forces both in terms of manpower and equipment.⁶⁶ The invasion also put an end to speculations about the possibility of some members' withdrawal from the Alliance at its Twentieth anniversary in 1969 (at which point a member state could withdraw with a year's notice). Beyond this, there is little evidence of any 'soul-searching' at the level of NATO's approach to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as a result of the Prague spring. Chiefly, NATO policy continued as before. NATO's strategy, as it had been declared in the Harmel 'doctrine' a year earlier was maintained.⁶⁷

NATO as a military alliance was institutionally "conditioned" to consider the security aspects of an East European crisis for the West and had limited capacity to coordinate a policy-response. EPC, which was chiefly concerned with foreign political issues, might produce a different perspective on such an issue. By the end of the

⁶⁵NATO latest, no. 3, 4 October 1968, "NATO and Czechoslovakia", NATO Information Service, Brussels.

⁶⁶Ibid., and Thomas Cynkin, Soviet-American Signalling in the Polish Crisis, London, Macmillan Press, 1988, p. 38.

⁶⁷For NATO reasoning on this, see Final Communique, 16 November, op. cit.

1970s, EPC had come to a turning point in its evolution.⁶⁸ The EPC machinery and procedures had gradually been strengthened throughout the 1970s. The level of cooperation had reached a respectable stage and EPC had some achievements to its credit. However, further steps, building on the existing accomplishments were needed. Most importantly for our purpose, EPC needed to improve its procedures for dealing with external crises. The need for such a procedure had been amply illustrated by the poor performance of EPC in the Middle East War in 1973 and in the Cyprus crisis in 1974. Nonetheless, it was the failure of EPC to meet and react swiftly to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979, which finally prompted a decision to create a crisis mechanism in EPC. At the London summit, in October 1981, (two months before martial law was imposed in Poland) specific crisis-procedures were introduced into the EPC framework. The Ten agreed that,

"The Political Committee or, if necessary, a Ministerial meeting will convene within 48 hours at the request of three member states. ... In order to improve the capacity of the Ten to react in an emergency Working Groups are encouraged to analyse areas of potential crisis and to prepare a range of possible reactions by the Ten."⁶⁹

⁶⁸For the changes in EPC in the early 1980s see Nuttall, op. cit. 1992, pp.149-181 and Christopher Hill "Changing gear in Political Cooperation", Political Quarterly, Jan-March 1982, pp.47-60.

⁶⁹"Report on European Political Cooperation issued by the Foreign Ministers of the Ten on 13 October 1981 (London Report)", part II.13, in European Political Cooperation (EPC), 5th ed., Bonn, Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, 1988, pp. 61-70.

The creation of the crisis-mechanism, however, only partly solved the difficulties involved in promoting a rapid and efficient EPC response to an external crisis. According to Christopher Hill, the often considerable divergences in national position was an equally important hindrance for EPC crisis-management:

"...EPC is not particularly well-suited to handling international crises, even those in which the Europeans are themselves directly involved. There is a distinct tendency not to avoid crises, for that almost by definition cannot be done, but certainly to play down their significance...member states are often still forced into anodyne generalizations by their fundamental lack of the capacity to agree amongst themselves on international questions."⁷⁰

Other problems with the EPC framework also contributed to weaken its capacity to coordinate an effective response to an external crisis. Firstly, EPC was hampered by its inability to deal with security issues. Secondly, EPC needed a secretariat to assist the overworked Presidency. Its creation had been delayed as a result of fear it might push EPC into evolving towards supranationality. An EPC secretariat was set up only after the signing of the Single European Act in 1986. Thirdly, as we shall see in the next section, the question of EPC's place in the overall framework of Western institutions, and in particular its relations with NATO, presented difficulties. Indeed, EPC prospered so long as it did not pose to great dilemmas for

⁷⁰Christopher Hill, "EPC's performance in crises", pp. 135-146, in Reinhardt Rummel (ed), Toward Political Union: Planning a Common Foreign and Security Policy in the European Community, Boulder, Westview Press, 1992, quotation on p. 145.

Atlanticism, in other words, as long as it stayed away from defence.

Having looked at the Western institutional framework in terms of its general relations with Eastern Europe and in terms of its specific provisions for foreign policy coordination in times of tension or crisis, the next section turns to look at the issue of the multiplicity of Western institutions and the problems this might create for the efficiency of Western coordination. The main question under this general heading is that of whether or not the coexistence of an Atlantic and a European framework might lead to divisions and thus prevent effective Western coordination. Or, on the other hand, whether or not the very existence of a variety of institutional frameworks, and the wider choice this provided for the states in terms of where and how to interact, might increase the flexibility and efficiency of coordination.

Institutional multiplicity: fragmentation of flexibility?

When the Treaty of Rome, establishing the European Community, was negotiated, emphasis was put on organising relations amongst the member states themselves, rather than on how to establish a dialogue with third countries. Procedures of communication with third parties were

invented ad hoc, rather than according to an established philosophy. According to Nuttall:

"The pattern of dialogue remains ... a confusing patchwork, and presents one of the greatest organizational problems EPC has to face."⁷¹

It is, in particular, with regard to relations between EPC, the United States and the Atlantic Alliance that this issue has been problematic.⁷² The difficulties in this case run deeper than the technical consideration of communication between the two sides, and actually concerns the question of whether or not the Atlantic Alliance and the European Community/EPC are mutually incompatible. It shall be argued in the following that although, ideally, they do not need to be so, in practice, Atlantic and European solidarity had been on a collision course since the early 1970s, and, furthermore, that by the time of the Polish crisis, this presented serious difficulties for the effectiveness of a coordinated response to an external event.

The inherent contradiction between NATO and the EC/EPC is most clearly illustrated if one bears in mind that NATO had ambitions to become not only a military alliance, but an

⁷¹Nuttall, 1992, op. cit. p. 283. Still, at least in the early 1980s, the system had not yet started to suffer from overload.

⁷²A detailed discussion of US -West European relations is provided in Michael Smith, Western Europe and the United States: The Uncertain Alliance, London, George allen and Unwin, 1984.

actual "Atlantic Community".⁷³ This dimension to NATO was strongly emphasised in the "Report of the Committee of Three on Non-Military Cooperation in NATO" in 1956. Presenting an ambitious line of action for the North Atlantic Alliance, the report argued that, accompanying its overall objective of security, NATO should aim at creating an "Atlantic Community whose roots are deeper even than the necessity for common defence". The Report of the Three argued that politics and security were interdependent and also that the challenge to NATO was not exclusively military. Consequently, it concluded that the success of the military alliance depended on the political cohesion of an Atlantic Community. When referring to the decision to create NATO in 1949, it pointed out that

"... in a shrinking nuclear world it was wise and timely to bring about a closer association of kindred Atlantic and Western European nations for other than defence purposes alone; that a partial pooling of sovereignty for mutual protection should also promote progress and cooperation generally. There was a sense of Atlantic Community, alongside the realisation of an immediate common danger ... it gave birth to the hope that NATO would grow beyond and above the emergency which brought it into being."⁷⁴

⁷³For a discussion of the concept of Atlanticism and the Atlantic Community, see Michael Smith, "Atlanticism and North Atlantic Interdependence: The Widening Gap?", in Barry Jones and Peter Willetts, Interdependence on Trial, London, Frances Pinter, 1984, pp. 167-229.

⁷⁴Selection from the Report of the Committee of Three on Nonmilitary Cooperation in NATO", December 1956, Appendix 3, pp. 281-293 in Jordan, op. cit. Quote on p. 283.

Nevertheless, referring to the Report of the Three, former British ambassador to NATO, Sir Clive Rose, has written that

"These are admirable guidelines. If they had been scrupulously followed by all members during the subsequent 26 years, the history of the Alliance would no doubt have looked different."⁷⁵

Indeed, it is highly debatable to what extent the creation of an Atlantic Community could succeed at all. It is clear, however, that with the creation of the European Community in 1958, an alternative identity to that of the Atlantic one was established and might ultimately lead to divisions inside NATO.⁷⁶

In the early years of the European Community, coexistence with NATO did not produce too many problems. However, with the strengthening of the Community's economic power in the 1970s and the creation of a European foreign political identity through EPC, this started to change. Similar trends indicating a European sense of nascent identity had already found expression inside NATO with the French decision to leave its military part in 1966. The formation of the Eurogroup in 1968, providing a means for the coordination of European defence efforts and a forum for

⁷⁵Rose, op. cit. p. 2.

⁷⁶For a persuasive presentation of the perspective that Europe can only be a meaningful reality if it is something distinct from America, see John Lukacs, Decline and Rise of Europe, Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press, 1965, in particular pp. 201-254. It might be added that the aspirations to an Atlantic Community are still with us. For this, see

harmonisation of European views on major political or strategic questions affecting the defence of NATO Europe, was further confirmation of this trend in NATO.⁷⁷ Finally, the Harmel report was also an expression of early European discontent with the NATO structure and of European interest in developing detente with the Warsaw Pact.⁷⁸ Still, the problem with the EC/EPC was different in the sense that it outlined the possibility of a competing institutional framework, rather than a "European pillar" inside NATO.⁷⁹

The potential conflict between EPC and NATO was first addressed by Henry Kissinger during his time as Secretary of State for Richard Nixon. He was concerned about the potentially disruptive effects of the creation of European Political Cooperation on Atlantic cohesion, and proposed a reactivation of the Atlantic Treaty. According to Kissinger, this reactivation should lead to the negotiation of an agreement on the broader issue of defence, detente, as well as commercial and monetary issues. In the same context, Kissinger, in a speech in April 1973, declared

⁷⁷Kaplan, op. cit. p. 108. Nonetheless Kaplan argues that the Eurogroup failed to provide a basis for a European voice within NATO and "...was more show than substance."

⁷⁸Jordan argues that the Harmel report also sought, and succeeded, in bringing France back into the mainstream alliance. See pp. 103-5. The text of the Harmel doctrine is published in Appendix 6, pp. 301-4.

⁷⁹See Hedley Bull, "European self-reliance and the reform of NATO", Foreign Affairs, Spring 1983, pp. 874-892 for an argument in favour of a European pillar inside the Atlantic Alliance.

1973 the "Year of Europe".⁸⁰ The European partners were not, however, overwhelmingly enthusiastic. Kissinger's initiative was generally, and probably rightly, interpreted as the result of concern about a weakening of the United States' influence in Europe and a wish to control EPC from the inside. The Europeans also disliked Kissinger's description of US responsibilities as global, whereas he considered European interests to be chiefly regional. Particularly sceptical was the French foreign minister Michel Jobert who denounced the 'condominium' between the United States and the Soviet Union and argued that what the United States really wanted was a partnership of unequals.⁸¹

As 1973 dragged on, the idea of a "Year of Europe" was to turn out a considerable failure. Kissinger himself refers to it as "the year that never was".⁸² In response, or in defiance, to the US proposal, the European Council, at their meeting in Copenhagen on 23 July, adopted the 'Declaration of a European Identity', stressing both the importance of the United States' nuclear umbrella for

⁸⁰For a discussion of the events of the "Year of Europe" see Pierre Mélandri, Une Incertain Alliance: Les Etats Unis et l'Europe, 1973-1983, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 1988 pp.79-120. Kissinger himself also gives a detailed account of the events of 1973 in Years of Upheaval, Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1982, pp. 128-195 and 700-747.

⁸¹Pierre Gerbet, La Construction de l'Europe, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1983, p. 426.

⁸²Kissinger op. cit. p. 192.

European security and the importance of equality between the United States and Europe. The Copenhagen declaration also underlined that relations between EPC and the United States should not affect the Nine's determination to establish themselves as a distinct and original entity.⁸³ In practice this amounted to a rejection of Kissinger's proposal. With the onset of the Yom Kippur war in October 1973 and the subsequent oil embargo, the weakness of Atlantic cohesion was obvious.⁸⁴

At the Atlantic Council in December 1973, Kissinger continued to pursue his aim of improving communication between the United States and EPC by suggesting regular meetings between the directors of the ministries of foreign affairs of NATO, and asking for a commitment on the part of EPC to consult the United States before taking any common decision of importance. The French President Pompidou refused. He did not want the United States to be consulted on foreign policy issues discussed in EPC until the Nine had already formed their opinion, otherwise, he considered, the United States would have too large an influence on European decisions.⁸⁵

⁸³For the full text of the 'Declaration of European Identity', see European Political Cooperation, op. cit, pp.34-55.

⁸⁴The oil embargo did, however, also show the weaknesses in intra-European solidarity.

⁸⁵Gerbet, op. cit., p. 428.

It was only by the end of April the next year that a compromise on how interaction between EPC and the United States should take place was found with the Ottawa Declaration on Atlantic Unity and the so-called Gymnich formula.⁸⁶ The Gymnich formula was a pragmatic solution according to which consultations between EPC and the United States would be carried out by the Presidency on behalf of the Nine, when this was requested by one member state and agreed upon by the others. The US Ambassador in the capital of the Presidency would receive advance notice of the subjects likely to be discussed at meetings of the Political Committee or of the Foreign Ministers and the US Ambassador would forward the viewpoint of the State Department to the Presidency of EPC. After EPC meetings, the US Ambassador was debriefed separately. Other third countries usually received a collective briefing. The use made of input from the United States depended on the Presidency, however, according to Nuttall "circulation of the US papers as documentation was thought to be in poor taste".⁸⁷

The second half of the compromise that followed the debacle of the 'Year of Europe' was the Ottawa declaration, adopted at the Atlantic Council in Ottawa in June 1974, in which

⁸⁶Although most academic works on EPC-US relations will refer to the Gymnich formula, there is apparently no written text documenting its existence, and some practitioners deny all knowledge of it.

⁸⁷Nuttall, 1992, op. cit., p. 284.

the members of the Atlantic Alliance confirmed their commitment to strengthen the practice of political consultation and mutual information inside NATO.⁸⁸

The above arrangement established a system of communication between EPC and the United States. According to Nuttall, the Gymnich formula turned out to function relatively well.⁸⁹ They did, however, fail to address the underlying issue of the development of a European entity that might with time weaken the cohesion of NATO. It is clear that the exclusion of security matters from EPC's agenda was meant to avert a conflict between the two institutions. Also, the two organisations had been seen to function efficiently side by side for example in the CSCE process. Nevertheless, internal contradictions in the position of both sides contributed to the maintenance of the potential for divisions.

The ambiguity on the European side consisted chiefly in the fact that attempts at creating a European identity often involved opposing Europe to the United States. This was most clearly expressed in French policy, but it did also find expression in the European project overall. At the same time, and to a large extent in conflict with their quest for independence, the Europeans continued to

⁸⁸For full text see NATO Facts and Figures, op. cit. pp.405-7.

⁸⁹Nuttall, 1992, op. cit. p.284.

emphasise the importance of the United States' commitment to the defence of Europe. This was clearly illustrated by the Copenhagen declaration which stresses both European dependence on the US nuclear umbrella and the ambition of an "independent" Europe. Rummel has also pointed to this ambiguity:

"To the extent that EPC has dealt with NATO-related matters in recent years, its members have begun – not totally unwillingly – to form a political 'block' in the Western Alliance. This has caused some irritation in Washington. ... the situation is somewhat ambivalent: when American views diverge, the Europeans follow their own path; yet even at the same time, it continues to be a matter of survival for the Europeans that NATO should not be fundamentally questioned."⁹⁰

On the American side, contradictions were equally flourishing. Hence, the United States traditionally supported the creation of a European framework and occasionally also complained about an absence of a "European pillar" inside the Atlantic Alliance. At the same time the United States refused to relinquish the control of NATO policy and wished the Europeans to comply with American decisions. Stanley Hoffmann has argued that there is a vicious circle in the alliance, according to which the United States tended to act unilaterally, or to assume the monopoly in the political sphere, whereas the West Europeans restricted themselves to complaints and essentially negative reactions without taking any positive

⁹⁰Rummel, 1988, op. cit. 122.

action themselves.⁹¹ These difficulties with the links and contradictions inside the alliance in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, were often referred to in the academic literature on NATO at the time.⁹² They were also stressed by practitioners. Sir Clive Rose, British ambassador to NATO during the Polish crisis, for example, called for improvements in the relations between EPC and the Atlantic alliance.⁹³

Finally, two points before concluding. Firstly, it must be underlined that this section has focused chiefly on the institutional issues related to United States-EPC relations. As the next chapters will indicate, what made the situation particularly difficult in the late 1970s was that these structural problems were further strengthened by political disagreements between the allies.⁹⁴ As long

⁹¹Stanley Hoffmann, La nouvelle guerre froide, Paris, Berger-Levrault, 1983, p. 227.

⁹²Raymond Aron, "La Communauté Atlantique, 1949-1982", Politique Etrangère, 1983, pp.827-839; Pierre Mélandri, "L'Alliance Atlantique: incertitudes stratégiques, incertitudes diplomatiques", Relations Internationales, no. 36, hiver 1983, pp.395-413; Josef Joffe, The limited partnership, Cambridge, Mass. Ballinger Publishing Company, 1987; Stephen Gill (ed), Atlantic Relations, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1989; Gregory F. Treverton, Making the Alliance Work, London, Macmillan, 1985.

⁹³Rose, op. cit. See also Lord Carrington, "Lack of consistent political strategy: a cause of friction", NATO Review, vol. 31, 1983, no. , pp.1-17.

⁹⁴For this see also Stanley Sloan, "Crisis in NATO: a problem of leadership?", NATO Review, no.3, 1982 pp.13-19; Josef Joffe, "European-American relations: the enduring crisis", Foreign Affairs, vol 59, no 4, 1981, pp.835-852; Pierre Hassner, "The shifting foundation", Foreign Policy, Fall 1982, pp 13-20.

as transatlantic disagreements persisted, these were likely to reinforce solidarity and commitment to European Political Cooperation. Hence, the institutional fragmentation and the political disagreements could mutually reinforce each other. This might create a vicious circle, in which the existence of a European framework in itself was a sign of disenchantment with the Atlantic framework, and that this institutional fragmentation in turn would contribute to strengthen transatlantic disagreements. On the other hand, the opposite possibility must not be neglected: institutional diversity provided alternative agencies for coordination. By giving a larger amount of flexibility and providing alternative agencies for coordination, it could calm political disagreements. As Hill has argued,

" ... the very parallelism of national foreign policies, European foreign policies, and global organisations provides a continual choice of strategies and methods for the Community partners. They will have to decide whether or not, as a matter of principle, to go for a common European position at the outset of any given international issue, or whether to take each as it comes so that alignments are dictated more by the 'merits' of the problem than by the demands of any particular solidarity."⁹⁵

This might be particularly true in situations such as the Polish crisis which, because it raised economic and political issues as well as military ones, did not fall exclusively within the sphere of interest of NATO, or in situations where there was transatlantic disagreement over how to respond.

⁹⁵Hill, 1982, op. cit, p. 57-8.

Before concluding the chapter looks briefly at the activities of the G7 group, which was seen by some as a possible solution to some of the difficulties of the existing Western institutional framework in the late 1970s.

Summit meetings. The mirage of a new institutional order?

The creation of the G7 group may be interpreted on the one hand as a symptom of the structural changes in the Western alliance and of changes in the types of problems that the Western states were facing in their relations with each other in the 1970s, and, on the other hand, as an attempt to seek new solutions to deal with the new context. The need for new forms of Western cooperation were also pronounced by academic studies in this period.⁹⁶ Putnam and Bayne argue that the G7 summits of the most industrialised nations showed a potential for effective action in the area of East West relations that no other international body could match.⁹⁷ Its advantages over NATO, COCOM and, to some extent, also the European Community and European Political Cooperation, were two-fold. Firstly, its very structure provided for a discussion of economic, political, as well as security matters.

⁹⁶Kaiser et. al. op. cit.; "Summit meetings and collective leadership in the 1980s", The Atlantic Council of the United States, Working Group on Political Affairs, 1980.

⁹⁷Robert Putnam and Nicholas Bayne, Hanging Together: Cooperation and Conflict in the Seven-Power Summits, London, Sage Publications Ltd, 1987.

Secondly, difficult issues could be solved immediately because of the presence of the highest political authority from each state and did not need clearing from elsewhere before being implemented. However, G7 never wholly exploited this potential.

Broadly speaking, the summit-meetings were supposed to be a "private and personal event", giving the political leaders the opportunity to exchange views freely on matters concerning them all.⁹⁸ There was, however, some disagreement as to the amount of organisation that should be put into the summit, to what extent the agenda should be prepared beforehand and to what extent the national bureaucracies ought to be involved in the process, as opposed to maintaining its characteristics as a summit regarding only the top level politicians. The Europeans tended to favour the informal, occasional summit, whereas the United States wished to establish the summit as a decision-making institution with its own preparatory and follow-up apparatus. The two first summits, at Rambouillet in 1975 and Puerto Rico in 1976 kept to a fairly spontaneous formula. With time, the summits became more institutionalised. More time was given to preparation by the summit leaders' personal representatives ('sherpas') and to following up the decisions. At a national level, most often a summit 'team' or 'task force' was established under the direction of the personal representative to the

⁹⁸Putnam and Bayne, *op. cit*, p. 35.

summit. Also, making the informal character of the summits more difficult to maintain, two new participants, the European Commission and Canada, were added to the original six.⁹⁹

Five topics were regularly discussed at the summits: macroeconomics, monetary issues, trade, energy and North-South relations. They were, in other words, chiefly devoted to economic issues and, what is more, often "internal", Western economic issues. Foreign policy questions had always been discussed on an informal basis at the margins of the summit, but were only gradually, and with much resistance from some states, introduced onto the official agenda. The French, in particular, resisted the formal introduction of international political issues. They wished that such matters be discussed in a smaller grouping than what G7 had become. Two reasons in particular contributed to the introduction of political issues to the summit agenda proper. One was the deterioration of East West relations, the other was the reaction to the Guadeloupe meeting, where France, Britain, West Germany and the United States in January 1979 discussed the problem of the Euro-missiles. Its taking place caused protest from those not included at the meeting, ie. Japan, Italy and Canada, and led them to press for the inclusion of international political issues in the official agenda of the G7 summits.

⁹⁹The original participants were France, the United States, Italy, Great Britain and Japan.

With Canada as the host to the next summit, in Ottawa in 1981, foreign policy issues were put on the agenda.¹⁰⁰ Two themes were featured in these political discussions at the G7 summits: East West relations and terrorism. In addition, the summits dealt with international crises that had erupted in the period just before its meeting. This, however, was only meant to be short-term.

But even though non-economic issues took up more of the time at G7 summits from 1979,

"their handling was erratic and unpredictable. The foreign policy preparations never became as thorough as the work of the sherpas and were described at the time of the Venice summit (22-3 June 1980) as 'furtive and improvised'. This ...would become a drawback should the leaders wish to have a more profound discussion of a complex and sensitive subject and to give public expression to any consensus which they might reach."¹⁰¹

To a large extent, Putnam and Bayne blame the lack of apparatus to prepare for these discussions for inhibiting in-depth discussions on international political issues.¹⁰²

Despite the attempts at strengthening the role of G7 in coordinating Western policies, and despite its potential for overcoming the problem of fragmentation between

¹⁰⁰Putnam and Bayne, op. cit, p. 102.

¹⁰¹Putnam and Bayne, op. cit., p.106.

¹⁰²Putnam and Bayne, op. cit. p. 245.

economic, political and security issues, G7 could hardly be more than the tip of the iceberg of Western coordination. Most importantly for the purpose of this thesis, there is little to support the idea that it could play a decisive role in organising the Western response to a crisis in Eastern Europe.

Conclusions

The chapter has found four principal weaknesses in the Western institutional framework.

The first weakness is related to the coexistence of several separate institutional networks within the overall Western alliance. These institutional networks were to a large extent compartmentalised and had few links between them. Each institutional framework was specialised to deal with specific issue areas. NATO and CoCom have concerned themselves primarily with the security aspects of relations with Eastern Europe, while the European Community and European Political Cooperation have focused on trade relations and political/diplomatic exchanges. There was no overall institutional framework available to deal with all economic, political as well as security aspects of a particular crisis and ensure a coherent response in all these areas taken together. Closest to providing an overarching framework is NATO, yet its ability to

effectively coordinate political, and even more so, economic, issues is questioned.

A further problem related to Western institutional multiplicity is the existence of competing Atlantic and European "identities" which are potentially damaging to Western cohesion and to the ability of Western states to coordinate policies. As William Wallace has argued, the setting up of EPC had brought the foreign ministries of France, West Germany and Britain closer together:

"The pattern of relations which obtained between the three capitals [Paris, Bonn and London] by the end of the 1970s was thus very different from that which had obtained some 20 years before. Working relations between the three foreign ministries were now extremely close...Bilateral summits between London and Bonn, and London and Paris, supplementing the well established link between Paris and Bonn, had intensified bilateral contacts between diplomats at lower levels; ... The three Foreign Ministers, their political directors and other senior officials saw each other almost every week, in the context of EC Council meetings, Political Cooperation meetings, bilateral summits, four power conversations on Berlin (which provided convenient cover for discussing wider issues with the Americans on a confidential basis), seven-power summits, and so on."¹⁰³

This new closeness was to some extent perceived by the United States as a threat to Atlantic solidarity. Paradoxically, the US did, at the same time, express support for European integration. The creation and strengthening of European Political Cooperation also had the capacity for reinforcing already existing contradictions inside the Atlantic Alliance and thus for

¹⁰³William Wallace, in Morgan and Bray, op. cit., p. 219.

making effective Transatlantic coordination more difficult. Finally, because of the institutional multiplicity, there was a potential for an overlap between the activities of EPC, the European Community and NATO in the political sphere, although on East-West relations this kind of conflict was normally avoided by EPC taking a back seat and declining to deal with security issues. On the other hand, the coexistence of multiple institutional frameworks could also provide room for more flexibility for Western states in their efforts to coordinate policies with each other. Likewise, institutional overlaps could, in principle, be favourable in the sense that by linking together a larger number of states, it might further reduce inter-state tensions and ensure a more comprehensive policy.

The second set of problems, or weaknesses, arises in the particular context where states have to move beyond consulting with each other and provide rapid concrete responses, perhaps even ensure common action. Although the Western institutional framework provides ample opportunities for consultation between interested states on almost any foreign policy issue, it does not always provide a suitable basis for common action. This problem becomes even more acute in a situations of crisis, which requires states to react rapidly. The EPC crisis mechanism was the closest Western institutions came to established procedures for dealing with a crisis situation in the early 1980s. NATO crisis mechanisms are geared towards military

crises that represent a threat to the territory of member states, and are not particularly useful in other contexts. Indeed, the chapter found that NATO did not have the proper apparatus to coordinate a political response to the interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Much of this problem inevitably stems from the intergovernmental nature of all Western institutions, with the exception of the EC proper. Essentially, the decision to act in a crisis situation rests with national governments. In addition, in the case of NATO, its ability to coordinate political issues in a situation of crisis is hampered by an unwieldy bureaucracy. The NATO machinery works on the gradual building of a political consensus, and in a situation of crisis, this is not enough.

Thirdly, the system as a whole was beginning to show signs of age. Structural changes, such as the general strengthening of Western Europe, both economically and politically, had neither led to equal adjustments at the institutional level, nor significantly transformed the 'transatlantic bargain' of the immediate post-war period. NATO remained essentially a hegemonic alliance. It depends, for its complex machinery to work efficiently, on US leadership. One of the difficulties in the late 1970s and early 1980s was that the legitimacy of US leadership, as well as the way in which the United States chose to exercise it, was questioned. As a result, the Atlantic

alliance risked, at best, grinding to a halt, at worst breaking down altogether.

Fourthly, although each agency has dealt with some aspect of the West's relations with the region, Eastern Europe has been a chief objective for none. There were no provisions specifically for coordinating policies towards Eastern Europe in any of the Western institutional frameworks. Indeed, the Harmel report of 1967, opening up for detente in East-West relations, encouraged individual national approaches to Eastern Europe. In the case of NATO this stems from the fact that, during the Cold War, Eastern Europe held a peculiar position in Western strategic thinking. As chapter two pointed out, Eastern Europe was central to Western strategic concerns, yet, politically out of reach, and as such marginalised from intra-Western discussions. This absence of any tradition or established procedures for dealing specifically with Eastern Europe inside the Western institutional framework promised to increase the difficulties of coordinated action.

Finally, it must be stressed that the Western institutions provided the framework within which the Western states could coordinate their policies. But political factors, and the political commitment to coordination, must also be taken into consideration in order to understand why coordination succeeds or fails. Indeed, the difficulties in the Western alliance were not only the result of

institutional weaknesses and changes in the distribution of power and influence between Western Europe and the United States. There were also individual issues and specific political differences, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which made the situation in the Alliance more tense.

CHAPTER FOUR. DEVELOPMENT OF A CRISIS IN POLAND (JUNE-- DECEMBER 1980)

Introduction

The following chapter is the first of three, examining the process of coordinating the response of the Western allies to events in Poland, from the summer of 1980 and into 1983. The three chapters evaluate whether or not the Western states succeeded in presenting an active and cohesive policy in response to the Polish crisis, define how these policies were coordinated and identify any difficulties encountered in the process. They do not aim to assess the value of Western policies in terms of their effect on the situation in Poland or on the behaviour of the Soviet Union. In so far as the "value" of the policy is discussed, it is from the point of view of establishing whether or not cohesion was maintained amongst the Western allies. If there was cohesion, the policy will, from this perspective, be characterised as "successful".

It is argued that the attempt to establish a common policy presented the Western allies with serious difficulties. Nonetheless, until the imposition of martial law on December 13 1981, coordination was relatively successful. After this event, the difficulties of coordination increased

considerably, and led, by the summer of 1982, to one of the most serious crises in the history of the Western alliance.

The three chapters are divided chronologically. Chapter four looks at the crisis from the beginning of the strikes in Poland in the summer of 1980 until December 1980, when the Warsaw Pact intensified its campaign to prevent further political changes in Poland. It was a phase during which the West considered the crisis to be chiefly domestic and hopefully containable within Poland. Chapter five examines the period from December 1980 to the imposition of martial law in Poland on December 13, 1981. During this phase, the domestic Polish crisis spilt over into East-West relations. The Western alliance focused its attention increasingly on the threat of a Soviet intervention, and coordinated its response accordingly. Finally, chapter six looks at Western reactions to the imposition of martial law. It was at this point that the Western states found it most difficult to present a common front, and a crisis developed inside the Western camp.

This chapter examines the nature and origins of the crisis in Poland, and maps out the different issues it raised for the Western alliance. It also raised the question of whether or not the Polish crisis should be considered a foreign policy crisis for the West. The outbreak of strikes in Poland, and

the subsequent establishment of the independent trades union, Solidarity, represented a severe blow to the Polish regime. As a workers' movement, Solidarity challenged the essence of Polish official ideology. There was also a risk of the crisis spreading to the rest of the Warsaw Pact and destabilising the Soviet bloc. According to Norman Davies:

"...the ramifications of the Polish crisis reach[ed] into all the current problem of the USSR".¹

It is suggested here that, partly as a result of a decade of detente, the domestic Polish crisis raised issues of an economic and political character for the Western states in addition to the traditional military/security issues. It is also argued that, although analytically separate from the problem of coordination, the complexity of these issues made coordination amongst the Western allies more difficult.

The Polish crisis emerged at a time when it was almost fashionable to talk about a "crisis" in NATO, and perhaps even the end of the alliance. Central to Western disagreement was the issue of detente. The chapter discusses the significance of detente for the Western allies and suggests that, at the end of the 1970s, "detente" had become a disguise for a variety of different approaches to East-West relations. The Polish crisis hit at the heart of these

¹Norman Davies, Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 433.

Western divergences. What is more, after the failed attempt to act together over Afghanistan, the Western allies were under pressure to respond cohesively and efficiently to any future external crisis. Successful coordination was important for the continued credibility of the Alliance, not only in relation to the outside world, but also in relation to allied governments' domestic constituencies, who were increasingly challenging the legitimacy of NATO. It should also, in principle, enhance the Western states' ability to promote their own values and objectives.² It is suggested that cohesion was maintained amongst the Western allies by a form of "muddling through" policy, in which Western states shared information on events in Poland and consulted each other regularly, without moving to make concrete, coordinated policy-initiatives, because there was concern that attempts at doing so would be divisive.³

The chapter starts with a discussion of the domestic origins of the Polish crisis. The two subsequent sections discuss the main issues the strikes in Poland raised for the Western

²It could of course be argued that attempts at coordination in the absence of common interests is unwise. Yet, this thesis will suggest that in the Polish crisis, there were both conflicting and shared interests amongst the Western states and, furthermore, that it is possible for states to agree on specific joint policies even if their interests are not always converging.

³Charles Lindblom, "The science of muddling through", pp.79-88, Public Administration Review, American Society for Public Administration, Washington D.C., vol. 19, spring 1959.

states. Finally, the last section examines the ways in which the Western states responded to these issues.

Origins of the crisis in Poland

The Polish crisis was triggered, in July 1980, by a government decision to increase the prices of meat. This decision led to spontaneous and uncoordinated strikes at individual factories throughout Poland. In the beginning, the strikes were not reported by the Polish press. Thus, officially, political and economic life took its normal path in Poland. As the strikes spread and the workers became more organised, the Polish authorities were gradually forced to recognise the situation. On July 16, railway workers on the railway line from Lublin to the Soviet border laid down their work. Two days later a Lublin strike committee was formed.⁴ In an attempt to calm the workers, local agreements were made. However, this only encouraged workers in other areas to follow suit. On 6 August, BBC's East European correspondent, Tim Sebastian, reported that irreversible changes had taken place in Polish politics as a result of the strikers' actions:

⁴Kevin Ruane, The Polish Challenge, London, British Broadcasting Corporation, 1982, p. 5.

"There's every indication that the current series of strikes in Poland has brought about a minor industrial revolution. Even Polish sources admit that the new unofficial wage-bargaining, the open discussion of stoppages in the censored press, the tacit admission that strikes are acceptable - all this is bound to cause irreversible changes in Polish life. As one official here put it: 'After the last few weeks, there is just no way things could ever be the same again.' For a country firmly anchored in the Soviet bloc, that is a remarkable admission, but it reflects both the extent of the changes that have taken place and the realisation that a new economic structure can no longer be ordered by ideological requirements, but by the genuine requirements of the people themselves."⁵

It was not the first time that the Poles had taken to strikes in order to manifest their dissatisfaction with the political and economic situation in their country. Strikes had last occurred in 1976, and had at that time led the Secretary General of the Polish Communist Party, Edward Gierek, to an immediate withdrawal of his decision to increase prices. Gierek himself had become Secretary General in 1970 after his predecessor Wladyslaw Gomulka was ousted from power as a result of popular unrest related to the country's economic situation. And Gomulka, in turn, had been brought back to power after the unrest in 1956, by the same party that had dismissed him in 1948, and presented to the country as the "national saviour".

According to Timothy Garton Ash and George Schopflin, the outbreak of strikes in the summer of 1980 should be

⁵Ibid. p.9.

understood in the context of Polish politics in the 1970s.⁶ Two factors are considered particularly important. Firstly, the visit of the Polish Pope to Poland in 1979, and secondly the failure of Gierek's reform policy. When Gierek came to power in 1971, he promised to make a "new Poland". This "new Poland" would be a country with a regime based on political consultation and communication. Moreover, it would be a prosperous regime, with a modern economy. The modernisation would take place with the help of Western credits, enabling Poland to buy Western technology. It has already been pointed out that Gierek came to power in a situation of social unrest. His predecessor, Gomulka, having increased the prices of food, faced rioting workers and was forced to resign. By abolishing the increase in prices and presenting a project for reform, Gierek had succeeded in bringing things, temporarily, back in control.

By re-establishing order and by making the workers go back to their jobs in return for the promise of a "brighter future", particularly a brighter economic future, Gierek was considered to have made a "contract" with Polish society. Social peace was bought off with the promise of economic progress:

⁶Timothy Garton Ash, The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-81, London, Jonathan Cape, 1983 and George Schopflin, Poland: A Society in Crisis, Conflict Studies. No 112, Oct. 1979. See also Schopflin's book, Politics in Eastern Europe, Oxford, Blackwell, 1993.

"Basically he proposed to win the support of the majority of the population by bringing them a steadily rising material standard of living, visible in the shops as consumer goods, on top of the traditional socialist advantages of full employment, social security and stable prices."⁷

But Western credits were either consumed or lost in a corrupt economic system. In addition, Western markets for Polish goods disappeared after the oil shock in 1973. By 1980, Poland faced severe economic difficulties. Gierek's program for a new Poland had failed. It was again necessary to increase prices, yet, by doing so, Gierek would breach his contract with society. In the meantime, since Gierek had come to power, the workers' attitudes had changed through two experiences. Firstly, in 1970, they had learned that they were capable of achieving concrete goals through strikes. In 1970, the price increase was taken back, and the party leader was removed as a direct result of the workers' protest. Secondly, the visit of the Pope in 1979, had given society self-confidence as well as trust in their ability to act responsibly and in an organised fashion, independently of the Party:

"John Paul II left thousands of human beings with a new self-respect and renewed faith, a nation with a rekindled pride, and a society with a new consciousness of its own essential unity. ... The Pope's visit probably marks the point at which the subjective reality

⁷Garton Ash, 1983, op. cit, p. 14.

of social/national unity overtook the objective reality of social division....the form the explosion took in 1980 ... (this) follows from the mass experience of that fantastic pilgrimage in June 1979. It is hard to conceive of Solidarity without the Polish Pope."⁸

In other words, the characteristics of Polish politics as well as the behaviour of its population, had changed during the 1970s. This helps to explain both the extent of support for the workers and the confidence and responsibility with which they acted in the crisis that developed over the summer of 1980.

On 14 August 1980 the workers in Gdansk set up an Inter-Factory Strike Committee (MKS) to coordinate the actions and demands of the workers in striking enterprises. Three days later the MKS presented 21 Demands to the Government. The main points of these demands were the right to free trades unions, independent of the Party and employers; the right to strike; respect for the freedom of speech, print and publication; release of all political prisoners; restoration of former rights to people dismissed from work after the strikes of 1970 and 1976 and to students expelled from universities because of their convictions.⁹ The government, for its part, seemed committed to the idea that the problem

⁸Garton Ash, 1983, op. cit. p. 29-30.

⁹Garton Ash, 1983, op. cit. pp. 42-43.

should be solved peacefully. Gradually, step by step, it started giving in to the workers' demands. Its retreat ended spectacularly with the negotiations between MKS and the government's representative, Mieczyslaw Jagielski, in the strikers' headquarters, the Lenin Shipyard. After two weeks of intense bargaining the ambiguous Gdansk agreement was signed on 31 August 1980.¹⁰ It was on the basis of the interpretation of this document that the Polish crisis was to develop, both sides claiming their interpretation to be the correct one.

Throughout the crisis, the strikers were supported by the dissident organisation KOR (Committee for the Defence of the Workers). KOR was founded after the workers' protest in 1976, in order to help the strikers who had been arrested. It continued to provide legal and financial assistance, and to advise people who were victims of government repression. It was also in the role of advisor that KOR took part in events in Poland in the summer of 1980. KOR helped the workers to draft and present their demands. But even though this support from the intellectuals was vital, the Polish "revolution" remained in essence a grassroot movement. Its origins were to be found in the workers' spontaneous protest, and it was

¹⁰Agence Europe Bulletin 1/2.9.80. The full text of the Gdansk agreement is reprinted in "Documentation. Crisis in Poland", Survival, vol XXIII, no. 5, Sept/Oct. 1981, pp. 225-231.

driven forward by these same people. In this respect it was different from the two other East European crises that it is often compared with, the Hungarian crisis of 1956 and the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968. On both those occasions the movement of protest started, and to a large extent remained, with the intellectuals. For this reason the Polish "revolution" was likely to be even more explosive, and even more damaging to the communist regime. It was the workers themselves, those who were supposed to be the backbone of the Party, who protested. This hit at the very heart of the communist party's ideology and self-legitimation, and threatened to cause irreparable damage to its position in Poland, as well as to Soviet-Polish relations.¹¹

It was difficult, even impossible, at the time of the signing of the Gdansk agreement to give an accurate interpretation of the nature of events in Poland, and thus also of their significance for the outside world. The questions as to "what and why" in Poland were more numerous than the answers. The main difficulty was knowing whether or not the process of reform, initiated by the Gdansk agreement, would succeed, and

¹¹According to Jiri Valenta, the Polish crisis constituted a three-fold challenge to the Soviet Union: strategic, politico-ideological and economic. He argues that: "A truly successful workers' revolution, originating from below, is even more threatening to the USSR than were the Czech intellectual reforms of 1968". Jiri Valenta, "Soviet options in Poland", pp. 50-59 in Survival, vol XXIII, no 2, March/April 1981, quote on p. 51.

a workable compromise, acceptable to Polish protesters as well as to Polish authorities, be established. The uncertainty was strengthened by the fact that it was not clear how far the workers would go with their demands; what was happening inside the black box of the Polish government; and whether or not both parties were willing to search for a compromise. The creation of Solidarity represented a severe blow to the Polish regime and to its ideology. By association, even if Poland's role in the Warsaw Pact had not been questioned so far, there was a risk of contagion to other East European states and to the Soviet Union. This raised the question of whether or not Poland's allies would accept the outcome of a possible domestic compromise: Would the existence of a trades union, independent of the communist party, in the long term be acceptable to the Soviet Union? Finally, if reforms succeeded, how would this affect the Warsaw Pact, and conversely, in case of a failure to achieve a compromise, what would the effects of this be on Poland, on the Warsaw Pact and thus on the security balance in Europe?

The two-edged sword of the Polish crisis

The news of the strikers' achievements in Poland were acclaimed by all sides, to the left and to the right of the

political scale, in the West. It was hailed as a victory for human rights and for the principles of liberal democracy.¹² The positive aspect of the crisis was underlined by the comments of Western leaders after the signing of the Gdansk agreement. The French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing talked of:

"...l'attention avec laquelle les événements en Pologne sont suivis en France, et la sympathie qui accueille toute initiative répondant aux aspirations du peuple polonais."¹³

The American President Jimmy Carter said:

"The working men and women of Poland have set an example for all of those who cherish freedom and human dignity. They have shown the world not just how to win a victory for labour, but that the hunger for human rights is everywhere."¹⁴

The creation of Solidarity corresponded to the aspirations the West claimed to have for Eastern Europe. It was a compromise of the sort that Western states considered both

¹²For a typical comment see Financial Times, 5.9.80: "Few world events of recent years have given such widespread pleasure in Britain as the winning by the Polish workers of the right to organise independent trade unions." Also Le Monde, 2.9.180, The Times, 1.9.1980, The Guardian 1.9.1980.

¹³Le Monde, 29.8.1980. See also the statement from the French Foreign Minister, Jean François-Poncet to the French National Assembly, Débats Parlementaires de l'Assemblée Nationale, Première Session Ordinaire de 1980-81, 12 novembre 1980, "Loi des finances, deuxième partie, pour 1981". Journal Officiel, 13.11.1980, pp. 3773-4.

¹⁴The Daily Telegraph, 2.9.80.

the most realistic and the most "suitable", in terms of the prospects for political change in the East European countries. It opened up for the possibility of a gradual evolution of a communist regime towards more freedom for its citizens. At the same time it indicated, if it were to succeed, a certain independence for the East European states, along the lines of the Sonnenfeldt doctrine, or the aims of the United States' policy of 'differentiation'.

But if Western leaders were enthusiastic about the turn of events in Poland, they were also very cautious. In late October André Fontaine, the editor of *Le Monde*, wrote:

"L'enjeu est immense: les Polonais que l'on peut rencontrer ces jours-ci parlent ouvertement de dernière chance. Ils veulent dire dernière chance pour leur pays, qui serait voué, en cas d'échec, à redevenir un simple objet de la politique internationale. Mais ils pourraient aussi bien parler de dernière chance de la détente, et du dernière chance du socialisme, au moins au sens que les léninistes donnent à ce mot."¹⁵

This comment, although not from a governmental source, gives an indication of the prevalent "mood" in the West at the time.¹⁶ Events in Poland represented a threat to the legitimacy of the Polish regime. A failure to keep the situation under control would menace the stability of the

¹⁵André Fontaine "Dernière chance pour la Pologne", *Le Monde* 18.10 80.

¹⁶Fontaine is also author of Un Seul Lit Pour Deux Rêves: Histoire de la Détente, Paris, Fayard, 1981 and is one of France's foremost experts on East-West relations.

Soviet system, and in turn might affect stability in Europe. In this sense, the Polish crisis was a two-edged sword for the Western allies. The strikes in Poland were discussed by the Western allies for the first time in mid-September, on the occasion of the visit of the US Deputy Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, to Europe. The meeting was pre-arranged and was supposed to concern the question of the Euromissiles. While Christopher was in Bonn, the issue of Poland was also discussed.¹⁷ The Polish issue had also been considered in the context of the European Community and European Political Cooperation in August, and again in Echternach, as well as on the return of Lord Carrington from his visit to Poland on November 4.¹⁸ Lord Carrington confirmed in late November that exchanges of views had taken place on the issue of Poland:

"We have discussed Poland on a number of occasions in political cooperation [of the European Community]".¹⁹

From the beginning of the strikes in Poland, the Western allies' embassies in Warsaw also arranged special meetings to

¹⁷Agence Europe Bulletin, 15.9.80.

¹⁸Agence Europe Bulletin, 27.10.80 and 4.11.80. The meeting in Echternach was an informal EPC meeting. No declaration was adopted.

¹⁹Le Quotidien de Paris, 27.11.80.

exchange information and assess the situation as it developed.²⁰

Although the content of these consultations between the allies was kept largely unknown to the public, the fact that they took place indicates that Western states were concerned about the situation and its possible impact in the West. Events in Poland raised a complex set of problems for the Western states. Although they provoked concern about the risk of a military intervention in Poland, the strikes also raised economic issues for the Western states and presented Western governments with political dilemmas, such as the question of how to deal with Western public opinion. Most importantly, an event of this sort raised expectations of concerted action from the Western allies. It will be suggested in the following that such concerted action was particularly difficult because of the complexity of the issues raised by the Polish crisis.

Economic implications of the strikes in Poland

It has already been pointed out that an important element of Gierek's policy in the 1970s had been to finance the recovery of the Polish economy by taking up credits in the West.²¹

²⁰Interview Oslo, December 1992.

²¹As a result of this Poland had for example become the Federal Republic's most important East European trading partner. See Constanze Ketterer, German liberalism and

Gierek's policy developed against the backdrop of the new climate of detente and a political willingness of Western states to engage in economic relations with East European countries. There was a surplus of capital on the world market and on the basis of the "umbrella theory" Poland was considered a trustworthy creditor because the Soviet Union and the CMEA were seen as ultimate guarantors of its debt:

"East European borrowers have an impeccable record for punctual payment of debt obligations. Even if temporary cash-flow problems do arise, it is assumed that the Comecon "umbrella" would be raised to shield Poland from a rain of writs. ... Belief in the Comecon umbrella is an act of faith for Western bankers."²²

By 1979 it was clear that Gierek's economic policy had failed dramatically. The Polish economy had not been modernised, foreign credits had been used almost exclusively for consumption and the market for Polish goods in the West had disappeared after the oil crisis of 1973. In August 1980, it was reported that Poland would need an additional credit of \$ 7.1 bn to service its hard currency debt for 1980.²³ Part of this debt was to private creditors and part to governments or government backed creditors, but the distribution between the two was unclear. Poland's debt crisis was not in itself

foreign policy: the FDP's Ostpolitik under Hans Dietrich Genscher, 1974-1990, PhD dissertation, London School of Economics, November 1994, p. 59.

²²Financial Times, 27.8.80.

²³Financial Times, 9.8.80.

a new issue. Piecemeal re-financing of Poland's debt had already started in 1979.²⁴ But Poland's economic situation and its ability to repay its debt was seriously aggravated as a result of the social unrest.²⁵ Poland's major creditors in 1977 were France, Britain, Austria, West Germany, Japan and the USA. The share of the United States increased after 1977 but West European banks were still more heavily exposed than their US counterparts.²⁶ It was not only the Western financial sector that risked being affected by the crisis in Poland. According to Richard Portes, the crisis would also have an impact on East-West trade more generally:

"Simple miscalculations in managing an extremely tight convertible-currency debt and payments position could lead to default, ... The creditworthiness of other CMEA states would be affected, and East-West trade could suffer greatly." ²⁷

²⁴Richard Portes, The Polish Crisis: Western Economic Policy Options, London, RIIA, January 1981, p. 9. Portes defines "refinancing" as the issuing of "new loans to pay off the maturing principal obligation on an old loan". "Rescheduling" is defined as "the stretching out of maturities on existing loans, postponing repayments of principal and sometimes interest."

²⁵Poland's total hard currency debt was, at the end of 1979, estimated at \$ 19.4 bn. Poland was one of the first countries in the 1980s to encounter problems with large foreign debts. By the mid-1980s the Polish debt was to look small in comparison with that of Mexico and other Latin American states, yet, at the time, it was unusually high.

²⁶Portes, op. cit. p.27.

²⁷Portes, op. cit. p.2.

The West Europeans had a much larger share of East-West trade than the United States. In fact, the United States' share of OECD exports to Eastern Europe was only 9%. The Federal Republic's share, including intra-German trade, was 25%. The US' share of imports from Eastern Europe was even lower, with only three percent. In 1980, 1.7% of US exports went to the CMEA states and 0.6% of its imports came from these states. This is what has led Woolcock to conclude that East-West trade was essentially a European affair:

"It would ... be more accurate to see East-West trade as an essentially European affair, rather than to refer to Western Europe having a greater stake in it".²⁸

What this meant in terms of the Polish crisis was that the West Europeans were likely to feel its economic effects more strongly than their American ally. This was particularly the case with the Federal Republic. Trade with Eastern Europe had in the 1970s become an important instrument of the Ostpolitik.²⁹ Indeed, from 1971 to 1981 both intra-German trade and West German trade with Eastern Europe had grown approximately by a factor of four.³⁰ West Germany's share of

²⁸Stephen Woolcock Western Policies on East-West Trade, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1982, p. 16.

²⁹For the economic dimension to the FRG's Ostpolitik, see Angela Stent, From Embargo to Ostpolitik, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981.

³⁰It was no doubt helped along by the fact that the beginning of Ostpolitik coincided with the Budapest declaration of 1968 of the Warsaw Pact, which favoured increased trade with the West. Woolcock, op. cit., p.51.

Poland's trade with the West grew to over 30% in the short period from 1970 to 1974.³¹ By 1984, West Germany's balance of trade with Eastern Europe was DM 34 billion. Although West Germany's exports to Eastern Europe were less than five percent of its total exports, specific economic sectors relied quite heavily on trade with Eastern Europe,³² thus making West Germany's economy sensitive to fluctuations in East-West trade.³³

France's trade relations with Eastern Europe in the 1970s were relatively limited.³⁴ Its share in East-West trade was approximately the same as its share in world trade, whereas for West Germany it was higher. In 1978, 4.5% of French exports went to Eastern Europe and 3% of its imports came from that region. However, as in the case of West Germany, if one looks at specific economic sectors, the picture becomes

³¹This was partly the result of a trade and cooperation agreement between Poland and West Germany which was negotiated in parallel to the negotiations on the Warsaw Treaty between the two states. For this, see chapter two.

³²These included some basic chemical products, intermediate metal products and machine tools.

³³Woolcock, op. cit. pp.16-22 and Josef Joffe, "The view from Bonn: the tacit alliance", pp. 129-188 in Lincoln Gordon (ed), Eroding Empire: Western Relations With Eastern Europe, Washington DC, The Brookings Institutions, 1987, p.154.

³⁴The following is based chiefly on Thomas Schreiber, Les Relations de la France avec les pays de l'Est (1944-1980) Annexe, "Les échanges commerciales de la France avec les pays de l'Est", pp. 93-101, La Documentation Française, 30 Avril 1980.

slightly different. In 1976-7, 13% of French exports in non-electric machinery, 10% of steel and iron exports, 6% of exports in chemical products and 14% of paper exports went to Eastern Europe. Also, since the mid 1970s, the increase in exports to Eastern Europe had compensated for the stagnation of French exports towards the Western world. Without exports towards Eastern Europe, the French trade deficit would have been twice as high. Poland was France's second largest trading partner in the CMEA, following the Soviet Union.³⁵

British trade relations with the Soviet bloc were less important than those of France and Germany:

"...the economic links between Great Britain and the Eastern bloc ... are [not] important enough to have significant consequences, still less are they capable of changing East-West political structures."³⁶

To take only the issue of trade with the Soviet Union, the British share of Soviet trade with OECD fell from 14% in 1970 to just over 3.5% in 1982. West Germany's and France's share

³⁵For an overview of French trade relations with Poland see, Assemblée Nationale, Première Session Ordinaire de 1979-1980, Rapport d'information, no. 1520, 20.12.1979.

³⁶Michael Clarke, "The debate on European security in the United Kingdom", pp. 121-140 in Ole Waever, Pierre Lemaitre and Elzbieta Tromer (eds), European Polyphony: Perspectives Beyond East-West Confrontation, London, Macmillan, 1989, p.130.

of trade during the same period increased by a factor of five.³⁷

Because of the increase in trade and financial relations between East and West in Europe in the 1970s, the strikes in Poland had economic consequences also for Western states. These consequences were not, however, evenly distributed amongst Western states. The West Europeans, and France and West Germany in particular, were more closely involved in economic exchanges with Poland, and thus more sensitive to the economic consequences of the crisis. This in turn promised to raise difficulties for Western coordination.

³⁷Curtis Keeble, "The development of the relationship between the United Kingdom and the USSR", Appendix A, Part IV, "Trade relations", para 4.2. Second Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee, 1985-86, UK-Soviet Relations, Vol. 1, HC 28-1, HMSO, pp.lxxx-cii. Two reasons are often put forward in order to explain the limited British trade with Eastern Europe: firstly, that in Britain trade was to a large extent subordinated to security interests and secondly, that the British government did not offer the same political and financial support to trade with the Soviet bloc as the other European countries. Yet, these can only be partial explanations. When, in 1975, in the context of the signing of an Anglo-Soviet Protocol on political consultation, the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson signed a long term credit agreement with the Soviet Union, only a small part of the credit was used. Furthermore, the areas covered by the COCOM rules represented only about five percent of trading potential with the Soviet Union. See Clarke in Waever, op. cit; Edwina Moreton, "The view from London", pp. 232-269 in Gordon, op. cit; Margot Light, "Anglo-Soviet relations: political and diplomatic", pp.120-146 in Alex Pravda and Peter Duncan, Soviet-British relations since the 1970s, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Polish strikers and Western political dilemmas

Events in Poland also presented Western governments with broader political dilemmas. They raised a moral or human dimension that went beyond the general sympathy usually expressed towards foreign countries in difficulties. Chapter two stressed the importance of the "myth of Yalta", symbolising the failure of the West to prevent the division of Europe, in Western policies towards Eastern Europe. It also argued that, with the onset of the Cold War, Western states continued, in principle, to support political change in Eastern Europe, although they could not be seen to interfere directly in the domestic affairs of East European states. Moreover, although political change in Eastern Europe was desirable in principle, it was perceived to entail risks for Western security, thus further limiting Western willingness to get involved in the political affairs of Eastern Europe.³⁸

At the time of the strikes in Poland, these dilemmas in Western policies had been reinforced by a decade of East-West

³⁸Sir Julian Bullard, Political Director at the Foreign Office at the time of the Polish crisis has argued that: "As the internal crisis in Poland built up during the summer of 1980, the Nine were torn between a feeling that 'We cannot remain silent' and a natural caution in the face of a situation so fraught with dangers.", in "European Political Cooperation 1970-1990: a tale of two decades", pp. 31-44 in Power and Plenty? From the Internal Market to Political and Security Cooperation in Europe, Jean Monnet Chair Papers, The European Policy Unit at the European University Institute, Florence, 1991, quote on p. 36.

detente. Detente had driven some practical wedges into East-West divisions and encouraged the notion that, although part of the Soviet sphere of influence, Eastern Europe was no longer entirely out of reach politically. The signing of the Helsinki accords, for example, had brought political issues and human rights onto the East-West agenda. Detente had not only increased economic interaction, but also personal and cultural exchanges between East and West, as freedom of movement was relaxed between the two blocs in Europe. The changes brought about by detente did not amount to a military commitment of the West to Poland. Neither did they guarantee the West's ability to prevent a crackdown in Poland, but, they did make it more difficult for Western governments to stand idly by and do nothing about events in Poland.

It must be added that the economic, political and security issues raised as a result of the crisis did not necessarily point in the same direction. Arguably, Western governments (some perhaps more than others) had an even stronger vested interest in the continued maintenance of stability in Poland, not only in security terms, but for economic and political reasons. The Polish leader, Edward Gierek, was generally considered a liberal and trustworthy leader by Western governments. Chapter two pointed out that Giscard, for example, underlined his close relations with Gierek:

"Nous nous connaissions suffisamment pour situer nos convictions et nos cultures respectives, sans avoir

l'illusion de les influencer l'un chez l'autre, mais nous avons la possibilité de parler de système à système, de puissance à puissance, sans procès d'intention et sans agression verbale, ce qui nous permettait d'acquérir une meilleure connaissance du point de vue adverse et de l'apercevoir, en quelque sorte, de l'intérieur".³⁹

Poland had also been one of the main targets of the United States' policy of differentiation. For West Germany, detente had allowed for the return of ethnic Germans from Poland, as well as for the improvement of the freedom of movement for East and West Germans. Nonetheless, Western states were also committed to political change in Poland.

Events in Poland also presented Western governments with the possibility of a strong reaction from their own domestic population in case they were not seen as supportive enough of reforms in Poland. This phenomenon is recognised by Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser to president Carter:

"In the afternoon meeting with Ambassador [Peter] Hermes of [West] Germany. He maintains that the Germans would adopt economic sanctions against the Soviets if the Soviets invade Poland. He says public opinion pressures would push them that way. I hope he is right because the official position is much more reticent".⁴⁰

³⁹Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Le Pouvoir et la Vie, Paris, Compagnie 12, 1988, p. 169.

⁴⁰Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Documentation. White House Diary", pp. 32-48 in Orbis, Vol. 32, No. 1, Winter 1988, p. 37.

France and the United States, hosted a large number of Polish immigrants, thus reinforcing the interest in events in Poland at the level of society.⁴¹ Western trade unions also took an active interest in the Polish crisis. In fact, in the first phase of the crisis, while public opinion reactions at large were limited, the trade unions called for increased government action. First out was the American trade union AFL-CIO, which created a special assistance fund to help Polish workers financially.⁴² It was more open in its support for the Polish workers than the US government, and less concerned about being accused of interfering in Poland's domestic affairs. The United States' government did not approve of this financial aid, and was reported to have advised the trades unions not to go through with it. This

⁴¹The Polish-Americans are one of the largest ethnic groups in the United States, with an estimated 5.1 million Americans of Polish heritage in 1972. The Polish-American Congress was founded in 1944, with the aim of ensuring Polish independence in Europe. By coincidence, two leading policy-makers in Carter's administration (Secretary of State Edmund Muskie and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski) happened to be of Polish origins. "Poles", Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MASS, 1980, pp. 787-803. For press coverage of the Polish-American links and the strikes in Poland see Le Monde 24.8.1980. Research does not confirm that the Poles constituted an irresistible pressure group for US foreign policy although their presence no doubt enhanced domestic interest in events in Poland. See Stephen Garrett, "Eastern European ethnic groups and American foreign policy", pp. 301-327 in Political Science Quarterly, no. 3., vol. 93., 1978. He argues that "...Americans of East European ethnic origins have not in fact had much influence on American diplomacy toward Eastern Europe." p. 321.

⁴²Agence Europe Bulletin, 6.9.80.

action from the American government came after a complaint by the Polish government about the news of economic aid from A.F.L.-C.I.O.⁴³ European trades unions were also largely supporting the Polish workers both at a national and a European level. The attitude of the British TUC was the exception that confirmed the rule. Indeed the TUC provoked large scale public anger in Britain by refusing to cancel an official visit to the official Polish trades union after the creation of Solidarity. After a month of heated debate in the British press, the visit was finally cancelled on the initiative of the Poles.⁴⁴ Apart from this, European trades unions sympathised with the Poles. Jon Ivar Nalsund, Deputy Secretary General of the ESC in a letter to the Presidents of the Council and of the Commission of the European Community, called for a coordinated European economic policy to assist Poland. The trades unions saw a direct link between the economic situation in Poland and the promotion of the right to free expression and to organise freely. Thus, by contributing to the creation of stable economic conditions in

⁴³New York Times, 12.9.80 and 10.9.80.

⁴⁴Britain was in the paradoxical situation during the Polish crisis of having, on the one hand, a government that defended the right to free trade unions in Poland, while seeking to crush them at home, and on the other hand, national trade unions fighting for their own survival, while at the same time remaining, for some time into the Polish crisis, reluctant to abandon support for the official trades unions in Poland. See The Times, 20.8.1980 and 6.9.80.

Poland, they argued, the West would also contribute to securing the rights of the workers.⁴⁵

There was a difference in the approach of the European and the American trades unions. The former had a greater trust in the Polish regime's ability and willingness to reform the structures of Polish government, whereas the latter were giving their support directly to the workers.⁴⁶ This is a distinction that was to become recognisable later in the crisis also at governmental level, in particular if one compares the attitude of the government of the Federal Republic with that of the United States. The target of West German policy was primarily the Polish government, which was still considered trustworthy and able, and not Polish society. The American government, on the other hand, was, later in the crisis, to shift its emphasis away from supporting the Polish government and towards supporting society as a separate entity. For the time being, however, these differences were not so obvious.

This section has argued that the strikes in Poland did not present themselves exclusively in terms of security, but raised a more complex set of economic as well as political issues for the Western states. The next section argues that

⁴⁵Agence Europe Bulletin, 14.11.80.

⁴⁶As chapter two has argued, this reflects a long-standing debate in Western states on how to deal with Eastern Europe.

the nature of these issues would make coordination more difficult for the Western allies, and that coordination would be further complicated by the growing tension within the Western camp over the continuation of detente. Events in Poland threatened to play directly into these existing transatlantic disagreements and to continue to undermine confidence in the Alliance.

The necessity and risks of a coordinated response

The strikes in Poland started at a time of general deterioration in East-West relations, as well as intra-alliance relations. There was a strong feeling, in particular in the United States, that the Soviet Union had not played according to the rules of detente, that it had in fact been a "one-way street" which had only benefited the Soviet Union. The United States' disillusionment with the achievements of detente were mainly a result of Soviet activities in the third world.⁴⁷ It received a final blow with the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979.⁴⁸ The

⁴⁷For an account of the Soviet Union's policy in the Third World in the 1970s, see Helene Carrère d'Encausse Ni Paix ni Guerre, France, Flammarion, 1986 and Fred Halliday, The Making of the Second Cold War, London, Verso, 1989.

⁴⁸"The Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan a fortnight later, on 27 December 1979, which followed by a few weeks the humiliating occupation by Islamic radicals of the United States embassy in Teheran, precipitated a drastic and rapid deterioration of East-West relations. The Soviet action appeared to be taken in violation of the explicit and

importance of Afghanistan for Carter's perception of the Soviet Union was underlined in his interview with ABC news on 31 December 1979. During the interview he famously stated that:

"...this action of the Soviets has made a more dramatic change in my own opinion of what the Soviets' ultimate goals are than anything they have done in the previous time I have been in office."⁴⁹

After Afghanistan, the American government turned its back on the detente as an approach to East-West relations and called for a more confrontational approach to the Soviet Union.⁵⁰

implicit rules of conduct agreed to in the June 1972 Nixon-Brezhnev understanding which was intended to distinguish between tolerable meddling and unacceptable expansion in the Third World." Carl-Christoph Schweitzer (ed) The Changing Western Analysis of the Soviet Threat, London, Pinter Publishers, 1990, p. 40.

⁴⁹Excerpts of the interview are published in "Documentation. Crisis in Afghanistan. Interview with President Carter, 31 December 1979" Survival, vol XXII, no 2, March/April 1980, p. 68.

⁵⁰US sanctions after Afghanistan included deferring the ratification of the SALT I treaty; limiting sales of high technology and strategic items to the USSR; embargo on delivery of 17 million tons of grain ordered by the USSR; and a boycott of the Olympic games in Moscow in 1980. See "Statement by President Carter, 4 January 1980", Survival, vol XXII, no 4, July-August 1980, pp. 66-68. For an assessment of the impact of Afghanistan on superpower relations, see William E. Griffith, "Superpower relations after Afghanistan", pp. 146-151; and Zalmay Khalilzad, "Afghanistan and the crisis in American Foreign Policy", pp. 151-159, in Survival, vol. XXII. no 4, July/August 1980.

The Europeans had benefitted more from detente than the United States and were reluctant to follow the American lead in abandoning it.⁵¹ As Sloan has argued:

"Europe has gained far more in tangible benefits, some of utmost importance, than has the United States from the period of detente. This fact makes Europeans more inclined to regard detente as 'divisible', and want to protect the gains of detente for Europe. The United States, carrying the majority of Western global military burdens, has much greater interest in treating detente as 'indivisible', with Soviet actions outside Europe seen as providing cause for Western responses within the European framework."⁵²

The West Europeans considered their security to be based chiefly on the political and military balance in Europe. They did not consider the "global balance" that the Americans saw threatened, to be as important as it was in American eyes. Soviet activities in the Third World did not in their eyes constitute a security threat to Europe. The West Europeans also disagreed with the US administration's analysis of the wider implications of Afghanistan for the East-West balance:

"In the American view, Afghanistan could be a starting point for Soviet domination of the Persian Gulf;...Most European governments...refused to share this analysis. They were less concerned with the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan than fearing that the American reaction to

⁵¹See for example the French government's refusal to boycott the Olympic games in Moscow. *Débats Parlementaires de l'Assemblée Nationale, seconde session ordinaire de 1979-1980, "Questions au Gouvernement", 28 mai 1980, Journal Officiel, 29.5.1980, pp. 1334-1342.*

⁵²Stanley Sloan "Crisis in NATO: A Problem of Leadership?" *NATO Review* no. 3, 1982, p. 15. See also his book, *NATO's Future: Toward a Transatlantic Bargain*, London, Macmillan, 1986.

Afghanistan could affect detente on the main East-West front, i.e. in Europe"⁵³

It was argued in Europe that a return to a Cold War rhetoric might result in increased tension in Europe and thus, in turn, threaten Western Europe's security.⁵⁴

It follows logically from this that the West Europeans were also more interested in maintaining a policy of detente with Eastern Europe than their American counterparts. It could be argued that Poland was "proof" that detente was successful and that agreements such as the CSCE-treaty, which was a product of detente, had given dissidents in Eastern Europe a concrete document to refer to in their protests against their governments' violations of human rights.⁵⁵ By way of increased, although still of course restricted, economic and cultural exchanges, it had enabled Polish society to get a glance at how the other half of Europe lived and draw comparisons with conditions in Poland.

⁵³Ernst van Der Beugel, "After Afghanistan", Survival, vol XXII, no 6, Nov/Dec 1980, pp. 242-247, quote on p. 247.

⁵⁴For the French government's defence of continued East-West detente, see "Déclaration du gouvernement sur sa politique étrangère" (Foreign Minister Jean François-Poncet), Débats Parlementaires de l'Assemblée Nationale, Seconde Session Ordinaire de 1979-1980, 17 avril 1980, Journal Officiel, 18.4.1980, pp. 476-7.

⁵⁵Interview Glasgow, June 1996.

Hence, after Afghanistan the West Europeans had continued to call for cooperation in East-West relations and underlined the importance of dealing with the Soviet Union in a business like manner, as opposed to the more ideological approach of the American leadership. The West Europeans emphasised issues such as confidence-building measures, economic cooperation, respect for the renunciation of force:

"Notwithstanding the setbacks which the efforts for a constructive East-West relationship have unquestionably suffered, the possibility for a new businesslike and sober start has not been destroyed." ⁵⁶

Transatlantic disagreements had been further reinforced by personal conflicts, in particular between Carter and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. Gabriel Robin has pointed out in a discussion on Franco-American relations under Giscard that

"It is in fact after the election of Jimmy Carter that things started to deteriorate, and from the French perspective, for several different reasons. Maybe without being conscious of it, Carter's ideology was extremely destabilising for the European governments. To profess that detente with the East was a "jeu des dupes", in which the "dupes" were the West European governments, there was nothing more efficient to discredit the political leaders who would have continued this policy indefinitely."⁵⁷

⁵⁶H-G Wieck, "The future of East-West relations". NATO Review No. 6, Dec. 1981. p.18.

⁵⁷"Témoignages et interventions", pp. 63-67 in Samy Cohen et Marie-Claude Smouts (eds) La Politique Extérieure de Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Paris, Presses de la Fondation

Giscard also points out in his memoirs that both Schmidt and himself had wished for the re-election of Gerald Ford in 1976. This was hardly a factor likely to facilitate Euro-American relations under Carter.⁵⁸ The often difficult character of relations are also confirmed by both Carter himself and Brzezinski.⁵⁹ The Europeans were questioning Carter's ability as the leader of the West and criticised his foreign policy for being both naive and dogmatic.⁶⁰ A typical example of these kinds of problems in the alliance under Carter was the controversy over the neutron bomb.⁶¹

Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1985. Gabriel Robin, La Diplomatie de Mitterrand, France, Editions la Bièvre, 1985, p. 66. Robin was Conseiller Technique au Secretariat General de la Présidence de la République from 1974 to 79, and then Directeur des Affaires Politiques au Ministère des Affaires Etrangères until 1981.

⁵⁸Giscard d'Estaing, op. cit. p. 132-136.

⁵⁹Jimmy Carter, Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President, London Collins, 1982, pp.112-3 and Zbigniew Brzezinski, Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983, pp. 25-6.

⁶⁰Phillippe Moreau Defarges, Les Relations Internationales Dans le Monde d'Aujourd'hui, Paris, Editions S.T.H, 1987, p.109.

⁶¹The neutron bomb controversy is also quoted by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing as an important cause of distrust between Schmidt and Carter: "la perte de confiance d'Helmut Schmidt dans l'administration Carter a été définitive.", Le Pouvoir et la Vie. II. L'affrontement, Paris, Compagnie 12, 1991, pp. 132-135. For a discussion of Alliance politics and the neutron bomb see Sherri Wassermann, The Neutron Bomb Controversy, New York, Praeger, 1983.

Yet, the divergences in Western views did not stem only from a clash of personality or indeed from diverging perspectives on the implications of Afghanistan. Behind it was a deeper disagreement on East-West relations and on the view of the Soviet system, which could perhaps be described as a disagreement between those who believed in the possibility of co-existence between the two systems and those who believed that they were irreconcilable.

The difference between these two approaches had, to a large extent, been disguised by the ambiguous function given to detente policy.⁶² To some, detente was an objective in itself. The aim was to create "peaceful co-existence" between the two systems, allowing them to grow gradually closer. The clearest example of this approach is no doubt Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik, as outlined in chapter two. To others, detente was an instrument in the continuous struggle against communism. It was from this last perspective that Nixon and Kissinger launched the policy of detente in the 1960s. The president of the French National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee has summarised the differences in US and West European perspectives on detente in the following way:

"Pour les États-Unis, la détente a été essentiellement un code de conduite de la stratégie nucléaire avec l'URRS. Pour les Européens Occidentaux, elle a été

⁶²There were of course also differences in Soviet and American interpretation of detente. For this see Raymond Garthoff, Detente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan, Washington DC, Brookings Institution, 1994, in particular pp. 27-57.

beaucoup plus humaine. Elle a consisté à multiplier les échanges de personnes, de marchandises, culturels, matériels, à essayer de faire changer les choses de l'intérieur avec le temps, et de créer les conditions d'une meilleure cohabitation".⁶³

Together, the allies had managed to agree on the policy of detente itself without agreeing on the values behind it.⁶⁴ The United States' policy of detente, as it was launched in the late 1960s, was a strategy for managing their relations with the other superpower.⁶⁵ It was not, essentially, expected to alter the nature of the relationship. In Europe and, in particular, with West Germany's Ostpolitik, detente took on a different meaning. It was not about managing adversarial power, but about improving relations between East and West in Europe, and, in particular, East and West

⁶³"Discussion sur la déclaration du gouvernement sur sa politique étrangère" (Maurice Faure, President of the National Assembly's Affairs Committee) Débats Parlementaires de l'Assemblée Nationale, Troisième Session Extraordinaire de 1981-2, 6 juillet 1982. Journal Officiel, 7.7.1982.

⁶⁴See Lindblom, op. cit. He argues that we cannot distinguish between the means and ends in analysing the process of decision-making: "one chooses among values and among policies at one and the same time. Put a little more elaborately, one simultaneously chooses a policy to attain certain objectives and chooses the objectives themselves." The simultaneous choice of means and ends enables the decision-maker to establish an agreement between the different actors involved, even if these actors do not share the same interest. Because the agreement is made on the basis of a certain policy, on the action that should be taken, and the policy incorporates both the means and the ends. P. 48.

⁶⁵For the Nixon-Kissinger strategy on detente see Robert S. Litwak, Détente and the Nixon Doctrine: American Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of Stability. 1969-1976, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Germany. Thus, for the United States, it was logical to change tactics once they proved inefficient in terms of achieving the downfall of communism. At the same time, this threatened to expose the diverging perspectives inside the Alliance. Consequently, the compromise that had been found for the last decade became difficult to maintain.

The principal effect of Afghanistan had been to highlight the issues on which there was disagreement amongst Western allies:

"This invasion [of Afghanistan] highlighted the differences, which had increased since the early seventies, in the way Europe and the US viewed detente."⁶⁶

After the failure of attempts to coordinate their action over Afghanistan, there was a determination to close ranks at the next crossroads.⁶⁷ Throughout spring and summer of 1980, a number of meetings were held in the context of NATO and other Western institutional frameworks, aiming to solve the differences between the Western allies and to improve cooperation on foreign policy-issues. After a meeting of the "Eurogroup" countries in Brussels on May 12 and a subsequent meeting of the NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs on May 14, a declaration on political consultation was issued,

⁶⁶Richard Woyke, "A Crisis in US/West European Relations?" NATO Review, No.5 October 1981. p. 15.

⁶⁷Interview London, September 1994.

confirming the determination of the member states to confront the international situation "post-Afghanistan" together.⁶⁸ During the month of June, there were three subsequent meetings of Western leaders, in different fora: the European Council in Venice on 12-13 June, the G7 summit in Venice on 22-23 June and the Atlantic Council in Ankara on 25-26 June, where the issue of cooperation was discussed.⁶⁹

Against this backdrop, the strikes in Poland presented a further serious problem of coordination for the West, and threatened to reopen the wounds created after Afghanistan. Arguably, because of the nature of the issues raised by the Polish crisis, it promised to be, at the same time, more important and more difficult to ensure a coordinated response than to Afghanistan. It has already been argued that the strikes in Poland raised issues of a political and economic character, and not only security issues. A comprehensive Western response would require coordination in all these areas. As chapters two and three showed, Western solidarity was initially based on the feeling of common threat from the Soviet Union and the Western institutional structures were

⁶⁸The Eurogroup comprised the European members of NATO's integrated military organisation. Thus France was not a member. Agence Europe Bulletin 12.5.80 and 14.5.80.

⁶⁹Agence Europe Bulletin 25.6.80. For a discussion of the G7 summit in Venice see Robert Putnam and Nicholas Bayne, Hanging Together: Cooperation and Conflict in the Seven-Power Summits, London, Sage Publications, 1987, pp. 221-126.

constructed around the idea of a need for cooperation in the area of security. There were few institutional structures facilitating transatlantic cooperation in areas of foreign policy and foreign trade or finance. Furthermore, in the economic sphere, the cement of the "common enemy" did not exist to the same extent. Thus, in a situation like the one that the West faced with the strikes in Poland, cooperation was likely to be more difficult than in a "straightforward" security crisis. As chapter three has shown, NATO was not made for dealing with the type of problems raised by the strikes in Poland. It did not have specific structures to deal with political coordination or a crisis situation in Eastern Europe, unless these issues were subordinated to a common concern about Western security. Moreover, there was no other structure to compensate for the inadequacies of NATO. The basis for political cooperation between Europe and the USA, were the "Gymnich agreement" of June 1974, that opened up the possibility of political consultations between the Presidency of the EEC and the American government, and the Ottawa declaration of the Atlantic Council, in which the allies declared their commitment to keep each other informed and to strengthen the practice of political consultations.⁷⁰ But both these texts were mainly declarations of intent and did not represent a sufficient and reliable structure for

⁷⁰The Ottawa declaration was signed in Brussels on 26 June 1974. Pierre Gerbet, La Construction de l'Europe, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1983, p. 428.

political coordination, and in particular for common action. The EC proper, CoCom or the G7 could not fill the gaps in NATO's provisions and, in addition, suffered from their own inadequacies. According to Rummel:

"The West had no uniform framework within which to formulate and safeguard overall Western interest in peripheral crises, i.e. in cases where NATO does not 'grip'. Above all, coordination between West European and American crisis responses can by no means be regarded as ensured. But there are also a great number of specific shortcomings: lack of background sharing, great differences in the degree of crisis consciousness and national willingness to take risks, virtually no common attempts at crisis definition, fragmentation in the form of individual assessments according to specific events, no overview of the various management frameworks, lacking coordination of existing instruments, insecurity concerning actually available crisis capacities etc."⁷¹

A number of different issues were raised in the West as a result of the strikes in Poland, and a variety of interests, sometimes cutting across national borders, were at stake. If the strikes in Poland continued, and the search for a compromise between the regime and the workers proved unattainable, Poland's Western creditors might find themselves in financial difficulties and East-West trade might be threatened. From the point of view of public opinion, the pressure on the West to "do something" was likely to increase if the situation in Poland deteriorated. The different issues raised as a result of strikes in Poland,

⁷¹Reinhardt Rummel "Coordination of the West's Crisis Diplomacy", pp. 123-133 in Aussenpolitik, vol 31, no 2, 1980, quotation on p. 124.

did not necessarily all encourage the same policy-response. Economically, the primary interest of the West was the survival of the regime.⁷² In relation to public opinion, it was important for the West to be seen as an active and positive force, encouraging reform in Poland. Strategically, stability in Poland was a clear priority.⁷³ But most importantly, there was concern that alliance cohesion be preserved. As a result of the strikes in Poland, the Western states were once again running the risk of exposing to the rest of the world in general, and to the Soviet Union in particular, the inefficiency of their political structures to provide a common policy. If forced to act, their differences on detente and their difficulties in dealing with the changing power structure in the alliance risked being exposed.

The main solution that the West brought to these challenges in the first phase of the crisis, was to do as little as possible. Thus, alliance cohesion was preserved, a lid was put on diverging interests, and separate perspectives were allowed to coexist.

⁷²Financial Times 9.8.80.

⁷³International Herald Tribune, 29.8.80.

The ostrich method or how to solve problems by ignoring them

In their comments on events in Poland, Western leaders made efforts to emphasise that this was essentially a domestic crisis which should be solved by Poland on its own. Although obviously also intended as a signal to the Soviet Union to stay out of Poland's affairs, it was, at the same time, the most convenient option for the Western alliance itself. The French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, in a comment on events in Poland, pointed out that:

"La France a pour principe constant de ne pas intervenir dans les affaires intérieures des autres Etats. Elle souhaite que la Pologne puisse trouver en elle-même les moyens de surmonter ses difficultés et de répondre aux aspirations de son peuple".⁷⁴

Lord Carrington declared that:

"what is happening in Poland is a matter for the Poles. I hope that all other countries agree with that policy."⁷⁵

As for the US administration, its attitude in the first months also remained cautious, emphasising in particular its

⁷⁴Le Monde, 29.8.1980.

⁷⁵The Guardian, 30.10.80.

concern about not doing anything which might lead to Soviet accusations of interference.⁷⁶

As long as the crisis was defined as a domestic issue, it would not be necessary for the Western states to face up to their divergent views on detente and East-West relations. Moreover, they could continue with "business as usual" in areas such as East-West trade, and any possible inconsistencies in their interests in Eastern Europe need not come to the surface. In practical policy, this resulted in issues related to Poland being dealt with on a case by case basis, as they occurred, and not according to a coherent, overall strategy, unless the tendency to play down the significance of events so as to avoid publicity could be seen as a deliberate and calculated strategy.

The issue that the West dealt with most efficiently was that of Poland's debt, which also involved a number of Western banks and their financial survival. It is difficult to achieve a clear picture of the size and distribution of Polish debt among Western creditors in early 1980. The Polish government did for obvious reasons not seek publicity on the issue and Western bankers and governments seem to a large

⁷⁶New York Times, 4.9.1980, The Guardian 2.9.1980, Daily Telegraph 2.9.1980. See also the US administrations reactions to the activities of the AFL-CIO.

extent to have complied with this wish.⁷⁷ What is clear is that the strikes led the Polish government to launch a campaign for increased economic support from the West. Poland approached West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Britain and the United States for credits, as well as for help to reschedule its existing loans. The Poles were also reported to have warned their Western creditors that unless rescheduling was forthcoming, Poland might be forced to default on its loans.⁷⁸ From early in the autumn, the Western leaders were reported to favour increased financial aid to Poland. In a message to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, US President Carter proposed that they consider ways of helping Poland out of their economic difficulties. This was approved by the United States' allies.⁷⁹ Throughout the autumn, new credits were being accorded to Poland by Western private and public sources. On September 6 the United States granted Poland credits of \$ 675 m to support agriculture in 1981. This was

⁷⁷Portes op cit., p.34.

⁷⁸The Guardian, 27.11.80.

⁷⁹US Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on European Affairs, 97th Congress, second session, "The Polish Economy and Poland's International Debt: Implications for US Foreign Policy", January 1982; International Herald Tribune 4.9.80; Agence Europe Bulletin 9.9.80. See also Brzezinski in Orbis, op. cit. p. 32.

an increase in \$ 125 m compared to 1980.⁸⁰ A German banking consortium gave Poland \$ 675 m in credit after pressure from the German government.⁸¹ And in late November, France opened a new credit line to Poland.⁸² Similar reports of increased credits came from British banks in late October.⁸³ Finally, a series of meetings of different groups of Poland's creditors took place throughout the autumn of 1980 in an attempt to coordinate their activities.⁸⁴ But apart from these fragmented attempts to save Poland's liquidity crisis, and by the same token, save European banks that had invested in Poland, much was not done to help Poland out of its economic difficulties. According to Richard Portes:

"the policies of Western governments are not very well defined, even behind the scenes. ... Everyone is more or less sympathetic to Polish needs, but no one has been willing to make long-run commitments"⁸⁵

In general, the Western leaders were anxious that events in Poland should not interfere with their normal conduct of East-West relations. Hence, no new initiatives were taken as

⁸⁰Agence Europe Bulletin, 6.9.80.

⁸¹Agence Europe Bulletin, 29.8.80.

⁸²International Herald Tribune, 29/30.11.80.

⁸³Financial Times, 21.10.80.

⁸⁴Portes op. cit. p.28. See also, "Poland, the USSR and the West", Background Paper, House of Commons Library, 5 December 1980, p. 10.

⁸⁵Portes, op cit. p. 28.

a direct result of the situation in Poland. Events in Poland did lead to some modifications of the East-West agenda. Anxious to preserve relations with its East German counterparts, the Federal Republic's Chancellor Helmut Schmidt cancelled a visit to East Germany in order to prevent Poland from becoming an issue between the two Germanies.⁸⁶ But if the West Germans were discreet, the East Germans did not seem to consider the same strategy. The leader of the GDR was one of the strongest opponents of reform in Poland, letting his voice be heard early in the crisis. A fervent speech condemning recent events in Poland in mid-October appeared as a little-disguised warning to West Germany to remain neutral.⁸⁷ The French President Giscard d'Estaing's planned visit to Poland was also postponed, and later cancelled, at the initiative of the Polish Secretary General Stanislaw Kania.⁸⁸ This visit would have been his second in a short time, and was part of Giscard's effort to act as a bridge between East and West in a period of tension.⁸⁹ The

⁸⁶International Herald Tribune, 29.8.80.

⁸⁷Agence Europe Bulletin 15.10.80.

⁸⁸Agence Europe Bulletin 11.9.80.

⁸⁹Giscard had, without consulting his allies, met with Brezhnev in Warsaw in May 1981, to discuss the situation in Afghanistan. The reasons for his visit are outlined by foreign minister François-Poncet in "Déclaration du gouvernement sur la rencontre de Varsovie", Débats Parlementaires de l'Assemblée Nationale, Seconde Session Ordinaire de 1979-1980, 21 may 1980, Journal Officiel, 22.5.1980, pp. 1124-1127.

announced purpose of the visit had been to "keep the dialogue between various parts of Europe going".⁹⁰ These highly independent initiatives were, nevertheless, not appreciated by France's allies, and, most of all, signalled disunity in the Western alliance over East-West relations.

Unlike Giscard's second visit to Poland, that of the British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington was not cancelled. Lord Carrington was the first Western official to visit Poland after the signing of the Gdansk agreement.⁹¹ He met with Prime Minister Jozef Pinkowski and with the Secretary General Stanislaw Kania.⁹² It was known that Poland asked Great Britain for help with its large foreign debt, but apart from this, very little information came out about the nature of Lord Carrington's talks with Polish officials. The Poles clearly wanted to give the impression that business was continuing as usual in its relations with the West. Still, on the second day of Carrington's visit, Kania had to fly to Moscow for an emergency meeting with Soviet authorities.⁹³

⁹⁰Agence Europe Bulletin 26.6.80.

⁹¹The Guardian 25.10.80.

⁹²Edward Gierek was replaced by Stanislaw Kania in early September 1980.

⁹³Agence Europe Bulletin 29.10.80.

The United Kingdom was particularly active in EPC at this time, and Lord Carrington was reported to be pressing hard for the Community to take a common foreign policy initiative towards Poland.⁹⁴ Nonetheless, no concrete action was taken either at the European level or at the Atlantic level. There was, however, common monitoring of events, as well as continuous consultation amongst allies, but no concrete common policy-initiatives were taken.

At a national level, evidence leads us to suggest that the United States was the only country to take specific action. According to Brzezinski, the United States had already held its first Special Coordination Committee on Poland in October 1980.⁹⁵ There is no evidence that similar action was taken at such an early stage by any of the West European states. Further, according to Brzezinski, in late October

"We went through the checklist of possible responses [to a Soviet intervention in Poland] and agreed that a number of them should be raised in the course of the following week when consultations are held in Europe with our principal allies. I did not press for any recommendations because that would not only be **premature** but probably **divisive**."⁹⁶

⁹⁴The Guardian, 22.11.80.

⁹⁵Brzezinski in Orbis, op. cit. p. 33.

⁹⁶Brzezinski in Orbis, op. cit. p. 33. Our emphasis.

This indication that the US was reluctant to go very far in attempting to coordinate action confirms that there was no complete coherence of views amongst Western allies and that, thus, for the time being, it was more convenient for the Alliance to keep a low profile. Indeed, it was also at this point still possible to do so. Brzezinski also refers to such a disagreement:

"The Germans have told us at the Quad meeting [four-power conference with Britain, France, West-Germany and the United States] that detente should not be the victim of such intervention [by the Soviet Union]; in other words, the Germans are saying that in the event of a Soviet intervention the Germans would be prepared to continue with their East-West relationship".⁹⁷

Thus, there was a consensus in the West, but it was a negative consensus, simply consisting in continuing with business as usual and limiting the impact of events in Poland both on East-West relations and on intra-alliance relations.

Conclusions

The Western states successfully maintained a cohesive front during the first months of the Polish crisis. Lessons had been drawn from the failure to coordinate a response to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and deliberate efforts

⁹⁷Ibid, p.34.

were made, both in Europe and in the United States, to consult and inform allies over Poland. At the same time, there were early warning signs of the risks that the Polish crisis involved for Western cohesion. The crisis emerged at a time when the Western alliance's diverging views on East-West relations were becoming increasingly pronounced, and it threatened to highlight sensitive issues in intra-alliance relations. Also, taking place in the heart of Europe, the Polish crisis was potentially a far more explosive issue for the Western allies than Afghanistan. Not only would military action by the Warsaw Pact in Poland be disastrous in human terms, and represent serious risks to East-West stability, a failure by the Western states to agree on policy at the strategic heart of Europe would also be far more damaging to the Alliance's credibility. Finally, Western disagreement over Poland would give fuel to those on both sides of the Atlantic who questioned, albeit for different reasons, the continued utility of the Alliance. For these reasons, coordination over Poland was important.

The considerable uncertainty generated by the situation in Poland about the intentions of the Warsaw Pact and Polish authorities, as well as the strikers themselves, created a situation close to Snyder's and Diesing's definition of a

foreign policy crisis.⁹⁸ Still, the Polish crisis was not a traditional foreign policy crisis for the West. It raised a more complex set of issues, of an economic and political, as well as military/security character. Poland was highly indebted to Western governments and private banks, creating a situation of economic interdependence and reinforcing Western interests in stability in Poland. More was also at stake in political terms than in previous East European crises. The 1970s detente had strengthened political links between Poland and Western Europe in particular, as well as committing both sides to the respect of human rights. Consequently, public opinion in the West was far more sensitised to events in Poland. These non-military aspects of the crisis were particularly visible in this first phase of the crisis. Although there was also speculation about Soviet intentions at this early stage, a Soviet military intervention was not considered imminent.

Although analytically separate from the problem of coordination, the complexity of the issues raised in the West by the Polish crisis threatened to make coordination more difficult. Chapter three showed that Western provisions for coordination in the economic and political spheres were weak. There was no forum where all economic, political and security

⁹⁸Glenn Snyder and Paul Diesing, Conflict Among Nations, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1977, p.17.

aspects of Western policies could be dealt with together. What is more, solidarity was likely to be less strong amongst Western allies in the economic sphere than in the security sphere, where the cement of the Soviet threat was less strong. Indeed, the crisis in Poland was a two-edged sword for the Western alliance. The West could not stand idly by and watch events in Poland. At the same time, it did not wish to provoke a further deepening of the crisis, to be seen to interfere in what essentially was the security zone of the Soviet Union, or to damage its own fragile intra-Western consensus on East-West relations.

The chapter has found that the Western states dealt with these challenges by a policy of "muddling through". The risks that the crisis represented to East-West relations were played down, the crisis was defined primarily as a domestic issue on which the West could not be expected to take substantial action, and it was deliberately decided not to go beyond the common monitoring of events in Poland. This enabled Western states to maintain an apparent consensus and to continue to keep a lid on increasingly diverging perspectives on East-West relations and detente. Poland was discussed both within NATO and EPC. There was an attempt from early on in the crisis to ensure that EPC responded to events in Poland. But, there were few signs that this was done to the exclusion of the United States or NATO. Most importantly,

there were few signs at this stage, of an overall approach, in particular in the economic sphere.

It was still possible for the Western alliance to "muddle through" at this stage because it was still uncertain which direction events would take in Poland. The next chapter will show that in early December the West's strategy, at least on the official level, was to change quite drastically. The domestic Polish situation was not improving. The Polish Government was losing control over events and the Soviet Union was becoming visibly more impatient with its ally. As a result, the Western states became increasingly concerned that the Soviet Union might intervene militarily in Poland. The fear of a Soviet intervention was to become the centrepiece of Western policy up until the imposition of martial law.

**CHAPTER FIVE. DECEMBER 1980 TO DECEMBER 1981: SPILLOVER TO
EAST-WEST RELATIONS**

Introduction

By late November, early December, 1980 news about Soviet troop movements at Polish borders started coming through to the West. Western states had been concerned about Soviet reactions since the start of the strikes in the summer of 1980. Nevertheless, as chapter four showed, in the first months they aimed to downplay the risk of a military intervention and to emphasise the domestic political character of reform in Poland. With reports of Soviet troop movements on Poland's borders in late November, as well as news about an emergency meeting of the Warsaw Pact in Moscow on 5 December, the possibility of a Warsaw Pact intervention became the main concern of Western states. Thus, a new phase developed in Western responses to the Polish crisis. As the West changed its tactics and openly and consistently warned against a Soviet or Warsaw Pact military intervention in Poland, the Polish crisis spilt over into East-West relations.

Western policies in this second phase could be seen, and were presented by Western policy-makers, as rationally defined and aiming at achieving clear objectives, in particular that of

preventing a military intervention. Thomas C. Cynkin refers to American policy in this period as a "carrot and stick policy": threatening the Soviet Union that an intervention would have incalculable consequences for East-West detente, and encouraging change in Poland through economic aid.¹

Aiming to establish the basis upon which coordination continued in this phase of the crisis, this chapter questions the perspective presented by Cynkin. It was pointed out in chapter four that a military intervention in Poland threatened to affect stability of the European continent. Such an intervention would also threaten the continuation of detente, and of crucial arms negotiations between the US and the Soviet Union. All of this gives credibility to Cynkin's perspective.² Nonetheless, the understanding of the situation in Poland was uncertain, and accordingly, Western attempts at defining clear policy objectives haphazardous: It was still

¹Thomas C. Cynkin, Soviet and American Signalling in the Polish Crisis, London, Macmillan, 1988, p.68.

²The two-track decision in NATO was taken in 1979, at the request of the West Europeans (H. Schmidt was the first to alert attention to the implantation of Soviet SS20 missiles in Eastern Europe in a speech at the IISS in 1977). The American 'zero option' was presented by President Reagan on November 18, 1981 as a part of his negotiating plan. Negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States on reduction of nuclear weapons in Europe began in Geneva on November 30. Michel Tatu, La Bataille de Euromissiles, Paris, Ed. du Seuil, 1983; Diana Johnstone, The Politics of Euromissiles: Europe's Role in America's World, London, Verso, 1984; Jeffrey Herf, War by Other Means: Soviet Power, German Resistance and the Battle of Euromissiles, New York, Free Press, 1991.

uncertain in late 1980 which direction the changes in Poland would finally take, and whether or not reforms would succeed. Throughout 1981, the economic situation in Poland gradually deteriorated. Poland's national income dropped by 14%, meat rationing was introduced and the country was finding it increasingly difficult to service its foreign debt.³ Parallel to this, those on both sides of the political map in Poland favouring a compromise, were losing ground. Solidarity's demands became gradually more political, and Lech Walesa and the more moderate union leaders were less and less able to control the workers. Inside the government, the Minister of Defence, Wojciech Jaruzelski, became Prime Minister on 9 February 1981. On 18 October he replaced Stanislaw Kania as leader of the Party.⁴ News of Soviet pressure on Poland and the PZPR came and went throughout 1981. Yet, at the same time, reforms continued to be introduced both inside the Polish communist party (PZPR) and in the country in general. Against this backdrop, Western observers disagreed on the prospects for continued reforms in Poland. Indeed, Western predictions on this issue changed from week to week. What is more, news did also simmer through to the West that a domestic "solution" might be imposed in Poland, rather than

³Strategic Survey, 1981-2, p. 57.

⁴For an assessment of Jaruzelski and of his place within Polish politics, see Timothy Garton Ash, The Polish Revolution: Solidarity, London, Granta Books, 1991, pp. 150-154.

an external intervention. Defining Western objectives was further complicated by the need to ensure cohesion amongst allied states, as well as by the, to some extent, contradictory demands of Western economic, political and security aims in Poland outlined in chapter four.

Against this backdrop, the following pages question whether or not the rationality perspective fully explains Western policies.⁵ It is suggested that Western policies in this phase can at best be seen as the result of a process of "bounded rationality", that is, where

"the principle of 'satisficing' rather than 'optimizing' more realistically characterizes the process."⁶

The chapter continues to examine the overall Western response to events in Poland by looking at its economic as well as the political and strategic aspects. It also explores any linkage between Western responses to Poland and other issues on the Western agenda. Intra-alliance problems were still abundant,

⁵The rational actor model is defined in the following way:

"The foreign policy-maker, like any rational individual, considers possible causes of action, and evaluates the likely consequences of each in terms of costs and benefits. The decision-maker then selects the cause of action most likely to achieve the desired goal". Brian White, "Analysing Foreign Policy: Problems and Approaches", pp. 1-26 in Michael Clarke and Brian White, (eds) Understanding Foreign Policy: The Foreign Policy Systems Approach, Great Britain, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 1989, quote on p.12.

⁶Herbert A. Simon, Administrative Behaviour, New York, Macmillan, 1959, quoted by White op. cit. p. 17.

despite a brief "honeymoon" period after the election of Ronald Reagan as US president. There was strong popular opposition in Western Europe to NATO's planned deployment of Cruise and Pershing 2 missiles in Europe. Disagreement continued on the question of East-West economic trade and its potential threat to Western security. Finally, the efficiency of the Western institutional framework in dealing with coordination in response to events in Poland during this phase is examined.

The chapter starts by looking at the change of course in Western policies in late 1980. Subsequently, it turns to discuss, firstly, the rationale behind this policy, and secondly, any interconnection between the state of transatlantic relations and Western responses to events in Poland. The last section examines the differences between the West European and the American perspectives on the economic response to the crisis in Poland.

A change of direction in Western policy

From December 1980 the West's response to the crisis in Poland changed to focus increasingly on the risk of a Soviet military intervention. The change of policy is symbolised by Carter's public warning to the Soviet Union on 3 December:

"The United States is watching with growing concern the unprecedented buildup of Soviet forces along the Polish border and the closing of certain frontier regions along the border. ... foreign military intervention in Poland would have most negative consequences for East-West relations in general and US-Soviet relations in particular ... I want all countries to know that the attitude and future policies of the United States towards the Soviet Union would be directly and very adversely affected by any Soviet use of force in Poland."⁷

The increased tension in Poland and around its borders coincided with the European Council meeting in Luxembourg on 2/3 December, as well as with the twice yearly meeting of the North Atlantic Council. In both meetings Poland became one of the main issues on the agenda, and resulted in stern warnings to the Soviet Union to let Poland solve its own problems. In the final statement of the European Council in Luxembourg on 1-2 December, West European Heads of State and Government declared that

"The European Council expressed its sympathy for Poland and outlined the position of the nine as follows:

1. In their relations with Poland, the nine conform and will conform strictly to the United Nations charter and to the principles of the Helsinki Final Act.

2. In this context, they would point out that in subscribing to these principles, the states signatory to the Final Act have undertaken in particular to:

- respect the right of every country to chose and freely develop its own political, social, economic and cultural system as well as to determine its own laws and regulations,
- refrain from any direct or indirect, individual or collective intervention in internal or external affairs

⁷New York Times, 4 December 1980 'Text of US statement on Poland', quoted in Cynkin, op. cit, p. 64.

which fall within the national competence of another signatory state regardless of their mutual relations - recognise the right of all people to pursue their own political, economic, social and cultural development as they see fit and without external interference

3. The nine accordingly call upon all the signatory states to abide by these principles with regard to Poland and the Polish people. They emphasise that any other attitude would have very serious consequences for the future of international relations in Europe and throughout the world."⁸

Lord Carrington, in an interview with BBC TV and ITN on 2 December explicitly declared that the warning of the Nine was directed to the Soviet Union. He further confirmed that the declaration was meant to be a "very serious warning". As for the consequences that an intervention would have for East-West relations, he pointed out that

"The consequences for East-West relations would be incalculable in terms of arms talks, in terms of detente, in terms of the security conference in Madrid. ... You would not I think see any more discussion about arms limitation, I don't see how you could possibly go on with the Madrid conference... You would probably see other consequences, but those naturally would depend on what and how it happened."⁹

Equally, the final communique of the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of NATO resulted in a clear warning to the Soviet Union. The foreign ministers also pledged allegiance to what they called "genuine detente", and gave the Soviet Union the

⁸London Press Service, Verbatim service, 3 December 1980. Text of the Presidency conclusions on East-West relations issued on 2 December 1980 after the European Council meeting in Luxembourg.

⁹London Press Service, Verbatim Service, 2 December 1980.

full responsibility for the increased tension in East-West relations:

"Detente has brought appreciable benefits in the field of East-West co-operation and exchange. But it has been seriously damaged by Soviet actions. It could not survive if the Soviet Union were again to violate the basic rights of any state to territorial integrity and independence. Poland should be free to decide its own future. The Allies will respect the principle of non-intervention and strongly urge others to do likewise. Any intervention would fundamentally alter the entire international situation. The Allies would be compelled to react in the manner which the gravity of this development would require."¹⁰

Parallel with the public clarification of the West's common position on Poland, concrete steps were taken to ensure a common response if the Soviet Union intervened. NATO was the central organising institution in the process of negotiating and establishing the West's contingency planning. The decision to map out a common response to a potential Soviet intervention in Poland was taken during the meetings of the Defence Planning Committee of the North Atlantic Council on 10 December and of the Foreign Ministers on 11 and 12 December. The American Secretary of State Edmund Muskie arrived at the meeting with a list of possible political, economic and diplomatic sanctions that might be implemented in the case of a Soviet intervention. A committee of permanent representatives was set down to study the list and

¹⁰NATO Press Service, 12.12.1980.

map out a contingency plan for NATO as a whole.¹¹ The same committee would also meet every fortnight to monitor the situation in Poland.

The list of measures was deliberately not made public, out of the belief that this would lead to a loss of leverage with the Soviet Union. There are, however, certain indications of what was included on it. The general point always made was that an intervention would mean "the end of detente". Lord Carrington pointed out in an interview that the measures would be stronger than those taken after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.¹² Cynkin refers to the following items having been discussed at the first NATO meeting in December 1980:

"The Allies considered a range of contingency steps to be taken in the event of an invasion: 1) increased defense expenditures; 2) cessation of credits to Poland and the USSR; 3) cancellation of high technology exchanges, such as the gas pipeline deal; 4) closure of Western ports to Soviet vessels; 5) cancellation of the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction Talks; 6) walkout on the ongoing conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) deliberations; 7) cessation of cultural exchanges; 8) recall of ambassadors and 9) reduction of Western missions in Moscow."¹³

¹¹Financial Times, 15.12.80, Le Monde 14/15.12.80, Le Monde 13.12.80. Contingency planning in preparation for a Soviet intervention is confirmed by Lawrence Eagleburger in the US Congress, "US relations with Europe and the Soviet Union", US Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, 97th Congress, 2 and 10 June 1981, see in particular p. 48.

¹²The Japan Times 9.4.1981.

¹³Cynkin, op. cit. p. 74. Similar suggestions were made in interviews London, September 1994. See also Le Monde 25.2.1981.

The NATO Defence Ministers also decided to ask the United States to despatch four AWAC planes to Europe to observe the situation on Poland's borders. The planes, which are unarmed and advanced surveillance aircrafts, were expected to operate from West Germany.¹⁴ Finally, the NATO Defence Planning Committee concluded that NATO's Standard Naval Force should not be dispersed as was usual at Christmas time. The NATO communique, informing of this decision, underlined that the force was

"a symbol of Allied solidarity particularly in times of tension".¹⁵

Although the situation in Poland was not officially quoted as the reason for this decision, it must be assumed that it was the direct cause.

Hence by December 1980, the West had mapped out a new direction in its response to the situation in Poland. There was a clear effort to signal that the West was not indifferent to the evolution of events in Poland and that

¹⁴International Herald Tribune 10.12.80. This must be considered an important diplomatic signal. AWACS were indispensable instruments in time of war and a US sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia led to heated debate in the United States in 1981. For excerpts from this discussion, see Survival, vol XXIV, no 1, Jan/Feb 1982, "Documentation. The AWACS Debate", pp. 37-42. See also Arnold Lee Tessmer, Politics of Compromise: NATO and AWACS, Washington DC, National Defense University Press, 1988.

¹⁵NATO Press Service, 10.12.80.

Soviet interference would not be taken lightly in the West. The change of President in the United States in January 1981 did not have any immediate effect on the West's policy towards the crisis in Poland. As Gordon has also pointed out

"Secretary of State Haig quickly secured President Reagan's agreement to a policy of discouraging Soviet military intervention, using public and diplomatic channels and allied consultations in the same pattern as the previous administration."¹⁶

Throughout 1981, Western leaders kept up the monitoring of the situation in Poland and underlined at regular intervals their concern that Poland be left to sort out its problems on its own.¹⁷ Mrs Thatcher's statement in April is characteristic:

"An external intervention in Poland would be a disaster for Poland, for Europe, for East-West relations, and for all peoples. I hope that the Soviet leaders realise that intervention would be a disaster for the Soviet Union as well."¹⁸

¹⁶Lincoln Gordon, "Interests and policies in Eastern Europe: the view from Washington", pp. 67-128 in Gordon (ed), Eroding Empire: Western relations with Eastern Europe, Washington, The Brookings Institution, 1987, quote on p. 123.

¹⁷See for example Le Monde 12/13.4.81 (Jean Francois-Poncet, French foreign Minister under Giscard d'Estaing); Le Monde 9.6.81 (Claude Cheysson, French Foreign Minister under Mitterrand); International Herald Tribune 7.4.81 (Ronald Reagan); Financial Times 3.4.81 (US administration); Interview with Lord Carrington in National Public Radio in Washington on 27.2.81, text by London Press Service, 3.3.81; "Déclaration de politique générale du Gouvernement", (Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy), Débats Parlementaires de l'Assemblée Nationale, session de droit en application de l'article 12 de la Constitution, quatrième séance, 8 Juillet 1981, Journal Officiel, 9.9.1981, p. 54.

¹⁸The Guardian 9.4.1981.

At the NATO summit in Rome in May 1981 Poland was again one of the main topics discussed. Soviet pressure against Poland was condemned as damaging to international security and stability:

"In Europe, efforts to restore East-West co-operation and exchanges on the basis of the Helsinki Final Act cannot but be severely undermined by the use or threat of force for intervention in the affairs of other countries. Poland must be left free to resolve its own problems. Any outside intervention would have the gravest consequences for international relations as a whole and would fundamentally change the entire international situation. The Allies, for their part, will continue to adhere strictly to their policy of non-intervention and they call on all other states to do the same."¹⁹

The process of consultation between allies appeared to work satisfactorily in this phase. Carter, Brzezinski and Haig all underline the efforts they made to keep the Europeans informed, both of their knowledge of the situation in Poland and of American diplomatic initiatives to warn the Soviet Union. The importance of consultations was also pointed out by West European leaders.²⁰

¹⁹North Atlantic Council. Rome. 4-5 May 1981. Text published in NATO. Final Communiqués, 1981-85. Brussels. NATO Information Service, pp. 25-29.

²⁰The Japan Times 9.4.1981 (statement by Lord Carrington). See also Zbigniew Brzezinski "White House Diary, 1980" pp.32-48 in Orbis, vol. 32, no 1, Winter 1988, p. 32; Alexander Haig, Caveat: Realism, Reagan and Foreign Policy, New York, Macmillan, 1984, pp. 241-2, Gordon, op. cit. p.119. Interviews London, September and December 1994.

In the spring of 1981, most of the West European foreign ministers or heads of governments went to Washington to meet the new American President. On these occasions, the general consensus between West Europeans and Americans on the right of the Poles to sort out their problems without outside interference was constantly underlined, and appeared relatively convincing. The Italian Foreign Minister Colombo was first to report back to his European colleagues after such a visit. In his report to EPC on his return, he described the American attitude to Poland as "slightly less alarmist than a few months ago".²¹ Likewise, during the French Foreign Minister, Jean Francois-Ponçet's visit, as well as that of Helmut Schmidt, who visited the United States at the end of March, Poland was an important issue, and the "complete coherence" between the West Europeans and President Reagan was underlined.²²

Poland was also an important issue for EPC and intra-West European relations. It was discussed at the 37th Franco-German summit in Paris in February 1981, where it became the subject of a foreign policy-statement, despite the fact that the two political leaders were initially supposed to make a

²¹Agence Europe Bulletin, 18.2.81. Also, Bulletin of the European Communities, no 2, 1981, vol 14, section 2.2.45.

²²Financial Times 31.3.1981.

statement only on cultural relations. Schmidt and Giscard stated that:

"La modération s'impose, en premier lieu, dans les rapports entre les signataires de l'Acte final d'Helsinki qui a défini les règles. Elle signifie qu'il est essentiel que la Pologne puisse résoudre ses graves problèmes elle-même d'une manière pacifique et sans, hors d'Europe, comme en Europe, ingérence extérieure."²³

This confirms both a European wish to influence East-West relations, and the importance that the West Europeans attributed to the political situation in Poland.²⁴ It is interesting to note that Great Britain also underlined the importance of cooperation inside the framework of European Political Cooperation on the Polish question. Mrs. Thatcher stated that the Polish crisis directly affected the European Community and that it demanded real and immediate coordination of EEC foreign policy.²⁵

This section has shown that, at first sight, the Western states appeared successful in presenting a common front, and

²³Le Monde 8/9.2.1981.

²⁴Le Monde 7.2.1981. See also "Declaration on Poland". Maastricht European Council. Bulletin of the European Communities, no 3, 1981, vol 14, section 1.1.13.

²⁵The Guardian 9.4.1981. This corresponds with the view that Thatcher's government "... made EPC the main plank of its contribution to the European Community", Christopher Hill, "Britain: a convenient schizophrenia", pp. 19-33 in Hill (ed) National Foreign Policies and European Political Cooperation, London, George Allan and Unwin, 1983, quote on p. 22.

in pursuing a coherent and well defined policy, corresponding with clear objectives. However, several questions remain unanswered, the most important one being why the emphasis in Western policies was put almost exclusively on the role of the Soviet Union. The next section examines the Western states' understanding of the situation in Poland more closely.

Muddled perceptions, muddled objectives

Western policy initiatives in early December were apparently triggered by reports of Soviet troop movements at Poland's borders. Intelligence reports from the CIA, NATO and also some neutral countries, in particular Sweden, noting an increased activity of Soviet troops on Poland's borders started coming in to Western governments by late November early December 1980.²⁶ According to Ascherson, State Department officials told journalists on 25 November that Soviet troops were on a high state of alert.²⁷ And from this time the Western press attributed their headlines to the risk

²⁶Neil Ascherson, The Polish August: The Self-Limiting Revolution, UK, Penguin books, 1982, p.211; Timothy Garton Ash, The Polish Revolution: Solidarity, London, Granta Books, 1991, p.94.

²⁷Ascherson, op. cit. p.206.

of a Soviet military intervention.²⁸ Brzezinski also refers to CIA reports from late November.²⁹ Western concern was increased by the knowledge that an emergency meeting of the Warsaw Pact was held in Moscow on December 5, to discuss the situation in Poland.

These intelligence reports came at a time of relative calm inside Poland itself. Solidarity had, throughout October and early November, successfully fought for the registration of the trades union. The so called 'Narozniak affair' in which a Solidarity activist was arrested for having stolen a confidential document issued by the prosecutor's office, was solved by the release of the men in question and the threat of a general strike was averted.³⁰ As Western alarm grew, the Central Committee of the PZPR was holding its Seventh Plenum and this was the focus of most of the concern inside Poland. After some days, however, the rumours of Soviet troop movements had their impact also inside Poland itself

"This weekend [of 6-7 December] was by far the most dangerous moment for Poland since the first strike wave developed in July. For the first time, a realisation of

²⁸See for example Financial Times 1.12.80, The Times 3.12.80, New York Times 5.12.80

²⁹Brzezinski, in ORBIS, op. cit, p.34 and Jimmy Carter, Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President, London, Collins, 1982, p. 584.

³⁰For details on the "Narozniak affair", see Ascherson, op. cit. pp. 204-208, Garton Ash, op. cit. pp. 88-93.

the peril in which the nation stood seemed to flow over the population"³¹

Throughout 1981, the concern about the risks of invasion came and went in waves. It reached a second peak in early April when the Soviet military manoeuvres 'Soyuz 81' continued beyond the planned date.

However, it is not an easy task to establish with certainty the Western perception of the situation in Poland and of the risk of a Soviet military intervention. The situation in Poland was complex and rather unpredictable. Not only was it difficult to know which one of the three main actors, the Polish Communist Party, Solidarity or the Soviet Union would eventually force through its viewpoint. These actors were themselves influenced by several different factions and were thus not in total control of their own policy. The Soviet Union had to deal with pressure from the other East European states, Solidarity was finding it increasingly difficult to control its grassroot members and the PZPR was absorbed in an internal struggle over which attitude to take in the crisis. Indeed, these actors did not always have clear intentions, but, rather, were feeling their way and keeping several options open.

³¹Ascherson, op. cit. p.216.

Both Brzezinski and Carter are unclear as to whether they were convinced of the inevitability of a Soviet move. Brzezinski confirms that he had some doubts about the accuracy of the CIA reports.³² Carter on the other hand, appears to have been more certain about the Soviet threat. According to his memoirs,

"Early in December ... we became convinced that their [the Soviets] military forces were preparing to move into Poland."³³

Although the same detailed information is not available on the West European policy-makers' interpretations, it does not seem unreasonable to assume that there was no clear perception of the situation.³⁴ In other words, not only were there differences between the Western countries, but there was also a general confusion about the situation in Poland, regardless of each Western state's interests or idiosyncrasies.

³²Brzezinski in Orbis, op. cit., p. 34.

³³Carter, op. cit. p.584. It must be added here that the Carter administration was considerably weakened in the last year of his Presidency because of the Iranian hostage crisis. Although other foreign policy issues suffered more from the high priority given to the hostage crisis, there is no doubt that this event constituted a drain on resources and limited the time the Carter administration had available to deal with the Polish crisis. See Barry Rubin, Secrets of State: the State Department and the Struggle over US Foreign Policy, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1987, in particular p. 197.

³⁴Interview Oslo, December 1992.

Even today there is no clarity on the question of a "real" Soviet threat of intervention. We now know that plans had been made for a Warsaw Pact military intervention in Poland.³⁵ Thus observers at the time were correct in arguing that the Soviet Union was "in a state of near readiness for intervention".³⁶ However, the intelligence reports received at that time and which formed part of the information upon which the West made its decisions, were not accurate. Recent research confirms that the question of military intervention was discussed at the Warsaw Pact meeting of December 5, and that it was also rejected at the same meeting, after Polish guarantees that they were able to control the situation.³⁷ Secret documents from the archives of East Germany's

³⁵Mark Kramer, "Poland, 1980-81. Soviet policy during the Polish crisis", pp.1, 116-139 in Cold War International History Project, Bulletin, Washington DC, Woodrow Wilson Center, Issue 5, Spring 1995. This article is based on documentation released from the former Soviet Union and the GDR after the end of the Cold War. See also International Herald Tribune 11.1.1993 for references to similar findings based on research into the archives of the Communist party of the GDR.

³⁶Richard D. Anderson, "Soviet decision-making and Poland" pp. 22-36 in Problems of Communism, March-April 1982. Similar statements are presented in Minton F. Goldman "Soviet Policy towards the turmoil in Poland during the fall of 1980", pp.335-357 in East European Quarterly, vol. XX, no. 3, September 1986; André Gerrits "Limits of influence: the Kremlin and the Polish crisis 1980-81", pp.231-239 in Bulletin of Peace Proposals, vol.19 no.2, 1988.

³⁷See Kramer, op. cit. Also Keesing's Contemporary Archives, February 20, 1981 pp. 30721-2; Goldman, op. cit. p. 351; Richard Weitz "Soviet Decision-Making and the Polish Crisis", pp. 191-212, East European Quarterly, XXII, No. 2 June 1988, p.193.

Communist Party confirm this, as well as the point that the Soviet Union was under pressure from its East German ally to resort to military intervention.³⁸ Yet, intelligence reports quoted by Brzezinski state that a decision to intervene was taken on that same meeting. On December 6, Brzezinski noted:

"...it is now the Agency conclusion that the Soviets will be ready to go within 48 hours. Moreover, it is the Agency conclusion that they will go into Poland on Monday or Tuesday [8,9 December]..."³⁹

The day after, he recorded that

"A joint decision to invade was made on December 5 and can come as early as the morning or night of the 7th."⁴⁰

Furthermore, on the estimations of Soviet troops in the area, there was some confusion. The International Herald Tribune referred in early December to sources in Brussels stating that between 30 and 35 Soviet divisions were ready to move into Poland.⁴¹ Carter and Brzezinski in their memoirs quote rather lower numbers.⁴² Valenta points out that 300 000 to

³⁸International Herald Tribune, 11.1.93.

³⁹Brzezinski in Orbis, op. cit. p.39.

⁴⁰Ibid. p.41.

⁴¹International Herald Tribune, 10.12.1980. Also, The Guardian, 10.12.1980.

⁴²Brzezinski in Orbis, op. cit. p. 39 and Carter op. cit. p. 584. Carter writes about "fifteen or twenty divisions" being ready to move into Poland. Brzezinski refers to a message from Stan Turner (CIA Director) that 18 Soviet divisions would enter Poland 7 December 1980.

400 000 Soviet troops were ready to be deployed in Poland, although more divisions could be drawn from other districts.⁴³

Most importantly, information that contradicted the intelligence reports or indicated that an alternative course of events was also possible, was received by the West. The United States had received information on Polish plans to impose martial law through Polish Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski. Kuklinski served in the central Polish government apparatus charged with organising the reimposition of communist authority in Poland in 1980-81. He fled to the West just before imposition of martial law in December 1981. He claims that the idea of imposing martial law had already been considered in August 1980 and that the United States had been informed about this. According to Kuklinski, the plans to impose martial law were completed in early November 1980, but were temporarily shelved:

"To cozen the mutinous society, the Leadership Staff adopted the tactic of agreeing to sign a rather imprecisely worded social agreement in order to

⁴³Jiri Valenta, "Soviet options in Poland", pp. 50-59 in Survival, vol. XXIII, no. 2, March/April 1981. Valenta also points to the following 'moves' having been made by the Warsaw Pact: Soviet military commanders in Czechoslovakia were recalled to Moscow in early December; a series of unannounced ad hoc bilateral meetings of Soviet officials took place over the Polish crisis; other Warsaw Pact countries, in particular East Germany, stepped up their public campaign against Solidarity. He further argues that these initiatives were similar to Warsaw Pact behaviour before the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

extinguish the conflagration of strikes...and in the resulting more favourable conditions to switch to a counter-offensive by means of administrative measures, including as a final resort the imposition of martial law."⁴⁴

Finally, it should be added that historical precedents rendered the martial law alternative more likely than a military intervention. Indeed, the Soviet Union had never, during previous crises in Poland, chosen to intervene militarily. Recently published documents indicate that the decision not to use military force in 1956 was chiefly because of a Soviet fear of Polish military resistance.⁴⁵

There was not only confusion in the West about the situation in Poland, there was a further confusion in the formulation of policy objectives. According to Brzezinski, the United States had four objectives at that time with its policy:

"On December 8, I wrote in my journal: 'I see four objectives to what we are doing: one is to deprive the Soviets of surprise. ... Two, perhaps encourage the

⁴⁴"Documentation. Special Report: Poland in Crisis, 1980-81." pp.3-31 in Orbis, Vol.32, no.1 Winter 1988, quote on, p.14-15.

⁴⁵Cold War International History Project. Bulletin, Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, Spring 1995, pp. 1, 50-56. Several other observers have argued that the Polish army could not be relied upon to remain passive in the face of an external intervention. See Valenta, op. cit, in particular p. 53; Dale R. Hesping and Ivan Volgyes, "How reliable are East European armies?", Survival, vol XXII, no 5, Sept/Oct 1980, pp. 208-218; Karen Dawisha, Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and Reform: The Great Challenge, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 100 and 106.

Poles to resist if they are not taken by surprise, for this might somewhat deter the Soviets. The publicity is already doing that. Thirdly and paradoxically, to calm the situation in Poland by making the Poles more aware that the Soviets may, in fact, enter. The Poles have till now discounted this possibility and this may have emboldened them excessively. Here, in effect, we have a common interest with the Soviets, for they too may prefer to intimidate the Poles to a degree. And fourth, to deter the Soviets from coming in by intensifying international pressure and condemnation of the Soviet Union."⁴⁶

This was more or less followed up by the Reagan administration:

"American aims were simple: to keep Soviet troops out of Poland, and to preserve the reforms achieved by Solidarity".⁴⁷

However, both administrations at times claim to have considered a Soviet intervention as inevitable. Hence, Haig has stated that:

"There was never any question that the popular movement in Poland would be crushed by the U.S.S.R. The only questions were: when will this happen, and with what degree of brutality?"⁴⁸

In Western Europe, there was the same element of confusion between pessimism on the prospects of Soviet respect for reforms, and, at the same time, a policy aimed at deterring the Soviet Union. The difficulty in formulating policy-

⁴⁶Zbigniew Brzezinski, Power and Principle: Memoirs of a National Security Adviser London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983, p.467.

⁴⁷Alexander Haig, Caveat: Realism, Reagan and Foreign Policy, New York, Macmillan, 1984, p.240.

⁴⁸Haig op. cit. 239.

objectives was further exacerbated by the to some extent contradictory and, indeed, even incompatible aims of the economic, political and security aspects of the crisis.

This debate on whether the Soviet Union would have intervened and, in our case, whether the West thought it was going to do so may, at a certain level, seem fruitless. The fact is that it did not intervene. Still, the question always lingers in the background of any discussion on Poland in the early 1980s. From the perspective of Western coordination it is important because, as this chapter has shown, up until the imposition of martial law, the Western policies concentrated almost exclusively on the possibility of a Soviet military intervention in Poland, despite the fact that they had received information about Polish plans to impose martial law. The reasons for this focus are crucial to understanding Western policies. It has been argued here that several points in this respect remain unclear: Was a Soviet intervention considered inevitable, or was reform seen as possible? If Soviet intervention was seen as inevitable, then why try to discourage it? If it was not seen as inevitable then why focus only on this particular possibility and not other possibilities? Or, to put it differently, why in the context of general confusion about the evolution of events in Poland, did the West chose to focus its attention and contingency

planning on the Soviet military intervention and ignore other possible development, in particular martial law?

Bounded rationality

The underlying tension between the Western allies is an important factor contributing to explain why the Western states chose to focus on the Soviet threat, despite the fact that they were not certain that this was the only possible evolution of events, and despite the fact that it did not appear to be the result of clearly defined Western objectives in Poland. As chapter four outlined, the Polish crisis erupted in the midst of a situation of considerable strain in Euro-American relations. This section suggests that by concentrating on the risk of a Soviet intervention, the Western states managed to remain cohesive.

The Europeans had questioned Carter's ability as leader of the Western alliance and criticised his foreign policy for being both naive and dogmatic.⁴⁹ The election of Reagan in 1981 did, temporarily, improve transatlantic relations. The European Council in Luxembourg expressed satisfaction with

⁴⁹Philippe Moreau-Defarges, Les Relations Internationales dans le Monde d'Aujourd'hui, Paris, Editions S.T.H., 1987, p. 109.

Reagan's declared intention of creating "a strong America".⁵⁰ Equally, the French president, in a televised interview on French foreign policy, acclaimed the US president's intention of creating a powerful America, which fully exercised its international responsibilities, and underlined the importance of consultation between the United States and the West Europeans.⁵¹ The optimism in Euro-American relations in early 1981 was further reinforced by Reagan's emphasis, in his first official statement as president, on the importance of cooperation inside the alliance. In an interview on 20 February Reagan pointed out that:

"Western Europe will be called to play a key and vital role in the organisation of our security over the next decade".⁵²

He further declared that bilateral and multilateral cooperation was vital for the security of the Western alliance and underlined the importance of presenting an image of cooperation in face of adversaries.

However, the positive tune in Euro-American relations was not to last. As chapter four suggested, disagreement with Carter was not just a question of style of leadership or clash of

⁵⁰Le Monde, 4.12.80.

⁵¹Agence Europe Bulletin, 29.1.81.

⁵²Interview with Reagan in Figaro-Magazine, 20.2.81, quoted in Agence Europe Bulletin 21.2.81.

personalities, but the result of a disagreement on policy. In these terms Reagan's presidency did not signal an improvement of relations in the alliance. Reagan was as critical of detente as his predecessor. The virulent anti-communist discourse of his foreign policy speeches was not matched by a corresponding zeal in Western Europe despite the fact that West European politics were also shifting further towards the right of the political spectrum. In other words, the ideology of the Reagan administration was as far, or even further, apart from the West European position as Carter's had been, thus, if anything, promising to aggravate tension in the Alliance.⁵³

With regard to the Polish crisis, the differences between the West Europeans and the Reagan administration manifested themselves first on the question of economic relations. Members of the American administration were critical of the idea of economic aid to Eastern Europe, considering that it would only ease the Soviet Union's economic burden of looking after its East European satellites. Economic aid to Poland

⁵³In his first press conference Reagan stated that "So far, detente has been a one-way street that the Soviet Union has used to pursue its own aims ...the promotion of world revolution and a one world socialist or communist state..." He also argued that "...the Soviets reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat..." to further this cause. "Documentation. The Reagan administration and superpower relations", Survival, vol. XXIII, no. 3, May/June 1981, pp. 129-30.

was from this perspective seen as a way of subsidising Soviet control.⁵⁴ Taken to its extreme logic, this would mean that the Western states ought to stand by and let the Polish economy collapse, in order to create a heavy financial burden for the Soviet Union. This policy was recommended by some member of the Reagan administration:

"If the Soviet Union were on the verge of bankruptcy, would the United States offer its financial aid? Of course not; the collapse of the Soviet economy would be proof that Communism does not work, a realization devoutly to be wished. If Communist-run Poland were on the verge of bankruptcy, would the United States offer that nation financial aid? The obvious answer is again, of course not - let the Russians, who imposed the unworkable system on Poland, bail it out."⁵⁵

This domestic US debate on economic aid to Poland was only to a limited extent matched by similar consideration in Western Europe.⁵⁶ In fact, West Europe had, through the European Community, started its programme of food aid in December 1980. The West Europeans saw food aid to Poland as the logical continuation of the West European conception of detente, in which trade and economic relations played and

⁵⁴Gordon op. cit. p. 123, also Haig op. cit. pp. 111-116.

⁵⁵Quoted in the International Herald Tribune, 13.2.81.

⁵⁶"The West Europeans did not view detente as a quid pro quo formula, wherein trade is considered a concession requiring political rewards. In Europe, the interlocking East-West interdependence was designed to create a generally harmonious politico-military environment in which Polish liberation was not the crucial objective." David William Hunter, Western trade pressure on the Soviet Union: an interdependence perspective on sanctions, PhD dissertation, London School of Economics, 1988, p. 142.

important part. Food aid was given without political conditions. It presupposed the ability and the willingness of the Polish regime to negotiate with the workers and to make reforms. In a televised interview on January 27 the French President summarised France's attitude to events in Poland with the following three words "sympathie, non-ingérence, aide".⁵⁷ Although the French position at the time was more positive to economic aid than some of the other West European countries, his words are indicative of the differences between the United States and West Europe. France, Giscard pointed out, was "l'amie de la Pologne et du peuple polonais depuis longtemps". However, he also underlined that "dans la solution de ses problèmes, la Pologne doit tenir compte de sa situation géographique et stratégique". Finally, he underlined that Poland needed and should be able to rely on Western aid in its effort to solve its domestic problems.⁵⁸

The new United States' administration on the other hand, only started its aid program in April 1981. The Carter administration had decided in November 1980 to put off further action on Poland's request for economic assistance until the Reagan administration was in place.⁵⁹ The Reagan

⁵⁷Full text of the interview published in Le Monde 29.1.1981.

⁵⁸See also his memoirs, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Le pouvoir et la vie, Paris, Compagnie 12, 1988, pp. 168- 172.

⁵⁹Agence Europe Bulletin, 22.11.80.

administration's position on economic policy had remained uncertain for several months, chiefly as a result of the discussion inside the administration on the role of East-West trade. When US economic aid was restarted, the United States took a different approach from the West Europeans. It made an effort to extract guarantees from Poland and it was stressed that the aid was conditional on the continuation of political reforms.

The discussion on aid to Poland took place in the context of a wider debate within the alliance on the risks and advantages of East-West economic relations. Since the Ottawa summit of the G7 in 1981 the United States had pursued the aim of introducing curbs on high technology exports to the Soviet Union and restricting Western credits to the Soviet Union.⁶⁰ This was part of an overall change of American policy towards the Soviet bloc, initiated by the Reagan administration. The new American administration was highly suspicious of West European economic relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. It rejected one of the central ideas of detente policy, that trade with the Soviet

⁶⁰Robert Putnam and Nicholas Bayne, Hanging Together: Cooperation and Conflict in the Seven Power Summits, London, Sage, 1987, p. 126-140. See also Jack Brougher, "1979-82: The US uses trade to penalize Soviet aggression and seeks to reorder Western policy", pp. 419-453, study prepared for the use of the Joint Economic Committee, US Congress, December 31 1982, 97th Congress.

system might lead to more openness and less tension.⁶¹ It emphasised the risk of West European dependency on the Soviet Union and also stressed that the West, through trade with the Soviet bloc, was actually helping to strengthen the Soviet military machinery, partly by providing hard currency to the Soviet economy, partly by making Western technology available to the Soviet Union.⁶² American policy of the early 1980's:

"...marked a major shift in the logic which had underpinned American policy towards the Soviet Union for the past twenty years, and especially a sharp break with the period of detente. ... The Reagan administration's emerging focus [was] on changing the Soviet domestic situation - whether as a means to alter the Soviet external behaviour or as a way to accelerate the disintegration of the Soviet system and empire..."⁶³

The American concern about the Soviet Union gaining military advantages from trade with the West received a certain echo with some of the West European governments, in particular the British and the French. However, the American proposals resembled a policy of economic warfare that the West

⁶¹See for example Samuel Pisar, Coexistence and Commerce: Guidelines for Transactions Between East and West, London, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1970, whose work is said to have influenced the French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's view for East-West trade.

⁶²For a discussion on the question of East-West trade and the utility of sanctions in East-West relations see for example Philip Hanson, Western Economic Statecraft in East-West Relations, Chatham House Paper, London, Routledge, 1988; Stephen Woolcock, Western Policies on East-West Trade, Chatham House Paper, RIIA, 1982; Robert O'Neill (ed), The Conduct of East-West Relations in the 1980s, Macmillan, London, 1985.

⁶³Strategic Survey 1982-1983, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London 1983, p.31.

Europeans were highly suspicious of. Also, there was still a strong belief in Western Europe in the beneficial effects of East-West trade on East-West stability. In the words of Stephen Woolcock:

"West European governments, . . . , despite having modified some of the views that they held at the height of the detente period, see trade as a means of stabilizing East-West relations..."⁶⁴

The Europeans remained reluctant, both for economic and political reasons, to abandon trade relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.⁶⁵ As chapter four showed, economic leverage was an important part in particular of the Federal Republic's Ostpolitik. As the political importance of East-West trade increased in the late 1970s for the Federal Republic, the United States became increasingly sceptical of the value of East-West trade. By 1981:

"Bonn's aversion to utilising negative economic leverage against the Soviet Union clearly demonstrated that...the Federal Republic had developed its own trade policy towards Eastern Europe and no longer accepted US definitions of what was permissible in the area."⁶⁶

⁶⁴Woolcock, op. cit. p.79.

⁶⁵See for example Pierre Hassner, "Les mots et les choses", pp. 232-241 in Marie-Claude Smouts and Samy Cohen (eds), La Politique Extérieure de Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Paris, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1985 on the French commitment to East-West trade.

⁶⁶Constanze Ketterer, German liberalism and foreign policy: the FDP's Ostpolitik under Hans-Dietrich Genscher, 1974-1990, PhD dissertation, London School of Economic, 1994, p. 59.

It was further argued by the Europeans that the cost of such a policy would be carried by the West Europeans. This was even more likely because of the type of products the US administration sought to exclude from East-West trade. By excluding agricultural products from his policy, Reagan "shifted the burden of responsibility and costs of supporting the US embargo policy to the Europeans".⁶⁷

This discussion on East-West trade and economic aid to Poland illustrates that there were fundamental differences in the United States' and (broadly speaking) West European approaches to East-West relations, and consequently underlines the difficulties in providing some form of coherent Western response to events in Poland. One issue on which all the Western allies could agree, however, was that of the need to warn against a Soviet intervention in Poland. This was a policy which enabled the United States to prove that it took a firm stand against the Soviet Union, and the West Europeans to signal their continued commitment to detente, and their concern about the risk of its destruction. Such agreement was not, on the other hand, readily available when it came to preparing for the possibility of martial law in Poland. Consequently, discussion on this issue, and how to respond to it, was set aside.⁶⁸ The Western states have been

⁶⁷Hunter, op. cit. p. 72.

⁶⁸Interview London, September 1994.

criticised for presenting an oversimplified picture of the situation in Poland, for over-emphasising the role of the Soviet Union and for using the Polish crisis in their ideological and political struggle with the Soviet Union. It was from this perspective that the party chairman of the ruling SPD in the Federal Republic, Willy Brandt, argued that "Poland has a great deal more to do with Poland than with the relationship between East and West."⁶⁹ In the same vein, Kevin Ruane has argued that the West ignored the complexity of events in Poland, and did not appreciate the new Polish government's genuine efforts at reform.⁷⁰ It is often argued that "more" should have been done to support the process of reform in Poland, in particular economically.⁷¹ Others considered the West to have been too complacent with the Polish regime and the Soviet Union and that the appropriate response would have been an economic embargo.⁷² The next

⁶⁹Quoted in Josef Joffe, The Limited Partnership: Europe, the United States and the Burdens of Alliance, Cambridge, MASS, Ballinger, 1987, p. 19.

⁷⁰Kevin Ruane, The Polish Challenge, London, British Broadcasting Corporation, 1982, pp.76-77.

⁷¹See for example Portes, op. cit, Garton Ash, op. cit. pp 338-345. Both argue that a concerted and coordinated Western programme of economic aid could have made a difference in Poland, contributing to ensure stability and thus providing a fertile ground for reforms in Poland.

⁷²For this argument see the debates on Poland in the US Congress, for example "Developments in Europe", US Congress, House of Representatives. Committee on Foreign Affairs. Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East. 97th Congress, Second Session, February 9, 1982. Cynkin argues that the United States should have used the threat of a Polish default

section will look more closely at the economic initiatives taken by Western states. What may be concluded at this point is that the policy developed by the Western allies may not have been the best policy for Poland, but it was a policy that enabled the Western allies to present a common front. Thus, the emphasis on the risk of Soviet intervention may well have been simplistic, yet it was a feasible option from the perspective of alliance cohesion.⁷³ All could agree, albeit for separate reasons, on warnings against a Soviet intervention.⁷⁴ This approach also allowed the Polish crisis to be defined as a Cold War issue, in which the roles of the Western allies were the most clearly set out and where cohesion was strongest. The economic and political issues raised by events in Poland, where the cement of the Soviet threat was less strong, became secondary to the issue of a risk of a military intervention in Poland.

as a bargaining chip with the Soviet Union, op. cit. p. 221. Charles Gati takes a different perspective by criticising both the notion that a massive economic aid programme could have made a difference and arguing that an economic policy of complete denial was unrealistic. Still, he comes down on the side of those favouring a strengthening of US sanctions towards Eastern Europe "Polish futures, Western options", pp. 292-309 in Foreign Affairs, vol. 61, no. 2, 1982.

⁷³Interview London, September 1994.

⁷⁴It must, of course, be added that if a Soviet or Warsaw Pact military intervention were to have taken place, it would not only have been a humanitarian disaster, but would have seriously destabilised the European continent.

The Western states' difficulties in agreeing on how to prepare for martial law in Poland, and the consequent result, which was to leave preparations for this eventuality out, are confirmed by Haig's memoirs:

"We had expected that the suppression would come at the hands of internal Polish forces, but discussions with allied governments failed to develop a consensus on the actions that might be taken by the West in this contingency. We had known for many months what we would do in case of direct Soviet intervention; but there was no certain plan of action in the more ambiguous case of internal crackdown."⁷⁵

The chapter now turns to look more closely at the economic response to events in Poland. Partly as a result of the divergence of views on East-West relations, partly as a result of a limited commitment to an economic initiative, the economic response to the situation in Poland was slow to develop and limited in its impact.

A reluctant economic response

Chapter four showed that it was already clear in autumn 1980 that Poland would be facing serious difficulties in servicing its debt. In 1981, the lack of foreign currency to buy essential imports, together with the continued strikes, put additional strains on an already weak Polish economy. By the end of 1981, several basic goods were rationed and many key industries were estimated to run at half capacity or less. By

⁷⁵Haig, op. cit. p.247.

the end of 1981, Poland's debt had reached \$27 bn.⁷⁶ The debt was not only severely hampering the restoration of economic prosperity in Poland, it had also become a serious liability for the Western banking system, in particular for the West European banks, notwithstanding the umbrella theory. Nonetheless, the West's economic response was put in place very slowly. This was due chiefly to the wider transatlantic disagreements on East-West economic relations discussed above. An outright crisis was avoided partly because different approaches developed inside different institutional frameworks.

Although discussions on the rescheduling of Poland's debt were for the most kept secret, it is clear that Western efforts to coordinate their responses to Polish demands for additional credits started in December 1980. In late February a press communique was published in which it was officially confirmed that such talks were taking place.⁷⁷ There was no obvious institution to deal with the coordination of the rescheduling of Poland's debt. An ad hoc group was organised at the initiative of the French Government and negotiations with Poland were chaired by the French Directeur du Trésor,

⁷⁶This figure is quoted by several sources. See London Press Service, Verbatim Service 3.12.80; Keesing's Contemporary Archives February 20, 1981. p.30717; Strategic Survey: 1981-82, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London 1982, p. 58.

⁷⁷Le Monde 27.2.81.

Jean-Yves Haberer.⁷⁸ The negotiations involved 15 countries. Poland itself was also present.

Achieving agreement on rescheduling Poland's debt was not done overnight. A general agreement was only achieved in April 1981. Short-term bilateral refinancing measures were taken to compensate while waiting for a long term solution. West Germany, France and Britain all provided short term credit to Poland to permit normal commercial transactions to continue. The delay in agreement was caused by the hesitant attitude of the Reagan administration.⁷⁹ By April 10 a document established by French, British, American and West German government officials provided a detailed assessment of Poland's financial situation, and on 27 April an agreement on principle was made to reschedule about \$2.5 bn. worth of official government-backed debts due for payment in 1981. The main points of the agreement were:

- 90 % of all official Western credits to Poland falling due between May 1 and the end of 1981 would be rescheduled or refinanced (including both interest and principal payment)

⁷⁸International Herald Tribune, 7.1.81.

⁷⁹Progress on the debt negotiations was reported in Financial Times, 22.1.1981, 12.2.81, 24.2.1981, 31.3.81 and 1.4.81. See also "Poland - the continuing crisis", Background paper, no. 97, House of Commons Library, 23 November 1981, pp. 4-7.

- introduction of a four year grace period in which Poland would not be required to repay those debts, repayment would start in 1986 and run for the next four years.⁸⁰

However, this agreement was only a first step. It was clear that Poland would also need to renegotiate its debt for 1982. Furthermore, there was the problem of new credits to bridge Poland's balance of payment gap and pay for essential imports as well as the question of the attitude of those creditors who had not been present at the discussions (Brazil, Spain and OPEC). The agreement was considered to be a basic formula that should also be applied by Poland's other creditors. Most importantly, the Paris agreement only covered half of Poland's hard currency debt. Agreement on rescheduling the other half, which was owed to private banks, still had to be negotiated.⁸¹ The commercial banks had been sitting on the fence, waiting for the outcome of the negotiations of the official debt before engaging themselves. Assessing the situation from a purely economic perspective, they were much more sceptical about Poland's economic prospects and more reluctant to give additional credits than their governments.

⁸⁰US Congress. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on European Affairs. 97th Congress, second session, "The Polish economy and Poland's international debt: implications for US foreign policy", January 27, 1982, pp.11-12; Financial Times 28.4.81.

⁸¹Financial Times 30.4.1981.

Negotiations on Poland's commercial debt were dealt with by a task force of Western banks, the number varying from 15 to 21. The task force would negotiate with Poland on behalf of all the country's commercial creditors. There were characteristics of the Polish debt that made it particularly difficult to find a solution.⁸² Firstly, there was more money at stake than usual in rescheduling negotiations. Poland requested rescheduling of \$3.1 bn. Previous rescheduling agreements with Turkey and Bolivia had involved smaller amounts. Secondly, the loans were spread amongst a very large number of creditors - about 460 banks were said to be involved and approval on the agreement was needed from all of them. Finally, negotiations of this kind were usually led by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It has the necessary expertise to negotiate with governments and is also able to acquire the necessary information on a country's economic situation from the government in question. Yet, Poland was not a member of the IMF and a major stumbling block throughout the negotiations was Polish reluctance to give information to its creditors about its financial situation.

In addition to these technical difficulties, it was the considerable difference between the European and the American approach to the question of rescheduling, which slowed down

⁸²Peter Montagnon "Rescheduling Polish debt. More than money at stake", Financial Times 22.6.1981.

deliberations. American banks were dragging their feet in the search for a solution.⁸³ The American position was that more time was needed to assess Poland's prospects for economic recovery before an agreement could be made. The European banks, who were more heavily exposed than their American counterparts, needed a faster agreement to protect themselves from a potential default. It was assumed that if one of the banks declared default it would make the whole block stumble. The Europeans further argued that a quick agreement was the only way to get the Polish economy back in working condition.

By the end of April there was pressure on both European and American banks to find a quick solution to the debt problem. Poland's economic situation and hence its ability to repay its debt was worsening. The West European governments were also pressuring their banks to do something.⁸⁴ In early April, Poland was given a "moratorium" until July 1, the delay then given to find a more long term solution to Poland's commercial debt.⁸⁵ Finally on 25 June the commercial banks were reported to have reached an agreement on a programme of rescheduling.⁸⁶ However, the agreement still had to be approved by Poland and certain of the conditions

⁸³International Herald Tribune 22.5.81.

⁸⁴Financial Times, 6.3.81.

⁸⁵Financial Times, 1.4.81 and Le Monde 17.4.81.

⁸⁶Financial Times 26.6.81.

attached were difficult to accept. Essentially, the plan proposed that Poland's debt for 1981 (\$3bn falling due in 1981) would be deferred until 1988, provided that Poland supplied the banks with a detailed economic recovery programme. Poland had never before supplied this kind of economic information, which included details of its financial relationship with the Soviet Union, to Western commercial institutions.⁸⁷ An "agreement in principle" for Poland's 1981 debt, between Poland and its Western creditors was not reached until 30 September the same year.⁸⁸ In early December, Poland was still threatening to declare default on some of its loans to the West.⁸⁹ Further, there were still doubts in the West as to the ability and willingness of Polish authorities to follow up the agreement with Western bankers.⁹⁰

In addition to the negotiations on rescheduling its debt, Poland was asking the West for additional credits, especially to import food. These matters were dealt with in different

⁸⁷Financial Times 30.7.81, The Guardian 26.8.81.

⁸⁸Financial Times 1.10.81. The agreement had also been delayed by the insistence of US banks that Poland should be charged penalty interest rates. "Poland. Foreign economic assistance", Keesings Contemporary Archives, December 4, 1981, p. 3122.

⁸⁹The Guardian 5.12.81.

⁹⁰International Herald Tribune 20.11.81. By the end of November it was reported that new negotiations were entered into for Poland's debt for 1982, Financial Times 21.11.81.

fora from those dealing with the rescheduling of existing debt. Individual West European states had been approached by Poland on the question of food and general economic credits, but the EEC as such had not been asked for economic assistance.⁹¹ At the European Council in Luxembourg in late 1980, the members of the European Community decided that they would provide food aid for Poland and that this would be done through the EC, rather than bilaterally.⁹²

On December 8 Polish authorities gave the Commission specific details of what food aid they would like to receive.⁹³ This was the first time that the Community offered food aid to a European country. The programme set out by the Commission involved complex interaction between EC institutions, national governments and Poland itself. The food was to be taken from existing Community stocks. Hence the Commission and the DG for agriculture was responsible for working out the details of the aid programme and for negotiating its contents with Polish authorities.⁹⁴ This was done according

⁹¹Agence Europe Bulletin, 3.12.80 and 4.12.80.

⁹²Agence Europe Bulletin 25.3.1981. Bulletin of the European Communities. Commission. No 12, 1980, vol. 13, "Poland to receive food supplies from the Community", sections 1.2.1-1.26.

⁹³Agence Europe Bulletin 8/9.12.80, p.5.

⁹⁴It is interesting to note that the Polish government was dealing directly with the EC despite the fact that it had not officially recognised its existence. Official recognition of the EC by the COMECON countries only came in 1988.

to the guidelines given by the European Council in Luxembourg. It was thus the Commissioner for Agriculture, Mr. Villain, who negotiated with Polish officials about the conditions for the aid package. According to the Commission's plan, the food was to be delivered to Poland at prices 10% below the world rate for sugar and 15% below for other goods. The price difference between Community prices and the price at which the foodstuff was sold to Poland was to be covered by the Community budget. The cost for the EAGGF (European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund) was estimated to be approximately 30 million Ecus.⁹⁵ The member states were responsible for providing credits in order for Poland to be able to pay for the foodstuff originating in their country. The program established in December 1980 was maintained as a 'model' throughout 1981.

The Commission's proposal was confirmed by the EEC Council of Foreign Ministers on 17 December. By the end of February it was reported that the Polish government was preparing a demand for a second batch of food aid from the European Community.⁹⁶ The Polish demand was finally submitted on 23 March, thus coinciding with the European Council in

⁹⁵This estimation depended on the world market prices at the time of payment.

⁹⁶Agence Europe Bulletin. 23/4.2.81.

Maastricht.⁹⁷ The European Council again recognised Poland's need for economic support and instructed the Council and the Commission "in agreement with the partner countries which were already taking part in the Paris discussion, to examine these wishes as soon as possible."⁹⁸ The plan for the second tranche of food supplies was ready by early April and was estimated to cost the European Community's budget 33 million ECU. The conditions were the same as for the first tranche. By early September Poland prepared to ask for a third lot of food aid to be delivered in the last part of 1981. The first consignment of the third aid package was agreed upon by the Ten in early October and was to be sent under the same conditions as aid produced throughout 1981. The third aid package altogether was estimated at a cost of 52 million ECU for the EAGGF.⁹⁹

The production of a list of supplies available from Community stocks was the easiest part to settle. Providing national credits for Poland to enable it to buy this food was more complicated. Delays were encountered in the negotiations between Poland and some of the EC member states. The first

⁹⁷Agence Europe Bulletin, 25.3.81.

⁹⁸Agence Europe Bulletin 25.3.81. See also, "Supply of agricultural products to Poland", Bulletin of the European Communities, no. 5, 1981, vol 14, section 2.1.62.

⁹⁹Agence Europe Bulletin 3.10.81. Also, "Supply of food products to Poland", Bulletin of the European Communities, no 10, 1981, vol 14, section 2.1.94.

batch of food aid was delayed because agreement on credit was not achieved at the time planned.¹⁰⁰ Only by the beginning of March were these negotiations coming to an end.¹⁰¹ As the second and third batches were negotiated, hesitant voices were expressing doubt about certain aspects of the food aid project. Member states were reported as having difficulties in organising enough credit to cover the Polish purchases. The German government was quoted as being reticent, whereas France was positive to the project.¹⁰² In the second tranche of aid France proposed increases to the Commission's program. In addition, France proposed to sell additional wheat, financed on an autonomous basis.¹⁰³ On the whole, France's position on food and economic aid in this period was "lenient" and France was playing an important role in ensuring the continuation of the Community's program as well as the discussion on the rescheduling of Poland's debt.

It has already been pointed out that the new United States' administration took longer to decide on a program of food aid to Poland. Its aid program did not start until April 1981. In

¹⁰⁰Agence Europe Bulletin, 2.4.81. See also the European Parliament's resolution, urging member states to eliminate the problems hampering rapid supply of food aid to Poland. Bulletin of the European Communities, no.4, 1981, vol 14, section 2.3.13.

¹⁰¹Agence Europe Bulletin. 5.3.81.

¹⁰²Agence Europe Bulletin 18.9.81.

¹⁰³Agence Europe Bulletin 16.4.81 and 15.5.81.

late October the United States declared that it was ready to supply Poland with additional basic foodstuff worth 29 million \$.¹⁰⁴

Several conclusions can be drawn with regard to the economic aspects of the Western response to events in Poland. The Western states did not have a coherent, overall approach on economic policy towards the Polish crisis. There was no forum to provide overall coordination of all aspects of the economic response to Poland, and no one country or institution took the lead and ensured a dynamic response in the economic sphere. The Europeans coordinated their food aid through the European Community and the United States acted directly with Poland. In this area, the EC emerged as an important actor, yet the EC's programme of food aid, was far from super-efficient. The food aid was only delivered to Poland after considerable delay, confirming a reluctant attitude amongst some of the West European governments. Furthermore, it must be underlined that what was called food aid was, in effect, increasing Poland's long term debt, because Poland was at some point in the future expected to repay the credits given in the early 1980s to buy the food. By early December it was decided that the Community, as a "Christmas gift" to Poland, would deliver 8 000 tonnes of beef. It would be the first food "aid" given for free to

¹⁰⁴Agence Europe Bulletin 29.10.81.

Poland since the beginning of the crisis.¹⁰⁵ As for the debt issue, it was dealt with through separate channels, outside Western institutional frameworks. Agreeing on the debt rescheduling was a lengthy process. The decision to reschedule Poland's commercial debt for 1981 was only reached in early December 1981, and was jeopardised by the imposition of martial law. Both Poland's commercial and public debt for the following years were still left unresolved. The delays were not only the result of a lack of interest in the West, and of genuine disagreement over its legitimacy, but also demonstrated the difficulties in coordinating policies outside established structures. In addition, economic aid was not closely integrated with the overall response to the crisis.

Conclusions

Assessments of Western policies towards Poland in this period vary greatly. On the one hand, Western policies have been seen as successful in the sense that they contributed to deterring the Soviet Union from intervening militarily in Poland. The Western states managed, in a way that they did not in 1956 and 1968, to signal to the Soviet Union that a military intervention would not be taken lightly. On the other hand, it is often pointed out that more could have been

¹⁰⁵Agence Europe Bulletin 5.12.81.

done, in particular in the economic area, to support the reform process in Poland. The Western approach to events in Poland has also been accused of being blinkered, because of focusing only on the conflict with the Soviet Union.

What this chapter has showed is that the Western responses to Poland must be understood against the backdrop of intra-alliance relations. The policy developed was a feasible policy from the perspective of alliance cohesion, although not necessarily the "best" policy in terms of the situation in Poland. In other words, a form of bureaucratic politics was taking place at the level of the alliance. Defining the Polish crisis in terms of East-West relations (in other words, concentrating on the risks of a military intervention), was the easiest option for the Western alliance. By focusing on the role of the Soviet Union, a lid was kept on diverging perspectives on detente. This approach also allowed the United States to present itself as a the defender of human rights and democracy in Poland, and the West Europeans to express their commitment to the continuation of detente. It allowed Western states to be seen to be "doing something" and at the same time to maintain cohesion in the Alliance. So, the Western allies were successful in coordinating their responses to events in Poland, in so far as they avoided direct clashes. Yet, cohesion over Poland was built on a fragile edifice, which

excluded important policy-options and slowed down economic initiatives, contributed to dragging out debt negotiations and to slowing down the process of food aid to Poland. Most importantly, despite the fact that the possibility of martial law in Poland was known to Western states, no common contingency plans were made for this possibility, because the Western states could not agree on how to react to it.

With regard to the role of the Western institutional frameworks, conclusions are not clear cut. On the one hand, the suggestions made in chapter three, that the large number of Western institutions might make coordination more difficult, have only been partly confirmed here. If there were no direct clashes on economic policy, this was partly because the economic responses were not dealt with within the Atlantic framework. The West Europeans used the instrument of the EC to coordinate their food aid to Poland, whereas the US continued bilateral negotiations with Poland on this issue. The existence of the EC also enabled the West European states to move ahead with economic aid to Poland without waiting for the United States.

On the other hand, no one single state or institution took an overall view and provided leadership in the Western response to Poland. The leadership role traditionally played by the United States worked well when exercised in the traditional

alliance sphere, in other words, in making contingency planning for a Soviet intervention within the context of NATO. The US failed to provide dynamism and direction for the Western states in the economic sphere, and there were no institutional structures or other actors taking the United States' place. Debt rescheduling, food aid, and contingency planning were dealt with by separate institutional networks with few links between them.

The emergence of the European Community as an active participant in the Western response to Poland was unusual. The decision to use the EC instruments followed logically from the setting up of a common trade policy towards Eastern Europe, however, as described in chapter three, member states had been reluctant to allow the EC to play an active role in East-West trade. What is more, the linking of EPC aims in Poland and the provisions for food aid through the European Community structures, was unorthodox.¹⁰⁶ Still, the EC's efforts were this time round only partially successful. The EC's policy on food aid suffered from divisions and disagreements amongst member states, as well as from delays in the implementation process. Thus, although breaking new ground, the EC failed to emerge as an entirely efficient economic actor in East-West relations. Furthermore, it is

¹⁰⁶It must be added that the EC's activities in Poland in the early 1980s contributed to lay the foundations for its role in Eastern Europe after the end of the Cold War.

important to underline that Western states put a considerable effort into avoiding unnecessary strains on the Alliance. Thus, EPC remained in the background as long as the political aspects of the crisis were dealt with by NATO.

During the phase examined in this chapter, the Polish crisis became an important issue in East-West relations. As a consequence of this, one would perhaps have expected an effort to link it to the ongoing arms negotiations in Europe. There is little indication that this was attempted, although it must be assumed that withdrawing from arms negotiations was one of the items on the list of contingencies in case of a Soviet intervention. There was, however, a spillover from Western discussions on East-West trade and control of strategic exports in the sense that the Polish crisis provided the US administration with additional ammunition in its campaign to tighten CoCom rules on exports to the Soviet bloc. This will be dealt with in more detail in chapter six.

CHAPTER SIX. AFTER THE IMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW. A CRISIS IN THE WESTERN CAMP

Introduction

With the imposition of martial law in Poland on 13 December 1981, the carefully built Western consensus on Poland broke down, leading to one of the most serious crises in the history of the Western alliance. As the two previous chapters have shown, Western policy-makers started out defining the Polish crisis as a domestic Polish issue. From December 1980, it became impossible to define the Polish crisis purely in domestic terms. Western policies concentrated increasingly on the risk of a Soviet military intervention, and the crisis spilt over into East-West relations. This chapter shows that with the imposition of martial law, a second spillover took place from the Polish crisis, into intra-Western relations, provoking what Coral Bell has called an intra-mural crisis in the Western alliance.¹

In his speech to the Polish nation, announcing the imposition of martial law and the creation of a "Military Council of National Salvation", General Jaruzelski defined the objectives of martial law to be to restore the rule of law,

¹Coral Bell, The Conventions of Crisis, Oxford University Press, 1971, p.7.

order and discipline and to create guarantees for the normal working of the State administration.² As a result of martial law, Poland's borders were closed, internal and external lines of communication were closed down, basic civil rights were suspended and members of Solidarity and dissidents were interned. Despite the high level of repression, there was resistance to the authorities. Strikes and sit-ins were reported in several areas in Poland. By the end of the year, however, the military appeared to have succeeded in breaking most of the resistance. The Polish authorities reported that eight people were dead and approximately 5000 interned.³

Polish authorities claimed martial law was only a temporary measure aimed at "restoring order", and not the end of the reform process altogether. Gradually, however, all the independent unions established since August 1980 were banned. On 8 October 1982 the Sejm also banned Solidarity itself, thus confirming that the initial hopes for a restoration of the process of reform were misleading. By the time martial

²Kevin Ruane, The Polish Challenge, London, BBC, 1982, p. 277.

³Ruane, op. cit. p.288. Although the Polish authorities might not be a totally reliable source on the question, it must be assumed that the number of dead and arrested was not lower than what the officials were ready to admit.

law was lifted, in July 1983, all its measures had been incorporated into the legal system.⁴

Restoring and maintaining order was the simplest of the tasks facing Jaruzelski. Regaining the political confidence of the population, and getting the economy back in shape, proved to be more difficult. By the end of 1982, the authority of the Communist Party was still fragile, and the army, rather than the Party, appeared to constitute the backbone of Poland's administration.⁵ The regime's inability to mobilise society also affected the economic situation in Poland, making economic reform difficult. Food supplies remained low, industrial production remained in slump and there was a shortage of hard currency for the import of vital goods.

Chapters four and five found a strong element of bureaucratic politics in the Western alliance. The imposition of martial law provoked a turning point in the crisis and placed Western policy-makers in a situation where explicit choices had to be made and 'muddling through' was no longer an option. They had to clarify, both at a national level and

⁴It must be underlined, however, that even so, in comparison with other East-European countries, the Polish regime was relatively liberal. See for example Karen Dawisha, Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and Reform: The Great Challenge, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

⁵George Sanford, Military Rule in Poland: The Rebuilding of Communist Power, 1981-3, London, Croom Helm, 1986.

at the alliance level, their objectives with regard to Poland, as well as identify the appropriate means to achieve these objectives. Against this backdrop, the role of Western coordination mechanisms and the extent to which the breakdown of Western coordination can be seen as the result of insufficient institutional or structural support is discussed. Furthermore, the importance of policy-disagreements as a result of martial law is examined. Indeed, as chapter four pointed out, although detente had raised the Western "stakes" in Poland, these "stakes" were not distributed equally amongst Western allies. This made agreement on how to react to martial law difficult. The Western states struggled not only with defining a common response to martial law, but in agreeing on its significance for the Western alliance. Finally, the significance of this crisis for the Western alliance and the roles, not only of individual states, but of the EC/EPC within it are examined. It is suggested that the crisis after martial law was not exclusively about Poland but about the nature of the Western alliance.

The chapter is organised chronologically. It starts out by looking at the immediate Western reactions to the imposition of martial law, as well as the main issues it raised for the Western allies. Subsequently, it outlines the Western responses, as they were formulated by individual states, and

examines the attempts made at coordinating these reactions. Following from this, the links between Western disagreements over martial law and pre-existing disputes inside the alliance are explored. Finally, the last section discusses the efforts made to patch up transatlantic differences after the G7 summit in June 1982.

Confusion in the Western camp

The immediate reaction in the West to the imposition of martial law can best be characterised as dominated by surprise, confusion and a certain embarrassment. Surprise, because there was no Soviet military intervention; confusion, because it was difficult to know what was really happening in Poland, and what the West could do about it; embarrassment, because of the lack of Western preparedness and because of the fragility of the Western consensus. With the imposition of martial law, the West risked being exposed as divided and indecisive. Jaruzelski's "domestic solution" highlighted the contradictions and confusions of Western interests and objectives, not only with regard to the Polish crisis but in Eastern Europe in general.

As chapter five has showed, the West had prepared itself for, and was probably expecting, a Soviet or Warsaw Pact military intervention in Poland. It was not prepared for a domestic crackdown: NATO's contingency-planning restricted itself to the possibility of a Soviet military intervention. Furthermore, although the possibility of martial law was known to Western governments, its timing also took Western states by surprise:

"The timing of this action [the imposition of martial law], which obviously had been meticulously prepared - and which we knew had been planned in minute detail in the USSR - came without forewarning to the United States."⁶

Most importantly, martial law did not fit in with Western contingency planning and created chaos in the Western alliance.⁷ There was an urgent need for a reassessment of Western policies and for a re-evaluation of the situation in Poland. This reassessment was, however, not a simple task. It would, for several reasons, be hazardous both for the alliance and for individual Western governments. A Soviet military intervention would have been easier to deal with for

⁶Alexander Haig, Caveat: Realism, Reagan and Foreign Policy, New York, Macmillan, 1984, p.247. This is also confirmed in interviews in Oslo December 1992 and London, September 1994.

⁷See for example International Herald Tribune 19/20.12.81 which underlines the press' view that there was no agreement in the alliance on what should be done about a Polish scenario in which the Soviet role was ambiguous.

the Western alliance. It would have produced a clear-cut situation in which the Soviet Union could have been singled out as the main responsible party. With the imposition of martial law, the West was obliged to enter a "grey" area, created largely by the policy of detente, where it was less easy to attribute responsibility, and where there was room for various different interpretations of the situation and various different solutions as to how one should react. As Hill has argued:

"This development [the imposition of martial law] was the worst possible from the Western viewpoint of seeking to make an effective response to the suppression of Solidarity. It neatly divided the United States from the Europeans by playing on the latter's hopes for a reconstructed Poland, rather than the 'liberation' which President Reagan's rhetoric increasingly yearned for."⁸

Further complicating the task of reassessing Western policies was the fact that, as a result of a total news blackout in the first ten days of martial law, it was almost impossible to get an accurate picture of the political situation inside Poland. It was not clear whether or not martial law had succeeded, how widespread resistance was to the military takeover, or how widespread the political repression was. It was still unsure to what extent martial law really was only a short term measure, as the Polish authorities claimed, and

⁸Christopher Hill and James Mayall, The Sanctions Problem: International and European Perspectives, EUI Working Paper, Florence, July 1983, p. 17.

whether or not there was still a risk of Soviet military action.

One issue in particular divided the West in the aftermath of martial law: that of the role of the Soviet Union and the degree to which it was responsible for the imposition of martial law. Western policy-makers also diverged on the question of whether or not martial law had been unavoidable, although they did not dwell on this in public. The way in which Western policy-makers at the time assessed the role and responsibility of the Soviet Union for martial law, had more to do with their pre-existing position on East-West relations, than with the political situation in Poland. Pierre Hassner has emphasised these paradoxes in the Western debate:

"Ceux qui proclament le plus fort que la crise polonaise marque la fin de la detente et reclament des sanctions, la suspensions ou la reduction radicale des rapports economiques Est-Ouest, un rearmement intensif face a la menace militaire sovietique, - sont ceux pour qui les evenements de Pologne n'ont en realite rien change. ... Ceux pour qui le 13 decembre devrait poser un probleme, ceux qui devraient s'interroger sur leur interpretation de l'Est et sur les paris qui servaient de fondement a leur politique, ce sont precisement les autres, ceux qui croyaient a la detente, ..., aux 'armes de la paix'... Or, ... [ils] maintiennent que le rapprochement est plus necessaire que jamais".⁹

⁹Pierre Hassner, "Le Deuil sied à l'Europe", pp.11-25 in Esprit, April 1982, p.12.

It must be emphasised, though, that this tendency was facilitated by the fact that information on events in Poland was limited. The fundamental disagreement about the significance of martial law, and the role of the Soviet Union, is reflected in the literature on the Polish crisis. Some have argued that the decision to impose martial law had been taken by Moscow, and that Jaruzelski was merely a Soviet puppet. Hence, Thomas M. Cynkin, assuming perfect rationality in the Soviet approach to Poland, for instance argues that:

"The final phase of the Polish crisis of 1980/81 saw the fruition of Moscow's strategy: the reaffirmation, beyond any doubt, of Soviet domination of the state of Poland. Pressure by Moscow ... galvanised the PUWP leadership and led to the ascendance of General Wojciech Jaruzelski, the man chosen to serve as the Petain of Poland."¹⁰

Jaruzelski's own account of events is carefully balanced between emphasising the importance of the independence of the Polish government in preparing and deciding on martial law, and stressing the threats emerging from the Soviet Union. He argues that the plans for martial law were made by Poland itself, and not by the Soviet Union.¹¹ He also underlines that continuous reform was impossible in Poland because Solidarity had, by December 1981, gone too far. After news of

¹⁰Thomas M. Cynkin, Soviet and American Signalling in the Polish Crisis, London, Macmillan Press, 1988, p.181.

¹¹"Das war psychische Folter", Der Spiegel, 11 May 1992, pp. 181-194. Interestingly, Jaruzelski appears to have been relatively successful in convincing his compatriots of his position. An opinion poll conducted in October 1992 indicated that 59% of Poles then thought the imposition of martial law was a "patriotic act". Aftenposten, 29.8.1993.

a planned mass demonstration of Solidarity supporters on 17 December, he feared a situation similar to Budapest in 1956, arguing that Poland found itself at the brink of internal anarchy, with members of Solidarity barricading the streets and seeking to overthrow the Party. At the same time, he confirms the crucial role of the Soviet Union. He has consistently presented himself as a Polish patriot, under constant pressure from Soviet authorities, imposing martial law in order to save Poland from a Soviet military intervention. He points out that the final decision to impose martial law came after a straight ultimatum from the Soviet Union.

Jaruzelski's position has been contradicted by documents brought to Poland by Boris Yeltsin during his state visit to Poland, in August 1993. According to these documents, Jaruzelski personally requested "fraternal aid" from the Soviet Union, but was refused by the Soviet leadership.¹² The validity of these statements must be questioned, bearing in mind the overwhelming evidence of Soviet political and military pressure on Poland towards the end of 1980 and

¹²Le Monde, 30 August 1993, "Les Soviétiques ont refusé d'intervenir en Pologne en décembre 1981"; Newsweek, September 6, 1993 "Uncle Boris big surprise"; Aftenposten, 29.8.1993. Similar arguments have been put forward by Soviet general Gribkov as well as Soviet Foreign Minister during the Polish crisis, Ustinov. See Spiegel op. cit.

during most of 1981. The context in which this request is supposed to have been made is also insufficiently outlined.

Geoffrey Stern's position is close to Jaruzelski's. He has argued that the decision to impose martial law was not taken as a result of pressure from Poland's neighbours, but in order to bring Poland back from the brink of domestic political and economic chaos:

"...it seems to me that having shrugged off Soviet and allied pressures before, for example in August and September 1980, in December 1980 ... the Polish authorities could conceivably have shrugged off Soviet and Eastern European pressures again.[...] I would maintain that a Soviet military intervention in December 1981 was extremely unlikely and that hence fear of it is unlikely to have precipitated martial law. What I think may have tipped the scales, ..., was the catastrophic economic, social and political impact of the revolutionary impulse inside Poland itself."¹³

The independence of the Polish regime, and the decision to impose martial law as a Polish one, has also been underlined by Kevin Ruane:

"Towards the end of the year Pravda in Moscow reported problems inside the Polish Communist Party itself. Not all its members or organisations, it said, had withstood the test of acute political struggle. Now the Party had to strengthen its militant ranks. Such expressions of concern will probably be interpreted differently by different people, but to this writer, at least, they did not suggest the sort of certainty or confidence one might have expected from the Kremlin if it had indeed

¹³Geoffrey Stern "Poland: the confrontation continues" lecture given to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 28.1.1981. quotes on p. 5 and 6 taken from transcript of lecture.

imposed martial law on the Poles. And if there has been little mention of Moscow in this book since the beginning of November 1981 it is because it was Warsaw that was making all the running and Moscow was following."¹⁴

Taking a different perspective, Garton Ash has argued that Polish authorities had, at no point, intended to reach a compromise with the workers, and that they had, on the contrary, stalled reforms, thus ultimately provoking a crisis in Poland. Furthermore, he describes Solidarity's demands as reasonable and realistic, on condition that the Polish authorities were willing to cooperate.¹⁵ As chapter five argued, we now know that plans had been made for a Warsaw Pact military intervention in Poland if martial law failed, and that in parallel, from the autumn of 1980, plans were laid down in Poland for the imposition of martial law. What remains unclear is precisely under which circumstances a Soviet intervention would have taken place. Nevertheless, on this basis, to exclude totally Soviet responsibility and

¹⁴Kevin Ruane op. cit., p.293. See also André Gerrits "Limits of Influence: The Kremlin and the Polish Crisis. 1980-81", Bulletin of Peace Proposals, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1988, pp. 231-239 for a similar perspective. It must be added here, however, that as the mouthpiece of Soviet authorities, a comment in Pravda could easily be a policy instrument aimed at encouraging certain perceptions of Soviet intentions in the West.

¹⁵He writes that: "That the experiment would fail was, from the outset, probable, but not inevitable", Timothy Garton Ash, The Polish Revolution: Solidarity, London, Granta Books, p. 299. He also points to the inconsistency in the position of those who considered Solidarity to have gone "too far", and points out that they also often tended to argue that change in Poland was, from the outset, impossible.

involvement from marital law seems unrealistic. Furthermore, information about the early planning of martial law lends some credit to the idea that the Polish government did not really intend to compromise with workers, and that the negotiations in Poland after August 1980 were mostly about stalling the protesters.

The first official Western reactions confirm the discomfort of Western governments and the idea that reassessing the policy was difficult both at the national level and at the level of the alliance as a whole. Characteristic are the contradictory statements from the French government in the aftermath of martial law. French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson, in reply to a question on what France would do about martial law said: "Of course we will do nothing".¹⁶ A few days later, on December 16, President Mitterrand declared that whether the loss of freedom was the result of internal oppression or external pressure, it should be "clearly, vigorously and constantly denounced".¹⁷ Mitterrand's statement came after strong pressure from his own party and

¹⁶Quoted in Gabriel Robin, La Diplomatie de Mitterrand, éditions la Bièvre, France, 1985, p. 38; and in Pierre Hassner, "The View from Paris", pp.188-231 in Lincoln Gordon (ed), Eroding Empire: Western Relations with Eastern Europe, The Brookings Institutions, Washington DC, 1987, p.208.

¹⁷Mitterrand is quoted by Mauroy in Débats Parlementaires de l'Assemblée Nationale, Première Session Ordinaire de 1981-82, seconde séance de 16 decembre 1981, Journal Officiel, 17.12.1981, p. 4991. Also Financial Times 17.12.81.

from the non-communist trades unions, who had found Cheysson's initial official reaction to martial law inadequate.¹⁸

Overall, the West Europeans avoided a hardline position in the immediate aftermath of martial law. Speaking to the European Parliament, as President of the Council of Ministers, British Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, condemned the imposition of martial law, but indicated at the same time that the West was unsure about what was happening in Poland:

"We are familiar with natural disasters, but here in the heart of our continent is a manmade disaster on a colossal scale. Although news is censored, communications cut and diplomatic facilities suspended, we read of arrest, detention and evictions. There has almost certainly been some loss of life. There is an ominous silence about the fate of Lech Walesa."¹⁹

Margaret Thatcher also initially avoided a very hardline position. The British government's statements to the House of Commons discussion on the issue underlined that the immediate priority of the British government was to ensure food supplies for the Polish people.²⁰ As for the West German

¹⁸See Le Monde 15.12.1981 and Financial Times, 15.12.1981 for evidence of domestic protest over the French government's position.

¹⁹Financial Times 18.12.81.

²⁰"Government statement on Poland", Hansard, 14 December 1981, cols. 19-25 and Hansard, 22 December 1981, cols 933-961. See also Financial Times 23.12.81.

Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, he found himself in East Germany when martial law was imposed. This, in itself, symbolises the difficulties of the West German government with regard to Poland. Not wanting to jeopardise his visit, and the positive effect it was expected to have on intra-German relations, he declared that the Federal Republic was "holding strictly to the basic principles of not interfering".²¹ By the end of the first week of martial law, when news came out that repression in Poland was widespread, the West German government further clarified its position, still, however, underlining that martial law was an internal Polish affair.²² The West German government, in other words, appeared to accept the Polish argument that marital law was a temporary measure. It also stressed that it was a lesser evil than Soviet military intervention and that a Western response should take this into consideration.²³

NATO ambassadors, as well as EC foreign ministers, consulted in the immediate aftermath of the imposition of martial law. The American Secretary of State who, by coincidence, was in Brussels on December 13, attended a special meeting of NATO

²¹Financial Times 14.12.81.

²²Le Monde, 20/21.12.81.

²³Schmidt also underlines in his memoirs his relief that the turning point in Poland came with martial law rather than a military intervention. Helmut Schmidt, Die Deutschen und ihre Nachbarn: Menschen und Mächte II, Berlin, Siedler, 1990.

on December 15 to discuss developments in Poland.²⁴ Equally, the EC Foreign Ministers were due to meet in London on December 15, thus providing a context in which Poland could be discussed.²⁵ After this, however, a meeting explicitly to discuss Poland was not called either by NATO or by the EC until after Christmas. Allegedly, the reason for Western "discretion" was that Western governments did not wish to dramatise the situation.²⁶ However, in all likelihood, and as later events also confirm, Western governments preferred to define their national objectives first, before engaging in an attempt at policy-coordination with allied countries. Apart from the American decision on 15 December to suspend further government food assistance to Poland while it assessed the situation, private shipments of food were allowed to continue.²⁷ The European Community, as well as individual West European states, continued with their shipments of food.

²⁴The Guardian 14.12.81.

²⁵The foreign ministers issued a statement on Poland following their meeting, yet this contained little new, beyond stating that they were greatly concerned about the situation. Bulletin of the European Communities, no. 12, 1981, vol 14, section 1.4.1-1.4.6. Nuttall argues that it was unfortunate that an EPC meeting was scheduled so soon after martial law, because it left foreign ministers with virtually no time to prepare for their discussion. Simon Nuttall, European Political Cooperation, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992, p. 200.

²⁶International Herald Tribune, 18.12.81 and 19/20.12.81.

²⁷International Herald Tribune, 15.12.81.

Towards the end of December the American Under Secretary of State for European Affairs, Lawrence Eagleburger, left on a mission to the European capitals, to discuss how to respond to martial law. His visit took him first to Rome, then to Bonn, Brussels, London and Paris.²⁸ Eagleburger brought with him a list of possible sanctions to be imposed against Poland and the Soviet Union. Amongst the possible sanctions that were discussed, were the suspension of economic and financial aid to Poland, the imposition of strict conditions for provision of food, suspension of negotiations on Polish membership of the IMF, freezing trade relations and cutting exports to Poland and reducing diplomatic relations.²⁹ Full trade sanctions against the Soviet Union, as well as the suspension of negotiations on the reduction of intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe, were also under discussion.³⁰ However, from the perspective of cohesion, the outcome of these discussions were far from satisfactory.

Martial law took the Western alliance by surprise, not so much because it was, in itself, a totally unexpected event, but because the Western states had not managed to agree on

²⁸The Guardian 22.12.81, Financial Times 22.12.81.

²⁹The Guardian 22.12.81, Le Monde 23.12.81. See also "Developments in Europe", US Congress. House of Representatives. Committee on Foreign Affairs. Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East. 97th Congress, Second Session, February 9, 1982, in particular p. 34.

³⁰Financial Times 22.12.81 and 23.12.81.

how to respond to such an outcome. There was an urgent need for a reassessment both of individual national positions on Poland, and of the overall Western stand. Yet, in the immediate aftermath of the news of martial law, Western states sent confusing and contradictory signals about their position, due partly to the uncertainty about the significance of martial law, but mostly due to the fact that it did not correspond to the pre-planned strategy of the Western alliance.

Towards an intramural crisis

By the second week of martial law, the divergences between the Western governments on the interpretation of events in Poland and on the preferences for policy responses were confirmed. Drawing a line from a "weak" to a "strong" reaction, the United States and West Germany placed themselves on opposite sides, with Britain closer to the United States, and France in between Britain and West Germany. There were attempts at reconciliation amongst the allies, but they were successful only in the short term. The situation was rapidly approaching the condition of an intramural crisis.

The United States was first out to define its position on martial law and to outline a policy-response. On December 23,

while Eagleburger was still in Europe, Reagan announced without consulting with the West Europeans, that the United States was imposing sanctions against Poland. The sanctions announced by Reagan included the suspension of the US Export-Import Bank's export credit insurance; the prohibition of Polish planes from landing in the United States; the suspension of fishing allocation for Polish fishermen in American waters; the beginning of a "no-exceptions" policy restricting export licensing of high technology to Poland and a request to the US allies to restrict sales of high-technology goods to Poland. Sanctions against the Soviet Union were not mentioned at this point, although the responsibility for martial law was not attributed to Poland alone.³¹ However, on December 29 Reagan announced that sanctions would also be introduced against the Soviet Union. He stated that:

"The Soviet Union bears a heavy and direct responsibility for the repression in Poland. For many months the Soviets publicly and privately demanded such a crackdown. They brought major pressures to bear through now public letters to the Polish leadership, military manouvers and other forms of intimidation. They now openly endorse the suppression which has ensued."³²

³¹US Congress. House of Representatives, 9 February 1982, op. cit, Appendix 4 "Summary of US Measures vis-a-vis Poland and the USSR.", pp. 42-3.

³²"The US and Poland: A report on the current situation in Poland after the declaration of martial law." Appendix D, Presidential statement. US Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on the Budget. 97th Congress, second session, April 1982, p. 19. Reagan's speech on 23

Sanctions included

- suspension of landing rights in the US for the Soviet airline Aeroflot;
- closure of the Soviet Purchasing Commission (a New York offshoot of the Soviet Foreign Trade Ministry which arranged purchases of some non-agricultural goods in the United States);
- suspension of the issue or renewal of licences for export of electronic equipment, computers and other high-technology materials to the Soviet Union. These sanctions also included suspension of export licences for American equipment to be used in constructing the pipeline to carry Soviet natural gas to Western Europe;
- postponement of negotiations on a new long term grain agreement. US administration officials had been preparing for the negotiations that were expected to start in mid-February, although no specific date had been announced;
- suspension of negotiations on a new US-Soviet maritime agreement. A new regime of port-access controls was to be put into effect for all Soviet ships when the current agreement was to expire the next day;
- non-renewal of US-Soviet exchange agreements expiring in the near future, including agreements on energy and science and technology;

December is found in Appendix C, pp. 16-18. See also Le Monde 31.12.81 for the United States' reaction to martial law.

- suspension of issue of licences for an expanded list of oil and gas equipment, including pipelayers for any use in the USSR.³³

The West European governments' positions were evolving in a different direction from that of the United States. By the time Eagleburger returned from Europe, differences between the Americans and their European allies on the question of the role of the Soviet Union and on the choice of policy, were no longer a secret. There was, in particular, very little, if any, support in Western Europe for sanctions against the Soviet Union. Eagleburger had only succeeded in achieving European support in three limited fields:

- a halt to further Western government export credits to Poland;

- a halt in the negotiations of the rescheduling of Poland's official debt (a planned meeting of Poland's Western creditors for 14-15 January would go ahead in order to assess the general situation, but not to discuss rescheduling for 1982);

- continuation of humanitarian or food aid, provided that this could be monitored in order to ensure that shipments

³³Appendix 4. US Congress. House of Representatives, 9 February 1982, op. cit. Also, Financial Times 30.12.81.

were not taken by the army or used as a political tool by the Polish government.³⁴

The strongest opposition to American initiatives came from the West German government. It was openly hostile to any form of sanctions against the Soviet Union.³⁵ The West German government was also at this point still reluctant to attribute any responsibility for martial law to the Soviet Union, and continued to consider it as an independent Polish decision. The extent to which West Germany and the United States held diverging views on the situation in Poland and on how to deal with it, was illustrated by the visit of the Polish deputy Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski to West Germany. The West German government had, in a letter to Jaruzelski, asked that his government give some clear signal that the process of reforms would not be broken despite martial law. Rakowski was expected to confirm this position during his visit.³⁶ This visit took place at the time that

³⁴US Congress. House of Representatives, 9 February 1982. op. cit. Appendix 5, "Allied Measures in Response to US Sanctions", pp. 44-5.

³⁵Financial Times 29.12.81.

³⁶Rakowski met with foreign minister Hans Dietrich Genscher in Bonn. Genscher refers to this meeting in his memoirs, but his account of it gives no indication of Rakowski bringing any new light to the Polish government's intentions. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Erinnerungen, Berlin, Siedler Verlag, 1995, p. 267. See also International Herald Tribune 30.12.81 and Le Monde 31.12.81 for references to Rakowski's visit.

the United States announced its sanctions against the Soviet Union.³⁷

The other West Europeans were, however, also upset by American sanctions and considered, in addition, that they had been inadequately warned before Reagan's announcement.³⁸ The French government's position was outlined to the French National Assembly by Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy on 23 December 1981. Mauroy stressed the French commitment to a continuation of food aid to Poland and called for a cautious approach to Poland:

"... il est facile de brandir des sabres de bois quand on n'est pas soi-même exposé..."³⁹

³⁷This contrasts with the situation after Afghanistan. It was then the French President Giscard who was the principal dissenter in the Alliance. He took off for a meeting with Brezhnev in Warsaw, with little prior consultation with his allies. Schmidt, on the other hand, before his meeting with Brezhnev in Moscow in June 1980, ensured that his allies, in particular the USA, were well informed and in agreement with his actions. For excerpts of Schmidt's comments on Afghanistan, see Survival, vol XXII, no 5, Sept/Oct 1980, p. 223, "Speech by Chancellor Schmidt, Moscow 30 June 1980".

³⁸Haig, op. cit, p.254. The lack of consultation is confirmed by Eagleburger in Congress on February 9, 1982. op. cit: "...if we had decided to consult in detail in advance of the decision, I suspect that we would still be at it...There was warning. There was not, in the classical sense of the term, consultation.", pp. 33-4.

³⁹Débats Parlementaires de l'Assemblée Nationale, Première Session Extraordinaire de 1981-2, troisième séance, 23 décembre 1981, Journal Officiel, 24.12.1981, pp. 5403-5406, quote on p. 5403.

Interestingly, Mauroy claimed that the US did not intend to take any action beyond the suppression of food aid to Poland, thus confirming lack of allied consultation before the US decision to impose sanctions.

The Foreign Ministers of the European Community (EPC) met on 4 January to discuss how to respond to martial law. It was decided not to comply with American demands for sanctions against the Soviet Union. The Europeans merely took note of the American decision and vowed not to take any action to hinder American sanctions. Still, the French and the British were closer to the United States in their interpretation of events in Poland and in their choice of rhetoric, than to West Germany.⁴⁰ Neither the French nor the British governments disputed that the influence of the Soviet Union was crucial to the imposition of martial law. Hence, in the declaration issued after the EPC meeting, the military crackdown in Poland was strongly condemned and, as had the United States, EPC called for the Polish government to lift martial law, free all those arrested and restore the dialogue

⁴⁰The French President, Mitterrand, was in general taking a more confrontational approach on East-West relations than his predecessor Giscard d'Estaing. See, for example, his speech to the German Bundestag in January 1983, where he stated that "Les missiles sont à l'Est et les pacifistes à l'Ouest", Diana Johnstone, The Politics of Euromissiles, London, Verso, 1984, p. 84. Mitterrand's support for the 0-option is also outlined in François Mitterrand, Réflexions sur la Politique Extérieure de la France, Paris, Fayard, 1986, p. 234 and in Ici et Maintenant: Conversations avec Guy Clarisse, Paris, Fayard, 1980.

with Solidarity. In addition to the strong criticism of the Jaruzelski regime, the Ten also attributed a share of the responsibility to the Soviet Union:

"La signification de ces événements dramatiques dépasse le cadre de la seule Pologne. L'incapacité des systèmes totalitaires, tels ceux de l'Europe de l'Est, à accepter les adaptations nécessaires pour faire face aux aspirations les plus légitimes de la population est de nature à mettre en cause la confiance des opinions publiques dans la possibilité des rapports de coopération avec les pays de l'Est et à porter par là une grave atteinte aux relations internationales. A ce sujet les Dix notent avec préoccupation et réprobation les graves pressions extérieures et la campagne menée par l'URSS et d'autres pays de l'Est contre l'effort de renouveau en Pologne."⁴¹

The Ten agreed to suspend economic and financial aid to Poland and to discontinue the Community programme of sale of food at reduced prices, as long as their political demands were not respected by the Polish government. They also agreed to suggest to the OECD to move the USSR from category II of relatively rich states, to category I, thus raising the rates of interest on export credits to the country. Finally, the foreign ministers decided to raise the issue of martial law at the reopening of the CSCE conference in Madrid on February 9 as well as in the United Nations.⁴²

⁴¹Le Monde 6.1.82.

⁴²"The Community and Poland", Bulletin of the European Communities, no. 12, 1981, vol 14, section 1.4.1-1.4.6 (includes text of the final communiqué of the foreign Ministers' meeting on 4 January 1981).

It is clear then, that, despite the focus of attention on the Euro-American differences, there was also divergence between the West Europeans. The American decision to impose sanctions put the Europeans in an embarrassing situation not only because the West Europeans disagreed with this policy, but also because the Europeans had not yet clarified their own national positions, and because there was intra-European divergence. It took two weeks before the European foreign ministers actually met on January 4 1984, specifically to discuss Poland. Great Britain had tried to call for an earlier meeting of the Foreign Ministers to discuss a reaction to the crisis, but that initiative was blocked by France.⁴³ Furthermore, during the meeting on 4 January, a proposal to send the Belgian Foreign Minister Mr. Leo Tindemans, who had taken over the Presidency after Britain, to Warsaw and Moscow to express the Community's condemnation of the situation in Poland was rejected. The proposal was backed by the British and the Germans, but rejected by both France and Greece. The French foreign minister Cheysson argued that one had to leave it up to each state to take the initiatives and make contacts that it considered appropriate, and that the political integration of the Community members had not yet reached a stage where one representative could

⁴³International Herald Tribune 30.12.81, The Guardian 30.12.81. As a compromise solution, an informal meeting of Political Directors accompanied by economic advisers was held on 30 December. Nuttall op. cit, p. 201.

speak for all Ten. The incident demonstrates most of all the limitations to French willingness to subordinate its foreign policy to that of the rest of the EC, rather than a disagreement on substance of sanction and the role of the USSR.⁴⁴ France was also at odds with the other Community members by arguing in favour of continuing the provision of food for Poland through the Community framework.⁴⁵

Despite the fact that the EPC statement criticised the role of the Soviet Union, West Germany was still reluctant to consider martial law as irreversible and to condemn the Soviet Union. It wanted to give Poland more time to fulfil its assurances that reforms would continue and that trades union rights would be re-established. This more reluctant West German position led to difficulties for the otherwise traditionally strong Franco-German axis. Both France and West Germany were subject to strong domestic pressures on martial law which took them in opposite directions. The imposition of martial law provoked a public outcry in France, and

⁴⁴In the case of Greece there was disagreement on substance. Greece also refused to adhere to the NATO declaration on Poland on 11 January 1982.

⁴⁵Le Monde 6.1.82 and Financial Times 5.1.82. Also Robin op.cit., p.36-7. In fact, the French continued bilateral credits for purchase of food after martial law. The French commitment to food aid and refusal to impose sanction against Poland is confirmed in a response to a parliamentary question in April 1982. Débats Parlementaires de l'Assemblée Nationale. Seconde Session Ordinaire de 1981-2. "Questions orales au gouvernement", 16 avril 1982, Journal Officiel, 17.4.1981, pp. 1180-82.

Mitterrand's strong condemnation was in part a result of pressure from public opinion. West German policy was also heavily criticised in the French press, thus putting further strain on Franco-German relations. In West Germany, on the other hand, public opinion reacted less strongly to martial law.

Several attempts were made at narrowing the gap both between the positions of the Europeans themselves and between the Europeans and the Americans. However, they were not altogether convincing. The day after the meeting of European foreign ministers in Brussels, the West German Chancellor had a highly publicized meeting with president Reagan in Washington. Despite considerable efforts from the American administration to claim that the meeting was successful, Reagan did not manage to convince his West German counterpart to change the essence of his analysis of the situation in Poland.⁴⁶ On the contrary, the United States was beginning to realise that convincing the West Europeans to follow its lead, in particular on the question of sanctions, would be difficult, and that it might have to settle for less than it had initially hoped for.⁴⁷ By the end of the meeting the West

⁴⁶Helmut Schmidt confirms his fundamental disagreement with Reagan over sanctions in Men and Power: A Political Retrospective, London, Jonathan Cape, 1990, pp. 251-262.

⁴⁷See quotes of Haig after his meeting with Schmidt, The Guardian 7.1.82.

German Chancellor had moved slightly closer to accepting that the Soviet Union had a share of responsibility for martial law. However, he was still opposed to economic sanctions against Moscow.

In an attempt at reconciliation, an emergency meeting of NATO's foreign ministers was called to discuss the response to Poland, on January 11 1982. The NATO communique published after the meeting was a carefully drafted document in which each alternative paragraph deliberately referred respectively to Poland's and the Soviet Union's responsibility for martial law.⁴⁸ On the question of sanctions there was an "agreement to disagree". No commitment was made by the West Europeans to impose sanctions against the Soviet Union, and against Poland they only agreed to freeze further credits and to stop negotiations on the rescheduling of the debt. These were the issues that Eagleburger had achieved European support for during his visit to Europe in December. Beyond this, each member, in accordance with its own situation, would study which measures it would be appropriate to take:

"11. Each ally will, in accordance with its own situation and legislation, identify appropriate national possibilities for action in the following fields:

(a) further restrictions on the movements of Soviet and Polish diplomats, and other restrictions on Soviet and Polish diplomatic missions and organizations;

⁴⁸Interviews, London September 1994.

(b) reduction of scientific and technical activities or non-renewal of exchange agreements.

14. In the current situation in Poland, economic relations with Poland and the Soviet Union are bound to be affected. Soviet actions towards Poland make it necessary for the Allies to examine the course of future economic and commercial relations with the Soviet Union. Recognising that each of the Allies will act in accordance with its own situation and laws, they will examine measures which could involve arrangement regarding imports from the Soviet Union, maritime agreements, air services agreements, the size of Soviet commercial representation and the conditions surrounding export credits."⁴⁹

The January 11 meeting led to follow-up discussions in NATO's North Atlantic Council in which the parallel steps the allies could take against Poland and the USSR were discussed. Meetings were held on January 23 and February 3. Continuing the efforts to resolve Alliance differences and to present a common front to the outside world, a visit by Schmidt to France on January 13 was added to an already busy Franco-German schedule.⁵⁰ The meeting was arranged at the initiative of the West German government and is in itself a signal of its great concern about the effect the Polish crisis was having on Franco-German relations.⁵¹ However, after the meeting, doubts were still raised, particularly in France,

⁴⁹"Special Ministerial session of the North Atlantic Council 11th January, 1982. Declaration on events in Poland." NATO Press Service, press release M-1(82)1, 11 January 1982.

⁵⁰The Guardian 13.12.82 and Le Monde 13.12.82.

⁵¹For Schmidt's own account of the meeting see Helmut Schmidt, Die Deutschen, op. cit. p. 295. He underlines the fundamental convergence of his own and Mitterrand's perspectives on martial law and on sanctions.

over the extent to which the two countries' position had actually come closer together, despite efforts on both sides to deny any disagreement.

After the NATO-summit on January 11 some sanctions were imposed by the West Europeans against Poland and the Soviet Union. These were, however, limited, and served mostly to underline the persistence of disagreement between the allies. On 1 February the West German Government banned the Polish state airline LOT from landing in West Germany. It also tightened restrictions on the movement of Soviet and Polish diplomats.⁵² The British government restricted Polish officials to within 25 miles of their consulates in London and Glasgow and increased BBC Polish language broadcasts. Restrictions were also placed on the movement of Soviet diplomats in Britain, Anglo-Soviet technical co-operation, as well as the licensing of Soviet factory ships buying fish caught in British waters, were reduced.⁵³ As for the European Community, it decided in late February to impose restrictions on Soviet imports to signal its criticism of Soviet

⁵²Financial Times 1.2.82 and 2.2.82. Further sanctions were introduced on 17 February. They included postponement of negotiations on a Science and Technological Agreement and more restrictive interpretations of cooperation agreements between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union.

⁵³Financial Times 6.2.1982. The full list of British sanctions is published in US Congress, House of Representatives, 9 February 1982, Appendix 5, op. cit..

involvement in the crackdown in Poland.⁵⁴ The EC underlined that this was to be considered as a symbolic measure rather than one that was expected to have a large economic impact.⁵⁵ The measures were not voted on in the Council until 23 March, because of the Danish government's objection to the Council taking what it considered in essence a foreign policy decision, as opposed to Ministers meeting as a "Conference" in EPC.

The most important sanctions, and the ones most likely to have any impact on Poland, were the suspension of negotiations on Poland's official debt and the freezing of officially guaranteed credits to Poland, as well as the refusal of further credits. These sanctions were confirmed in a meeting of Poland's official creditors in Paris on 14 January.⁵⁶ Further, cheap EC sales of food to the Polish government were also ended and negotiations on Poland's membership in the IMF were suspended. Finally, a ban was put on all high level political contacts with Poland.

⁵⁴Bulletin of the European Communities, no 3, vol 15, 1982. A regulation on limiting imports from the Soviet Union into the EC was imposed on 15 March 1982. 60 products, covering 8 % of EC imports from the Soviet Union, would be reduced by 25 or 50%, para. 2.2.52.

⁵⁵International Herald Tribune, 12.3.1982.

⁵⁶Financial Times 15.1.82, International Herald Tribune 13.1.82.

As argued above, the United States and the West Europeans were on a collision course with regard to how to respond to martial law, and, in particular, on the issue of sanctions. What is more, there was divergence amongst the West Europeans, with the Federal Republic's preference for defining the Polish crackdown as a "domestic Polish matter", thus feeding into the "fear in France of German political drift".⁵⁷ The NATO emergency meeting on January 11 confirmed the seriousness with which the Western allies treated the imposition of martial law and the tension it provoked in the Alliance. It has been argued that the failure to call such a meeting after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, was one of the reasons for the crisis in the Alliance.⁵⁸ Indeed, for some time, it looked as if the Western allies had succeeded, through the January meeting, in patching up their differences. Yet, the compromise hammered out at the summit provided only temporary respite.

A widening of the Western crisis

Throughout spring and into the summer of 1982 a "dialogue des sourds" developed between the West Europeans and their

⁵⁷Henrik Larsen, Discourse analysis and foreign policy: the impact of the concepts of Europe, nation/state, security and the nature of International Relations on French and British policies toward Europe in the 1980s, PhD dissertation, London School of Economics, 1993, p. 287.

⁵⁸Interview London, September 1994.

American allies. The United States continued to press for further sanctions in response to martial law, and several US missions went to Europe with the purpose of convincing the Europeans to follow the American line. However, the West Europeans remained sceptical of the utility of further restrictive measures. The crisis came to a head at the G7 summit in Versailles in June 1982, yet, by this time, the question of how to deal with the Polish crisis had gradually become intermingled with, and in the end superseded by, other Western disputes. Poland, the original subject of Western disagreement was almost ignored.

In its attempts to convince the West Europeans to increase the pressure on the Soviet Union and Poland in response to martial law, the United States focused on two areas in particular. Firstly, on the question of Poland's debt, and the possibility of introducing sanctions on credit relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; and secondly, on the question of sanctions on the Siberian gas pipeline. Poland, as chapter three showed, signed an agreement with Western governments in April 1981 to reschedule its official debt for the rest of that year (approximately \$2.3bn).⁵⁹

⁵⁹As for the signing of Poland's agreement with the commercial banks for 1981, it should have taken place on 29 December. It was delayed when Poland failed to pay off all the outstanding interest arrears (ca. \$250 m.) on its 1981 debt, which was a condition for the signature of the agreement deferring repayment of the principal. Poland, however, gradually paid back this interest. See "The Polish

Negotiations on the rescheduling of the public debt for 1982 had started in November 1981, but were, as it has already been pointed out, suspended as a result of a decision at the NATO summit on January 11. In the meantime, Poland had not been paying anything on its 1981 agreement, which meant that in practice the country was in default, although it was not officially declared. However, to the great concern of West European governments, it became known that the American Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger was trying to convince Reagan to declare Poland officially in default. Furthermore, he also wanted to disrupt Western credit relations with the Soviet Union and the other East European countries.⁶⁰

The Europeans considered that a Polish default would have disastrous consequences for the Western banking system and also for East-West trade in general. Furthermore, as chapter four showed, the West Europeans had a much greater share in

economy and Poland's international debt: implications for US foreign policy", US Congress. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on European Affairs. 97th Congress, Second Session, January 27, 1982, p. 11. Also, Le Monde 9.1.82, Financial Times 23.12.81.

⁶⁰International Herald Tribune 5.2.1982. The option of declaring Poland in default was discussed on a number of occasions in the United States Congress, as well as in the American press, over the winter and spring of 1982. See in particular "The Polish Debt Crisis". US Congress, Senate, Foreign Assistance and Related Programmes. Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1983. Hearings before the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, 97th Congress, Second Session, February 9, March 6 and 16, April 21, 1982. The Washington Post, 7.2.1982, The Wall Street Journal 7.1.1982, New York Times, 3/4.2.1982.

the trade with Eastern Europe than the United States, and considered that they would have to pay a much higher price for any interruption in East-West trade that would follow from disrupting credit relations, than the United States.⁶¹ Even the British government, which is traditionally closer to the United States, sided with the Europeans on this question. Haig has referred to a discussion with British prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on this subject:

"...she [Mrs. Thatcher] told me at once that she was uncertain of American intentions with regard to the sanctions and worried over rumours of even stronger action to come. The Prime Minister had heard alarming reports that some in the United States wanted to put Poland in default with consequences for the Germans and the rest of the Western banking system that could not be calculated. The cost ... would be far greater to the West than to the Soviet Union."⁶²

The second area in which the United States wanted to strengthen sanctions was on the Siberian gas pipeline agreement.⁶³ Negotiations on the pipeline had started in

⁶¹The Guardian 30.3.82, International Herald Tribune 16.12.82. The unequal distribution of cost of a disruption of East-West trade was well known to the US government. It is confirmed throughout the Congressional Hearings on Poland's debt. See for example Robert Hormats, Assistant Secretary of State in the US Senate, February 9, 1982, p. 132. op. cit.

⁶²Haig, op.cit. pp. 255-256.

⁶³For a study of the pipeline dispute see Antony J. Blinken, Ally Versus Ally: America, Europe and the Siberian Pipeline Crisis, Praeger, New York, 1987; Stan Woods Pipeline Politics: the Allies at Odds, Centrepieces, No 5, Spring 1983, Centre for Defence Studies, Aberdeen; Bruce W. Jentleson, Pipeline Politics: the Complex Political Economy of East-West Energy Trade, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1986.

1980, and the contracts were signed in 1981 and 1982, in other words in the middle of the Polish crisis. France for example, much to American dislike, signed its contract on 22 January 1982.⁶⁴ Adding insult to injury, when being criticised for signing the agreement, the French Prime Minister, Pierre Mauroy, replied that:

"Il ne servirait à rien d'ajouter au drame polonais le drame supplémentaire pour les Français de ne pas être approvisionnés en gaz".⁶⁵

As a result of this agreement, Soviet natural gas exports would increase from 27 billion cubic metres to 60 billion cubic metres by the late 1980s.⁶⁶ The pipeline agreement was an extremely important agreement for the West Europeans. It was expected to introduce a degree of diversity into Western Europe's supply of energy and to alleviate its dependence on OPEC. It also gave prospects for creation of new jobs in Western Europe, and West European companies were expected to earn from \$7 to \$10 billion from sales of equipment to the agreement.⁶⁷ The United States had from the beginning of the negotiations on the pipeline agreement been highly critical

⁶⁴Robin, op. cit. p.37.

⁶⁵For Mauroy's justification of his position, see "Discussions et vote sur la motion de censure", Débats Parlementaires de l'Assemblée Nationale, seconde session extraordinaire de 1981-2, , 28 janvier 1982, Journal Officiel, 29.1.1982, pp. 643-668. The Prime Minister's statement is quoted on p. 646.

⁶⁶Strategic Survey, 1982-83, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London 1983, p. 52.

⁶⁷Blinken, op. cit, p.4.

of the project, arguing that relying on supply of vital resources such as oil from the Soviet Union would create a situation of dependency that might ultimately threaten West European independence and security. The agreement was seen by some in the United States as a confirmation of suspicions that the West Europeans were becoming "soft" on the Russians.⁶⁸

The imposition of martial law provided the United States with an opportunity to reopen the debate with its allies on the pipeline agreement. It has already been pointed out that part of the sanctions package against the Soviet Union announced on 29 December, were export controls on oil and gas transmission, as well as refinement equipment and technology. In other words, equipment and technology destined for the pipeline project. At first, this decision appeared largely symbolic, because American firms affected by the embargo had only a minor share in the pipeline. The main suppliers were West German, French, British and Italian companies, and the American measures did not affect these firms. However, doubts were raised relatively quickly about the scope of these

⁶⁸For an examination of the risks involved for West European security in the pipeline agreement which sides with the US perspective, see Thomas Blan and Joseph Kircheimer, "European dependence and Soviet leverage: the Yamal pipeline", pp. 209-214 in Survival, vol. XXIII, no 5, Sept/Oct 1981. They argue that "...the Yamal project raises serious issues of Soviet leverage; the project could enable the Soviet Union to achieve political concessions as well as economic benefits", p. 211.

sanctions. Firstly, it was unclear whether or not they were retroactive, in other words, whether they would apply to contracts already signed, or only to new contracts. According to Haig, Reagan did not intend them to be retroactive, yet in the process of implementing the sanctions, the Commerce Department interpreted them as being so, thus aggravating their effect on the pipeline project.⁶⁹ Secondly, it soon emerged that some members of the Reagan administration were seeking to convince the American president that these sanctions should also cover sales by American-owned or controlled companies in Western Europe, as well as sales by independent European companies using American produced parts or technologies.⁷⁰ If this idea were to be put into practice, it would jeopardise the whole pipeline project.

By spring it became clear that the US administration had abandoned the idea of declaring Poland in default, despite the fact that some members of the administration continued to argue that it was still not taken off the agenda.⁷¹ On two occasions, the United States' government reimbursed American

⁶⁹Haig, op.cit. p.254.

⁷⁰The Guardian 1.2.82, The Washington Post 2.1.1982. The issue of the sanction on the pipeline is also discussed in "The Polish Debt crisis", US Congress, Senate, op. cit. and "Developments in Europe", US Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, April 29, 1982 (pp.3-6 in particular) and July 21, 1982 (pp. 20-21 in particular).

⁷¹"The Polish Debt Crisis", US Congress, Senate, op. cit.

banks for Polish overdue loans that had a federal guarantee, rather than declare Poland in default. The first time, in early February, the US government paid \$71 million, and the second time, in the second half of April, \$138 million.⁷² However, uncertainty continued to linger both over the pipeline sanctions and the broader question of credits to the Warsaw Pact countries. On 17 March, Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance, Science and Technology, James Buckley, was sent to Europe, apparently at the initiative of Haig. It is clear that the purpose of the visit was to discuss the question of sanctions, yet, it is not entirely clear exactly which issues Buckley was supposed to discuss with the Europeans, or what kind of proposals he brought with him. Some sources indicate that he was not to discuss the pipeline, but the broader issue of credit policy towards the Soviet bloc, and that Reagan had abandoned the idea of extending pipeline sanctions to European firms.⁷³ According to Blinken, this is also what Buckley himself claims was his mandate. Blinken also maintains that Buckley was told to

⁷²Le Monde 3.2.82 and International Herald Tribune 21.4.82. Confirmed by Haig in Congress. "Statement by Alexander Haig", US Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Affairs, 97th Congress, February 2, 1982, p. 8. The House of Representatives had also by this time rejected a proposal to force the US administration to declare Poland in default. See also Gary Clyde Hufbauer, Jeffrey J. Schott and Kimberley Ann Elliott, Economic Sanctions Reconsidered: History and Current Policy, Washington DC, Institute for International Economics, 1990, p. 192.

⁷³The Guardian 4.3.82; International Herald Tribune 22.2.82.

threaten the Europeans with an extension of the pipeline sanctions unless they complied with American requirements of limiting credits.⁷⁴ Other sources, however, argue that a decision on pipeline sanctions was not abandoned, only deferred until after Buckley's return.⁷⁵ A statement by Eagleburger quoted in *Le Monde* shows the ambiguity of the United States aims:

"M. Buckley a discuté du pipeline dans toutes les capitales visitées. Notre position est claire: le gasoduc constitue une imprudence, il peut rendre les Européens trop dépendants de l'URSS en matière énergétique et amener à une exportation massive de devises. [Mais] nous sommes réalistes. Nous savons que le projet est en cours depuis longtemps, qu'il est important pour plusieurs économies occidentaux. La question aurait du être réglée il y a cinq ans environs..."⁷⁶

Regardless of the precise purpose and strategy of the American administration, the mission was highly unsuccessful. The American mission did not manage to convince the West Europeans to strengthen sanctions against the Soviet Union by reducing or eliminating credits and credit guarantees for East-West trade. As for the pipeline sanctions:

"The Europeans reacted with all the bewilderment and vexation that such an invasion of their sovereignty might have been expected to produce."⁷⁷

⁷⁴Blinken op.cit., p.99.

⁷⁵Financial Times 4.3.82.

⁷⁶Le Monde 1.4.1982.

⁷⁷Haig, op. cit. p. 255.

The United Kingdom, who was in favour of taking a strong line against Moscow, rallied with the other West Europeans both on the pipeline issue and on the extension of sanctions against the Soviet Union by restricting credits and credit guarantees for East-West trade. Lord Carrington said that:

"I am personally not in favour of taking more measures against the Soviet Union with the aim of bringing about a Soviet change of heart. For one thing one must keep things in reserve in case the situation worsens, and for another, I do not believe this is the right moment for further countermeasures".⁷⁸

Another US mission headed by George Shultz went to Europe in May, without any more success.⁷⁹ All in all, the West Europeans were critical of what they considered the slightly hypocritical attitude of the United States. The Europeans argued that whereas they had to pay a high price for introducing the sanctions proposed by the United States, the Americans themselves had very little to lose. As chapter three has shown, West European stakes in East-West trade were much higher than those of the United States. West European trade with the Soviet Union had a value of \$41 billion in 1982, whereas American trade only amounted to \$2.5 billion.⁸⁰ Furthermore, much of West European export competitiveness, relied heavily on such subsidised credit that the Reagan

⁷⁸The Guardian 17.3.82. See also, Financial Times 18.3.82.

⁷⁹Haig, op.cit, p.304-305.

⁸⁰Blinken, op.cit p.8.

administration wanted to get rid of.⁸¹ The United States on the other hand, had not, in 1982, had any concessionary credit system for US-Soviet trade for eight years. Finally, the Europeans argue that one of the few measures that was likely to hurt the Soviet Union was a US grain embargo.⁸² However, it was also a measure that would be costly for American farmers, and hence, the West Europeans argued, the United States expected the West Europeans to pay the costs of US policy.⁸³

⁸¹Another element that should not be ignored in this context, is that of economic competition between Europeans and, in particular, between France and West Germany for exports to the Soviet Union. This did at least in the French case make them even more reluctant to restrict official credits.

⁸²The US grain embargo against the Soviet Union imposed by Carter after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979, was lifted by Reagan in April 1981. It must be added in this context that the effectiveness of a grain embargo is disputed. It failed to influence Soviet policy in Afghanistan. See Joseph Hajda, "The Soviet grain embargo", Survival, vol XXII, no 6, Nov/Dec 1980, pp. 253-258.

⁸³For this viewpoint see for example the statement of Maurice Faure, president of the French National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee: "[Les Etats-Unis]...ont demandé aux Européens de manier l'arme économique, tout en se gardant bien de le faire elle-même puisqu'elle continue à vendre du blé à l'Union Soviétique. Elle a donc incité les Européens à livrer dans une large mesure le combat à sa place." "Discussion sur la Déclaration du Gouvernement sur sa Politique Etrangère" p. 4228, Débats Parlementaires de l'Assemblée Nationale, troisième session extraordinaire de 1981-82, 6 juillet 1982, Journal Officiel, 7.7.1982. The text of the French government's declaration on foreign policy is found in "Déclaration du gouvernement sur sa politique étrangère (Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson) Documents de l'Assemblée Nationale, No. 1014. Troisième session extraordinaire de 1981-82.

The crisis in the Alliance came to a head at the G7 summit in Versailles on 4-6 June. At the summit, an attempt was made to establish a compromise between the American demands for restrictions on East-West trade credits, and the West European concern about collective management of exchange rates. The French in particular, but also the other Europeans, were concerned about the high interest rates and the strong dollar, and wanted the United States to intervene in order to stabilise the international monetary system. The American pipeline sanctions were not explicitly mentioned in this bargain, but it was implicitly understood that they would be abandoned if an agreement was achieved on the other two issues. The diplomats appeared to have arrived at a suitable compromise involving a US intervention in the foreign exchange market and credit policy towards the Soviet Union, yet this fell apart at the last minute. Angry at what he considered European renegeing of an agreement, President Reagan unilaterally announced the extraterritorial extension of the US sanctions on pipeline equipment to American owned or controlled companies in Western Europe and to American licences on 18 June. The American announcement was met with a storm of protest in Europe:

"The German government expressed 'dismay' at what it termed 'a contradiction to what was agreed and discussed at the world economic summit'. Mitterrand said, 'We wonder what concept the United States has of summit meetings when it becomes a matter of agreements made and not respected.' Privately, he reportedly told one visitor that after long efforts to establish rapport

with Reagan, he had concluded that there was not a single issue on which he could trust the American president. ... Thatcher ..told the Commons that 'it is wrong [for] one very powerful nation' to try to prevent the fulfilment of existing contracts'."84

The Europeans declared the American move illegal and instructed the European companies to ignore the American ban.⁸⁵ The contracted deliveries with the Soviet Union were fulfilled despite the American penalisation of European firms in the form of forbidding export of American products or technology to them in the future.

In his statement about the pipeline sanctions, Reagan maintained that they were introduced in order to "advance reconciliation in Poland".⁸⁶ However, by this time, the issue of Poland under martial law was, in reality, marginalised. The imposition of martial law had essentially been a useful pretext for the United States to re-open the pipeline issue,

⁸⁴Robert Putnam and Nicholas Bayne, Hanging Together: Cooperation and Conflict in the Seven-Power Summits, London, Sage Publications Ltd, 1987, p. 138.

⁸⁵The French government ordered French companies to honour their contracts for the pipeline on 22 July; invoking the protection of trading interests Act, the British government followed suit on 2 August; the West German government informed the US government on 25 August that its initiative was illegal under international law and violated German sovereignty. Hufbauer, Schott and Elliott, op. cit. p. 207.

⁸⁶"Statement on Extension of U.S. Sanctions on the Export of Oil and Gas Equipment to the Soviet Union" Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, vol. 18, June 18, 1982, quoted in Blinken, op. cit., p.103.

and to justify its calls for restrictions on East-West trade.

As Philip Hanson argues

"The relationship of this episode [the discussion on the pipeline] to martial law in Poland, however, was slight. The Polish events served as an occasion for pursuing policies which the US administration favoured on the grounds that had nothing to do with the state of affairs in Poland."⁸⁷

The deal in Versailles fell through partly as a result of profound disagreement amongst allies on the issues at hand, partly as a result of a lack of communication between political leaders at the summit. Furthermore, as Putnam and Bayne have pointed out, the sort of package deal attempted in Versailles usually works best if the two sides are not equally interested in both subjects. This was not the case at the Versailles summit, where all sides put a lot of importance both on monetary policy and on East-West trade policy.⁸⁸ Finally, there was an important domestic dimension to the US position on the pipeline. In fact, the West Europeans had become party to an internal struggle for control over American foreign policy, which ended with the resignation of Alexander Haig a few days after Reagan had announced the pipeline sanctions. The "Atlanticists" led by Secretary of State Haig, although critical of the pipeline

⁸⁷Philip Hanson, Western Economic Statecraft in East-West Relations, Chatham House Papers, London, Routledge, 1988. p. 47.

⁸⁸Putnam and Bayne, op. cit. p.139.

agreement, had stressed the importance of maintaining good relations with the West European allies. The compromise worked out in Versailles was a product of the "Atlanticists".⁸⁹

This chapter has showed that the domestic Polish crisis had a spillover effect into West-West relations. A policy-debate that had initially started because of Western disapproval of events in the Soviet bloc, led to a crisis, not for the Soviet bloc, or even for East-West relations, but for the West itself. The irony being that Poland, in the end, turned out to be the trigger of events rather than the cause itself, thus strengthening the argument that Poland had not been the reason for these sanctions in the first place. The United States abandoned the extraterritorial claim and rescinded its punitive countersanctions in November 1982, five months after they had been imposed. Western diplomats had worked at finding a way for the United States to lift the sanctions without losing face. Finally, an agreement was achieved producing a joint study, reviewing East-West trade relations, in return for which the United States promised to lift the pipeline sanctions. There was, however, no concrete commitment from the West Europeans to change their policy on

⁸⁹The domestic political dimension will be examined more closely in chapter seven.

East West trade.⁹⁰ The lifting of the sanctions also coincided with the death of Leonid Brezhnev and the nomination of Yuri Andropov as his successor. Although this was probably not the cause of the lifting of the sanctions, it certainly presented the US President with a convenient opportunity for a new start in relations with the Soviet Union.

By the end of 1982 calm had returned to the Alliance, even if only on the surface.

Muddling together

By the end of 1982 the political situation in Poland remained virtually unchanged. The likeliness of the Polish government consenting to Western demands of lifting martial law, releasing all political prisoners and reopening negotiations with the Church and Solidarity was rapidly decreasing. Hence, a debate developed over the continued utility of sanctions and also over the initial rationale for imposing them.⁹¹ It

⁹⁰Strategic Survey, 1982-83, op. cit. p.55.

⁹¹The most important economic sanctions were the block on negotiations to reschedule Poland's debt, the freeze on credits to Poland, the American abolition of the most favoured nation status to Poland and the blocking of the negotiations on Poland's membership of the IMF. Poland had also been politically isolated since the imposition of martial law. All high level visits from the West to Poland had been banned.

became clear that the West Europeans, arguing that the sanctions had outlived their purpose, favoured an early lifting.⁹² The United States, on the other hand, favoured a continuation of sanctions. Partly accepting that not much could be done without the United States, partly recognising that other issues were higher on their list of priorities, the West Europeans accepted the continued freeze on relations with Poland, and maintained for longer than they ideally would have wanted, a policy of inaction.

On 21 July 1982 the Polish government announced that some steps would be taken to ease martial law. Two-thirds of internees were freed and General Jaruzelski also hinted that martial law might be lifted by the end of the year. This news was not greeted with much enthusiasm in the West, which still considered that the demands put forward in January 1982 had to be fulfilled.⁹³ NATO stated that the steps in Poland

⁹²The Danish Folketing voted in February to withdraw its support for EC sanctions against the Soviet Union. Although provoked by the Danish Parliament's claim that the European Community was not a reasonable forum for foreign policy decisions, the decision cannot be considered wholly unrelated from the issue itself. It is unlikely that the Danes would have taken this initiative purely on a matter of principle. For a discussion on the link between the EC proper and EPC over Polish sanctions see Simon Nuttall "Interaction between European Political Cooperation and the European Community", Yearbook of European Law, 1987, No. 7. pp. 211-249.

⁹³Le Monde 23.7.82 and 23.7.82.

"fall short of fulfilling the declared intentions of the Polish leadership and the three criteria set out by the alliance on January 11, 1982."⁹⁴

As a reaction to the dissolution of Solidarity by the Sejm (the Polish parliament) in October 1982, the American President even imposed further sanctions by lifting the Most Favoured Nation status awarded to Poland. Poland had been the first communist country to achieve the Most Favoured Nation status in 1960. It was followed only by Rumania in 1975 and by Hungary in 1979. The US decision referred to manufactured products, which represented approximately two-thirds of Poland's exports to the United States. Polish textiles, for instance, would be subject to tariff increases of 35 to 50 percent. Some argued, however, that in the short term the measure would not have a very strong impact because trade between the two countries was already heavily reduced as a result of the restrictions on credits to Poland.⁹⁵ Reagan also indicated that further sanctions were a possibility that would be discussed between the Western allies.⁹⁶ However, even though the French and British foreign offices also condemned the vote in the Sejm, there is no indication that

⁹⁴Financial Times 30.7.82.

⁹⁵Le Monde 23.7.82.

⁹⁶United States Information Service, Tuesday October 12th, 1982. "Reagan acts to end Poland's MNF status".

the West Europeans were considering tougher sanctions and no further measures were announced.⁹⁷

In December 1982 martial law was held in suspension but not lifted. The military government retained special powers to deal with any economic or political disruption.⁹⁸ It was impossible to know concretely what the effect of the latest measures in Poland would be or what restrictive measures would be maintained. Thus, again, the West took a "wait and see" attitude. The American President greeted the Polish measures, and underlined his willingness to restore economic aid to Poland and to lift sanctions, but stressed that this would only happen when Western conditions were fulfilled.⁹⁹ The European Community also decided in December 1982 to prolong the measures restricting the import of Soviet goods for another year.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷The French government repeated to the French National Assembly that although it condemned the abolition of Solidarity, it did not consider more sanctions a purposeful response. *Débats Parlementaires de l'Assemblée Nationale, Première Session Ordinaire de 1982-3, "Questions au Gouvernement" (Andrée Chandernagor, Ministre Délégué, Chargé des Affaires Européennes), 13 octobre 1982, Journal Officiel, 14.10.1982, pp. 5727-29. See also Le Monde 10/11.10.1982.*

⁹⁸Financial Times 14.12.82.

⁹⁹Le Monde 12/13.12.82.

¹⁰⁰Le Monde 25.12.82.

In July 1983 martial law was finally lifted and a limited amnesty was introduced for political and other offenders. However, most of the measures taken under martial law had been introduced into Polish legislation, and the lifting of martial law did not, therefore, have a large impact on conditions in Poland. In November 1983, Jaruzelski was still threatening to put the 11 most prominent prisoners from Solidarity and KOR on trial for treason. At the beginning of 1984 Poland was said still to hold about two hundred political prisoners, and there were no prospects of restarting talks about independent trades unions.¹⁰¹

Despite the inability of the Polish regime to return to the reform process, it became clear in the first months of 1983 that the West Europeans were beginning to question the continued purpose and utility of sanctions, and that they wished to normalise relations with Poland.¹⁰² Behind closed doors they tried to convince the United States of their viewpoint. Exploratory talks were apparently held on several occasions but without any decision being made. For instance, the new German Chancellor Helmut Kohl urged larger American flexibility on the question of sanctions against the Soviet

¹⁰¹An amnesty for "almost all" prisoners, including 652 political prisoners, was approved by the Sejm only in July 1984. Hufbauer, op. cit. Also, The Times, 23 July 1984.

¹⁰²See for example The Guardian 1.12.82; 19.2.83; Financial Times 4.5.83; International Herald Tribune 15.4.83.

Union in discussions with Reagan in May 1983.¹⁰³ In June 1983 the United States again declared that it would not lift sanctions unless it was satisfied that its three conditions were fulfilled.¹⁰⁴

At first the objectives of sanctions had appeared to be clear. Philip Hanson for example, has argued that

"The purposes of the sanctions against Poland itself were ... straightforward. They were intended to demonstrate US displeasure over the crushing of Solidarity, and to create pressure for its reversal: the aims of ending martial law, effecting an amnesty for political prisoners and allowing a resumption of dialogue between government and opposition were specifically stated."¹⁰⁵

However, even if the objectives of sanctions appeared to be clearly defined, the effectiveness of the sanctions in achieving these objectives, as well as the realism of the objectives themselves, were put in doubt.¹⁰⁶ In other words, as so often before in Western relations with Poland, there may have been an unrealistic gap between the stated objectives of the West and the instruments at their disposal to achieve these objectives (Or was it just that they were

¹⁰³International Herald Tribune 23.5.83.

¹⁰⁴International Herald Tribune 29.6.83.

¹⁰⁵Hanson op. cit. p.47.

¹⁰⁶Nicholas G. Andrews, "The effectiveness of US sanctions against Poland", pp. 323-333 in Paul Marer and Wlodzimierz Siwinski (eds) Creditworthiness and Reform in Poland: Western and Polish Perspectives, Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1988.

not really a sufficiently high priority?). The United States may have overestimated its leverage to force the Soviet Union into disagreeable concessions in Poland when it imposed sanctions.¹⁰⁷ It was also argued that sanctions are only useful if the target country can be isolated and in the case of a Warsaw Pact country that is virtually impossible. And finally, bearing in mind that the independent trades union was what most deeply challenged the Soviet political system, the demand for a re-establishment of Solidarity appeared less and less unlikely.¹⁰⁸

With regard to Poland, Western bankers were amongst those arguing that the principal consequence of sanctions had been to drive Poland still further into the Kremlin's arms by increasing its economic dependence on the Soviet Union. Most agreed that Western sanctions, in particular the restrictions on credits, had a damaging effect on Polish economy.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷For a discussion of the degrees of vulnerability of states to economic sanctions see Margaret P. Doxey, International Sanctions in Contemporary perspective, London, Macmillan, 1996, especially pp. 95-110.

¹⁰⁸For a negative assessment of sanctions see John Edwin Mroz, "Aider la Pologne", pp. 129-155 in Politique Internationale, 26, 1, été 1983. See also Yves Laulan "L'Occident put-il utiliser l'arme économique et financière? L'exemple polonais", pp. 38-43 in Commentaire, no 5, vol 17, printemps 1982. He argues that sanctions against Poland were mostly symbolic and had little impact on policies themselves.

¹⁰⁹M.S. Daoudi and M.S. Dajani, "Poland: the politactics of sanctions", pp. 149-166, The Polish Review, vol XXX, no 2, 1985.

Trade between Poland and the West had fallen drastically in the first six months of 1982.¹¹⁰ This, in a sense, was also the argument of the Polish government, which was accusing the West of destroying any hope of recovery in Polish economy.

Finally, there was a sensation, in particular in Western Europe, that, politically, the West was playing itself out of the Polish game; that by refusing any form of dialogue with the Polish government the West was losing all form of leverage in Poland. In this context it was also argued that some of the sanctions, such as the refusal to reschedule, was hurting the West more than Poland because Poland had effectively for two years got away with not paying anything on its debt.¹¹¹ The link between the rescheduling of Poland's private and public debt had been "broken". Before martial law Western banks had been reluctant to make any rescheduling deals with Poland without their governments taking the lead. However, with the continued blocking of the discussions on the public debt, an agreement to reschedule

¹¹⁰Polish imports from the United States declined with 33% from 1981 to 1982, exports declined 84%. The respective figures for West Germany were - 13% and -18%; France, +6% and -30%, Britain, +4% and -21%. Hufbauer, op. cit. p. 200. See also International Herald Tribune 24.6.82.

¹¹¹Financial Times 15.9.1983. There was, however, a situation of interdependence here. Poland needed the reopening of the discussions because this was the only way to obtain new Western trade and commodity credits.

the private debt for 1982 was reached in early November 1982.¹¹² And by March 1983 it was ready for a third round of debt rescheduling discussions.¹¹³ Hence, while Poland had not paid anything on its official debt since the imposition of martial law, all the country's foreign currency went into the pockets of private banks and none to Western governments.¹¹⁴

The Vatican, which had also clearly condemned the imposition of martial law, and supported the sanctions, also revised its position in 1983, and considered dialogue more important than confrontation. The Vatican also considered that the economic isolation of Poland did more harm and would not provoke change in Poland.¹¹⁵ Hence, a visit by the Pope to Poland

¹¹²International Herald Tribune 4.11.82.

¹¹³It must be added, however, that by 1983, the size of the Polish debt looked small in comparison with the debt of Mexico, Chile, Peru and Yugoslavia. Furthermore, because of the high value of the US \$ at the time, the part of the Polish debt that had been taken in European currencies had depreciated considerably, hence providing a further easing of the burden. See Financial Times 21.3.1983.

¹¹⁴The Times 7.12.83. An agreement to reschedule the 1983 debt was reached in August 1983, see Financial Times 19.8.83.

¹¹⁵Cardinal Glemp had, for some time before the Pope's visit to Poland, advocated the idea of creating a foundation to channel money to Polish farmers. In other words, the Church, and the Pope had accepted to enter into a dialogue with the Polish regime. The fund to the farmers should be financed by private Western aid, in particular, through Western Catholic Churches and was to be controlled by the Polish church. This project was, however, in the end abandoned. See, International Herald Tribune 29.6.1983 and 6.8.1983; The Guardian 28.9.1983.

was scheduled for the summer of 1983. The West Europeans appeared to hope that this would also pressure the United States to change its position. However, neither the visit of the Pope nor the lifting of martial law was considered sufficient by the United States.

The discussion on whether and under what conditions to lift sanctions coincided with crucial negotiations with the Soviet Union in Geneva on intermediate nuclear forces. These negotiations were a priority both for the United States and for Western Europe. There was concern that any public disagreement between the allies on Poland or any other issue would play into the hands of the Soviet Union. Hence, the West Europeans generally accepted the American position, in order to avoid an open confrontation, and decisions that threatened to be divisive were postponed.¹¹⁶ In practice however, after the lifting of martial law, sanctions were gradually lifted, although an outright and overall decision at Alliance level to do so, or to how it should be done, was not taken.

¹¹⁶Interestingly, the United States did not suggest a linkage between Poland and the INF negotiations. Before martial law Reagan had hinted that the possibility of such a linkage could not be ignored, "Interview with President-elect, Ronald Reagan, 19 January 1981", p. 131, in Survival, vol XXIII, no 3, May/June 1981. See for example Reagan's speech to Eureka College, May 1982. "Documentation. Nuclear weapons and arms control", Survival, vol XXIV, Sept/Oct 1982, pp. 229-230.

At a meeting in Paris in September 1983 between representatives from the foreign ministries of Poland's largest Western creditors¹¹⁷ a decision was taken "in principle" to re-open negotiations on the rescheduling of Poland's official debt. In practice this did actually amount to a major erosion of NATO's sanctions. It was expected that it might also ultimately lead to the lifting of the freeze on new Western export credits. However, there was still uncertainty as to the American position. So far, the United States had only let it be known that they were not opposed to re-establishing contact with Warsaw on the debt question.¹¹⁸ As a result, the Paris club was, in practice, only marking time for several months, waiting for the United States to make up their minds as to whether negotiations could actually open.¹¹⁹ Finally, the United States' decision to join in talks on rescheduling Poland's official debt was taken on 3 November 1983.¹²⁰ Still, there was disagreement over how to proceed. The American proposal was to re-negotiate Poland's debt year by year, starting with the broken agreement of 1982, then continuing with 1982 and 1983. The West Europeans

¹¹⁷West Germany, France, the United States, Great Britain, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Spain, Finland, Italy, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland.

¹¹⁸Le Monde 31.7/1.8.1983.

¹¹⁹The Guardian 11.1.1984.

¹²⁰Financial Times 3.11.83.

considered this to be too long a process. At Christmas 1983 the European Community's sanctions against the Soviet Union were allowed to lapse, as they expired on 31 December. The question was not discussed in the Council of Foreign Ministers, and no formal announcement was made with respect to this.¹²¹

In January 1984 NATO's permanent council was convened to review the Polish situation. Western Europe on this occasion led by West Germany and supported also by the United Kingdom, argued that it was time to normalise relations with Poland. Neither the EEC or individual West European countries were applying sanctions against Poland on their own, but US support was considered necessary to create effective moves to ease economic and political relations with Poland. Hence, the United States was, for example, delaying negotiations on the Polish application for IMF membership.

It was only in autumn 1984 that the US position started changing. The political amnesty was announced in Poland in August 1984, when 652 political prisoners were released. The suspension of scientific exchanges between Poland and the United States was lifted, and a ban on landing rights for regularly scheduled flights by the Polish airline LOT was

¹²¹Financial Times 23.12.83. (1.4% of Soviet exports to the EC had been covered by the sanctions, it amounted to a total of \$140 million per year).

ended. (However, new agreements had to be negotiated in the two areas and by October this had only just started on the question of scientific exchanges.) This appears to have given the Europeans the spur finally to bring relations with Poland back to normal. The diplomatic quarantine imposed on Poland after the NATO meeting of 11 January 1982 was lifted only in the autumn of 1984¹²², although a year earlier the EEC had already come to the view that time had come to re-open dialogue with Poland.¹²³ The United States was quoted as not being very pleased with the European decision to normalise diplomatic relations with Poland.¹²⁴

By early December 1983 it became clear that the Solidarity leader Lech Walesa also favoured an end to sanctions.¹²⁵ Solidarity had favoured the imposition of Western sanctions after martial law, but argued that the time had now come to

¹²²Financial Times 3.8.1984.

¹²³For speculation that the US would ease some of the sanctions against Poland, see for example Financial Times 2.11.83; International Herald Tribune 1.11.83 and 2.11.83; Le Monde 3.11.83.

¹²⁴The first West European higher official to visit Poland was British Minister of State Malcolm Rifkind, whose job in the Foreign Office was to oversee East-West relations. His visit to Warsaw was planned for 4 November. He was expected to be followed by German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Italian Foreign Minister Andreotti before the end of 1984. International Herald Tribune 12.10.1984 and Financial Times 9.10.1984.

¹²⁵For the official Polish reaction to sanctions, see Hufbauer, et al. op. cit. pp. 197-8.

lift them, because they no longer served their purpose and could not be expected to achieve much more.¹²⁶ Lech Walesa reiterated his position in his Nobel peace Prize lecture in Oslo later the same month¹²⁷ and in December the United States decided to lift its veto on IMF membership.¹²⁸

The strongest American sanctions, however, were still in place: that of withholding the Most Favoured Nation status from Poland and also the ban on new credits, which hampered Polish trade. It was only on 19 February 1987, that the United States lifted the remaining sanctions against Poland and restored the Most Favoured Nation trading status to Poland.¹²⁹

Hence, in practice sanctions were lifted little by little, without much coordination or overall strategy, but rather with the aim of creating as little tension in the alliance as possible. One may argue that the alliance returned in this last phase to its usual approach of "muddling together".

¹²⁶Financial Times 9.12.83.

¹²⁷International Herald Tribune 14.12.83 and Financial Times 9.12.83. The lecture was given by Walesa's wife, Lech Walesa himself was not allowed to leave Poland.

¹²⁸Financial Times 15.12.1984.

¹²⁹Hufbauer et al, op. cit p. 195.

Conclusion

Although not an entirely unexpected turn of events, martial law caught the Western alliance unprepared, and neatly divided the increasingly hardline United States' administration from the West Europeans, who were still committed to detente. Chapters four and five showed that until the imposition of martial law, the Western allies had succeeded in maintaining cohesion and in coordinating their policies towards Poland. Crucially though, they had failed to agree on how to react to the possibility of martial law, and once it was imposed, the divergences in their perspectives soon came to the surface, and led to one of the most serious crises in the history of the Alliance.

The findings of this chapter confirm that Western institutional structures were not strong enough to guarantee cohesion. Martial law required a quick reaction. It was no longer possible, as it had been up to martial law, for the Western states to continue to "muddle through" and although Western institutional structures provided extensive opportunities for consultation, their limited ability to ensure rapid coordinated action was amply illustrated after martial law.

The limited utility of Western institutional structures was a result of Poland's ambiguous place in Western foreign and strategic policies, as well as the nature of the issues raised by martial law in Poland. As chapter three showed, NATO is essentially a military alliance charged, in article V in the North Atlantic Treaty, with the task of providing collective defence for its member states.¹³⁰ The Polish crisis did not fall within the parameters of article V, and, with the risk of a Soviet or Warsaw Pact military intervention practically ruled out after martial law, NATO's "grip" on the crisis was loosened even more than in the two previous phases of the crisis. NATO's ability to function effectively and to ensure close coordination amongst the Western allies was closely tied up with military/strategic issues. This was obviously partly for political reasons, in other words, when the security of member states were seen to be at risk, the willingness to compromise grew stronger, nonetheless there was also an important institutional dimension to this. The structure and organisation of NATO was such that although consultation was easy enough to achieve on

¹³⁰According to article V of the North Atlantic Treaty, "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self defence..., will assist the Party or Parties so attacked...to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic Area". "The North Atlantic Treaty", pp. 376-378 in The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation: Facts and Figures, Brussels, NATO Information Service, 1989.

political issues, there were few instruments for promoting common political initiatives.

Other Western institutional networks were not in any way capable of taking NATO's place and ensuring transatlantic coordination over martial law. In fact, the European institutions were not entirely successful in promoting an active cohesive response at the European level. It is important to bear in mind that although the principal division was between the United States and the West Europeans, there were also divergencies within Western Europe. EPC was important in the sense that it facilitated, and to a certain extent legitimised, individual European states', and in particular West Germany's, opposition to the United States. By the same token it became a useful tool for French foreign policy, as France no longer stood alone as the sole dissenter in the Alliance on East-West relations. Still, EPC did little beyond providing a common umbrella for West European opposition to the US. It did not generate a European initiative after martial law. The newly invented crisis consultation mechanisms did not make a great deal of difference to EPC. Ultimately, the Franco-German differences were dealt with bilaterally and not in the framework of EPC. The impression of the limited importance of EPC is further reinforced by the fact that, although the West Europeans won the short term battle over the pipeline, they lost the longer

term battle over detente. EPC failed to transform itself into an effective actor on East-West relations.

Although perhaps logical in terms of the developments of the Ostpolitik in the 1970s, the West German position was unusual in terms of its position in the Atlantic Alliance. After the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, West Germany acted as intermediary between France and the United States. This time, West Germany was the internal dissenter, abandoning its role as a loyal ally to the United States, while the French President was closer to Reagan's perception of events, although he disagreed with the means employed in reaction to martial law. It was pointed out in chapter two that the role of the United States was one of the principal issues on which West Germany and France differed with regard to Western policies towards Eastern Europe. After martial law, this divergence was no longer there.

So, the situation in Poland fell outside the area where NATO had a firm grip. Although the defence aspects of NATO had tighter provisions for coordination, in situations where military security was not directly involved it was very difficult for NATO to generate coordination. At the same time, no other Western institutional framework was able "replace" NATO.

Poland was also an area where there was no long tradition for a common Western strategy. As chapter two showed, there had not really been a need for strong coordination of Western policies towards Eastern Europe. The Western alliance had taken a "laissez-faire" attitude, allowing, and even encouraging in the Harmel report, individual national approaches to Poland and Eastern Europe, within the overall framework of Western approaches to East-West relations. This approach had, in the 1970s got increasingly out of hand from a cohesion perspective, as the West Europeans developed a far stronger interest in the continuation of these national approaches to Eastern Europe. The difficulties with the "laissez faire" approach were further strengthened by the fact that the cement of the East-West problematique and the notion of two separate blocs in Europe was weakening. In other words, the fundamentals of the East-West relationship were increasingly questioned, and came to the forefront in the context of the Polish crisis. There was no common Western strategy towards Poland once it "came loose" from the logic of bipolarity or the Cold War. As chapter three pointed out, although Poland was geographically at the heart of the strategic balance in Europe, and thus had the ability to affect security within NATO, it was politically out of reach. As relations with Poland became increasingly "politicised" and "de-militarised" during detente, the grip of NATO over coordination towards this country loosened. Also, the gradual

politicisation had taken place along national lines, rather than collective lines.

The fragmentation of the political, economic and security elements in the Western response continued in this phase. Nowhere was this better illustrated than in the parallel and uncoordinated US delegations taking to Europe in the spring of 1982, all dealing with issues related to the Polish crisis, yet, failing to bring all its aspects together. As for the G7, which was, from some quarters, promoted as a forum that would enable discussion at the highest political level of economic, political and strategic issues, its inadequacies were amply illustrated at the Versailles summit. The advantages of informality were overshadowed by its inconveniences, as important participants at the summit were left unaware of vital decisions. Its inefficiency was further reinforced by the absence of provisions allowing for preparations of the discussions held at the summit.

Finally, disagreement amongst allies was not related exclusively to events in Poland. Arguably, martial law was the cause of the crisis, but it was not its only object. The issue of how to react to martial law became embroiled in wider transatlantic disputes over East-West trade and the use of economic sanctions in the early 1980s. These were issues on which there had always been stronger disagreement amongst

the allies. They were particularly sensitive at the time of the Polish crisis. It has been argued that the Western crisis, in the long run, was a good thing for the alliance, because it signalled weak links in its structure and called to account different perceptions of detente.¹³¹ This chapter has found that, rather than resolving or confronting their disagreements, they were at best covered up, if not reinforced after martial law. Individual Western states' perception of events in Poland were to a large extent determined by their overall view of detente and East-West relations. Rather than enhancing understanding between the United States and Western Europe, it strengthened suspicions on both sides. By late 1982, the Western allies returned to a deliberate policy of "muddling through" without having resolved their fundamental differences and without having moved towards a new transatlantic bargain. This was considered the most feasible approach in terms of alliance cohesion.

The breakdown of coordination cannot be seen as a result of a misperception of what was at stake for the other allies. This chapter has shown that US policy-makers were aware of the West European reluctance to sanctions, both in December 1981 and after the G7 summit in June 1982. They admit fairly

¹³¹David William Hunter, Western trade pressure on the Soviet Union: an interdependence perspective on sanctions, PhD thesis, London School of Economics, 1988, p. 143.

openly that they wished to pursue sanctions despite European opposition. If there was misperception, then it was in the form of the US overestimating its influence in the alliance. The institutional structures had in this sense created their own problems of coordination. Interaction in NATO had developed a certain pattern of expectations on both sides of the Atlantic. As the alliance hegemon, the US was conditioned to expect that, under pressure, the West Europeans would follow its lead. The West Europeans, on the other hand, expected to be consulted before US initiatives. They did not accept that Alliance ties would infringe on what they considered their rights as sovereign states.

The crisis that developed in the Western alliance after martial law was a crisis of Western unity, rather than a foreign policy crisis for one, some, or all of the Western states taken together. The three criteria for a foreign policy crisis outlined by Brecher: change in the external environment, high probability of war and a finite time for response, are not directly applicable.¹³² In fact, paradoxically, martial law defused the potential for a classic foreign policy crisis (in the shape of an East-West crisis) and in turn triggered an intramural crisis, in other

¹³²Michael Brecher, "A theoretical approach to international crisis behaviour", pp. 5-24 in Brecher (ed), Studies in crisis behaviour, New Brunswick, Transaction Books, 1978.

words a crisis of Western cohesion. Arguably, any external crisis has the capacity to affect an Alliance, but it does not necessarily have to provoke a crisis of unity. It will however do so when it is perceived differently by different member states, or when member states have different views on how, or whether or not, the external crisis affects the Alliance. To some, martial law was an issue that required a strong Western reaction. Others chose to define it as a domestic political issue with few implications for the Western allies. In turn, this raised questions about the purpose of the Alliance, thus further reinforcing the image of the crisis as a crisis of Western unity, rather than a specific foreign policy crisis for some or all of the Western states. In the longer term, this crisis damaged the alliance's credibility, not only in the eyes of the outside world, but also in the eyes of the member states' domestic constituencies, who were already sceptical about its legitimacy.

Although the breakdown of cohesion was no doubt facilitated by the absence of established common procedures on Western policies towards Eastern Europe, as well as by poor institutional support for coordination on issues that fell outside the Cold War problematique, institutional weaknesses cannot fully explain the breakdown in coordination. Ultimately, the breakdown of coordination was the result of

diverging national perspectives. With the end of the Cold War it has often been argued that "old" conflicts would return to Europe.¹³³ As chapter two showed, part of these "old" conflicts were diverging Western aims in Poland. Following the logic of this perspective, the breakdown of Western coordination after martial law would then be the result of the reemergence of longer term disagreement over Poland as detente had loosened the grip of bipolarity. This chapter has found that the problem was more complex. Firstly, from this long-term perspective, the principal dividing line should have been between France and West Germany and not between West Germany and the United States. Thus, it would seem that the considerable changes that had taken place in intra-European relations after the Second World War were important for relations with the outside world and that lifting the "lid" of the Cold War does not necessarily lead to a return of pre-Cold War conflicts. Secondly, the emphasis given to coordination up until martial law, as well as the NATO meeting in January 11 1982, indicate that there was a continued commitment to NATO, and to intra-West European coordination in parallel with the development of increasingly independent national approaches to Eastern Europe. In other words, although the grip of bipolarity had loosened, the grip of the Cold War institutions was still to some extent

¹³³John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future", International Security, Summer 1990, vol 15, no 1, pp. 5-56.

present. This would suggest that intergovernmental relations are not entirely innocent: in the long term they do bind states closer together. These more complex relations between allied states did not prevent conflict between them, but they do establish an image of inter-state interaction which is less simple than that of nation states pursuing one-dimensional national interests. It is against the backdrop of these paradoxes in intra-Western relations that chapter seven turns to examine the perspectives of the individual state actors, in order to determine how their positions were defined after the imposition of martial law in Poland.

CHAPTER 7. REVISITING THE WESTERN CRISIS

Introduction

This chapter returns to the question of the breakdown of Western cohesion, from the perspective of the national actors. Coordination is the outcome of interaction between the nation-states and the institutional structures in which they interact. Still, it is clear from previous chapters that the imposition of martial law led to a variety of different national reactions, and that these ultimately triggered the crisis in the Western camp. Consequently, in order to understand the breakdown in coordination, it is necessary to examine more closely how and why these national reactions came about. The emphasis will be on the analyses of the external and domestic constraints facing individual states in the aftermath of martial law. Before looking at the individual actors, however, the wider political context of the Atlantic alliance must be discussed. It was suggested in chapter four that this wider crisis made coordination over Poland more difficult. Hence, it could perhaps be argued that the response of the individual Western states was determined by this broader crisis within the Alliance. It is important to examine the extent to which this is a sufficient explanation of the breakdown of coordination after martial law.

The traditional perspective on alliance politics suggests that what keeps Alliances together is a sense of a common threat, and that, when the threat disappears, the Alliance is likely to fall apart. The underlying assumption is that the state is a "billiard-ball" unitary actor and its participation in an Alliance is the result of a rational pursuit of the state's "national interest". Although the starting point, and the main focus, of this thesis (as well as this particular chapter) is the states themselves, rather than a specific Western institutional framework, and although we consider the crisis in the Alliance to have been the result, in the end, chiefly of a conflict between different national policies, we take the process by which this disagreement came about to have been more complex than that assumed by the traditional alliance theories. Consequently, we also regard it as insufficient to explain the breakdown of coordination as resulting exclusively from the collision of clearly distinguishable national policies. In fact, the national perspectives after martial law were not always clearly in contradiction with each other. What is more, each national policy taken on its own, was not clear cut. There was no unified perception of events in Poland inside each state, nor was there always a clear definition of national policy objectives. In the same vein, there was often a discrepancy between the perceptions of events in Poland, the diplomatic statements of the government, and the practical initiatives of that same government. In other words, each national response was

defined in response to a variety of domestic as well as external pressures and not in respect of clearly defined objectives. Most importantly, the position of the other allied governments was an important factor in defining each state's position. It is in the context of this network of conflicting priorities that the maintenance and subsequent breakdown of coordination has to be understood. Thus, this chapter will pay particular attention to the way in which the Allied states chose to navigate within their domestic, external and alliance priorities.

The chapter starts by discussing the link between the crisis over Poland and the wider Atlantic crisis in the early 1980s. It suggests that although the wider Atlantic crisis contributed to the difficulties of coordination after martial law, it is not, on its own, sufficient as an explanation of why coordination broke down. Thus, the chapter turns to look at the individual positions of the four major Western states. It starts by looking at West Germany, then turns to France, Britain and finally the United States. It discusses the importance of domestic, as well as external influences on each individual state's position after martial law. It pays particular attention to the influence of domestic consideration upon the outcome of allied coordination after martial law.

Polish and Atlantic crises

The decision of the United States to impose sanctions against the Soviet Union and Poland without consulting with its allies must be set within the broader context of deeper uncertainties and more wide-reaching difficulties within the Western alliance in the early 1980s. The US action followed a series of controversies in NATO, most recently over the neutron bomb and over how to react to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Demonstrations of disenchantment with the alliance in public opinion on both sides of the Atlantic were becoming more and more frequent in the early 1980s.

Some have pointed to structural changes in the relationship between the United States and Western Europe as an important cause of the crisis. The 'relative decline' of the United States and the relative strengthening of the economic and political independence of the West Europeans in comparison is an underlying theme in many discussions of the Atlantic crisis in the 1980s.¹ Sloan wrote that,

¹The best known example of the argument of US decline is probably found in Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, London, Fontana Press, 1989. See also Joseph Nye, Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power, New York, Basic Books, 1990 and Henry Nau, The Myth of America's Decline, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990 both argue, from different perspectives, against Kennedy's thesis of the inevitable decline of US power.

"There is a crisis of confidence in the alliance, a crisis rooted in NATO's structural imbalance and exacerbated by the deterioration in West-West political and economic relations as well as by differences over East-West relations and nuclear weapons policies. ... The allies must find a new consensus that reflects the shifts in relative power which have occurred over the last 30 years".²

Stephen Gill has also emphasised the importance of structural changes in the Alliance in the early 1980s:

"... the American-centred transatlantic system, is, in Gramscian terms, undergoing a 'crisis of hegemony', involving, at the political level, a shift away from the post-war transatlantic consensus on East-West relations and from accepted domestic formulas for governing the Atlantic political economies. This crisis involves both elements of decay of the old order and elements of change and innovation."³

There was disagreement, however, as to the significance of the Atlantic crisis of the late 1970s/early 1980s. Those who stressed the structural changes in the Atlantic Alliance also tended to argue that the 1980 crisis was far more serious than previous crises, and to see it as the 'beginning of the end' of Atlanticism. For Mélandri, the economic decline of the United States made the Atlantic crisis of the early 1980s more serious than previous crises:

"Une interprétation strictement cyclique des crises qui secouent épisodiquement le monde atlantique court le risque de se révéler exagèrément optimiste. La

²Stanley Sloan, NATO's Future: Towards a New Transatlantic Bargain, London, Macmillan, 1986, p.123.

³Stephen Gill (ed), Atlantic Relations: Beyond the Reagan Area, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1989, p.11.

crise actuelle se situe dans le contexte d'une évidente mutation industrielle qui met à mal les structures héritées du passé et parce que, malheureusement les problèmes loin de seulement se perpétuer, tendent avec le temps à s'approfondir et à s'accumuler."⁴

Also, before the end of the Cold War, Gill predicted that:

"...the decade of the 1990s would probably be a period of significant transition in Atlantic relations, and (that) the label 'Atlanticist' would, as we approach the end of the century, become increasingly anachronistic".⁵

To others, the crisis was part of the normal cycle of periodic crises in NATO, and was an unavoidable characteristic of any Alliance of sovereign states. The history of the alliance is indeed riddled with crises, and journalists and politicians have with regular intervals predicted its demise. The Suez crisis in 1956 and the French departure from the military part of the alliance in 1966 are examples of upheavals that were in many ways more dramatic than the one in the early 1980s.

Still, the crisis in the Western alliance in the early 1980s was, no doubt, serious, and also different from previous crises. It involved all the major West European states, and not only France.⁶ Furthermore, it did not end with the West Europeans backing down, but rather with a US

⁴Pierre Mélandri, Une Incertaine Alliance, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 1988, p.408.

⁵Gill, op. cit, p.12.

⁶See also Josef Joffe, The Limited Partnership, Cambridge, Mass, Ballinger, 1987.

retreat, thus indicating a shift in the distribution of influence and allegiances within the Alliance. Finally, the crisis was more serious because of the existence of EPC and the European Community, providing a forum for the West European consultation and legitimisation of purely European positions. Still, the significance of the crisis in the early 1980s was highly ambiguous. On some issues, such as East-West economic relations, or on the evolution of domestic debates about foreign policy, the Western states seemed to be moving in different directions. At the same time, efforts also emerged to strengthen cooperation between the allied states. In fact, the very paradox of the crisis in the alliance in the early 1980s was that although there was structural change in the relationship between the member states, these same states did not show much willingness to change the basic political agreement upon which their relations were based. This point has also been stressed by other studies of Euro-American relations:

"There is no doubt that East-West relations during the 1980s have given rise to open competition and important divergences of view between Americans and west Europeans. Nonetheless, the structure within which competition and divergence has taken place remains fundamentally the same as in the 1970s, and Europeans show no material desire to overthrow it."⁷

This ambiguity could be seen in the West European embrace of the Reagan administration in the first half of 1981, when

⁷"Western Europe in the Atlantic system of the 1980s", David Allen and Michael Smith, pp. 88-110, in Stephen Gill (ed), op. cit, quotation p. 106.

they enthusiastically expressed their support for Reagan's claims to a strong American leadership of NATO. It could also be seen in that alternatives to NATO, such as a European pillar inside the Alliance or an independent European defence, were purely theoretical possibilities. During the Polish crisis, up until the imposition of martial law there was no deliberate effort to promote a separate European response to the Polish crisis, as opposed to an Atlantic one. Contingency planning took place inside the framework of NATO, not inside EPC. EPC did follow events in Poland closely and issued declarations with respect to the threat to detente in case of a Soviet intervention. However, the language of these statements did not diverge dramatically from the NATO statements.⁸ Finally, after the imposition of martial law, a considerable attempt was made to manage the differences at the Atlantic level, at the NATO meeting on January 11 1982. The fact that the meeting was held at all, as well as the careful drafting of the end communique, confirm that there was a willingness to cooperate and a common sense of a need to maintain NATO as a viable organisation. Why, in this case, did coordination not work?

⁸With regard to the economic aspects of the Western response to the Polish crisis, the West Europeans used the European Community instruments to provide food aid to Poland, and there is little evidence of coordination with the United States. Most likely, however, this was because there were no transatlantic institutions designed to deal with this type of problem, rather than the result of a desire to promote a separate European response to Poland.

It was principally the specific initiatives taken by the United States after martial law, and, in particular, the US decision to impose sanctions without consulting its allies, that triggered the breakdown of coordination. In addition to the West European dissatisfaction with the lack of US consultation before the imposition of sanctions, the main grievances of the Europeans were the lifting of the American grain embargo against the Soviet Union in April 1981, the subsequent signature of a new agreement to export US agricultural products to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1982, and the parallel sanctions on the gas pipeline, that the United States imposed on Western Europe.⁹ The Europeans considered that they were, in effect, expected to pay the price for the policy that the United States wished to implement.¹⁰ The importance of the American lifting of the grain embargo, in the West European perspective, is underlined not only by Attali, but also in

⁹Nau, op. cit. p. 314, points out that in the summer of 1982, the United States authorised a one year renewal of a long term grain agreement with the Soviet Union which expired in September 1982. In August 1983 a new long term agreement was signed between the United States and the Soviet Union. For a European perspective on the pipeline sanctions, see "Soviet pipeline sanctions: the European perspective", US Congress, Hearings before the Joint Economic Committee, 97th Congress, September 22, 1982 (André Fontaine, Thierry de Montbrial, Andrew Knight).

¹⁰In fact the United States' exports to the Soviet Union were so limited that in practice a US 'embargo' would have no chance of succeeding. Hence, the United States needed West Europe whose exports to the Eastern bloc were far more important than those of the US, to implement American policy. A different view is presented by Nau, who argues that American firms suffered more than European firms for the US sanctions, op. cit. p. 307.

Thatcher's memoirs.¹¹ Sir Nicholas Henderson describes Mrs. Thatcher's reaction to Reagan's efforts to explain the reasons behind the United States' embargo on the gas pipeline in the following way:

"Mrs. T's eyes blazed and she launched into a fierce attack on the President's decision, pointing out that American exports to the USSR would grow this year because of the lifting of the grain embargo."¹²

The following quote from Attali further confirms the 'dialogue des sourds' between the two sides of the Atlantic over the winter of 1982:

"Déjeuner, prévu de longue date, du Président avec l'ambassadeur américain, Evan Galbraith. On parle encore du gazoduc:
François Mitterrand: 'vous leur vendez bien du blé. Nous leur vendons des équipements pour un gazoduc'.
Evan Galbraith: 'si vous leur achetez du gaz, vous leur donnez des devises, c'est mal! Quand nous leur vendons du blé, nous leur prenons des devises: c'est bien!'"¹³

Beyond their shared annoyance with the United States over what ultimately came to be seen as an infringement of their sovereignty, the West Europeans, and, in particular, the West German, positions on Poland were shaped by different sets of concerns. Nonetheless, although they did, to some

¹¹Jacques Attali Verbatim. Tome 1: Chronique des années 1981-86, Paris, Librairie Arthème, Fayard, 1993, pp. 252-3 and Margaret Thatcher, The Downing Street Years, London, Harper Collins, 1993, p. 256.

¹²Nicholas Henderson, Mandarin: The Diaries of an Ambassador. 1969-1982, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1994, p.479.

¹³Attali, op. cit. p. 156, see also page 188.

extent disagree with each other, they agreed to disagree with the United States. In this context, the existence of European institutional frameworks was important. Still, this wider context of change and of a sense of crisis in the Atlantic Alliance is not enough on its own to explain the breakdown of coordination. The particular circumstances of the individual states, and the interaction between their domestic and external commitments must be taken into consideration.

West European responses to martial law

Old and new in Europe: Martial law and the German problem

West Germany distinguished itself from the other Western states during the Polish crisis not only because of its muted reaction to the imposition of martial law, but also, and most importantly, because events in Poland had more serious implications for West Germany's foreign and domestic politics than for the policies of the other Western states. West Germany's dilemmas over martial law were well symbolised by Helmut Schmidt's presence in East Berlin, in meeting with his East German counterpart Erich Honecker on 13 December, and were further strengthened by the history of German imperialism in Poland.¹⁴ During

¹⁴Schmidt himself also discusses the dilemmas that the particular history of German-Polish relations presented for West Germany's reaction to martial law. See in particular pp. 254-5, Men and Powers: A Political Retrospective, London, Jonathan Cape, 1990 : "No other nation, no other

their common press conference the morning after the imposition of martial law, Schmidt commented that both Honecker and himself were concerned about the fact that imposition of martial law had been "necessary".¹⁵ His unfortunate comment was met with a storm of protest in Western media. Against this backdrop, the objectives and interests of West Germany after martial law are still disputed.

In his impressive study of Germany's role in Europe, Timothy Garton Ash contends that West Germany's position on martial law was entirely self-serving. He argues that the West Germans expected that:

"... the Poles (must) curb their claim to freedom in order that the Germans might continue to pursue their claim to unity."¹⁶

people had suffered more from German military occupation [during the Hitler period] than Poland". Also "Hitler, Himmler and the so-called governor general of occupied Poland, Hans Franck, had taken the anti-Polish sentiment then prevalent in Germany and raised it to unimaginable horror."

¹⁵Schmidt argues in his memoirs that what he had meant was that he was concerned that Jaruzelski had considered it necessary to impose martial law in order to prevent a Soviet intervention. See Helmut Schmidt Die Deutschen und ihre Nachbarn: Menschen und Mächte II, Berlin, Siedler, 1990, p. 85.

¹⁶Timothy Garton Ash, In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent, London, Vintage, 1994, p. 292.

Garton

Ash considers West German policy to have been inspired purely by national interest, although it was not officially recognised as such:

"The singular feature of this crisis was not the clash of Polish and German national interest. It was rather the reluctance to admit - or perhaps the inability to see - that it was national interests that were clashing. This reluctance - or inability - took two forms. On the one hand, the German national interest (stability as permissive function) was conflated with a general human interest (stability as world peace), a European interest (stability as precondition for detente), and even an alleged Polish interest (stability as condition for reform). Political, analytical and moral arguments were rolled into one. On the other hand, Solidarity's claim to represent the Polish national interest was questioned. After all, Jaruzelski said he had imposed martial law in the national interest."¹⁷

In his own explanation of his policies on martial law, Schmidt pleads for a rational assessment of the situation in Poland, as well as of West Germany's policy and the abilities of the West German and the Western governments to improve the situation in the country.¹⁸ He argues that Jaruzelski was first and foremost a Polish patriot, whose main concerns were to prevent a Soviet or Warsaw Pact military intervention in Poland, and to stop Poland from

¹⁷Garton Ash, op. cit. p.292.

¹⁸The considerable space devoted to the Polish crisis in both volumes of Schmidt's memoirs is in itself a sign of the concern with which events in Poland were received by the West German government, and perhaps also of a sense of need to explain and justify an episode in the Federal Republic's foreign policy which has been severely criticised. For criticism of the West German position, in addition to the numerous press comments and Garton Ash, op. cit. see also Pierre Hassner, "The shifting foundation", Foreign Affairs, no 48, Fall 1982, pp. 3-20.

sliding into political and economic anarchy.¹⁹ He also suggests that Solidarity went too far in its demands for change and thus in part brought martial law on itself. He considers martial law to have been a lesser evil compared to the possibility of a Soviet military intervention, and that short of provoking a third world war, there was little the West could do to break down the division of Europe:

"At present it is impossible to see how the morally and historically untenable situation of the division of Europe can be ameliorated. Every attempt to use the will to freedom of the Poles, Hungarians, Czech or Germans as a lever to force restriction of Soviet controlled territory will run the risk of provoking violent intervention by Moscow; in the end there are the threats of civil war and international war."²⁰

Deploring what he refers to as the over-emotional response, in particular of the American public but also of American policy-makers to martial law, Schmidt describes the mood in the United States during his visit to Washington in January 1982 as being "close to hysteria". He also points to the discrepancy between Reagan's rhetoric and the American sanctions which "remained so limited in scope that they were merely of a pseudopolitical, symbolic nature".²¹

The key to Ash's interpretation of Schmidt's policy is perhaps found in Schmidt's suggestion that, because of West

¹⁹Schmidt, Die Deutschen, op. cit. p. 505.

²⁰Schmidt, Men and Powers, op. cit. p. 260.

²¹Schmidt, Men and powers, op. cit. p. 252.

Germany's own experience, it was well placed to understand Poland's predicament, and that both countries had to 'accept their fate':

"Germany, as the instigator and loser of the Second World War, had no choice but to accept the partition, under which it had been suffering for forty years; for the sake of peace, the Germans had also made the boundaries forced on them the subject of non-aggression pacts. In a different way, the Poles, too, suffer from the partition of Europe, which made them subject to Soviet sovereignty; they have also been forced to cede large tracts of their country to the Soviet Union."²²

The conceptual difficulties in explaining West German policy in the crisis, as Ash does, through the use of a concept as ambiguous as the 'national interest', are several. This is particularly so when the national interest is seen to exist, as it does in Garton Ash's argument, 'objectively', as a given, which does not require further definition. On the other hand, it is difficult to consider West German policy to have been the outcome, as Schmidt argues, of a perfectly rational, objective assessment of the situation in Poland. There can be little doubt that vital interests were at stake for West Germany in the Polish crisis. The outcome of events in Poland would interfere directly with the Ostpolitik and the Deutschlandpolitik, the discussion on how to react to martial law had a direct impact on the domestic political debate in West Germany in the early 1980s and it exposed the difficulties of the West German role in the Western

²²Helmut Schmidt, Men and Powers, op. cit. p.260-1.

alliance. Hence, it might be more useful to think about West Germany's policy as the outcome of a variety of domestic and external pressures. In other words, although concern about protecting the "national interest", defined implicitly by Ash as the ability to continue the Ostpolitik, must no doubt have been high on the agenda, it can hardly be seen as the only priority of West German policy-makers.

The Polish crisis emerged at a time of increased disagreement on the fundamentals of West German foreign policy, and the imposition of martial law and the question of how to react to it, fed directly into this debate. Schmidt was facing an increasingly strong opposition from the left wing of the SPD, which advocated West German disengagement from NATO, rejected the double track decision of 1979 and promoted the notion of a "security partnership" between East and West in Europe. Indeed, after Schmidt's resignation as Chancellor in the autumn of 1982,²³ the new SPD leadership called for:

"...what they called 'the second phase of Ostpolitik', which featured party-to party contacts with the SED and the Soviet and other East European communist parties. The purpose was to draw up, in advance of the SPD returning to power and in the hope of influencing the Bonn government's policies, a

²³Schmidt resigned when the FDP withdrew from the SDP-FDP coalition after a disagreement on budgetary issues. Still, Griffith argues that, "It was unlikely that he [Schmidt] could have maintained support for INF deployment and therefore would have fallen on that issue eventually", p. 56, William E. Griffith, "The American view", pp. 49-63 in Edwina Moreton (ed), Germany between East and West, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987.

series of agreements on such issues as nuclear and chemical weapons-free zones".²⁴

As the continued electoral success of the CDU after 1982 confirms, the left wing of the SPD did not speak for a majority of the West Germans. Nevertheless, their position is significant in that it constituted a considerable constraint on Helmut Schmidt's foreign policy while in government and meant that it was difficult for Schmidt to follow the hardline position taken by the Reagan administration. The domestic political debate on martial law was further complicated by the fact that the CDU joined the Western allies in criticising Schmidt's position. In a debate on martial law in the Bundestag on 18 December 1982, Helmut Kohl accused Schmidt of being insensitive to the concerns of the Polish people.²⁵

²⁴Griffith, in Moreton, op. cit. Quotation on p. 57. It should perhaps be noted that this discussion was by no means limited to West Germany. See for example, Martin Sæter, Europa mellom supermaktene, Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1984, in which the author advocates an "all-European peace solution" for Europe.

²⁵For Kohl's position on martial law see, Bundestag Plenarprotokolle, 9/74, pp.4294-4301, 18 December 1981. Once in power, however, Kohl did not in any way change West German policy on the issue, nor on East-West relations in general. In a statement to the Bundestag on 13 October 1982, describing the main elements of his foreign policy, he confirmed West Germany's conception of trade with the Soviet Union as an important part of West Germany's East-West relations, while at the same time expressing his sympathy for the situation in Poland. "Documentation. West Germany's foreign and security policy. Chancellor Kohl's policy statement." 13 October 1982, pp. 35-36 in Survival, vol XXV, no 1, January/February 1983.

This hitherto unprecedented polarisation of the country's foreign policy debate is a clear sign of the extreme unease within West German society in the early 1980s and linked indirectly to the issue of relations with East Germany.

According to Morgan:

"...the underlying issue [in the domestic West German debate] was the paradox of West Germany's combination of economic strength, political maturity, high international prestige, and total inability to make real progress in solving the fundamental problem of national division."²⁶

Martial law also raised the issue of Ostpolitik directly, and pointed to the long term history of German-Polish antagonism.

Recently published documents confirm that East German troops were expected to take part in a possible Warsaw Pact intervention.²⁷ Against the backdrop of German-Polish history, there is no doubt that such a scenario would not only have given the Ostpolitik a severe blow, it would also have brought renewed focus on the highly sensitive issue of Polish-German relations. Schmidt also mentions in his memoirs that one of his main fears during the Polish crisis

²⁶Roger Morgan, "West Germany's foreign and security interests", pp. 97-107 in Moreton, op. cit. Quotation on p.100.

²⁷Mark Kramer, "Poland, 1980-81. Soviet policy during the Polish crisis", pp. 1, 116-139 in Cold War International History Project, Bulletin, Washington DC, Woodrow Wilson International Center, Issue 5, Spring 1995, especially p. 120. The article reviews new archive materials and memoirs made public after 1989, from Russia, Poland, Germany and Czechoslovakia. For the role of East Germany, see also a forthcoming multi-volume collection of documents from the former East German communist party and Stasi archives SED-Politbüro und Polnische Krise 1980/1982, in preparation by Manfred Wilke et al.

was the possibility of seeing East German troops involved in an intervention in Poland.²⁸

Schmidt's interpretation of East Germany's position on martial law is nevertheless surprising. Referring to his thoughts on the issue, Schmidt indicates that he considered it important not to incriminate the DDR for events in Poland.²⁹ This perspective contrasts sharply with what has since emerged about Honecker's position on Solidarity and the Polish crisis. It is now reasonably well documented that Honecker was one of the most determined advocates of a Warsaw Pact military intervention in Poland. From very early on in the Polish crisis (as early as the autumn of 1980) Honecker tried to convince the Soviet Union that "fraternal aid" against Polish counter-revolutionary forces was necessary.³⁰ It would appear that Honecker's main fear was the risk that the movement of protest might spread from Poland to East Germany itself. In a situation where issues can only with difficulty be painted in black and white, there is little doubt that martial law was better than a full scale military intervention. At the same time, the

²⁸Schmidt, Die Deutschen, op. cit. p. 256. According to Valenta, Polish generals were said to have signed a document stating that if East German troops crossed the Polish borders this would be viewed as an act of war. Jiri Valenta, "Soviet options in Poland", pp. 50-59 in Survival, vol. XXIII, no. 2, March/April 1981, p. 58.

²⁹Schmidt, Die Deutschen, op. cit. p. 87.

³⁰See Kramer, op. cit. p. 118, in particular Honecker's letter to Brezhnev, 28 November 1980, in English translation on p. 124.

West German government was, at best, the victim of wishful thinking on the issue of East Germany's role in Poland.³¹ Most importantly for our argument, the recent information about the role of the GDR and Honecker in the imposition of martial law reinforces the image of the West German government as trapped in a series of domestic and external constraints over the Polish crisis.

Martial law was not, however, only a problem for West German domestic politics, and for West Germany's relations with East Germany, it also highlighted the ambiguities in the country's relations with its Western allies. The importance of its links with the West, through its membership in NATO and the EC, as well as the importance of the continued support of the United States and France, is often pointed out. Philip Windsor has stressed that "it is hard to exaggerate the importance of France at almost any level of German political perception."³² Roger Morgan argues that:

"...the Ostpolitik has been firmly rooted in Westpolitik; neither Brandt nor Schmidt allowed the Federal Republic's involvement with the Soviet bloc

³¹Hassner, op. cit. On p. 13, referring to Schmidt's statement that he felt Honecker was sharing his hopes for an agreement in Poland, Hassner argues "This is a serious blemish on the record of one of the few Western statesmen who deserve respect and support, particularly since he made the statement during a visit to East Germany." See also the debate in the Bundestag, Bundestag Plenarprotokolle, op. cit.

³²Philip Windsor, Germany and the Western Alliance: Lessons from the 1980 Crises, Adelphi papers, no 170, The IISS, London, Autumn 1981, p.15.

to grow to a point at which it threatened their country's fundamental commitment to Nato."³³

Still, it was becoming increasingly difficult for the West German government to balance the domestic dissatisfaction with the shift away from detente, with the concern of its allies about its 'loyalty' to the West.³⁴ Thus, Joffe has argued that:

"In stark contrast to France, where the legitimacy of a conservative regime is not tied to relations with the East, the diplomatic flexibility of the West German government is tightly circumscribed by the imperatives of domestic control."³⁵

Because of the history of Polish-German relations, and because the role of East Germany was directly involved, the West German reaction to martial law raised the alarm not only inside the Reagan administration, but also in France, thus indicating that the spectre of Rapallo still loomed large in the minds of French policy-makers. As Renata Fritsch-Bournazel points out:

"Except for the fear of a German finger on the nuclear trigger, no other political issue in the Franco-German partnership weighs so heavily psychologically as the Federal Republic's attitude towards the East."³⁶

³³Morgan in Moreton, op. cit, p. 105.

³⁴Windsor, op. cit p. 18-20 and Hassner, op. cit, p. 19-20.

³⁵Josef Joffe, "European-American relations: the enduring crisis", Foreign Affairs, vol 59, no 4, 1981, pp. 835-852, quotation on p. 845.

³⁶Renata Fritsch-Bournazel, "The French view", pp. 64- 82, in Moreton op. cit., quotation p. 74.

Essentially, the imposition of martial law highlighted in a particularly acute way West Germany's enduring dilemma of reconciling the necessity to constantly reconfirm its loyalty to the West with the desire to maintain the dialogue with East Germany.

Over the winter of 1982, West Germany gradually modified its position on martial law. It associated itself with the alliance compromise hammered out on January 11 1982. Also, in terms of the sanctions, West Germany followed the same line as the other West European states.³⁷ Most importantly, as the crossfire over the Atlantic intensified, despite the NATO compromise of January 11, the ghost of the "German problem" was superseded by the imperatives of transatlantic relations. Thus, by the end of June 1982, after the clash between Mitterrand and Reagan at the Versailles summit, Helmut Schmidt notes in his memoirs that France, finally aligned with the West German position.³⁸

France and Britain, a matter of sovereignty?

Turning to the position of West Germany's West European allies, it is clear first of all that less was at stake

³⁷Anne-Marie Le Gloannec, "Les réactions allemandes à la crise polonaise", pp. 3-13 in Documents. Revue des Questions Allemandes, Mars 1982, no. 1.

³⁸Schmidt, Men and Power, op. cit, p. 260.

both for France and for Britain as a result of events in Poland. Although it would be highly exaggerated to think in terms of an 'entente cordiale' between France and Britain after martial law, it is worth noting that the positions and interests of these two states were closer to each other than to West Germany. Both states were more openly critical of the role of the Soviet Union than the West Germans had been, and clearly gave the Soviet Union a large share of the responsibility for martial law. Thus, when both states turned their backs on the United States, it had less to do with a different assessment of events in Poland and of the role of the Soviet Union, and more to do with divergent views on how to handle this particular event. This, in turn, reflected highly divergent views on how East-West relations should be conducted more generally. But most importantly, the breakdown of coordination was triggered by British and French discomfort with the unilateral initiatives of the United States.

France

What is perhaps most striking about the French position on martial law is its elusiveness, or rather, its ambiguity. On the one hand, Mitterrand was amongst those of the Western leaders who most strongly condemned martial law in Poland. The impression of a vigorous and negative French reaction to martial law was strengthened by the number of French people who descended into the streets to protest

against the abolition of civil liberties in Poland. Such manifestations of outrage were not observed in neighbouring West Germany, neither, in fact, in the UK. On the other hand, French policy-makers made statements that were, if anything, as insensitive to the fate of Poland as those made by Helmut Schmidt in East Berlin. Chapter six showed that Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy defended the French signing of the gas pipeline agreement only weeks after martial law by arguing that one should not, on top of the suffering of the Polish people, add the suffering of French people by depriving them of heating.³⁹ Likewise, chapter six quoted Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson declaring the day after martial law, that "naturally we shall do nothing" about the situation in Poland.⁴⁰ Furthermore, in terms of the substance of policy, France did not do much more than West Germany. In essence, the French position consisted in adhering to existing economic agreements with Poland, but refusing to negotiate new commercial contracts, and also, halting the debt negotiations with Poland. There is no indication that the French government at any point considered imposing economic sanctions against the Soviet Union or Poland in response to martial law.

The more confrontational rhetoric of the French government after martial law corresponded with a general re-

³⁹See chapter six.

⁴⁰Cheysson made this declaration at the French radio station 'Europe 1' on December 13. It was widely quoted in the aftermath, see for example Le Monde, 16. 12.1981, "Les paroles imprudentes de M. Cheysson". See also Attali, op. cit p. 1981.

orientation of French foreign policy after the election of Mitterrand in May 1981. During his electoral campaign, Mitterrand had criticised Giscard for being too soft on the Soviet Union. Giscard was particularly ridiculed for his meeting with Brezhnev in Warsaw in the summer of 1980, which was supposed to lead to some form of "solution" to the question of Afghanistan, and which earned him the nickname 'petit télégraphiste' (the messenger boy) during the Presidential election campaign.⁴¹ Once in power, Mitterrand continued this line, taking a less conciliatory tone on East-West relations than Giscard. He expressed concern, in particular, about the arms build-up in Eastern Europe and acknowledged the need to restrict exports of strategic goods to the Warsaw Pact. According to Moisi:

"Giscard d'Estaing was anti-communist at home and soft on the Soviet Union. Mitterrand has brought Communist ministers into his government for a mixture of historical and tactical reasons but is firmly anti-Soviet."⁴²

One of the most often quoted statements of Mitterrand, is that from his state visit to West Germany in 1983, at the height of the German debate on the deployment of Cruise and

⁴¹For a discussion of Giscard's motivation for the Warsaw meeting see Michel Tatu, "Valéry Giscard d'Estaing et la détente", pp. 196-217 in Samy Cohen and Marie-Claude Smouts (eds), La Politique Extérieure de Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Paris, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1985, especially pp. 209-214.

⁴²Dominique Moisi "Mitterrand's foreign policy: the limits of continuity", Foreign Affairs, vol. 60, no. 2 1981, pp. 347-358, quotation, p.348-9.

Pershing II missiles, where he told the German Bundestag that, "les missiles sont à l'est, les pacifistes à l'ouest".⁴³

Yet this change of direction in French foreign policy does not mean that Mitterrand became an Atlanticist. Mitterrand's policy after martial law can probably best be seen as inspired by a concern for the balance of forces in Europe, a concern for the effect that events in Poland might have on France's relations with West Germany and by a concern for the continued independence not only of French foreign policy, but also for French domestic economic policy.⁴⁴ It follows from this that the French government's position on martial law had less to do with a specific view on Poland, and more to do with concern about the consequences of events in Poland for France's

⁴³See for example Bruno Racine, "La France et les FNI", pp. 79-91 in Politique Etrangère, no. 1, 1988; Mélandri, *op. cit.*, p 373. For the text of Mitterrand's speech see Réflexions sur la politique extérieure de la France, Paris, Fayard, 1986, pp. 183-208. See also Jolyon Howorth, "Foreign and defence policy: from independence to interdependence", pp. 201-217 in Peter A Hall, Jack Hayward and Howard Machin (eds), Developments in French Politics, London, MacMillan, 1994. For reference to Mitterrand's position on the Euromissiles see p.208.

⁴⁴The support for stronger American leadership in the Alliance and for the deployment of Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe, may be seen as motivated less by a specific Atlantic perspective and more by a recognition that the Soviet SS20 missiles made the French nuclear force de frappe extremely vulnerable. A strengthening of NATO would make sense also from an economic perspective, in that it would take some of the pressure off the need to reinforce France's own nuclear arsenal.

position in Europe and its other, and more important, foreign policy relationships.⁴⁵

The French assessment of what could be done about Poland was essentially pragmatic, and summed up in the following statement from Mauroy:

"Compte tenu de la situation géopolitique dans laquelle se trouve la Pologne depuis la fin de la deuxième guerre mondiale, chacun sait que l'Union Soviétique est impliquée par tout ce qui touche à l'Europe de l'Est. C'est le résultat des rapports de force sanctionnés par les accords de Yalta. La diplomatie française ne mettra pas un terme à cette situation..."⁴⁶

In other words, the French reaction to martial law seems to fit well into what Hassner calls France's "triangular games with Germany, the Soviet Union and the United States".⁴⁷ As chapter two showed, the preoccupation with the "German problem" had been an almost permanent feature of French foreign policy throughout the Twentieth Century.

⁴⁵See for example Stanley Hoffmann, "Mitterrand's foreign policy, or Gaullism by any other name", pp. 294-305, in George Ross, Stanley Hoffmann and Sylvia Malzacher (eds), The Mitterrand Experiment: Continuity and Change in Modern France, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1987 and Michael Harrison, "Mitterrand's France in the Atlantic system: a foreign policy of accommodation", Political Science Quarterly, vol. 99, no 2, summer 1984, pp. 219-246, in particular pp.219-226.

⁴⁶Débats Parlementaires de l'Assemblée Nationale, Première Session Extraordinaire de 1981-82. Troisième Séance, 23 décembre 1981. Journal Officiel, 24.12.1981, p. 5403. See also Le Monde, 25.12.1981.

⁴⁷Pierre Hassner, "Western European perceptions of the USSR", Daedalus, Winter 1979, volume 108, no 1, pp. 113-150, quote on p.124.

The strength of the West German peace movement and the internal developments inside the SPD, as well as the reluctance of the Schmidt government to condemn the role of the Soviet Union in martial law, all fuelled France's concern about the position of West Germany on relations with its Eastern neighbours and the political and strategic balance in Europe.

There was, also, an important domestic dimension to French policy after martial law in Poland. On the one hand, French public opinion reacted strongly against the imposition of martial law and the French media criticised their own government, as well as the West German, for not reacting strongly enough to martial law.⁴⁸ In fact, France did not, like its northern European counterparts have a strong pacifist, anti-nuclear movement in the early 1980s. On the contrary, there was a shift in French public opinion, and in particular amongst French intellectuals (who traditionally intervene actively in the French political debate), which went in a different direction: The so-called 'nouveaux philosophes' rejected Sartre's and his generation's intellectual dominance in France, criticised

⁴⁸For a criticism of Mitterrand's policy under martial law from one of Giscard's former associates see Gabriel Robin, La Diplomatie de Mitterrand, France, Editions la Bièvre, 1985, pp. 34-40.

Soviet totalitarianism, and called for a "stronger" Western reaction to its consequences in Eastern Europe.⁴⁹

The protest in public opinion was supported not only by the right-wing political parties and by the non-communist trades unions, in particular the CFDT, but also by the Rocard wing of the Socialist party. Thus, it reached inside the French government, where the Rocard was arguing for a stronger response to martial law.⁵⁰ Attali has noted the following lines from a discussion on martial law in the French Council of ministers on 16 December 1981:

"Michel Rocard attaque violemment Claude Cheysson: 'Il y a devoir d'assistance à personne en danger. Il faut agir.

Robert Badinter intervient dans le même sens: Il faut réagir et ne pas s'aligner sur la prudence des autres. Il faut interrompre les crédits à la Pologne."⁵¹

⁴⁹See Bernard Henry-Lévy, La barbarie à visage humain, Paris, Grasset, 1977; André Glucksmann, La cuisinière et le mangeur d'hommes, Paris, Seuil, 1975; André Glucksmann, Cynisme et passion, Paris, Grasset, 1981; Pierre Clastres La société contre l'État, Paris, Minuit, 1975.

⁵⁰For an overview of the different factions inside the French socialist party see Vincent Wright, The government and politics of France, London, Routledge, 1992, pp. 218-232.

⁵¹Attali, op. cit. p. 145. Although the exact detail of the quotes is obviously difficult to verify, what emerges from these paragraphs is the tension within the French administration on the question of how to react to martial law.

Divergence inside the government was strengthened by the presence of four communist ministers who were reluctant to express criticism over events in Poland.

The dilemmas that these differences presented for the French government over Poland, were indicated by the holding of a so-called "conseil restraint" on Poland, on January 12 1982, the day after the NATO declaration on martial law in Poland. After the "Conseil", the French foreign minister, Cheysson, was criticised by Mitterrand for the 'tone' of his declaration on the Soviet Union during the NATO meeting on January 11. The President's concern apparently referred to two declarations by the Foreign Minister in which he was considered to have been "inutilement provoquant pour les ministres communistes".⁵²

A general statement to the fact that the President was personally responsible for French foreign policy and that it was important that France spoke with one voice on the subject of Poland was issued at the same time. The essence of French policy on martial law had not, however, changed, at all. Indeed, this incident would appear most of all to have been an exercise in bridge-building and an effort to assert the authority of the President over foreign policy.

⁵²Le Monde, 14 January 1982. Cheysson's statement and the reaction of Charles Fiterman, the communist minister is also referred to by Attali, op. cit, p. 153. It is ironic that the same Foreign Minister had, one month earlier been rebuked by Mitterrand for his 'naturally we shall do nothing' remark on martial law.

Internal disputes on foreign policy rarely become as obstructive in France as, for example, in the United States. The privilege of conducting foreign policy is safe in the hands of the President and his Elysée staff. Likewise, the input of other actors, such as parliamentary and public opinion is, in general, relatively limited.⁵³ It is difficult to assess the direct impact of the various domestic concerns over martial law on French policy. It can, however, be assumed that the criticism that the French government suffered, combined with the essentially pragmatic position of the President, can account for the ambiguities, and the sometimes wide gap between rhetoric and policy-initiatives in the French position after martial law. The domestic debate on martial law does not detract from the essential analysis of French policy as motivated by a concern for the West German position and by a "pragmatic" assessment of the role of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and the West's capacity to change it, combined with an unwillingness to risk the economic and political cost of alienating the Polish regime and the Soviet Union. Indeed, the following quote captures the essence of the French President's position:

⁵³The foreign policy-making process in France is to a large extent a closed book. For insights into its functioning see, most importantly, Samy Cohen, La Monarchie Nucléaire, Paris, Hachette, 1986; see also J.E.S. Hayward, Governing France: The One and Indivisible Republic, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983, chapter 8, "National independence and international mission", pp. 241-277; Alistair Cole, François Mitterrand: A Study in Political Leadership, London and New York, Routledge, 1994, chapter 9 "The world leader", pp. 133-150; Jolyon Howorth, op. cit.

"François Mitterrand: 'Jamais l'URSS n'acceptera que la Pologne sorte de son orbite. Le monde occidental ne bougera pas. Nous n'abandonnerons pas les Polonais, mais il n'est pas dans notre pouvoir de les sauver. Peut-être dira-t-on un jour que Jaruzelski a agi de façon intelligente, au prix de la perte provisoire des libertés? Je pense que tout le monde est d'accord pour qu'on n'envoie pas de divisions en Pologne?'"⁵⁴

More important, in terms of the domestic influences on the policy after martial law, are the economic concerns of the French government in the early 1980s.⁵⁵ There are two aspects to this, firstly, from an economic perspective, it was not in France's interest to do much about martial law. Although not a major trading partner for France, the importance of trade with the Soviet bloc for some of the French industries, as well as for the overall balance of payments in France should not be ignored. This was particularly so in the early 1980s, when France was experiencing increasing difficulties with its balance of payments and its economic reform programme.⁵⁶

The second aspect is not directly linked to martial law, but became important as a result of the United States' policies. In fact, French irritation with the United States' position, as well as of the United States' demands for West European sanctions, did not grow only out of the

⁵⁴Attali, op. cit., p.145.

⁵⁵The importance of the economic dimension for Mitterrand's foreign policy is also stressed, in a more general sense by Harrison, op. cit.

⁵⁶See annex for French trade relations with Poland.

disagreement over martial law. It was further reinforced by the disagreement between the two governments over economic policy. Mitterrand's programme of economic reform was, by 1982, running into serious difficulties, and a radical deterioration of the French balance of payments was blamed partly on the US policy of high budgetary spending, which pushed up the value of the dollar. Thus, when Mitterrand and Reagan openly clashed at the Versailles summit, it was after a failed attempt at bringing the issue of economic policy-making into a wider compromise including East-West trade and sanctions over Poland.⁵⁷

Britain

Against the backdrop of Margaret Thatcher's declared affection for her American counterpart, the British opposition to the initiatives of the United States was more surprising than the French. However, Britain shared with France a concern about protecting its national sovereignty, even from the intrusion of the United States.

Despite the relatively special position of Poland in British foreign policy, compared to other Central and Eastern European states, Britain, of the three major West European states, had the least interest in, and probably the least to lose from, any specific outcome of the Polish

⁵⁷Putnam and Bayne, Hanging Together: Cooperation and Conflict in the Seven Power Summits, London, Sage, 1987, p. 137, Michael Mastanduno, Economic Containment: Cocom and the Politics of East-West Trade, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1992, p. 255.

crisis. It is from this perspective that Neil Winn argues that Carrington wanted to use the Polish crisis in order to further British influence in the development of EPC at the time when London held the Presidency of EPC (from July to December 1981).⁵⁸ Indeed, throughout the Polish crisis, the British government underlined the importance of maintaining a cohesive EPC position on Poland. However, British policy on martial law cannot be properly understood in the context of EPC alone. Chapter two showed that British policy towards Poland and Eastern Europe has traditionally been formulated as part of its Alliance strategy. The Thatcher government continued to stress the importance of maintaining close coordination across the Atlantic during the Polish crisis.⁵⁹ British foreign policy was still to a large extent operating on the assumption of a special relationship between the United States and Britain.⁶⁰ If little was at stake for the UK after martial law in terms of its relations with Poland or the Soviet Union, the same was not entirely true with regard to British relations with its main ally, the United

⁵⁸Neil Winn, "European crisis management in the 1980s", paper presented to the BISA Conference, York, December 1994, p. 13.

⁵⁹Thatcher, op. cit. p. 251.

⁶⁰For a general discussion of the 'special relationship' see, Donald C. Watt, Succeeding John Bull: America in Britain's Place, 1900-1975, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984; John Baylis, Anglo-American Defence Relations, 1939-1989, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1981; Henry Kissinger, "Reflections on a partnership: British and American attitudes to postwar foreign policy", International Affairs, vol 58, no 4, Autumn 1982, pp. 571-587.

States. During Thatcher's time in office, particular importance was given to this "special relationship", which was seen to be fortified by the close personal relations between Reagan and Thatcher. Reynolds and Dimbleby argue that for Mrs. Thatcher the special relationship was "an article of faith".⁶¹ Sir Anthony Parsons, Mrs. Thatcher's special foreign policy adviser from 1982-83, has pointed out that:

"It is many years since there was such ideological compatibility between an American president and a British Prime Minister as there was between Mrs Thatcher and President Reagan; both leaders made the most of this nexus."⁶²

Finally, as the war in the Falklands developed, it is reasonable to assume that it was in Britain's interest to maintain good relations with its American ally.⁶³

British foreign policy in the first Thatcher administration is often considered to have taken on a more ideological

⁶¹David Dimbleby and David Reynolds, An Ocean Apart: The Relationship Between Britain and America in the Twentieth Century, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1988, p. 309.

⁶²Sir Anthony Parsons, "Britain and the world", pp. 154-165 in D. Kavanagh and A. Seldon, The Thatcher Effect, Oxford, Oxford University press, 1989, quote on p. 161.

⁶³Although he recognises that changes have taken place both in British and American politics since Churchill first developed the notion of the special relationship, Michael Howard has also argued that the special relationship still existed in the early 1980s and that it should be valued. Sir Michael Howard, "Afterword: The 'Special Relationship'", pp. 387-392, in Hedley Bull and Roger Louis (eds), The 'Special Relationship': Anglo-American Relations Since 1945, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1986.

colour than previous administrations, thus bringing it closer to the United States' foreign policy.⁶⁴ As a flag-bearer of the "new right", Mrs. Thatcher displayed a strong distaste for the Soviet regime, and her view of detente as "just another Soviet tactic to gain influence over the West", corresponded with that of the Reagan administration.⁶⁵ As Sir Julian Bullard has argued:

"...In her total rejection of all that the Soviet Union stands for, its moral basis as well as its visible activity, its claimed achievements no less than its evident failures, Mrs. Thatcher did strike a note which was qualitatively different from the language of her post-war predecessors."⁶⁶

It must be pointed out that despite the expressed preference of Thatcher for a more ideological approach to East-West relations, and despite the importance she attributed to maintaining close relations with the United States, the British position on martial law fell within the category of what Sæter has called the "Atlanticist policy of containment" rather than the policy of "liberation"

⁶⁴For a general discussion of British foreign policy under Thatcher see Peter Byrd, British Foreign Policy under Thatcher, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1988; Peter Riddell, The Thatcher Government, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1985, chapter 10 "Foreign Affairs and Defence".

⁶⁵Michael Clarke, "The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe", pp. 54-75 in Byrd, p. 60.

⁶⁶Julian Bullard "Perceptions of the Soviet threat: Britain in the 1980s", pp. 136-150 in Carl-Christoph Schweitzer (ed) The Changing Western Analysis of the Soviet Threat, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, 1989, quotation on p. 143.

advocated by Reagan.⁶⁷ Also, Clarke argues that there was, overall, a difference between Thatcher's discourse on relations with the Soviet Union and her practical policy, which was far more pragmatic and in tune with her predecessors' policies.⁶⁸ As Ullmann points out:

"... in their approaches towards the Soviet Union, ... all (British governments) have pursued detente and all have defined the issues in contention between Moscow and the West in fairly specific and circumscribed rather than global terms. Even the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher - much the most right wing government in twentieth century British history - has eschewed the globalist anti-Soviet rhetoric that has been the hallmark of the Reagan Administration's foreign policy."⁶⁹

No doubt contributing to reducing the impact of Thatcher's own 'ideological leanings' in policy towards the Soviet Union, was the limited influence she had in her first, and divided cabinet. What is more, with little experience in the area of foreign policy, it is reasonable to assume that

⁶⁷See categories employed by Martin Sæter op. cit., in particular pp. 93-101. Sæter distinguishes between three directions in Western policy: (i) "the Atlanticist policy of containment" (atlantisk styrkepolitikk); (ii) the "isolationist policy" of the right wing in the United States; (iii) the West European "policy of detente", (den vesteuropeiske avspenningslinjen) which is seen by Sæter to aim for a gradual movement towards an "all-European" model (hence it is different from Ullmann's definition of detente policy). There are several problems with applying these categories to Western policies, and most importantly with the third category. Sæter's definition of a detente policy does not correspond to the policy of any of the Western governments and seems most of all to represent the author's own view of what kind of policy the West ought to lead in East-West relations. Still, in the case of Britain, the "atlantisk styrkepolitikk" is applicable.

⁶⁸Clarke op. cit. in Byrd, p.64.

⁶⁹Richard H. Ullmann, "America, Britain, and the Soviet threat", pp. 103-114 in Louis and Bull, op. cit. quote on p. 108.

Thatcher's personal views were dampened by the Foreign Office and Foreign Secretary Carrington. As one representative of the FCO has pointed out, "foreign policy was made by Carrington". Although the FCO recognised the role of the Soviet Union in martial law, it was not supportive of Reagan's liberation rhetoric.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, of the three West European governments studied here, Britain went furthest in supporting the American interpretation of events in Poland. British statements in the aftermath of martial law clearly stressed the responsibility of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, Britain was the country that most openly declared the necessity for maintaining good relations with the United States. Likewise, British efforts to ensure EPC cohesion as well as Atlantic cohesion cannot be seen as contradictory. Rather, it was part and parcel of the same perspective. Thus, British policy in general was based on the idea that there was no contradiction between Atlantic and European policy. Up until martial law this bargain functioned well.

It was only really when British sovereignty was seen to be at stake, in the summer of 1982, that Britain drew the full consequences of its position and rallied with the West Europeans. What eventually triggered the British break with the United States was a concern for the sovereignty of

⁷⁰Interview London, September 1994.

Britain rather than a concern about Poland or about loyalty towards the West Europeans. Thatcher sums up her position on the issue in the following way:

"My view was that ultimately we must support American leadership: but that did not mean that the Americans could pursue their interest regardless of the opinion of their European allies. ... What I found irritating and on occasion quite unjustified was the way in which the actions the Americans preferred inflicted a good deal more pain on their allies than on themselves and, one might argue, the communists in Poland and the Soviet Union."⁷¹

The outcome of the Polish crisis is indicative of the fact that by the end of the 1970s, British and American interests and perspectives had grown wide apart, not only in the area of economic relations, but also over political and security issues. Consequently, as Christopher Hill argues, the structural difficulties in the relationship between Britain and the United States could not be overcome despite the positive personal relations between Thatcher and Reagan:

"... there are strict limits to what can be achieved through personal relationship of the two heads of government in London and Washington, however clubby..there is a tendency on both sides to indulge in wishful thinking about the many tests which foreign policy throws up."⁷²

According to David Watt,

⁷¹Thatcher, op. cit. p. 252-3.

⁷²Christopher Hill, "Reagan and Thatcher: The Sentimental Alliance", World Outlook, Dartmouth College, Winter 1986, pp. 2-18, quotation from p. 11.

"...the 'special relationship' in the broad sense ceased to exist in the early 1960s and perhaps even earlier."⁷³

Still, it must have been a particularly rude awakening for the British Prime Minister to be reminded of the limits to the 'special relationship'. Thus, British policy after martial law illustrates the difficulty of what Reynolds has referred to as the British preference for "having the cake and eating it".⁷⁴

A principal argument of this chapter is that the United States' initiatives triggered unity in Western Europe and disagreement across the Atlantic. It is therefore important to examine why the United States was willing to risk a clash with its Western allies over Poland.

⁷³David Watt, "Introduction: the Anglo-American relationship", pp. 1-14 in Louis and Bull, op. cit. quote on p. 4.

⁷⁴See David Reynolds, "A 'special relationship'? America, Britain and the international order since the Second World War", pp. 1-20 in International Affairs, vol. 62, no 1, Winter 1985-86, especially p. 19. Reynolds also considers the relationship between the United States and Britain still to be qualitatively different from other alliance relationships in the 1980s despite the fact that it has undergone changes since 1945, and, in particular, during the 1970s. This difficulty or unwillingness of Britain to choose between the United States and Europe is alluded to also by Ullmann, op. cit, p.114, Watt, op. cit. p. 13 and Christopher Hill "Britain a convenient schizophrenia", pp. 19-33, in Hill (ed), National Foreign Policies and European Political Cooperation, London, George Allen and Unwin for RIIA, 1983.

Europe's American pacifier?⁷⁵

The official version of US policy towards Poland after martial law consists in arguing that US initiatives were clear and logical and successfully contributed to the process of democratisation in Poland in the late 1980s. This section questions this perspective. It points out in particular that such an interpretation ignores the complex interaction between Western allies, as well as the domestic political context of US foreign policy. It suggests that without taking these elements into consideration, it is difficult to understand the inconsistencies in US policy-initiatives.

According to Arthur Rachwald, whose account of the Reagan administration's policy towards Poland corresponds closely to the way in which Reagan himself presented his policy, the United States' President had two clearly defined objectives in mind when he imposed sanctions against Poland and the Soviet Union. The first objective was to apply economic pressure on the Soviet bloc as a whole, in order to force what was considered to be an already economically fragile Soviet Union to "assume full economic responsibility for its satellite". The second objective of

⁷⁵The title is taken from Josef Joffe, "Europe's American Pacifier", pp. 64-82 in Foreign Policy, vol. 54, 1984. He argues that "NATO's detractors ignore the central role America has played in pacifying a state system that almost consumed itself in two world wars.", quote on p. 81.

the United States, was to pressure Jaruzelski's government to move "towards moderation and dialogue".⁷⁶

In fact, these two objectives, as they are outlined by Rachwald, mutually contradict each other: If the imposition of martial law was the result of Polish dependence on the Soviet Union, reinforcing this dependence by forcing the Soviet Union to take financial responsibility for Poland could not be expected to lead to moderation by the Polish government, but rather to the continuation, or even strengthening, of the measures taken in the wake of martial law. Furthermore, even assuming that the objectives were consistent, there is very little evidence to support the view that the sanctions imposed by the United States were in any way sufficient to compel the Polish, not to mention the Soviet, government to modify their policies.⁷⁷ In addition, the commitment to the policy of sanctions was erratic; indeed, the determination of the United States to apply economic pressure on the Soviet bloc could only be seen as half-hearted in the light of the lifting of the grain embargo and the signing of the new contract for the

⁷⁶Arthur Rachwald, In Search of Poland: The Superpowers' Response to Solidarity, Stanford, California, Hoover Institution Press, 1990, p. 64.

⁷⁷For a negative view of the feasibility of an economic warfare policy, see Jerry Hough, The Polish Crisis: American Policy Options, Washington DC, The Brookings Institution, 1982. in particular pp. 64-69. See also the IIIS annual conference papers published in Robert O'Neill (ed) The Conduct of East-West Relations in the 1980s, London, Macmillan, 1985.

export of grain to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1982. This point was raised not only by the West Europeans but also by some of the so-called "hardliners" in the United States itself, thus further reinforcing the image of inconsistency.⁷⁸ Most importantly for our purpose, the Alliance dimension to the United States' policy, and the effect that the United States' initiatives had on relations inside NATO, is not at all discussed by Rachwald. It could be argued that the United States' sanctions on the pipeline were directed against the West Europeans, as an attempt to force a change in Alliance policy overall, rather than against the Soviet Union and Poland. Certainly, this was the West European interpretation. What is not clear in Rachwald's account is why the United States was willing to risk a serious rift with the West Europeans, or indeed, whether or not the United States realised that this might be the outcome of its initiatives.

One might suggest that the United States, at best, had sought three different objectives at the same time after martial law. Firstly, to punish the Soviet Union for its complicity with martial law in Poland. Secondly, to use

⁷⁸See previous quotes from Helmut Schmidt's memoirs. For a hard-line criticism of Reagan's initiatives see Henry Kissinger, "Poland's lessons for Mr Reagan", The New York Times, January 17, 1982. For an opposite view see Robert Osgood, "The revitalisation of containment", Foreign Affairs, vol 60, no 3, 1982, pp.465-752. He points out that the lifting of the grain embargo was a deliberate decision from the United States (an expression of Realpolitik), and also that the Reagan administration was sceptical to the utility of economic sanctions.

martial law in Poland as a pretext for launching a campaign of economic warfare against the Soviet Union. Thirdly, to reintroduce the pipeline issue on the Western alliance's agenda. What this means is that, as Hough has pointed out, it is unclear,

"...to what extent [the United States was] seeking to promote a gradual increase in freedom and autonomy in Poland and to what extent it was simply using Poland as a pawn in its policy towards the Soviet Union".⁷⁹

The Reagan administration's view is that there was no contradiction between these two objectives: the demise of the Soviet Union would also "liberate" Poland. Thus, according to the Reagan entourage, the United States policy towards Poland under martial law has to be understood in the context of the overall foreign policy project of the Reagan administration.⁸⁰ The United States' policy after martial law was, in the words of one of Reagan's close political advisors, Edwin Meese III, part of "a clear, coherent, and comprehensive Cold War strategy".⁸¹ In Reagan's own words, the United States' relations with the Soviet Union should be seen as that of a "struggle between right and wrong, good and evil." The Soviet Union was an

⁷⁹Hough, op. cit., p. 64.

⁸⁰Discussing the different American approaches to dealing with the Soviet Union, Garthoff argues that Reagan belonged to "the 'essentialist' school of policy, which became dominant in the United States in the early 1980s for the first time since the 1950s". Raymond Garthoff, The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War, Washington DC, The Brookings Institution, 1994, p.767

⁸¹Edwin Meese III, With Reagan: The Inside Story, Washington DC, Regnery Gateway, 1992, p.168.

"evil empire" and "the focus of evil in the modern world."⁸² It was Reagan's conviction that as a consequence of his policies:

"...the Soviets would have to come to terms on authentically peaceable agreements, not because they were trustworthy, but because they had no other choice. The 'objective factors', to use a communist phrase, would lead inexorably to a stand down from the Cold War."⁸³

The underlying assumption of the United States' policy after martial law, then, was that it was possible for the West to provoke the breakdown of the Soviet regime by means of economic, political and military pressure, designed to overstretch the Soviet economy and encourage domestic dissent.⁸⁴ As Gordon points out

"One substantial group [in the Reagan administration] believed that a policy of rigorous economic denial could bring the Soviets to their knees. They opposed any economic concessions to Eastern Europe, including Poland, arguing that the USSR would be forced to replace any resulting losses, thus adding to the costs of empire. There was also a small minority,

⁸²Reagan's speech about the empire of evil was made at a meeting of Christian evangelists in Florida in March 1983. Quotation from Robert Dallek, Ronald Reagan: The Politics of Symbolism, Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 1984, p. 192.

⁸³Meese, op. cit. p. 170. See also Ronald Reagan, An American Life, London, Hutchinson, 1990, pp. 265-268.

⁸⁴See Richard Pipes, Survival Is Not Enough: Soviet Realities and America's Future, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1984, and his article, "Can the Soviet Union reform?", Foreign Affairs, vol 63, Fall 1984, pp.47-61. Richard Pipes was Director of East European and Soviet Affairs at the National Security Council during the Polish crisis.

..., that positively welcomed the idea of a Soviet invasion [in Poland]."⁸⁵

It could be argued that the interpretation of Reagan's policy on martial law as logical and consistent has been further confirmed with the official recognition of United States' covert actions in Poland from June 1982 onwards. According to journalist Carl Bernstein, the Reagan administration, in close cooperation with the Vatican, undertook a clandestine campaign "destined to hasten the dissolution of the communist empire."⁸⁶ The main focus of the campaign was Poland, and Bernstein argues that Reagan and the Pope were both convinced that Poland could be broken out of the Soviet orbit if they committed resources to destabilise the Polish government and to keeping Solidarity alive. The principal policy architect of the cooperation on the American side was the head of the CIA, William Casey. Reagan did, however, receive daily briefings

⁸⁵Lincoln Gordon, "Interests and policies in Eastern Europe: the view from Washington", pp. 67-128 in Gordon (ed), Eroding Empire: Western Relations with Eastern Europe, Washington, The Brookings Institution, 1987, p.123.

⁸⁶"The Holy Alliance", Time Magazine, February 24, 1992, pp. 10-19. The existence of the US-Vatican Alliance has since been confirmed by Meese, op. cit.; Garthoff, op. cit.p. 31; Bennett Kovrig, Of Walls and Bridges: The United States and Eastern Europe, New York, New York University Press, 1991, p. 182; Richard Pipes, "Misinterpreting the Cold War: the hardliners had it right", pp. 154-160 in Foreign Affairs, Jan/Feb 1995, no 1. Meese, Garthoff and Kovrig all base their comments on Bernstein. Pipes was himself a participant in the 'operation'.

on these activities by Casey and by National Security Advisor William Clark. He was also personally in contact with the Pope. Funds aimed at keeping Solidarity alive came from the CIA, the National Endowment for Democracy, secret accounts in the Vatican and Western trades unions.⁸⁷ Intelligence of both military and political issues was shared openly between the Vatican and the United States, and the United States' administration benefited greatly from the well-informed sources of the Vatican. Only a handful of the members of the Reagan administration were informed of this cooperation with the Vatican, and most of the activity was handled outside normal state Department channels.⁸⁸

There is no doubt that this "Holy Alliance" actually existed. Still, its significance, both in terms of its effect on the situation in Poland and in terms of its scope is uncertain. Consequently, its value in terms of presenting US policy after martial law as logical and consistent is also debatable. No doubt, the financial and logistical support contributed to keeping Solidarity alive. Whether or not it was the main reason why Solidarity survived, is more questionable. Indeed, dissident movements in Eastern Europe, such as Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia

⁸⁷Bernstein does not indicate which trade unions took part, apart from the American AFL-CIO, and whether or not their link with the CIA was explicit.

⁸⁸Bernstein's findings are based on interviews with the main participants in this operation.

survived, seemingly without the same scale of external support. Most importantly, it is questionable whether or not these facts produce satisfactory confirmation of the thesis that the United States' policy after martial law was clear and consistent, and thus enables us to ignore the debate about the effects of US policy in the Western alliance. The assumption of the US administration is that because the United States did "the right thing", the West European position was not legitimate and the United States ultimately succeeded in rallying the West Europeans behind their cause.

Ultimately, the official view of the Reagan administration's policy on martial law hinges upon the interpretation of the end of the Cold War. Pipes argues that it was Reagan's "hardline" policy which provoked the disintegration of the Soviet Union.⁸⁹ An opposite view is presented by Halliday,

"...the collapse of communism came not through the conventional mechanism of inter-state conflict, nor through the erosion of the Soviet bloc's territory by Western military or commercial pressure, but rather with the undermining of the system via the

⁸⁹Pipes in Foreign Affairs, 1995, op. cit. John Lewis Gaddis The United States and the End of the Cold War, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992, although taking a more critical view of the Reagan administration still attributes importance to the initiatives taken by Reagan in the 1980s.

demonstration effect of Western success in the social, economic and political fields;"⁹⁰

The discussion about the end of the Cold War will preoccupy historians and political scientists for many years, and is beyond the scope of this thesis. Still, it is important to point out the connection between this debate and the logic of US policy over Poland because both Meese's and Rachwald's, as well as Reagan's own, accounts of the Polish crisis argue that there is a direct link between US policy after martial law and the later development of democracy in Poland. This can be little more than an attempt at post-rationalisation of US foreign policy. Although the last US sanctions were lifted when the round table negotiations opened in Poland, this does not have to mean that the liberalisation process in Poland came about as a result of US sanctions. Indeed, by 1987, the context of East-West relations as well as the political situation inside the Soviet bloc had radically changed as a result of the arrival of Gorbachev in power in the Soviet Union. Thus, the link between the development of democracy in Poland and Reagan's policy is tenuous. It glosses over the most difficult aspects of US policy and, most importantly,

⁹⁰Fred Halliday, Rethinking International Relations, London, Macmillan 1994, p. 190. See also Raymond Garthoff, Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan, Washington, DC, The Brookings institution, 1994 (revised edition), pp. 1147-1180; and Garthoff, The Great Transition, op. cit.: "US actions from 1981 through 1983 were not sufficiently aggressive to be described as a policy of confrontation. Yet the Reagan policy was too gratuitously hostile to serve usefully in an effective competition.", p. 758.

ignores the important domestic political struggle over US foreign policy, as well as its intra-alliance dimension.⁹¹ In fact, the links between the sanctions, martial law in Poland and the overall US policy on East-West trade, do not appear at the time to have been clear even to the US administration itself.⁹²

The conflicting accounts of the purpose of the so-called Buckley commission, which was dispatched to Europe in the winter of 1982, illustrate the considerable confusion over US aims and objectives after martial law. The objectives

⁹¹These internal disputes are no secret and were directly relevant to the policy toward Poland. They led to the resignation of the National Security Adviser Richard Allen (succeeded by William Clarke) in January 1982, and to Secretary of State, Alexander Haig's resignation in July 1982. According to Dallek, Allen's resignation was due to disagreement with Haig over the control of foreign policy. For a systematic analysis of the intra-bureaucratic struggle within the Reagan administration see Barry Rubin, Secrets of State: The State Department and the Struggle over U.S. Foreign Policy, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. 203-231. He argues, with reference to the Reagan administration, that "While the trend toward leadership by any particular individual or agency creates shortcomings, an even worse problem is the trend toward anarchy - the absence of a clear chain of command and the persistence of internal conflict among decision makers. The result is a growing discontinuity of policy, ...and an inability to pursue any consistent strategy....Clearly then, the machinery involved in the foreign policy process actively shapes the outcome." P. 231.

⁹²Mastanduno emphasises the importance of the domestic factors in the imposition of these sanctions: "In part, these sanctions reflected public pressure on the President to do "something" in response to the Soviet role in Polish repression. At the same time, they served the purpose of those in the administration who believed US export controls should have been made even more restrictive in 1981...The Polish crisis resolved that debate in the administration in favour of a maximally restrictive stance on industrial exports.", p. 245 in Mastanduno. op. cit.

of the commission are described differently by different actors inside the Reagan administration.⁹³ The confusion relates in particular to the sanctions on the pipeline project, which were imposed in three stages after martial law in Poland.⁹⁴ From the perspective of Reagan, the pipeline sanctions had been imposed as a direct response to the imposition of martial law in Poland.⁹⁵ The objective of the Buckley commission then, had been to convince the West European allies to support the sanctions imposed by the United States in December 1981, and to make them follow suit by imposing their own sanctions. In addition, the Buckley commission was to seek agreement on a reform of the Western credit policies towards the Warsaw Pact overall. If the West Europeans did not agree to this, the United States would introduce the clause of extraterritoriality on the pipeline products. Thus, if

⁹³For discussions of the US' aims, see Nau, op. cit. Nau was on the National Security Council in the White House from 1981 to 1983. See also Putnam and Bayne, op. cit.; Mastanduno, op. cit.; Bruce Jentleson, Pipeline Politics: The Complex Political Economy of East-West Energy Trade, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1986; Hyland, "US-Soviet relations: the long road back", America and the World, Foreign Affairs, vol 60, no 3, 1982, pp. 525-551.

⁹⁴The first stage was Reagan's declaration of sanctions against the Soviet Union on 29 December 1981. Sanctions on the pipeline here involved the suspension of issuance of licences or oil and gas equipment including pipelayers. When these sanctions were implemented, they proved to be retroactive, in other words to cover not only future contracts, but also contracts already signed. The third stage came after the G7 summit, with the imposition of the clause of extraterritoriality, which prevented European companies from using American produced parts or technologies on the pipeline project.

⁹⁵Reagan, op. cit. p. 306.

there was no agreement on a new credit policy, the existing pipeline sanctions would be extended to cover US affiliations abroad. There was, for Reagan, no question of lifting the existing sanctions, as this depended only on events in Poland, and not on relations with the West Europeans. There was only a threat of further sanctions.

Buckley himself has argued that his aim was to find a compromise which would achieve the lifting of the existing pipeline sanctions and replace these with a tighter Western credit policy towards the Soviet Union.⁹⁶ Thus Buckley was to use the promise lifting of the pipeline sanctions as leverage in order to achieve West European agreement on the credit issue. He was not to threaten to impose further sanctions. Haig presents a different perspective again. He argues that the second "stage" of the pipeline sanctions, of blocking existing contracts as well as denying future ones, was imposed not as a result of a Presidential decision but as a result of bureaucratic procedures.⁹⁷ Nau denies this and points out that the President agreed with

⁹⁶Buckley argues that he had two main objectives: "i) to work with the allies to achieve restrictions in official credit guarantees to the Soviet Union; ii) to express concern over the potential for an excessive dependence of Western Europe on Soviet natural gas." He further argues that his objective was not "to cut off trade with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; to address the Polish debt question; to seek an imposition or extension of sanctions against Poland and the Soviet Union; to block the Yamal pipeline." See "Polish Debt Crisis", US Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, 97th Congress, Second Session, 21 April 1982, pp. 209-210.

⁹⁷Alexander Haig, Caveat: Realism, Reagan and Foreign Policy, New York, Macmillan, 1984, p. 254.

the decision to extend the decision to already existing contracts.⁹⁸

The confusion over the purpose of the sanctions continued at the Versailles summit. Haig and his assistant Secretary of State for Economics and Business, Roger Hormats, who also served as Reagan's personal representative operated on a different set of assumptions from officials in the White House and members of the National Security Council staff.⁹⁹ As chapter six showed, Haig claims to have achieved an agreement on a compromise involving credit policy towards the Soviet bloc and a US intervention in the foreign exchange market. The pipeline sanctions were not explicitly mentioned in this bargain, but it was implicitly understood that they would be abandoned if an agreement was achieved on the other two issues.¹⁰⁰ Other American policy-makers claim this compromise never existed. It was after this failed summit that Reagan invoked the clause of extra-territoriality. Some members of the administration

⁹⁸Nau, op. cit. p.309. The coexistence of conflicting goals in US foreign policy in this phase is also emphasised by Mastanduno: "Clearly the pipeline dispute threatened to have broader alliance ramifications. For multilateralists in both the United States and Western Europe it became imperative to search for a solution that would both placate US hard-liners and enable West Europeans to act in accordance with their own conceptions of their vital interests. Haig sought such a compromise in March 1982 by shifting the focus of US pressure on the allies from the pipeline to export credits.", p. 252.

⁹⁹Nau, op. cit p.308.

¹⁰⁰Haig, op. cit. p. 309. See also Putnam and Bayne for this, op. cit. p.138.

argue that this was what he had threatened to do all along if the Europeans did not comply with US policy on credits towards the Soviet Union. Others have argued that the sanctions were imposed by Reagan in an act of retribution:

"Reagan imposed the sanctions in a fit of anger when he could not reach French president Mitterrand. Reagan's decision occurred after Mitterrand had spoken out, implying that the United States was acceding to a European position".¹⁰¹

Quite apart from the serious doubts about the feasibility of the declared US aims towards Poland and the Soviet Union that have already been outlined, this confusion over the objectives of the policy of the United States strengthens the doubts about the suggestion that US policy in the first half of 1982 were the result of clear-cut rational choices, and of an overall strategy aimed at subverting the Soviet Union. It suggests that the link between the domestic political situation in the United States was important for the content of US foreign policy, and that, in particular the decision to extend of the pipeline sanctions, which caused such a serious rift with the West Europeans, was influenced by intra bureaucratic struggles in the United States.¹⁰² The lifting of the grain embargo further

¹⁰¹Garthoff, The Great Transition, op. cit. p. 549. Garthoff quotes "a member of the White House staff". The European position he refers to was on the issue of a change in the United States policy in interest rates.

¹⁰²Rubin argues that the decision-making process under the Reagan administration was "...even more mangled than before." He highlights in particular the weak position of Haig: "Haig was a non-Reaganaut and a Kissinger disciple whose politics, style and methods were unacceptable to the President's men. The arrangement was doomed from the start." Rubin also points to the absence of clear decision-

reinforces the importance of domestic factors in US foreign policy and contrasts with the stated aim of "bringing the Soviet Union to its knees".

Michael Smith stresses the close link between domestic and foreign policy under Reagan:

"The essential concomitant of this position [the 'Reagan doctrine'] was the need to regenerate American power, both through the acquisition of new military muscle and through the unleashing of economic growth in the USA itself. Here, as elsewhere, there was a close link between the domestic and the foreign policy programmes of the administration: economic strength and national morale would provide the sinews for international assertiveness."¹⁰³

The link between domestic and foreign policy also worked the other way around, in that the policy positions taken on martial law in Poland were part of the wider "project" to boost national morale, by presenting the United States as actively pursuing the goal of "freedom and democracy". A similar perspective has been put forward by Dallek. He has argued that Reagan's external crusade was in fact closely connected to his battle against what he considered

making channels within the administration, and argues that as a result there "...was confusion, rapidly shifting factions, and burgeoning suspicions...Everything was a fight." Op. cit. p. 204

¹⁰³Michael Smith, "The Reagan presidency and foreign policy", pp. 259-285, in Joseph Hogan (ed), The Reagan Years, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, quote on p. 265. See also John Peterson, Europe and America: Prospects for Partnership, London, Routledge, 1996, pp. 79-105, for the importance of domestic constraints on US foreign policy.

similar trends which endangered conservative values in domestic American society:

"For Ronald Reagan the world outside the United States is little more than an extension of the world within: the struggle to defend freedom and morality abroad is a more intense version of the battle to preserve these virtues at home. In the eyes of Reagan and other conservatives, the communism of the Soviet Union represents the end point, the logical culmination of dangerous currents—big government, atheism, and relaxed moral standards—that they see so powerfully in America."¹⁰⁴

It must be added, however, that, rather than a cynically calculated strategy aimed at enhancing the power of the United States, Reagan's policy must be seen to have been inspired by a deep rooted conviction that the values promoted by the United States were ultimately beneficial to the rest of the world.¹⁰⁵ This recalls the importance of the "Wilsonian principles" in US policy towards Eastern Europe, as outlined in chapter two. Bernstein's suggestion that Reagan and the Pope believed that it was possible to remove Poland from the Warsaw Pact also reinforces this image.

Nevertheless, even this policy of "liberation" was the subject of domestic disputes. The conviction that the United States was capable of undermining the Soviet Union

¹⁰⁴Dallek, op. cit, p.129-130.

¹⁰⁵One might agree with Aron, who argues that Reagan's foreign policy could best be characterised as an ideology in search of a foreign policy, Raymond Aron "An ideology in search of a foreign policy", Foreign Affairs, vol 60, no 3, 1982, pp. 503-525.

was not universally shared by all members of the Reagan administration. According to Nau:

"The tug of war within the administration - particularly between the State Department and some elements of the Commerce Department (the trade promotion officers), on the one hand, and the NSC, Defense Department, and export control offices in the Commerce Department, on the other - was at least as intense as it was within the alliance. The tug of war even reached inside the White House, where public relations and policy officials clashed repeatedly over the next several months on the handling of the pipeline and East-West trade issues."¹⁰⁶

The domestic political disputes are important in their own right, because they enable us to understand the inconsistencies in US initiatives after martial law. In turn, they also clarify US relations with Western Europe, and the failure of coordination.¹⁰⁷ It is clear that the sanctions on Poland and the Soviet Union, as well as allied coordination surrounding these, were caught up in a domestic US dispute about the control of foreign policy. Although the key posts in Reagan's first foreign policy team were all filled by representatives from the traditional East coast, the same was not the case for Reagan's personal advisers. A number of Reagan's personal entourage was outsiders to the traditional Europhile East-

¹⁰⁶Nau, op. cit. p. 315.

¹⁰⁷It is interesting in this context to note that Nau, when looking at the economic aspects of the Reagan's administration's initiatives in the early 1980s, sees the United States' leadership in this period as a messy but ultimately successful attempt at changing the overall Western approach to East-West trade. In other words, the consequences for alliance relations are considered less important. Consequently, he also implies that the change in Western trade policies would not have been achieved without unilateral US initiatives. Op. cit. p. 321.

coast elite. As representatives of "sunbelt capitalism" they were sceptical of the value of the Alliance with Europe and more interested in developing the United States' links towards Latin America and the Pacific.¹⁰⁸ Haig, who made himself the spokesman for consultation with the West Europeans inside the administration was too isolated to make his voice heard.¹⁰⁹ According to Rubin:

"When Haig warned that sanctions against a Soviet gas pipeline were alienating Western European allies, one White House aide commented that Haig, 'sometimes acts like Europe's ambassador to Washington.' The key meeting on the issue [of the pipeline] was held when Haig was out of town and, he claimed, Clark placed only the most hard-line option before Reagan."¹¹⁰

The cooperation between the Vatican and the United States also confirms that the priorities of Reagan's advisers did not lie with the European allies. The United States chose to share its intelligence on Poland with the Vatican, whereas it did not do so with London, Bonn or Paris.¹¹¹ From this perspective, relations with Western Europe must have been seen as irrelevant, and "succumbing" to West European positions as illegitimate when weighed against the ultimate priority of confronting the Soviet Union. Having

¹⁰⁸Mélandri, op. cit. pp. 284-288; Gill, op. cit, p.30.

¹⁰⁹In the words of one of the "President's men", Reagan governed by round tables involving officials from different areas and this did not "suit" Secretary of State Haig, Meese, op. cit. p. 65. Furthermore, when Shultz took over, although the policy remained the same, allied relations improved.

¹¹⁰Rubin, op. cit. pp. 211-2.

¹¹¹Interview London, December 1994.

entered the 'slippery slope' towards neutralism, the West Europeans had to be "put right".¹¹² In fact, Schmidt points out in his memoirs that during his visit to Washington in January 1982, he had asked Haig why the United States had not consulted the Europeans before introducing sanctions. He received the reply that the United States did not think the West Europeans would agree. Schmidt further confirms that the Americans were correct in this assumption.¹¹³

It is clear that the two issues which most provoked the West Europeans, the grain embargo and the pipeline sanctions, were the subject of internal American disputes. Rather than softening the overall approach, these divisions led to further confusion as to what the objectives of the United States were, and thus also to further difficulties in Western cohesion.¹¹⁴

Gill argues that the attempt by the United States to reconstruct its relative power in the late 1970s and 1980s was

¹¹²Reagan, op. cit. p. 320 and Meese, op. cit. p. 65.

¹¹³Schmidt, Men and Powers, op. cit. p. 258.

¹¹⁴Quoting French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson, Mastanduno argues that trans-Atlantic political relations had dropped to perhaps their lowest point in the postwar era in the summer of 1982. The French view was that: "We no longer speak the same language. There is a remarkable incomprehension, and that is grave. The United States seems totally indifferent to our problems. Cheysson in New York Times, July 23, 1982, quoted in Mastanduno, op. cit. p. 260.

"...based upon a two-fold illusion: that of regaining its nuclear supremacy vis-a-vis the USSR, and that the USA could somehow re-create the capacity to impose military solutions in a world characterised by a massive diffusion of military capacities."¹¹⁵

A third illusion must be added to this, concerning the United States' leverage inside the Alliance, and its ability to ensure that the West Europeans would, eventually, follow the US lead, even when initially reluctant to do so.

In this context the United States, motivated chiefly by domestic considerations and hampered by bureaucratic struggles, produced a policy that was both ill-defined and confused. Most of all, the policy of the United States must be seen not so much as a misperception of what was at stake for Europe, but as a misperception of its own leverage inside the alliance. The United States clearly expected the Europeans to follow their lead and failed to realise that it was not possible simply to turn the clock back in terms of allied relations. Not only had detente changed the conduct of East-West relations in Europe, it had also affected both the West European, and, in particular, the West German, approach to the United States and the Alliance. Most of all, intra-European relations had changed, making it easier for individual West European states to oppose US initiatives after martial law in Poland.

¹¹⁵Gill, op. cit. p. 31.

Conclusions

From the realist or neo-realist perspectives the breakdown of coordination amongst the Western allies after martial law would be explained in terms of a clash between conflicting national interests. The findings of this chapter are not consistent with these perspectives. The positions on neither side of the Atlantic were clear cut. There were disagreements between US policy-makers on the question of consultation with the West Europeans, as well as on the rationale behind imposing sanctions. Some members of the US administration were closer to West Europe than the realist argument would allow for. Likewise, in Western Europe, positions were not clear cut. In France for example, the response to martial law was subject to fierce political debate. In the case of West Germany, policy is best seen as the outcome of a balancing act between domestic and Alliance perspectives. These findings are also consistent with those in previous chapters. It has been argued that there was, throughout the Polish crisis, a coexistence of common and conflicting perspectives within the Western alliance. Chapters four and five further argued that despite these partly converging, partly conflicting perspectives, coordination was maintained until the imposition of martial law.

Against this backdrop it is not possible to conclude that the breakdown of coordination was the inevitable outcome of conflicting national interests. It is clear that martial law triggered a sequence of events which shifted the emphasis away from cohesion and towards a breakdown in allied coordination and that national perspectives ultimately prevailed over a common Western response to martial law. Nonetheless, the realist and neo-realist perspectives are not helpful in explaining why this happened.

The neo-liberal institutionalists would emphasise the weaknesses of Western institutional networks in order to explain the failure to coordinate. Yet, although the institutional weaknesses pointed to in chapter six contributed to the breakdown of coordination, these cannot, on their own, fully explain the failure of Western coordination. Both the neo-realists and neo-liberal institutionalists underestimate the domestic constraints on foreign policy, and the ability of these domestic constraints to hamper governments' ability to coordinate positions with allied states.

This chapter has showed that the domestic political context in the Western states was important in driving the Western allies apart after martial law. Domestic political considerations were particularly important for the United States' and for the Federal Republic's reactions to martial

law. In the Federal Republic, the question of martial law fed into the ongoing West German debate about reunification and about West Germany's continued commitment to NATO's defence strategy. Schmidt's need to balance the requirements of Alliance cohesion with these domestic political constraints is important in explaining his position on martial law. The United States' initiatives must be understood against the backdrop of the domestic political struggle over the control of US foreign policy. Events in Poland strengthened the position of those inside the US administration who were less interested in the Atlantic dimension of US foreign policy and those more favourable to the so-called hardline position on East-West relations. Secretary of State Haig, who argued for close transatlantic consultations was too isolated to get his viewpoint across. Taking a firm stand against the Soviet Union was more important for some members of the US administration than keeping cohesion in the Western alliance. More generally, Reagan's strong anti-Soviet rhetoric must be seen as part of his efforts to restore confidence and optimism in the United States domestically. In this context, there was little domestic support for close cooperation with the West Europeans.

Domestic political considerations did not only reduce the likelihood of successful alliance coordination by drawing individual national responses apart. Intra-bureaucratic struggles in the United States also meant that US policy

was unpredictable, and led to the sending of confusing signals about the US position on sanctions. This was particularly the case with the negotiations before and during the G7 summit in Versailles, and it made an agreement more difficult to achieve.

Even in a country like France, where foreign policy is traditionally controlled by the President, the domestic political reaction to martial law affected the official response. Still, both for the French and the British refusal to follow US policy, the issue of sovereignty was more important than domestic constraints. Despite their traditional allegiance to the United States, the British were as embarrassed as the other Europeans about the United States' refusal to consult before imposing sanctions against Poland and the Soviet Union, and even more so, about the US imposition of the clause of extraterritoriality in the summer of 1982. The infringement of British sovereignty implied in the pipeline sanctions was too much even for Mrs. Thatcher.

Domestic pressure does not, however, inevitably have to lead to a breakdown in coordination. This is illustrated by the consultation between France and West Germany in the first months of 1982. In contrast to the transatlantic relationship, there was a deliberate effort in the Franco-German relationship to maintain good relations, and to avoid a clash, despite the existence of different

perspectives.¹¹⁶ A difference between the French and the American President's handling of events after martial law is in the importance given to domestic constraints. Although Mitterrand was subject to similar domestic pressures to take stronger measures against Poland and the Soviet Union, and thus to take policy further away from the West German position, he chose during the winter months of 1982 to cooperate closely with Schmidt, with the aim of overcoming and containing the differences between the two governments. It must be added here that the divergences between France and West Germany were not as important as those between West Germany and the United States. Still, the ability and willingness of governments to act on their commitment to alliance cohesion, as opposed to their other priorities, is important for coordination to succeed. In turn, one must add that the differences between the West Europeans faded into the background as a result of the unilateral initiatives of the United States. These had the effect of "cementing" European solidarity, or to use Joffe's expression, of "pacifying" -albeit in this case unintentionally- European divergences.¹¹⁷

Thus, rather than being considered the only reason for the breakdown in Western coordination, the domestic political constraints on Western states must be added to the other

¹¹⁶The discussions between Schmidt and Mitterrand are outlined in Schmidt, Die Deutschen, op. cit, pp. 292-300.

¹¹⁷Joffe, 1982, op. cit.

factors discussed in the thesis. One other determinant of Alliance politics has been stressed in this chapter. The general crisis in the Alliance and the existence of alternative European fora for consultation and coordination. Although as previous chapters have shown, EPC was not at the forefront in terms of coordinating West European positions, it did provide a useful forum for legitimising European opposition to the United States. The underlying disagreement on detente also meant that events in Poland were taken to the credit of the already existing positions of the member states on East-West relations. Hence, in the United States, martial law was considered as further indication of the unwillingness of the Soviet Union to accept reform in Eastern Europe and an indication of its inherently aggressive foreign policy stance. In West Europe, the development of Solidarity was seen as a sign of the success of detente and the beneficial effects of economic and political exchange between East and West in Europe. In turn, this reinforced the overall sense of crisis in the Alliance. From the United States' perspective, the West Europeans' refusal to follow the United States' position on sanctions was seen as confirmation of West European neutralist tendencies. From the West European perspective, Reagan's policy initiatives were seen as additional proof of the tendency of the United States to move towards unilateralism and disregard the interests of its allies. It was not inevitable that

coordination would break down over Poland, yet it was facilitated by the wider disagreements in the Alliance.

CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis set out to examine to what extent the Western states were able to coordinate their responses to events in Poland in the early 1980s, and to sustain an active and cohesive policy throughout the crisis. By the same token it also undertook to define the process of coordination, as well as to identify and explain any difficulties encountered in this process.

The question of foreign policy coordination is a classic, and permanent, problem in international relations. It is important to try to explain its dynamics, and why some times it works better than others. What is more, the coordination process is not only a necessary pre-requisite to cohesion, it also has an impact on the substance of policy. In the context of the Atlantic crisis in the late 1970s early 1980s, providing a cohesive response to the Polish crisis was particularly important for the credibility of the Western Alliance. A failure to maintain a cohesive position would also make the Western allies more susceptible to Soviet pressure. And by coordinating their responses the Western states might be more effective in promoting their own values and objectives, as well as in pressing the Soviet Union not to intervene in Poland.

Polish and Western crises

This thesis has not strictly speaking been devised as a study in crisis-management. Yet, the question of whether or not the domestic Polish crisis also was a foreign policy crisis for the Western states was raised in the introduction. Previous chapters have found that the Polish crisis cannot be straightforwardly defined as a foreign policy crisis for the Western alliance taken as a whole, or for individual Western states.¹ There was a strange duality in Western policies towards Poland in that events in this part of Europe did not constitute a direct threat to the Western states' security, yet they had, indirectly, the potential for affecting their stability. Chapter three showed that Eastern Europe was strictly speaking an "out of area" issue for NATO and politically "off limits". At the same time, Central and Eastern Europe was the central front area for a NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation and thus integral to Western strategic concerns. The possibility of a Soviet or Warsaw Pact intervention in Poland was of significant concern to all the Western states and in particular to West Germany. Hence, the

¹Brecher defines a foreign policy crisis as "... a breakpoint along the peace-war continuum of a state's relations with any other international actor(s)". He outlines four characteristics to the situation of crisis: (i) a change in its external or internal environment, which generates; (ii) a threat to basic values; (iii) high probability of involvement in military hostilities; and (iv) finite time for response. Michael Brecher, "A theoretical approach to international crisis behaviour", pp. 5-24 in Brecher (ed), Studies in Crisis Behaviour, New Brunswick, Transaction Book, 1978, see p. 6.

domestic Polish crisis was constantly threatening to turn into an East-West crisis and thus a foreign policy crisis for the Western states. The thesis has also shown that there were important political and economic dimensions to the Polish crisis. This meant that the Western states were presented with a more complex problem than a classic foreign policy crisis. It also made coordination more difficult to achieve.

The thesis has identified three fairly distinct phases in the Western responses to events in Poland. During the first and the second phase, the possibility of a Soviet intervention in Poland was looming in the background and threatening to turn the domestic Polish crisis into an East-West crisis. During the first phase, up until December 1980, the Western states tended to downplay the implications of events in Poland for East-West relations. In the second phase, the Western states turned to concentrate on warning off a Soviet intervention, and at the same time made contingency planning for this possibility. Western governments repeatedly declared that a Soviet intervention would put an end to detente. The risk of a Soviet intervention, and thus also of an East-West crisis, was averted with the imposition of martial law in Poland on 13 December 1981. This in turn did trigger an intramural

crisis inside the Western camp, as Western efforts to coordinate their responses to Poland floundered.²

The Atlantic Alliance

Several conclusions can be drawn about the nature of the Atlantic Alliance and trans-Atlantic relations in the early 1980s. Overall, the thesis has found that the crisis that erupted inside the Western camp after martial law was as much a crisis about the nature of the Alliance as about Poland itself. In this context, three issues are particularly important. Firstly, the issue of the suitability of the coordination mechanisms available to the Western states; secondly, there is the question of a link between the crisis over Poland and an overall crisis in the Western camp; and thirdly, following from this, is the specific problem of the role of the European Community and European Political Cooperation and their degree of capacity for splitting NATO.

The coordination mechanisms at the disposal of the Western states during the Polish crisis were not ideal. As chapter three has shown, they were fragmented into institutions dealing with economic issues and political-security issues. This made it difficult to maintain an overall view of the economic, political and security aspects of Western policies.

²Coral Bell, The Conventions of Crisis: a study in diplomatic management, London, Oxford University press for RIIA, 1971, p. 7.

The economic aspects in particular tended to slide away from any overall control. Also, none of the Western institutional mechanisms were geared towards dealing with a crisis in Eastern Europe. The limits to the institutional mechanisms were also reflected in the fact that there was a large degree of informal consultations, both bilaterally and multilaterally during the crisis. The most important examples of this were the ad hoc groups negotiating the rescheduling of Poland's private and public debt. Most importantly perhaps, the relatively weak coordination mechanisms of NATO reflect the intergovernmental nature of the organisation. Nonetheless, it was not the coordination mechanisms which ultimately led to the breakdown of coordination but the policy-makers themselves, and their weakening commitment to consultation. After the imposition of martial law, the Western states failed to use even those institutional mechanisms that actually were available to them.³

Thus the crisis over Poland indicated wider disagreements amongst the Western allies on East-West relations. In turn, it further reinforced them. The overarching disagreement was over whether or not to continue a policy of detente with the

³NATO sources point out that NATO did better than after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan because it did hold an emergency meeting on 11 January 1982. Yet, the compromise hammered out at this meeting was not sufficient to patch over the trans-Atlantic disagreements. The EPC crisis mechanism set up at the London summit in 1981 was not effective. Interview London, September 1994.

Warsaw Pact. Both sides used events in Poland to strengthen their own position on this issue: The United States attempted to use the crisis in Poland to support its argument for abandoning detente. The West Europeans took the opposite perspective, arguing that events in Poland proved that a policy of detente successfully encouraged change in Eastern Europe. Deeper divisions between West European and American perspectives on foreign policy also came to the surface in the context of the Polish crisis. The United States put greater emphasis on the ideological competition with the Soviet Union. The Europeans, no doubt influenced by their geographical proximity to the Soviet Union, tended to emphasise the security dimension of the relationship rather than the ideological aspects. The emphasis on ideology can be seen as a permanent feature in the United States' foreign policy, yet it was taken to an extreme under Reagan's presidency, thus making transatlantic cooperation even more difficult in the early 1980s. The decade of superpower detente had also increased European fears about a weakening of the United States' commitment to the defence of Europe. The European commitment to a European detente on the other hand led the United States to question the European commitment to NATO. These mutual suspicions were further reinforced by events after martial law.

The Polish crisis could be seen as a "European crisis", emerging as a consequence of the changes in East-West relations in the 1970s, and the changes inside both the Soviet Union's and the United States' spheres of influence.⁴ As the West Europeans clashed with the United States over how to respond to martial law, with the West Europeans arguing that detente was divisible and that superpower tension should not affect relations among European states, it could be seen as a sign of a growing tendency of "Europeanisation" of the problems in Europe. Although triggered by specific initiatives taken by the United States, the crisis was also a symptom of a wider structural imbalance in the trans-Atlantic relationship. The gradual strengthening of the West European economies and the intensification of European cooperation through the European Community and European Political Cooperation had made the Europeans less prone to accept US hegemony.

As has been argued throughout, however, the situation inside the Alliance in the early 1980s was not so clear cut. Events surrounding the Polish crisis do not indicate a desire on the part of the West Europeans to move towards "all-European" solutions to Europe's dilemmas. Although there were moves to

⁴Halliday argues that the US' aim in the Second Cold War was to reinstate its control over the Western alliance, Fred Halliday
The Making of the Second Cold War, London, Verso, 1989.

strengthen EPC in the early 1980s, it was still eclipsed by allegiance to NATO on East-West issues. Throughout most of the crisis in Poland, the European Community and EPC took a back seat. Coordination took place mainly bilaterally or within the context of NATO, and under the leadership of the United States. The EC did take charge of organising food aid from the member states. Yet this did not make it the dominant actor even on the economic side of Western responses to Poland. It was only one actor, among several others, inside the wider framework of the Western alliance.

There was an inherent contradiction in the transatlantic relationship in the early 1980s. One of the most vital elements in the Western alliance at the time of the Polish crisis was what Putnam has called "the European hunger for US leadership".⁵ The West Europeans had high expectations for Reagan to provide this. Also, there were as many similarities between the United States', French and British interpretation of events in Poland as there were amongst the West European states' view of the crisis. What kept the European states together after martial law was their shared frustration with the United States, not a general agreement on what to do, or even less so a deliberate attempt at providing a distinct European response to events in Poland.

⁵Robert Putnam and Nicholas Bayne, Hangin' Together: Cooperation and Conflict in the Seven-Power Summits, London, Sage Publications Ltd, 1987.

The ambiguities of transatlantic relations in the early 1980s are even more evident when one considers developments in the medium term. The failure of the United States to impose its own policy-preferences on its West European allies is an indication of its reduced authority within the Alliance. But at the same time, the West European reluctance to follow American initiatives was not followed up by a reinforcement of the Europeans' own identity, or even a strengthening of their ability to discuss security.⁶ Furthermore, the West Europeans, despite having won the short term battle with the United States by refusing to accept the embargo on the pipeline, lost the medium term, and probably most important battle, over the continuation of detente. Paradoxically, the Western crisis over Poland, in its own right a sign of the contradictions and internal entanglements of the Alliance, further reinforced the contradictions and brought the allied states wider apart, without bringing them closer to a breakup. Nothing in Europe replaced the reduced authority of the United States, nor was a fundamental review of the terms of the transatlantic relationship undertaken.

⁶Indeed, the difficulties of the Europeans in establishing European defence structures are manifest also in the post-Cold War world. See for example Simon duke, "The Second Death (or the Second Coming?) of the WEU", pp. 167-190 in Journal of Common Market Studies, vol. 34, No. 2, June 1996.

The problem of foreign policy coordination

The question of success and failure of foreign policy coordination has a relevance beyond the context of the transatlantic relationship in the early 1980s. The difficulty of foreign policy coordination arises from the unique nature of international society, as a society in which actors are not subject to a central authority. It is this absence of a central authority which has led the realists to consider that coordination, and the ability of states to sustain coherent foreign policies, is extremely limited.

The findings of this thesis only partially confirm the classical realist perspective, and much less so the more determinedly structuralist, neo-realist version.⁷ It is clear from the previous chapters that, ultimately, national positions prevailed over any common Western policy. The domestic "solution" to the Polish crisis divided the West European aspirations for continued detente, from the United States' wish for a return to a discourse, if not a policy, of "liberation". The coordination process was initiated and controlled by states and the Western institutional framework was not strong enough to draw them together after the imposition of martial law.

⁷For an exposition of the similarities between the realist and neo-realist perspective see Andrew Linklater, "Neo-realism in Theory and Practice", pp. 241-262 in Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds), International Relations Theory Today, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995.

Yet, the realist perspective does not help us to understand why coordination functioned reasonably well up until the imposition of martial law in Poland. Neither does it shed much light on what led the Western states to take diverging positions on Poland after the 13 December 1981. There is no evidence to indicate that the "national interests" of the Western states changed after December 13 1981, still, after this, cohesion broke down. The realists, and the neo-realists, need, at the least to explain how governments define their interest and why there is a change in policy. They also need to pay closer attention to the long term impact of alliance ties on the foreign policy of individual states. The view that national divergencies stem from the anarchical structure of the international system which forces states into antagonistic behaviour, is an oversimplification. It is even more so in the context of an institutionalised alliance such as NATO. The following section will first look at the suggestion that there is a qualitative difference in relations between states bound together through institutional links and sharing broad long term goals, and states who are not interlinked through such ties. Subsequently, it will look at the importance of domestic politics. And finally, it will highlight the limits to the assumption of rationality which is part of both the realist, neo-realist and the neo-liberal institutionalist perspectives.

Constraints on the anarchical condition

Despite the fact that the institutional constraints were not strong enough to guarantee cohesion, relations between Western states were qualitatively different from those at the level of the international system.⁸ The Western institutional framework did provide an important setting inside which the Western states interacted. It provided channels of communication and fora for consultation, as well as, in the case of the EC, instruments for common action in the area of food aid. The realists, and neo-realists, have underestimated the impact of participation in a permanent institutionalised structure such as the Atlantic Alliance on the individual states. By entering the Western alliance states, albeit for different and distinctly national reasons, had perhaps unwittingly accepted certain constraints on their foreign policies. And over time, the structures of the Western alliance had bound its member states even closer together.

Chapters four and five show that there was a commitment on the part of all member states to ensure that the Alliance provided a cohesive response to events in Poland. There was concern to learn from the mistakes made after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, and to avoid a similar collision

⁸Some have attempted to call this an international regime. It may well be that there was a Western regime, although the definition of a regime is unclear, yet this conclusion is not helpful because it does not tell us anything about interaction inside the regime itself.

inside the walls of the Alliance. This commitment is illustrated in the efforts made by the Western states to consult with one another, and exchange information over Poland up to martial law. This emphasis on alliance relations was an important consideration in the formulation of each states' policy.

It is true at the same time that events in Poland raised a different set of concerns for each of the Western states. At one extreme was West Germany: The possibility of a Soviet or Warsaw Pact military intervention (including East German participation) in Poland raised considerable concern. Not only would such an intervention have unravelled the carefully established edifice which was the West German Ostpolitik. It could also have ended the rapprochement with East Germany. Finally, at a time when West Germany was living through a phase of domestic uncertainty about its international role, the presence of East German troops on Polish soil would have been a highly uncomfortable reminder of the past. From across the Atlantic, the Polish crisis presented itself in a different way. The Polish crisis fitted perfectly into the increasingly confrontational discourse of US foreign policy in the early 1980s, and presented a good opportunity for the American President to present himself as "leader of the free world, defender of democracy and human rights". What is more, the Polish crisis played into the hands of those who were

critical of the West Europeans' attachment to detente, and Poland became not only a stick with which the US could beat the Soviet Union, but also a stick with which it attempted to beat its European allies.

At the same time, a set of common concerns about Poland were present in all the four major Western states. The long term objective of increased liberalisation of Poland was shared by all the Western states. All the Western states, including Margaret Thatcher's Britain, welcomed the creation of an independent trades union and the possibility of the development of political pluralism in Poland. There was agreement in condemning the imposition of martial law, the internment of the Solidarity leadership and the later dissolution of Solidarity. France, the United States and Britain harboured no doubts that the imposition of martial law was the result of Soviet pressure on the Polish leadership. At the same time, the Western states all recognised that they had limited resources available to them to promote this kind of change. The underlying assumption of anarchy does not take into consideration the coexistence of converging and conflicting priorities inside the Western alliance. Neither does it help us to understand the commitment to coordination as such amongst the allied states, or its success up until the imposition to martial law.

The importance of domestic constraints

Even more important for the prospects of coordination than institutional frameworks are domestic politics. Chapter seven has shown that in order to understand why Western coordination broke down after the imposition of martial law in Poland it is vital to look at the domestic political context in the United States. Chapter seven confirms that domestic politics influenced the United States' policy after martial law in Poland. This helps explain why the Reagan administration refused to consult with the West Europeans before launching into a policy which went directly against the wishes of its allies. The lifting of the grain embargo in April 1981, which contributed to West European resentment against the United States, came about for domestic political reasons, rather than as a result of foreign policy considerations. The pipeline embargo was also part of a wider foreign policy strategy aimed at gaining support from the American public opinion by presenting the US president as a crusader against the "evils of communism". Finally, the issue of consultation with the West Europeans was caught up in a wider struggle inside the US administration over the control of foreign policy. The Secretary of State, who advocated consultation with the West Europeans, was too isolated to impose his views against the wishes of Reagan's personal advisors.

Domestic politics are also important in understanding the West German position after martial law, and in understanding why West Germany, which otherwise tended to be a more loyal ally to the United States than for example France, became the United States' main antagonist after martial law. The Polish question fed directly into the ongoing domestic political debate about West Germany's relations with the GDR, about the memories of Nazi Germany and its role in Poland, as well as West Germany's role in the Atlantic Alliance. Thus, rather than being the exclusive result of external pressures from the international system, the crisis in the Western alliance was reinforced by domestic pressures.

Yet, although domestic pressures tested the solidarity among allied states to a breaking point, they did not always prevent coordination. France and West Germany, although subject to domestic pressures which would take their policies in opposite directions, were quite successful in patching up their differences. Schmidt's memoirs indicate that there was a commitment at the highest political level to protect the Franco-German alliance from a potential split over Poland. Hence, domestic politics do not inevitably take primacy over external pressures. Coordination must be understood in the context of a continuous flow of interaction between domestic and external impulses, including a commitment to alliance cohesion.

The limits to rationality

The failure of the realist perspective to recognise the ability of institutions to constrain states and to change states' conception of their self interest, is underlined by the neo-liberal institutionalists.⁹ Institutionalists such as Keohane and Putnam recognise the need to look inside the state, at domestic politics. Yet, the neo-liberals remain within the same framework as the neo-realists by maintaining the assumption of rationality of actors.¹⁰ This is the basis for Putnam's study of coordination as a two-level game.¹¹ This thesis has found that by opening the black box of the state, many of the rationalistic assumptions are undone, and that the Western states' policies towards Poland, and their efforts to coordinate these policies, cannot be explained purely by calculations of interests and a cost-benefit analysis. They are better seen as the result of complex interaction between domestic and external pressures, with the

⁹David Baldwin (ed), Neo-realism and Neo-liberalism: The Contemporary Debate, New York, Columbia University Press, 1993.
p. 271.

¹⁰See also Steve Smith, who stresses that the positions of the neo-realists and the neo-liberals are not really that far away from each other, Steve Smith, "The Self-Images of a Discipline: A Genealogy of International Relations Theory", pp. 1-37 in Booth and Smith, op. cit. Especially p.24.

¹¹Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and domestic Politics: The logic of two-level games", first published in International Organization, 42, summer 1988, pp. 427-460, reprinted in Peter Evans, Harold Jacobson and Robert Putnam (eds), Double edged diplomacy, London, University of California Press, 1993.

policy-objectives evolving throughout the crisis, rather than being fixed from the outset.

Starting with the level of national policies, these can only with difficulty be seen as the result of a rational assessment of how best to defend the self interest and enhance the power of the individual state. Once the black box of the state is opened, it is no longer clear who's interest is being defended or whose power is being "enhanced". Chapter seven has showed that there was no unified perception of events inside each member state, nor was there always a clear definition of national policy objectives. What is more, the position of each individual state was not formed in isolation from, but by interacting with, the other Western states. The policy objectives of the individual states (as well as those of the West as a whole) evolved throughout the crisis, in accordance with events in Poland, as well as in accordance with the domestic and external pressures that they were subjected to. The broad aspirations of encouraging change in Poland while maintaining stability in Europe, as well as that of maintaining alliance cohesion, were shared by all four governments. Yet these broad aspirations existed in parallel with conflicting national priorities and domestic pressures, such as the West German concern about the impact of the Polish crisis on relations with East Germany, and the United

States' desire to use Poland to change NATO's East-West policy.

Finally, not only is it difficult to identify clear cut and irreconcilable national interests. It is also difficult to understand a state's overall policy only in terms of interests. National priorities are bound up with a nation's view of itself and its past experiences. Policy-makers may not always learn the right lessons from history, but this does not mean that past experiences do not have an impact on present policies. Nowhere is this more clear than in the case of West Germany's position on Poland. Hence, a state's foreign policy must be seen as influenced also by values, assumptions and expectations from wider society, and not only from clearly calculated interests.

Moving from the national level to the level of the Alliance, a fragile compromise was built against the backdrop of these partly converging, partly contradictory concerns and remained intact until the imposition of martial law. It took the shape of an understanding rather than a bargain based on well defined national interests. The main device of this 'consensus building' was to focus on the issues on which there was agreement and leave aside the issues that were divisive, either by not dealing with them, or by delaying to deal with them. The cornerstone of this policy was the

warnings against a Soviet military intervention. It was followed up with the food aid and credits, as well as the attempt at renegotiating Poland's debt. This was not really a policy of a minimum common denominator, because policy-proposals were not watered down, but excluded altogether.

The process of policy-coordination inside an alliance is more complex than the realist or neo-liberal institutionalist perspectives admit. The formulation of each national perspective took place as a result of interaction between domestic and external pressures. The maintenance of cohesion emerged not only as a result of institutional links and a political commitment to it, but also because of the ability of the Western states to focus on policy initiatives which kept them together, and excluding those that divided them. It backfired after martial law, when the United States' administration gave priority to domestic concerns, and erroneously assumed that its authority inside the alliance was such that the West Europeans would follow suit. Domestic pressures were ultimately more important to the United States than was the commitment to alliance diplomacy, and the weak institutional structures could not compensate for this. Along the road, coordination became an end in itself, rather than a means to an end.

Western coordination and Poland

It has not been the purpose of this thesis to examine the content of Western policies, to evaluate to what extent these policies were the best in terms of influencing events in Poland, or the right ones from the perspective of the Poles themselves. Nonetheless, this question should not be completely ignored, not least because the efforts to coordinate the Western states' policies had an impact on their content.

Most of the literature on the policies of Western governments during the Polish crisis is critical of their efforts. The West has been criticised mainly on four accounts. In the period up until the imposition of martial law, two types of criticisms were made against Western policies: Firstly, it has been argued that Western economic aid, both the handling of the debt question and the provision of food aid, was insufficient. The assumption of this criticism is that if "more" had been done, this might have helped to stabilise the political climate in Poland and might have strengthened the chances of political reform.¹² Secondly, Western policies have been criticised for failing to predict, prepare and prevent martial law. Cynkin argues that the United States

¹²Portes called for an overall economic plan to reschedule or restructure Poland's debt, and expected this to rally Solidarity behind a programme of economic reform. Richard Portes, The Polish Crisis: Western Economic Policy Options, RIIA, London, 1981, (introduction).

should have used the threat to declare Poland default as a bargaining chip with the Soviet Union to prevent martial law.¹³ The third reproach against Western policy refers to the period after the imposition of martial law. The Western states were criticised for not condemning martial law strongly enough, and in particular for not taking sufficient action to 'punish' the Soviet Union.¹⁴ Later on, and this constitutes the fourth criticism, there was increased support for the argument that sanctions had been kept in place for too long and ought to be lifted, and that the best way to promote change in Poland would be to restart economic aid to the country.¹⁵

It is not altogether straightforward to assess the validity of these criticisms. They are based on different assumptions both about what kind of objectives the West could reasonably expect to obtain in Poland; about the significance of martial law (in particular on whether or not it was a lesser evil than Soviet intervention); and about what alternative outcomes, other than martial law or a Soviet intervention, one could realistically hope for in Poland. Yet one thing

¹³Thomas Cynkin, Soviet and American Signalling in the Polish Crisis, London, Macmillan, 1988, p.38 and p.221.

¹⁴Claude Lefort, "Sagt rett fra leveren" (Speaking one's mind), pp. 20-22, in Kontinent Skandinavia, K/S/82.

¹⁵John Edwin Mroz, "Aider la Pologne", Politique Internationale, 26 (1), summer 1983, pp. 129-155.

they have in common is that they do not take into consideration the alliance dimension, or the impact of the process of coordination on the content of policies. Neither do they seek to understand why Western policies were often so limited in scope. Cynkin, for example, focuses exclusively on the policy of the United States. But the United States alone did not hold a large enough share of Poland's debt to make the threat of default a real one. In order to have any chance of succeeding, the policy he advocates would have had to have been supported by the West Europeans, who were Poland's main creditors.

No doubt, the Polish crisis highlighted many of the contradictions and weaknesses of Western policies towards Poland as well as Eastern Europe overall. As chapter two showed, Poland was never on top of the list of priorities for the Western states. Rather than a separate "object" towards which Western states had distinct aims and objectives, it was one factor in the Western states' overall policy towards the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. The Western states favoured stability in Europe over political change in Eastern Europe, and were concerned about not encouraging "radical" change in Poland, which might lead to instability. At the same time, they were struggling with a political commitment to support the principles of democracy and human rights as specified in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Declaration.

In addition to these permanent constraints on Western policies towards Poland, what this thesis has shown is that the commitment to coordination contributed, paradoxically, to the lack of efficiency in the Western response. The objective of Western policies was to create a feasible policy, rather than a "good policy" from the Polish perspective. There was a clear tendency throughout the crisis for cohesion, rather than Poland itself, to take over as the main policy concern. Although martial law was a known possible outcome of events, no contingency planning was made to prepare Western states for this eventuality. The Western allies did not manage to come to an agreement on what should be done if there was an internal Polish crackdown. Likewise, the provision of food aid was caught up in EC disputes about the share of each member states in the overall aid.¹⁶ The negotiations on rescheduling the debt were dogged by arguments between the Western creditors and slowed down the process of negotiating a solution to the question. Chapter six showed that sanctions were lifted only gradually and in a disorganised fashion, with reference chiefly to internal Western negotiations

¹⁶One might add that it is far from certain that more economic aid would have been sufficient to stabilise Poland and prevent the imposition of martial law. The protest movement in Poland quickly moved from an economic issue to politics, and economic aid would most likely not have been enough to prevent this escalation. Also, previous chapters have shown that there was a greater effort by Western states to respond to the Polish crisis and a greater concern about the significance and consequences of the Polish crisis, than the Czech crisis in 1968 and the Hungarian crisis in 1956.

rather than in response to the economic and political conditions in Poland. There was a reluctance on the part of the Western states to break the fragile consensus that they had established during the autumn of 1982.

In other words, if, ideally, more could have been done for Poland, in practice the West was constrained not only by the risk of instability in Poland, or by its limited ability to protect democracy in Poland, but equally by its own internal disagreements. This not only dragged out the process of decision-making, but led to policies which were often not directed in any rational way towards Poland, but towards the Western alliance itself. Increased coordination is ideally supposed to lead to increased influence, but at the same time, it can, and did, to some extent in the case of the Polish crisis, rebound and lead to a less efficient policy response.

Although this thesis has maintained a state-centric perspective, it does not find the realist conception of policies as resulting exclusively from interaction between rationally defined and clearly distinguishable national policies satisfactory. It has argued that states should be seen as navigating inside the constraints of domestic politics, alliance politics and international [in this case

East-West] relations. Thus, the argument has moved away from the realist and neo-realist perspective without embracing the neo-liberal institutionalist perspective. It is in the tradition of foreign policy analysis that this thesis has found the most useful insights, both in understanding the position of individual states and the interaction between them. It has taken what Waltz calls a "reductionist" perspective, by concentrating the analysis at the level of the individual actors (the states). It has emphasised the importance of the policy-choices made by governments which are seen as constrained, but not determined, by both their domestic and their external structures. And these processes of choice, in their turn, help us to understand the sometimes strange and almost always unpredictable course of international history.

APPENDIX 1. CHANGES IN WESTERN GOVERNMENTS DURING THE POLISH CRISIS

	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
<u>Britain</u>	Margaret Thatcher (Conservative Party) <u>Foreign Secretary:</u> Lord Carrington				
<u>Federal Republic</u>	Helmut Schmidt (SPD) <u>Foreign Minister:</u> Hans-Dietrich Genscher (CSU)			Helmut Kohl (CDU)	
<u>France</u>	Valéry Giscard d'Estaing(UDF) <u>Prime Minister:</u> Raymond Barre (indep.) <u>Foreign Minister:</u> Claude Cheysson (UDF)		François Mitterrand (PS) Pierre Mauroy (PS) Jean François-Poncet (PS)		
<u>United States</u>	Jimmy Carter (Democrat) <u>Secretary of State:</u> Edmund Muskie <u>National Security</u> <u>Adviser:</u> Zbigniew Brzezinski		Ronald Reagan (Republican) Alexander Haig George Shultz (July 1982) Richard Allen William Clarke		

APPENDIX 2. EAST-WEST TRADE RELATIONS

Table 1. Exports of Western states to Poland.¹

(in 1000 US \$)

	1970	1975	1977	1980	1982
France	81177	626605	482703	830997	432550
UK	135145	390577	349384	689007	232869
FRG	179733	1302294	1245708	1458980	883912
US	69838	580090	436536	710447	292607

Table 2. Imports of Western states to Poland.²

(in 1000 US \$)

	1970	1975	1977	1980	1982
France	67968	352652	425691	583673	332912
UK	151253	253994	304074	451652	265560
FRG	203342	581797	901761	1376950	878567
US	97946	243097	329085	459313	229189

¹COMECON Foreign Trade Data, 1984 and 1980, Ed. by the Vienna Institute for Comparative Economic Studies, London, Macmillan, 1985 and 1981.

²Ibid.

Table 3. Western trade dependence on CMEA states¹
(Percentage of total trade)

	1957	1962	1970	1976	1979	1980
France	Ex 2.3 Im 2.1	3.6 2.6	3.6 2.4	4.9 3.1	4.2 3.1	4.5 3.9
UK	Ex 1.7 Im 2.6	2.9 3.5	3.1 2.8	2.5 3.3	2.3 2.8	2.4 2.5
FRG ²	Ex 2.7 Im 3.1	3.8 3.6	3.8 5.8	6.1 4.6	5.1 5.0	4.9 4.5
USA	Ex 0.4 Im 0.4	0.6 0.5	1.0 0.6	3.1 0.7	3.3 0.6	1.7 0.6

Table 4. Poland's foreign trade. Shares of trading partners in %.³

	1960	1970	1980	1981	1983
USSR	Ex 29.4 Im 31.1	35.3 37.7	31.2 33.1	32.4 41.7	31.2 36.8
France	Ex 1.1 Im 1.7	1.7 2.4	2.9 4.2	2.2 3.7	2.5 2.0
UK	Ex 7.5 Im 5.9	4.3 5.3	3.2 3.5	3.0 2.5	4.9 3.6
FRG	Ex 5.2 Im 5.9	5.1 5.3	8.1 3.5	7.9 2.5	8.3 3.6
USA	Ex 2.4 Im 5.6	2.6 1.6	2.5 4.0	2.5 4.7	1.7 1.4

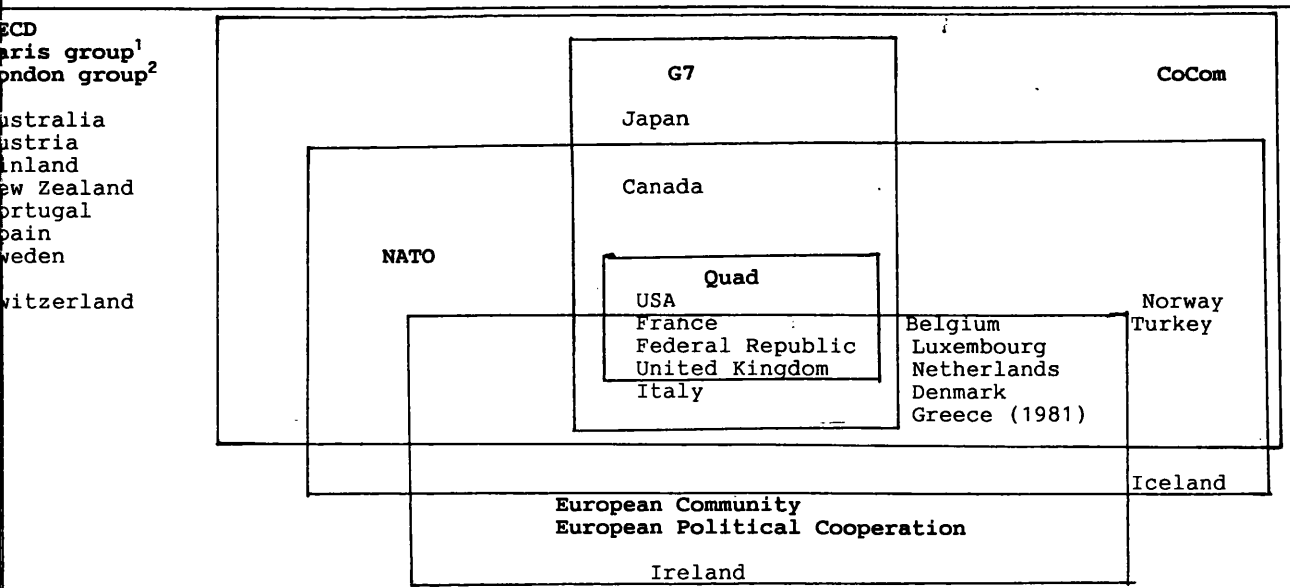
¹Taken from Stephen Woolcock, Western Policies on East-West Trade, London, RIIA, 1982. Figures are based on OECD, Foreign Trade Statistics, Series B.

²Excludes intra-German trade.

³Source, COMECON Foreign Trade Data, 1984, Ed. by the Vienna Institute for Comparative Economic Studies, London, Macmillan, 1985.

APPENDIX 3. THE WESTERN INSTITUTIONAL NETWORKS

a. Geographical scope of institutions



¹Ad hoc group organised at the initiative of the French government, in late 1980, to negotiate Poland's public debt. Composed of Poland's largest creditors (France, FRG, United Kingdom, United States, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Canada, Denmark, Spain, Finland, Italy, Japan).

²Ad hoc task force of Western banks (varying in size from 15 to 21), negotiating with Poland on behalf of the country's commercial creditors.

b. Principal areas of activity for individual Western institutions

	military/security	economic	political/diplomatic
NATO	X		(X)
European Community		X	
European Political Cooperation			X
CoCom	(X)	X	
Paris group (ad hoc)		X	
London group (ad hoc)		X	
OECD		X	

APPENDIX 4

CHRONOLOGY

- July 1980** Polish government raises prices of meat. Strikes start in Lublin and spread to the Baltic Sea region.
- August 1980** Signature of the Gdansk agreement.
- Schmidt cancels planned visit to the GDR.
- Carter writes to Schmidt, Thatcher and Giscard d'Estaing to discuss ways in which the Western states could respond positively to Poland's demands for economic aid.
- West German banks give a loan of \$674 m. to Poland.
- September 1980** AFL-CIO informs the Carter administration of its plans to provide economic aid directly to Solidarity.
- The Carter administration announces \$ 670 m. in credits for export of agricultural products to Poland.
- October 1980** Brzezinski convenes meeting of the Special Coordinating Committee of the NSC to review the Polish crisis.
- December 1980** European Council in Luxembourg declares willingness to provide economic aid to Poland and warns all states to allow Poland to solve its difficulties on its own.
- A Warsaw Pact meeting is held in Moscow to discuss the Polish crisis (5 December). Western intelligence reports that a military intervention is imminent.
- NATO's Foreign Ministers task NATO's ambassadors with preparing a package of political, diplomatic, economic, financial and commercial contingency measures for implementation if the Soviet Union intervenes in Poland.
- January 1981** Carter warns the Soviet Union to stay out of Poland in his last State of the Union speech.

- April 1981** Western governments agree with Poland, in the framework of the Paris group, on a rescheduling of its public debt for 1981.
- Reagan lifts the grain embargo against the Soviet Union.
- July 1981** Ottawa G7-summit. Reagan presses for stricter control of exports to the Soviet bloc and for the West Europeans to abandon the pipeline agreement.
- August 1981** The European Parliament pledges EC member states to speed up the programme of food aid to Poland.
- October 1981** The London Report on European Political Cooperation establishes procedures for rapid consultation amongst EC-member states in situations of crisis.
- November 1981** The Federal Republic signs the pipeline agreement with the Soviet Union.
- December 1981** Schmidt arrives in the GDR (11 December). The last visit to the GDR by a Chancellor of the FRG was in 1970.
- Martial law is imposed in Poland (13 December).
- Schmidt in East Berlin declares that both Honecker and himself were concerned about the fact that the imposition of martial law had been "necessary".
- French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson declares that "naturally we shall do nothing" about martial law.
- US Secretary of State for European Affairs, Lawrence Eagleburger, visits Europe to gain support for sanctions in reaction to martial law, but returns to the US empty handed. (20-30 December).
- Reagan announces sanctions against Poland (23 December) and against the Soviet Union (29 December), without consulting with the European allies.
- After a failed attempt to call an emergency meeting of EC foreign ministers, EC foreign policy officials meet in London to discuss sanctions (30 December).

January 1982

EC foreign ministers meet in London to discuss Poland. The important role of the Soviet Union in Poland is acknowledged. Agreement is achieved on avoiding any measures that might undermine US sanctions. No commitment to impose European sanctions (4 January).

Schmidt visits Washington and is met with a storm of protest against the West German position on martial law.

A special ministerial session of the North Atlantic Council. End communiqué calls for lifting of martial law, release of prisoners and restoration of political dialogue. Agreement is achieved for individual governments to study appropriate means to protest against martial law (11 January). Agreement is achieved to freeze further discussions on the rescheduling of Poland's official debt.

A special ministerial meeting of CoCom is held, for the first time in its history, at the initiative of the Reagan administration for the first time in its history, to discuss stricter control over exports to the Soviet bloc.

Schmidt visits Mitterrand to calm French fears of West Germany's position on Poland.

France signs the trans-siberian gas-pipeline agreement.

February 1982

The Buckley mission goes to Europe to gain support for further economic sanctions.

Britain is the first West European state to impose minor sanctions (restrictions on the movement of Soviet and Polish diplomats).

EC Foreign Ministers agree to restrict import of Soviet goods.

West Germany follows Britain in imposing limited sanctions.

- June 1982** Versailles G7-summit. An apparent agreement on export credits to the Soviet Union falls through. In the midst of confusion about the content of the agreement, Reagan announces an extension of the ban on products to the Siberian pipeline to cover US companies abroad as well as foreign companies using US equipment.
- July 1982** The French government orders French companies to honour their contracts on the pipeline despite the US ban.
- August 1982** The British and West German governments order their companies to honour the pipeline contracts.
- October 1982** The United States lifts MFN status of Poland after the Sejm dissolves Solidarity. The West Europeans do not agree to take further sanctions.
- November 1982** The United States lifts sanctions on the pipeline. An agreement is achieved amongst Western governments to study ways to control exports to the Soviet bloc. France denies the existence of such an agreement.
- Agreement is reached for the rescheduling of Poland's private debt for 1982. Negotiations on Poland's public debt are still frozen.
- December 1982** Martial law is held in suspension. EC restrictions on import of Soviet goods are prolonged for one year.
- February 1983** The West Europeans seek an early lifting of sanctions against Poland.
- July 1983** Martial law in Poland is lifted, yet all its measures are incorporated into Polish law.
- September 1983** A decision "in principle" is taken to reopen discussions on rescheduling Poland's official debt.
- November 1983** The United States agrees to take part in negotiating a rescheduling of Poland's debt on a year by year basis. It continues to delay discussion on Poland's application for membership in the IMF.
- December 1983** Walesa declares himself in favour of a lifting of sanctions against Poland.

The European Community's restrictions on import of Soviet goods are not renewed.

January 1984 Western governments agree to restart negotiations on rescheduling Poland's public debt for 1982.

December 1987 US restores MFN status to Poland.

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