

Chapter 2

1966–69

Incubation of Strategies



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ILLUSTRATION 2: Chancellor Willy Brandt (right) with State Secretary Egon Bahr in June 1972.

Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, B 145 Bild-00110934,
Photographer: Ulrich Wienke.

We hold the view that a mitigation and clarification of the relationship between the two parts of Germany is essential before the start of East–West conferences.

– Egon Bahr, September 1969¹

Governments and representatives of the economy and the sciences in East and West should already now be seeking ways of cooperation, so that useful discussions can be had on as many areas as possible. Genuine progress in practical cooperation will also benefit European security.

– Willy Brandt, June 1969²

By early 1967 at the latest, all the major parties in Bonn had come to understand that the foreign policy pursued until then was only pushing the FRG into self-inflicted isolation – not only in the East, but also in the West. Instead of stubbornly holding on to the so-called Hallstein Doctrine, a new, more flexible approach towards the East, and especially towards the other German state, was badly needed.³ The partners of the Grand Coalition, the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and the Social Democrats (SPD), as well as the liberal Free Democrats (FDP), now in opposition, were each eagerly discussing the prospects of a ‘European peace order’ (*europäische Friedensordnung*) as a possible solution to the impasse.⁴ To be sure, all of the parties had different ideas about such a future order. It remained a very elusive construction, since none of the parties was able to define the contents of this peace order in precise terms. Nevertheless, the thinking on foreign policy options was clearly in a state of flux. While this resulted in open controversies, and, towards the end of the decade, in an increasing paralysis in the decision-making of the Grand Coalition, it was also of fundamental importance in ushering in new strategies and approaches. Anything but a mere passive lull between two eras, therefore, the years of the Grand Coalition had a considerable impact on the reformulation of the foreign policy of the Federal Republic.

This also applies to West German policies with regard to a possible European security conference. On the surface, the Grand Coalition was remarkably reluctant to make any moves in the nascent conference process. However, as argued below, behind the scenes in Bonn things were certainly not dormant on the CSCE front. The focus in this chapter will be predominantly on the final six months of the Grand Coalition. A serious debate in Bonn on the prospects of a European security conference did not emerge until the spring of 1969, when the Warsaw Pact’s so-called Budapest Appeal in March and the subsequent Finnish initiative in May suddenly gave new impetus to the project. Simultaneously, the coalition partners in Bonn were finding it increasingly difficult to agree on a common position on foreign policy in general, and on the security conference

in particular. But in spite of this deadlock, vitally important groundwork for the future West German CSCE policy was done precisely during these six months, from March to September 1969. Initial ideas for both main tracks covered in the following chapters of this book – the instrumental as well as the substantive approaches to the CSCE – were already developed before the formation of the SPD-FDP Government in the autumn of 1969.

The Early Years and the Eastern ‘Propaganda Circus’

Although the concept is, in retrospect, usually connected only with the Eastern Treaties accomplished by the subsequent Brandt–Scheel Government, it was already the Grand Coalition’s Eastern policy that was labelled the ‘new *Ostpolitik*’ at the time. And in fact, the change of government in the middle of the electoral term in late 1966 brought about a clear change in tone to the foreign policy of the Federal Republic. In his government declaration on 13 December 1966, Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger laid out his commitment to pursue a European peace order.⁵

While it was building on the peace note of the preceding Erhard Government and echoing even older ideas of Germany as a bridge between East and West, the suggested way forward was new. The European peace order was to be pursued by negotiating bilateral renunciation-of-force agreements with individual members of the Warsaw Pact. The Hallstein Doctrine was effectively given up during the first year of the Grand Coalition, beginning with the establishment of diplomatic relations with Romania in January 1967 and finalised with the similar move towards Yugoslavia in December.⁶ Yet there were clear limits to how far the Grand Coalition was prepared to go. Although Kiesinger agreed to commence a correspondence with the East German premier Willi Stoph in the summer of 1967, at this stage a diplomatic recognition of the GDR, or any lesser action indicating such recognition, was completely out of the question for Kiesinger’s CDU and Brandt’s SPD alike.

This, in turn, ensured that the Grand Coalition at first remained as sceptical as its predecessors to the idea of a European security conference. The latest Eastern call for a conference, issued at the Bucharest meeting of the Warsaw Pact in July 1966, had, in spite of some more forthcoming elements, included all the usual demands directed mainly at the Federal Republic, ranging from full diplomatic recognition of the GDR to a consolidation of the post-war borders in Europe.⁷ These preconditions alone were enough to make the security conference unacceptable in Bonn.

And in the beginning of the Grand Coalition’s term in office, the Soviet Union did not make the acceptance of its own proposal any easier for the

West Germans. The Kiesinger–Brandt Government had its first direct encounter with Eastern suggestions for a security conference in April 1967. A conference of national leaders of twenty-four communist parties in the Czechoslovakian town of Karlovy Vary resulted in a very harsh and provocative ‘declaration for peace and security in Europe’.⁸ Resembling, as Helga Haftendorn has put it, a ‘treatise on moral rearmament’,⁹ this statement, while also repeating the call for the convocation of a European security conference, was clearly a step or two in a less compromising direction than that of the Bucharest statement a year before. Not surprisingly, this Karlovy Vary statement, in essence a frontal attack against West German ‘imperialism’ and ‘revanchism’, led to no official response from the Federal Republic.

Among themselves, the Western Allies had been discussing the prospects of a possible security conference ever since the Bucharest statement in 1966. At a meeting of the planning staffs of the US, British and West German Foreign Ministries in July 1967, the Allies more or less agreed that entering East–West negotiations in a security conference according to the Soviet proposals was not likely to result in anything more than a mere ‘propaganda circus’. Although the idea of a security conference in general still deserved to be given further thought, it was considered necessary for all members of the Alliance to make it clear that they were not prepared to enter a conference under Soviet terms.¹⁰

For the moment, the coalition partners in Bonn agreed in their evaluation of the Eastern conference initiatives. In December 1967, Foreign Minister Brandt was applauded by the Christian Democratic MPs at the *Bundestag* when he declared that the time was not yet ripe for a security conference.¹¹ Instead, Western – and West German – détente efforts at that time were focused on two other major projects. First of all, since late 1966 the NATO countries had been active in outlining the ‘future tasks of the Alliance’, as the second decade of its existence was drawing to a close. In December 1967 the result of this exercise, the Harmel report, named after the Belgian Foreign Minister, was approved at ministerial level.¹² The report emphasised the dual nature of defence and détente and, at the same time, also gave the military alliance a more outspoken political role than before. Secondly, partly as a response to the repeated Eastern proposals for a security conference, NATO Foreign Ministers gave a common declaration in the Icelandic capital in June 1968, calling for mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR) in Europe.¹³ This ‘signal of Reykjavik’ marked the beginning of the MBFR process which was to run in parallel with the CSCE for years to come.

Significantly, the West Germans – Brandt himself and numerous officials of the *Auswärtiges Amt* – were actively involved in the drafting of the Harmel report as well as in the preparations of the Reykjavik MBFR initia-

tive.¹⁴ But in all, these moves were not enough to block the growing interest of certain NATO allies in the idea of a CSCE. In mid-March 1968, on The Netherlands' initiative, the European security conference issue was again discussed in the political committee of NATO. The new instructions sent from Bonn to the West German NATO mission soon after that were unambiguous: for as long as the Soviets showed no sign of retreating from the maximal demands directed at the FRG, the Federal Government considered a European security conference to be an 'unsuitable instrument'.¹⁵ Nevertheless, during the spring of 1968, some, especially Belgium, Denmark and Norway, continued to argue in favour of moving forward with the conference idea.¹⁶

On the domestic level in Bonn, the FDP, the only opposition party in the *Bundestag*, was the first to develop a certain enthusiasm for a possible European security conference. The Free Democrats had started to revise their views on foreign policy immediately after the establishment of the Grand Coalition. The more progressive views in the party on foreign policy, especially on *Ostpolitik* and *Deutschlandpolitik*, were articulated in a study drafted by Wolfgang Schollwer in January 1967. Schollwer, working for the press service of the FDP and a controversial figure within the party, had presented similar views in an earlier memorandum already in 1962. In the internal struggle for the leadership of the party, two supporters of a new course in foreign policy, Walter Scheel and Hans-Dietrich Genscher, finally gained the upper hand in the party conference in January 1968.¹⁷ Genscher, for his part, had spoken in favour of a European security conference, with the inclusion of the United States, as early as in 1966.¹⁸ In a *Bundestag* debate in April 1968, Genscher once again argued that the Federal Government should actually be the main proponent of an all-European security conference, since it stood to gain the most from it: such a conference was, Genscher stated, 'in the long run probably the only international organ in which it would be possible, with at least some hope of success, also to discuss the German problems'.¹⁹

In his response to Genscher a few days later, Herbert Wehner (SPD), Minister for All-German Affairs and the true dynamo behind the Grand Coalition, warned of the danger of slipping into a 'conference slope', which had originally been set up only to make the FRG the scapegoat for all East-West problems. However, Wehner implied that the Federal Government was considering possibilities to turn the tables and to make the conference useful for its own purposes.²⁰ In June 1968, in another foreign policy debate in the *Bundestag*, Brandt declared that his recent discussions with foreign leaders, in the East and in the West, had confirmed his view that the time for a European security conference had not yet arrived. Nevertheless, both Brandt and Wehner now suggested that further discussion of the idea was

needed and that more emphasis should be given to developing a German contribution to a 'security component of a European peace order'.²¹

One highly controversial attempt at this kind of contribution was delivered only a week later, when Brandt's trusted adviser, Egon Bahr, at this time head of the *Auswärtiges Amt* planning staff, finished his draft on possible conceptions of European security. This memorandum was later leaked to the West German press, and published in September 1973 under the provocative title 'How Egon Bahr wants to neutralise Germany'.²² Bahr has consistently distanced himself from that label, but Alexander Gallus is correct in identifying certain neutralist tendencies in Bahr's thinking at that time.²³ Yet Anthony Nicholls makes a valid point in reminding us that the *Ostpolitik* of the FRG was never truly neutralist.²⁴ Although Bahr clearly was toying with the idea of a neutral German role between East and West, one should not draw too far-reaching conclusions on the basis of this single planning-staff paper. As Timothy Garton Ash has argued in this very context, planners are indeed there to think the unthinkable.²⁵

Nevertheless, Bahr's thoughts were certainly explosive at the time. In the paper, Bahr listed three different détente scenarios. In conception A, NATO and the Warsaw Pact were to remain antagonistic organisations but individual states in the East and the West were to seek a maximum of détente and disarmament. In conception B, NATO and the Warsaw Pact were to remain separate organisations but to lose their antagonistic nature because of their 'enmeshment' in common institutions, possibly leading to a 'European security commission' after a preceding European security conference. In conception C, the alliances were to be dissolved and replaced by a completely new common European security system, guaranteed by the United States and the Soviet Union, but without their participation. In Bahr's view, the third option was clearly the most promising one for the FRG, possibly creating suitable circumstances for reunification and at least leaving the solution of the German question open. Replacing NATO and the Warsaw Pact with a pan-European security system, the organs of which would be seated in Berlin, Bahr argued, would help to overcome the status quo and would be a move closer towards a European peace order.²⁶

However, to Bahr none of this seemed compatible at this stage with the idea of a CSCE. By contrast, for all the radical thoughts in the memorandum, Bahr's views on the European security conference remained fairly conventional. Bahr did suggest that the Western MBFR initiative, aired only a few days earlier in Reykjavik, might be useful in filling the Eastern conference idea with needed substance. But, he went on, it would be illusory to think that the conference agenda could be limited to this topic. Instead, the Soviet Union would use the conference to push ahead its maximal demands, especially the recognition of the GDR. Therefore, Bahr ar-

gued, for the time being any multilateral negotiations involving the GDR in general, and a European security conference in particular, especially as foreseen in his scenario B, were to be avoided. Since East German participation in a security conference was inevitable, Bahr reasoned, the GDR would as a result gain an immense enhancement in its international position, without the West receiving anything in return.²⁷ Thus, at this moment, Bahr joined the majority of decision-makers in Bonn in perceiving the security conference as harmful to West German interests.

The theoretical considerations of the future shape of East–West cooperation in Europe were rapidly overtaken by events in the night of 20–21 August 1968. The Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia dealt a crushing blow, not only to the reformists led by Alexander Dubcek in Prague, but to proponents of détente all over the world. The impact of the Prague invasion was also deeply felt in Bonn. In fact, it marked an important watershed in the Grand Coalition’s time in office, since the conclusions drawn by the coalition partners were almost diametrically opposite to each other. Whereas Brandt, Bahr and their entourage stressed the importance of continuing détente efforts, Kiesinger was under increasing pressure from the ranks of his own party to take a harder line in foreign policy towards the East. Thus, from August 1968 onwards, the mistrust and distance between Kiesinger and Brandt, to a certain extent inherent to begin with, started to grow dramatically.²⁸ As Dirk Kroegel has pointed out, from then on Kiesinger was no longer prepared to publicly defend the views of his Foreign Minister, let alone be in any way influenced by them.²⁹

All the same, as far as the CSCE was concerned, the severely damaged working relationship between Kiesinger and Brandt was not seriously tested for a while. The events in Prague ensured that the idea of a European security conference was temporarily off the table. Although the Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko repeated the suggestion for such a conference in his speech at the UN General Assembly in October 1968, the response in the West was lukewarm at best. And so it remained for the following months. It was not until March 1969 that a more serious discussion about the European security conference resurfaced. The decisive push came, once again, from the East.

The Budapest Appeal: ‘We Could Have Drafted it Ourselves’

As a result of the one-day summit meeting of its Political Consultative Committee in Budapest on 17 March 1969, the Warsaw Pact issued, in addition to the usual communiqué, an ‘appeal to all European states’. This

Budapest Appeal, as it became known, explicitly referred to the declaration made in Bucharest in July 1966, calling again for a pan-European conference to address questions of European security and peaceful cooperation.³⁰ But the tone of the appeal was new – implying that the Soviet attitude had changed significantly in a more conciliatory direction. Above all, this change was sparked by the Sino-Soviet border clashes on the Ussuri River in early March 1969. Confronted with a potential conflict in the East, the Soviet Union needed stability in the West. Against this backdrop, the Budapest Appeal was in all likelihood an effort to offset the negative impact of the Prague invasion.

Accordingly, the change in the Western response, compared with the very shallow attention given to the Karlovy Vary statement in the summer of 1967, was also quite remarkable. This time, in spite of the heavy burden of the recent Prague invasion, the Warsaw Pact document was carefully examined in Bonn, as in other European capitals. In the Federal Republic, the harsh attacks on West German militarism and ‘revanchism’ included in previous Warsaw Pact initiatives were naturally well remembered. Therefore, the clearly less aggressive tone of the Budapest Appeal was greeted with a mixture of old suspicions of Soviet motives and careful optimism. It can fairly be said that the former mood was more prevalent within the CDU/CSU and in the Chancellery, the latter within the SPD, the opposition party FDP, and in the *Auswärtiges Amt*.³¹ After the Budapest Appeal, for the remaining six months before the federal election, the discussion about the security conference was one – although certainly not the only – symptom of two simultaneous developments: the increasingly differing foreign policy views between the coalition partners on the one hand, the rapprochement of the ideas of the SPD and the FDP on the other.

In the Foreign Ministry, the first planning staff analysis of the Budapest Appeal immediately after the Warsaw Pact meeting characterised the appeal as a surprising change of course in Soviet foreign policy. The tone and contents of the appeal were substantially more conciliatory than those in the Bucharest proposal three years earlier. Although the Soviet insistence on recognition of the European status quo was still visible in it, the appeal was seen as the ‘most positive general declaration heard from the East for a long time’. The memorandum even suggested that large sections of the appeal could in fact have been drafted in the *Auswärtiges Amt*.³²

Foreign Minister Brandt followed suit in the foreign policy debate at the *Bundestag* on 19 March 1969. Whereas Rainer Barzel (CDU) left no doubt about his reservations regarding the latest Warsaw Pact proposal, Brandt argued that the appeal did constitute a surprising change of course, at least one of a tactical nature. Brandt noted the minimum of polemics contained in the appeal, in comparison with the aggressive Karlovy Vary dec-

laration. Nevertheless, in his *Bundestag* address, Brandt suggested that the initiative might also be a sign of a more active strategy of the Warsaw Pact – instead of waiting for an internal erosion of NATO, the Warsaw Pact might again be trying to weaken the coherence of the Alliance by addressing the European states separately.³³

In a statement given to the Hungarian news agency on the same day, Brandt's tone was clearly more optimistic. While calling for concrete deeds instead of mere declarations, for example in the form of force reductions, and demanding that the conference had to be carefully prepared, Brandt supported the idea in principle: 'We embrace this idea. The realisation of such a conference could bring closer the solution of the existing problems in Central Europe, and that would meet the interests of the German people and the countries in question.'³⁴ Within the *Auswärtiges Amt*, this Hungarian interview with the Foreign Minister became the first point of reference for an official West German position on the security conference.³⁵

Ulrich Sahn, a key official in Brandt's Foreign Ministry, struck a slightly more careful note in a memorandum which was also forwarded to Chancellor Kiesinger. In Sahn's view, although the unusually realistic tone of the appeal was remarkable and numerous points in it were 'compatible with the *Ostpolitik* of the Grand Coalition', that change was unlikely to be anything other than a tactical move. Because of this, Sahn argued, at that moment a European conference as well as a suggested preparatory conference would be against West German interests. For the time being, a conference could only end in failure, for which the Federal Republic would be blamed. Nevertheless, Sahn continued, if the conference was convened 'without preconditions, with the inclusion of the US, and if thorough preparation gave well-founded reason to expect success from it', it was in the West German interest to declare Bonn's readiness to it, in principle. Importantly, Sahn also noted that the surprisingly conciliatory tone of the appeal would almost certainly have an impact on the 'politically influential public of the West European states', and therefore increase pressure on the respective governments to work in favour of a security conference.³⁶

Sahn's memorandum brilliantly highlights the dichotomy visible in all of the early reactions to the Budapest Appeal in the *Auswärtiges Amt*. On the one hand, the appeal was welcomed for being 'unusually realistic' and 'polemically abstinent'.³⁷ Its demands for reduction of tension, renunciation of the use and the threat of force, and enhanced cooperation were recognised to be 'strikingly moderate' and 'in accordance with the principles of our *Ostpolitik*'.³⁸ But, on the other hand, the Soviet motives behind the appeal and their implications for the German question were deeply mistrusted. Conciliatory rhetoric alone was not enough to assure West Ger-

man officials that a European security conference would be anything else than yet another instrument for the Soviet Union to pursue its old objectives: cementing the status quo in Europe and the German division, reducing the American presence in Europe, and weakening the coherence of NATO.³⁹ In the week following the Budapest Appeal, Brandt specifically instructed the top officials in the *Auswärtiges Amt* to deal with the initiative 'delicately' and to 'refrain from negative statements'.⁴⁰ Thus, in spite of a fair amount of scepticism still making the rounds in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, by late March 1969 the Foreign Minister was clearly no longer willing to dismiss the CSCE offer.

In Kiesinger's Chancellery, by contrast, outright mistrust of the Warsaw Pact initiative continued to be the predominant mood. Immediately after Brandt's *Bundestag* statement in March, Walter Boss from the foreign policy department of the Chancellery wrote a memorandum to Kiesinger, comparing the declarations issued by the Warsaw Pact in Bucharest and Budapest. In Boss's view, the Bucharest declaration of 1966, to begin with, had not been as forthcoming as some in the West had interpreted it to be. Furthermore, Boss argued, as far as the German question was concerned, the Warsaw Pact took an even harder position in the Budapest Appeal than had been the case in Bucharest. Therefore he thought it was simply wrong to see the Budapest declaration as a 'change of course' in the Soviet Union's Western policy. In Boss's view the latest appeal had also encountered 'remarkable reservations' in most Western capitals, especially in Paris, London and Washington.⁴¹

This view of strong Allied reservations was indeed supported in various discussions of the Bonn Group in late March 1969. Jonathan Dean from the US embassy in Bonn expressed his worries of a 'free two-year period of propaganda' that a security conference would grant to the Soviets. If a conference was ever to be convened, Dean argued, the least the West should do would be to secure notable concessions in return, for example by linking the conference to progress on the Berlin situation.⁴² At the monthly quadripartite lunch, the Budapest Appeal was touched upon only briefly – but enough to make the State Secretary of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, stand out with clearly a more positive attitude towards the conference idea than the three ambassadors.⁴³

In line with the scepticism of his advisors and the major allies of the FRG, Chancellor Kiesinger appeared to be utterly suspicious of the latest Warsaw Pact move. Actually, instead of openly criticising the conference proposal, he maintained an almost complete silence on the topic in the weeks following the Budapest Appeal. While Brandt referred to it in numerous public statements, Kiesinger hardly mentioned the document at all. One of the rare exceptions was his visit to Vienna in late March. There,

the Chancellor stressed to his Austrian colleague Josef Klaus that, unlike Brandt, he did not consider that the appeal marked a change in Soviet policy. However, Kiesinger also told Klaus that he, too, was in favour of putting the 'hard core' of the appeal, the part regarding Germany, to the test.⁴⁴

Kiesinger was certainly correct in identifying the actual core of the Budapest Appeal. Just like the preceding calls for a security conference, the Budapest Appeal included a long list of 'main prerequisites (*Hauptvoraussetzungen*) for safeguarding European security', aimed directly at the Federal Republic. These included the inviolability of borders, recognition of the Oder-Neisse border, diplomatic recognition of both German states, renunciation of the FRG's claim for sole representation of the German people, German abstention from nuclear weapons, and recognition of the special status of West Berlin.⁴⁵ For Kiesinger and for the CDU/CSU in general this list of demands was reason enough to reject the conference proposal altogether. By contrast, Brandt and his key advisors were, from the outset, interested in finding out the nature of these claims: were they to be understood as preconditions (*Vorbedingungen*) for convening a conference or as a list of objects to be negotiated at a conference?⁴⁶

To address this and other open questions regarding the Budapest Appeal, Brandt arranged to have a meeting with the Soviet Ambassador in Bonn, Semjon Tsarapkin, on 1 April. Brandt stressed that clarification of the contents of the appeal was important for forming a West German position on the issue before the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Washington. Rather circumspcctly, Tsarapkin stated that although the conditions listed in the Budapest Appeal were prerequisites (*Voraussetzungen*) for safeguarding European security, that did not mean that the signatories of the appeal saw them as preconditions (*Vorbedingungen*) for convening the conference. As Brandt insisted on the importance of US and Canadian participation, Tsarapkin evaded with the standard Soviet reply: European security was first and foremost a European question, and there were hardly any forces outside Europe that would have as strong an interest in it as the European countries. Brandt was also unable to receive an answer to his question on whether the Budapest Appeal's references to arms limitation meant that the Warsaw Pact was willing to consider the MBFR initiative made by NATO in Reykjavik.⁴⁷

A sequel to this meeting followed only three days later, at Tsarapkin's request. In between the Soviet Ambassador had obviously received new instructions from Moscow, and was prepared to meet Brandt closer to half-way. Tsarapkin was determined to reassure Brandt that convening the security conference would not be connected with any kind of preconditions. He also told the Foreign Minister that the Soviet Government was fully prepared to engage in discussions and consultations on the entire complex

of issues related to the conference. Furthermore, the Soviet view on US participation had suddenly softened. Because European security was the issue, it was up to the European states to decide whether they welcomed US participation or not. Brandt welcomed this Soviet readiness for discussion, but argued that careful preparation was needed. It was better not to have a conference at all than to have a failed one. Overall, however, Brandt seemed to be very content with the results of the meeting – the Warsaw Pact was not setting any preconditions for the conference and seemed to be interested in genuine improvements in East–West relations.⁴⁸

The change of tone between these two meetings is actually quite remarkable. Although Tsarapkin attempted, in the latter meeting, to suggest that other Western states were accusing the FRG of blocking the security conference with its rigid views, his behaviour rather indicated the opposite. The Soviet Ambassador was at pains to convince the West German Foreign Minister of the viability of the European security conference, probably hoping that Brandt would be key to winning over the support of other NATO countries. If the security conference issue had been raised for propaganda purposes alone, the Soviets would hardly have signalled their willingness to negotiate with the West about its terms.

In any case, the two discussions between Tsarapkin and Brandt were crucial in forming the West German position on a security conference before the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Washington. Whereas the Chancellery had been very doubtful all along, the *Auswärtiges Amt* had from the outset drawn the conclusion that the West should signal its preparedness for a European security conference, provided that four conditions were met – there were no preconditions set for it, the United States and Canada would participate in it, the conference was carefully prepared and there was reason to expect some tangible results from it.⁴⁹ Now, the irony of a West German 'precondition for no preconditions' notwithstanding, Brandt's meetings with Tsarapkin and reports from West German embassies abroad indicated that the Soviet Union was prepared to meet the first two demands. The catch was obviously in the latter two, the ambiguous demand for careful preparations and tangible results, which in effect left open the possibility to hold back negotiations for as long as was considered necessary. In any case, Brandt and his trusted officials in the *Auswärtiges Amt* had reason to be optimistic about the prospects of a security conference. What they had to take into consideration, however, were the suspicions of their allies. As Sahm put it in a memorandum even before the Brandt–Tsarapkin meetings, it was important to avoid giving the impression that the Germans were suddenly trying, bilaterally with the Soviets, to rush ahead of their allies on the conference front.⁵⁰

Consultations Abroad, Electioneering at Home

In the North Atlantic framework, the Budapest Appeal had, at German and Dutch requests, been on the agenda of the NATO Council in Brussels already on 24 March. Then, the French Ambassador had been the only one equipped with more detailed – and rather sceptical – instructions from his government. The majority of the representatives had agreed that the security conference initiative should be discussed by the Foreign Ministers at their upcoming meeting in Washington.⁵¹

Prior to this twentieth anniversary gathering of NATO Foreign Ministers on 10–11 April, embassy reports from West German missions signalled that most NATO members had serious doubts about the security conference idea.⁵² Despite this disadvantageous starting point, Brandt did his best to make sure that the Budapest Appeal was high on the agenda in Washington. In bilateral and quadripartite discussions prior to the actual ministerial meeting, Brandt tried to convince his US, British and French colleagues William Rogers, Michael Stewart and Michel Debré to take the appeal seriously. While assuring his fellow ministers that he did not consider the security conference to be topical immediately, Brandt argued that bluntly rejecting the proposal would only strengthen ‘wrong elements’ in the Warsaw Pact. Although the three Allied Foreign Ministers were clearly more sceptical, at least the West German record shows them agreeing with Brandt that it would be unwise to respond to the Budapest Appeal negatively.⁵³

In his official statement in the Washington ministerial meeting, Brandt made the case strongly for ‘taking the Warsaw Pact countries at their word’. Instead of rejecting the proposal, Brandt argued, NATO members ought to respond to it by signalling their willingness to pursue a European security conference, while also reminding the Warsaw Pact of the MBFR initiative. This, Brandt pointed out, would be the best way to find out what motives lay behind the Warsaw Pact suggestion.⁵⁴ Other delegations agreed with the West German view that a European security conference would only make sense if the United States and Canada took part in it, if it was carefully prepared, if tangible results could be expected from it, and if no preconditions were set for the conference and its results.⁵⁵ Thus, the four West German ‘essentials’ regarding a possible CSCE, formulated in the *Auswärtiges Amt* soon after the Budapest Appeal, were adopted as a common NATO position.

In his final dispatch from the Washington meeting, Hans Ruete, Political Director⁵⁶ of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, concluded that Brandt’s statement was greeted with interest and general acceptance. Most of Brandt’s colleagues agreed that the moderate tone of the appeal was notable, and that

the NATO Council should examine it in more detail.⁵⁷ However, in the end the Budapest Appeal was not explicitly mentioned in the final communiqué of the ministerial meeting.⁵⁸ The main reason given for leaving the appeal out of the communiqué was the sharp declaration the Soviet Government had published on the twentieth anniversary of NATO. The Alliance could either discuss both documents or neither of them, Brandt later argued.⁵⁹

On the whole, it seems, Brandt was fairly successful in making his point understood among his colleagues. To be sure, most Foreign Ministers – with the exception of Italy’s Pietro Nenni – were somewhat more reserved in their attitudes towards the security conference than Brandt.⁶⁰ But, as both Ruete and Brandt stressed after their return to Bonn, the ministers had unanimously agreed that the Budapest Appeal should not be rejected completely. In spite of the scepticism of many members, the Alliance had laid out its own ‘balanced and constructive’ position to the security conference.⁶¹ And in fact, it was already in the Washington meeting that the Foreign Ministers agreed to begin discussions within the NATO structures about how to proceed in East–West negotiations. The Council was instructed to prepare a list of possible issues for fruitful negotiation and early resolution, and to report on the progress of that exploration at the following meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers in six months.⁶² As Hartmut Mayer has pointed out, therefore, the Alliance basically accepted the idea of a CSCE already in April 1969.⁶³

It was at home in Bonn that Brandt’s position caused greater controversy. Throughout the ministerial meeting, the large national West German newspapers had reported disagreements between Brandt and his colleagues in Washington about a suitable line on the security conference.⁶⁴ This, as was to be expected, was not at all well received in the Chancellery. On 10 April, in a letter to Kiesinger, State Secretary Karl Carstens referred to the news reports as well as the protocols of the Foreign Minister’s earlier discussions with Tsarapkin, and argued that Brandt had talked ‘too positively’ about the security conference.⁶⁵ On the following day, Kiesinger brought this criticism into the open in a public speech. Some Germans, the Chancellor said, had ‘unfounded illusions’ about the Budapest Appeal and the security conference. The Federal Government had continuously stressed that ‘a European peace order could not be created by making the German people accept the Soviet demands for eternalising the forced status quo in Europe’. Yet those hard and unconditional demands, Kiesinger argued, were exactly what were hidden behind the friendly-sounding sentences of the Budapest declaration.⁶⁶

Within the Chancellery, Carstens was especially active in attacking Brandt in this context. In a further memorandum to Kiesinger a few days

later, the State Secretary stressed that recent foreign policy developments in Bonn 'filled him with great concern'. One of the main reasons for this was the positive statement on the security conference Brandt had made in Washington. In Carstens' view, Brandt's behaviour was difficult to understand, since the Warsaw Pact wanted to use the conference first and foremost to weaken the position of West Berlin and the Federal Republic.⁶⁷ To press his point, Carstens suggested that Kiesinger should take the matter up with Brandt personally, and also drafted a letter of his own to be sent to the Foreign Minister, highlighting their disagreements on the CSCE issue. In it, Carstens criticised Brandt for failing to tell the Soviet Ambassador in their recent meeting that the Federal Government did not approve of the suggestions of the Budapest Declaration regarding Germany and Berlin. As for the NATO ministerial meeting in Washington, Carstens would have wished to hear Brandt declare there that the most important purpose of the conference for the Soviets was to seal the German division.⁶⁸

Thus, the growing rift between the two views within the Grand Coalition on the European security conference was becoming increasingly apparent. Since the differences in the statements made by Kiesinger and Brandt were so easily discernible, Ruete's attempt to assure a Soviet embassy official in mid-April that the Chancellor and the Foreign Minister had agreed in their analyses about the situation 'before, during and after the NATO conference' was half-hearted and futile. Even more so, since Ruete added that the Soviet embassy should consider Brandt's statements in a press conference on 14 April as the official West German position.⁶⁹

The disagreements were no longer confined to the domestic arena, either. In April Kiesinger told the Swedish Prime Minister Tage Erlander he did not believe that a European security conference would actually be convened. Whereas Erlander approved of the conference idea, provided that the United States took part in it, Kiesinger argued that the Americans simply did not want this kind of conference and that the only thing that could be advanced by it was the recognition of the European status quo. In Kiesinger's view Brandt and Nenni had been the only exceptions to the otherwise reserved statements in the Washington meeting. Kiesinger also told the Swedish premier that prior to the NATO ministerial meeting he had warned Brandt 'not to go too far'.⁷⁰

Brandt defended his views at an SPD party conference in Bad Godesberg. Reminding his audience that there was no reason to overestimate the significance of the Budapest Appeal, he nevertheless stressed how important it was to find out whether it had been meant to be taken seriously. In this view, Brandt declared, he had been fully supported by allies in Washington. 'And I am certain', he added, 'that at the end of the day even the chairman of the CDU will not have any objections to it'.⁷¹ So far, however,

neither the Chancellor nor his subordinates showed any sign of changing their minds. Instead, Hermann Wentker, a specialist on *Deutschlandpolitik* at the Chancellery, strongly criticised Brandt's views, calling it 'politically inexpedient' to enter a conference which would only suck the West Germans into the 'maelstrom of Eastern ideas on the German question'. Furthermore, Wentker considered attempts to present the Budapest Appeal as a serious proposal to be a deception of the general public.⁷²

Towards the end of April, the security conference issue was also discussed in the parliamentary framework in Bonn – confidentially in the Foreign Policy Committee of the *Bundestag* as well as publicly in the plenary debates. In the session of the Foreign Policy Committee on 24 April, Brandt told the members that he was certainly not expecting the conference to be convened 'next week at 5 p.m.'. Nevertheless, Brandt declared, contrary to some press reports the Allies had supported him in Washington in the view that it was not advisable to reject the Eastern proposal completely. Instead of arguing about technicalities, the focus should be on the agenda of a possible conference. Agreement to coordinate the bilateral East–West contacts of individual NATO members in this respect had, in Brandt's opinion, been the essential achievement of the NATO ministerial meeting.⁷³

On the following day, in the plenary debate of the *Bundestag*, Brandt was again confronted with the alleged contradiction between his actions and the scepticism of his NATO colleagues regarding Soviet proposals for a 'mammoth conference on European security'. Brandt, in his response to this question posed by a Christian Democrat MP, denied the allegation. On the contrary, he argued, there had been a high degree of agreement in principle on the judgement of the Budapest Appeal in Washington: 'In agreement with most of my colleagues, I consider it essential that the West does not allow itself to be pressed into a negative position or into a merely reactive role'.⁷⁴ In fact, for all their disagreements in the large foreign policy debate in the same *Bundestag* session, the leaders of all three parliamentary groups – Helmut Schmidt (SPD), Rainer Barzel (CDU/CSU) and Wolfgang Mischnick (FDP) – managed to agree that it would be useful to sound out the Soviet proposal through diplomatic channels, in order to discover what it was truly made of.⁷⁵

Purely in substance, then, there was hardly sufficient reason for the domestic controversy about the West German position towards a possible CSCE, and especially about Brandt's role in the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting. There were genuine differences of opinion, but by and large all the three major political parties agreed that if the necessary precautions were met, the idea of a European security conference was worth looking into further. However, those minor differences that did exist were dramat-

ically sharpened by the overall state of the Grand Coalition. With still five more months to go until the federal election in September, the partnership between the CDU/CSU and SPD had already turned into rivalry, especially in foreign policy issues. The security conference provided the main contenders, Kiesinger and Brandt, with one possible issue to make their differences felt – at times leading both sides to an inadvertent exaggeration of their own positions, as Waldemar Besson has noted.⁷⁶ In addition, apart from being personal, between the Chancellor and the Foreign Minister, the controversy about the prospective CSCE during the remainder of the Grand Coalition's time in office was to a large extent also institutional, between key officials in the Chancellery and the *Auswärtiges Amt*. Short-term electioneering and long-running institutional rivalries were central factors in the inability of the Grand Coalition to form a firm West German position towards the security conference.

But on the international level, at the same time, Brandt and his *Auswärtiges Amt* played an important role in initiating a serious discussion about the security conference within the West. Although most of Brandt's colleagues were not as responsive to the Budapest Appeal as the West German Foreign Minister, the NATO ministerial meeting in April 1969 marked the beginning of multilateral Western preparations for a possible East–West meeting. For the time being, admittedly, these preparations were very speculative in character, given that the Eastern proposals lacked any concrete ideas of procedure and timetable leading to the convening of a European security conference. This situation was soon to change, with a surprise move by the Finnish Government.

Nobody Expects the Finnish Initiative

Following the instructions in the Washington communiqué (paragraph 5), the permanent NATO machinery in Brussels was engaged with the proposed CSCE already in late April. At a Political Committee meeting on 22 April, comparing their recent experiences, the representatives noted that especially Soviet, Romanian and Hungarian diplomats had been very active in Western capitals lately, trying to promote the conference idea. This 'Soviet smile offensive', as a French official called it, had failed to make a convincing impression.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the Allies started their discussion on a 'list of issues for possible East–West negotiations', as prescribed by the ministers in Washington.⁷⁸ In the first Senior Political Committee (SPC) meeting, the West German representative argued for dividing the issues into three categories, to be approached chronologically in that order: (1) smaller steps to sound out the intentions of the Warsaw Pact countries and

to reduce suspicion on both sides; (2) discussion of topics in the cultural, scientific, technological and economic sphere; and (3) a wide range of disarmament and arms control issues, including balanced force reductions. Interestingly, the West German official concluded that a solution of the problems regarding Germany and Berlin could only be attempted at the end of all these negotiation rounds.⁷⁹ In its report in early May, the NATO Council stressed the importance of 'due caution and careful preparation of positions'.⁸⁰

But a completely new variable in the nascent debate about a European security conference was introduced on 5 May 1969, when Finland suddenly distributed an *aide-mémoire* to all European governments as well as to the United States and Canada. In the memorandum, the Finnish Government declared itself to be 'favourably disposed to the convening of a conference on European security problems' and offered to act as a host to such a conference as well as a possible preparatory meeting, 'provided that the Governments concerned consider this as appropriate'. Arguing for their suitability to host the conference, the Finns especially stressed their 'impartial attitude towards the most vital problem of European security, the German question'.⁸¹

In view of Finland's problematic position as a neutral country under constant political pressure from its large Eastern neighbour, such a move coming from Helsinki was destined to raise suspicions in the West that Finland was acting merely as a Soviet puppet in Moscow's pet project. The blunder of opening the memorandum with a direct reference to the Soviet Government⁸² was hardly helpful to the Finnish officials trying to avert Western suspicions. In the light of archival sources and recent scholarship, however, the assurances of the Finns at the time seem to have been well-founded. The Soviets certainly put pressure on Finland to act in favour of the conference, more so than the Foreign Ministry in Helsinki was willing to admit openly. But the formulation, contents and timing of the memorandum were truly of Finnish origin.

Clearly, both Finland and the FRG had a special position in the Soviet blueprint for a security conference. On 8 April, the Soviet Ambassador in Finland, Andrei Kovalev, showed up on the doorstep of Tamminiemi, President Urho Kekkonen's residence in Helsinki. Kovalev called for Finnish support for the recent Budapest Appeal, explicitly arguing with the West German case. 'If several European countries approach the proposal positively, the Federal Republic of Germany can no longer take an opposing position.'⁸³ Yet although Soviet suggestions always had to be taken seriously in Helsinki, the memorandum issued four weeks later was actually quite skilfully drafted to serve Finnish interests as well, in domestic and foreign policies alike. Kimmo Rentola, a Finnish scholar, has put it

poignantly: ‘When bowing to Soviet pressure, Kekkonen clearly wanted to give the idea a touch of his own.’⁸⁴ Moreover, from the Soviet perspective, at the turn of the decade the Finns were no longer such trustworthy messengers as they had once been. As Rentola argues, in 1969–70 the Kremlin leadership was increasingly worried about Finland’s threatening ‘slide’ away from its grip.⁸⁵

Interestingly, the Finnish initiative was not completely new in May 1969. Paavo Keisalo, one of the key Finnish officials involved with the CSCE process in the 1970s, told the author that the Finnish Foreign Ministry had toyed with the idea of getting active in the CSCE context already a year earlier. Secretly prepared in the spring of 1968 for Kekkonen’s visit to the Soviet Union, the speech containing the original initiative to act as host for a security conference was, however, never made during that trip.⁸⁶ Having been suppressed by the Prague events in August 1968, the idea was then rediscovered at a lunch between Kekkonen and the Finnish UN Ambassador Max Jakobson in Tamminiemi on 29 April 1969.⁸⁷

Paradoxically, the main goal behind the Finnish proposal was not the convening of a security conference. Instead, as Keijo Korhonen, then Deputy Political Director in the Foreign Ministry, has said, its main aim was to serve as a ‘driving anchor’ of Finnish policy towards the two German states.⁸⁸ At the time, Finland was the only country in Europe that had not fully recognised either of the German states yet maintained diplomatic relations with both of them on equal footing – instead of embassies, these relations were taken care of on the level of trade missions. In order to maintain this status as a cornerstone of the policy of neutrality, and to dodge growing domestic and foreign pressures to recognise the GDR, the conference initiative was intended to highlight the value of this exceptional Finnish position in the German question. This has also been confirmed by Jakobson, who argues that the CSCE initiative was only a diversionary move, intended to safeguard Finnish neutrality.⁸⁹ Focusing on this instrumental value of their initiative, in May 1969 nobody in the Finnish leadership actually expected it to lead to anything substantial as far as the security conference was concerned. Yet only a few weeks later, faced with a flow of positive responses to the CSCE memorandum, ‘the magician himself was surprised’, as President Kekkonen wrote under his pen name.⁹⁰

The West Germans, at the time, naturally did not know the complete background of the Finnish surprise move. Nevertheless, first analyses of the memorandum in the *Auswärtiges Amt* were relatively sober and positive. Having received the *aide-mémoire* on 5 May, Ruete told the head of the Finnish trade mission in Bonn that the West German view of a possible security conference was ‘fairly similar’ to that of the Finns. Ruete also

confirmed that Bonn did not oppose the participation of the GDR.⁹¹ The representatives of the FRG in Moscow and Helsinki concluded that the Finns seemed to have thought out their initiative more or less on their own. Although the Soviets had probably been consulted, 'it would certainly be wrong to see the memorandum only as the extended arm of the Kremlin'.⁹²

Yet in spite of the general benevolence towards the Finnish move in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, it also posed the Federal Republic with a dilemma. At least temporarily, it complicated the emerging plans to make the conference project useful for the *Deutschlandpolitik* of the FRG. First hints of these plans can be seen in the widely noted speech Brandt gave in Hamburg on 7 May 1969, focusing precisely on the European security conference. Drafted before the delivery of the Finnish memorandum, the speech had been intended by Egon Bahr to be perceived as an 'important political step' by the audience in Hamburg as well as by the Soviet Union.⁹³

In his speech, Brandt underscored the implications of the Budapest Appeal for inner-German relations. They were twofold. On the one hand, in Brandt's view, the appeal indicated that it would be possible to overcome the 'unrealistic preconditions' for talks between Bonn and East Berlin. Because the GDR was among the signatories of the Budapest Appeal, Brandt argued, there was reason to believe that the East Germans finally agreed that solving the problems arising from the German division could not be treated as preconditions for entering inner-German talks, any more than for convening a security conference. On the other hand, Brandt went on to explain that for the Federal Republic it was even more important now than before to improve inner-German relations prior to a security conference. Otherwise, the conference would be unnecessarily burdened by 'German quarrels'.⁹⁴

This was a prime example of the paradoxical relationship the FRG had to the 'Europeanisation' of the German question. It was essential for Bonn to press the GDR to admit that the German division was a European problem, and that solving the problem by negotiations was in a general European interest. But at the same time, the FRG insisted on tackling these problems bilaterally, not in a pan-European conference. Putting the solution of the German problem on the agenda of a multilateral forum was certainly one of the last things that any Federal Government in Bonn – regardless of its composition – wanted. For as long as the allies of the FRG remained suspicious of the conference, however, Brandt and Bahr seem to have thought that it would be possible to delay its being convened long enough in order to make substantial progress in the inner-German relationship before that. Arguing with the threat of 'German quarrels' at a future security conference, they hoped to put pressure on the GDR to agree to inner-German negotiations.

And it was precisely here that the Finnish initiative contradicted West German interests. The move by a neutral country made the idea of a European security conference more acceptable in the West than when it had been exclusive to the Warsaw Pact. Simultaneously, it dramatically accelerated the process from a speculative idea towards an actual conference. Moreover, it required every addressee to react to it.⁹⁵ For the West Germans, even those who had so far been vocally in favour of a CSCE, this turned out to be a difficult task. In his Hamburg speech, given two days after the Finnish initiative, Brandt did not mention the Finnish memorandum at all. In subsequent weeks, the *Auswärtiges Amt*, let alone the Chancellery, was extremely reluctant to comment on the Finnish initiative publicly in any way.

This silence clearly irritated the Soviet Union. In Bonn, the Soviet Ambassador even made the extraordinarily clumsy effort to persuade the head of the Finnish trade mission, Martti Salomies, to act on behalf of Moscow. At a meeting organised at very short notice in mid-May, Tsarapkin urged the Finn to contact State Secretary Duckwitz or other influential figures in the *Auswärtiges Amt* in order to 'squeeze out' at least a preliminary reply, and then to inform Tsarapkin of it. Salomies cautiously refused, arguing that he could neither put pressure on German officials, nor share confidential information from third parties with Tsarapkin without permission from the Finnish Government.⁹⁶

Meanwhile, the NATO members had agreed to consult each other about the Finnish initiative and pledged that none of them would give a binding answer to the Finns before that. The issue was set on the agenda of the Political Committee and the Council for 13–14 May.⁹⁷ In preparation for these consultations in Brussels, Ruete sent detailed instructions to the West German NATO mission. In the telegram, Ruete praised the 'soberly balanced' text of the Finnish memorandum, which was considered to reflect the endeavours of the Finnish Government to maintain correct neutrality. However, Ruete was clearly concerned about the implications of the Finnish initiative for the German question, especially its characterisation of the German question as 'the most vital problem of European security'.⁹⁸

In the NATO Council meeting on 14 May, the Allies struggled to find a common position on the Finnish memorandum. The Scandinavian countries and Canada assessed the move in very positive terms, whereas the United States, supported by the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Turkey and Britain, suspected that the Finns were, first and foremost, advancing Soviet interests and increasing the propaganda effect of the Budapest Appeal.⁹⁹ The West German NATO Ambassador Wilhelm Grewe stood between these extremes. Following instructions, Grewe suggested that 'no reply should be given to the proposal for preparatory work and a subsequent

conference, but that after consultation in NATO individual replies should be sent which could state interest in the Finnish proposal and agree that “detailed bilateral soundings” would be the necessary first stage’.¹⁰⁰ Summing up the consultation, NATO Secretary General Manlio Brosio declared that the members should reply to the Finnish initiative individually. The possibilities ranged from the British proposal (‘take note and undertake to bear in mind’) to the ‘more forthcoming’ West German view.¹⁰¹

Given a closer look, however, the position on the Finnish memorandum in the *Auswärtiges Amt* was not too forthcoming either. The FRG was prepared to conduct ‘bilateral soundings’, but for the time being, there was not going to be an official reply to the Finns. Accordingly, in a press conference on 19 May in Bonn, Foreign Minister Brandt replied very evasively to a question on the Finnish proposal. Brandt described the Finnish initiative as an important document, which would be taken into consideration in the common consultations on European security in NATO.¹⁰² Fortunately for the West Germans, the Finns did not seem to insist on a rapid response to their memorandum. At the end of May, Salomies said that Ruete’s oral comments at the delivery of the document were considered to be sufficient and that no further statement was required or expected.¹⁰³

The impact of the Finnish security conference initiative in May 1969 on the whole CSCE process was significant. In addition to raising the idea to another, more serious level from a one-sided Warsaw Pact action, it gave, as a chief US negotiator in the later CSCE has put it, the prospective security conference its first fixed element – the site.¹⁰⁴ At this stage, however, fixed elements were not necessarily something that the West German decision-makers, not even those in principle in favour of a security conference, wanted. On the contrary, during the spring of 1969 Brandt, Bahr and a few key officials in the *Auswärtiges Amt* had started to see the instrumental value of the possible security conference: a means to lure the GDR into negotiations with the Federal Republic. This tactical approach required delaying the convening of the conference to meet a timetable suitable for Bonn. For as long as there was nothing more substantial around than a series of rather elusive Warsaw Pact proposals to respond to, this seemed manageable within the Alliance. With the Finnish move, however, the security conference idea became more presentable in the West. Thus, when a number of Western Allies also started to show interest in the conference, the process threatened to begin advancing too rapidly for West German tastes. But the acceleration of the progress towards a security conference was by no means just bad news for Brandt and Bahr. Over the summer of 1969 it started to become obvious that, in their view, the instrumental value was not the only side to the story. Especially Brandt was increasingly manifesting genuine interest in the possible contents of a CSCE.

Promises of East–West Cooperation or an Instrument of *Deutschlandpolitik*?

With the federal election getting closer, in the summer months of 1969 the security conference became an increasingly controversial issue within the Grand Coalition. To be sure, the conference was nowhere near the top of the foreign policy agenda in Bonn. Other, more severe arguments within the government – most notably that over the response to the Cambodian decision to recognise the GDR – were the ones that brought the Grand Coalition deeper and deeper into a crisis. At the same time, these circumstances further diminished the likelihood of achieving an agreed official position on the CSCE.

Both abroad and at home, Brandt continued his active engagement in favour of the security conference. Increasingly, there were two strands simultaneously visible in Brandt's argumentation. On the one hand, he emphasised the genuine promises for a European peace order provided by the conference. On the other, he presented progress in the inner-German relationship as a necessary prerequisite for the convocation of the CSCE. In the meeting of the Western European Union (WEU) in The Hague at the beginning of June, Brandt praised the Budapest Appeal as one of the most remarkable changes in East–West relations during recent years. Precisely because of indications that the Warsaw Pact countries were not merely engaged in the conference project for the sake of tactical manoeuvring, Brandt stressed that the West should continue to 'take the Eastern statesmen at their word'. In particular, the West German Foreign Minister was intrigued by the references in the Budapest Appeal to common projects dealing, for instance, with energy, traffic and the environment.¹⁰⁵ At the meeting of the Socialist International, Brandt compared reading this section on East–West cooperation in the Budapest Appeal with 'meeting an old acquaintance'. In the mid-1960s, as mayor of West Berlin, Brandt himself had suggested taking up similar pan-European infrastructure projects.¹⁰⁶ In another speech in July, Brandt regretted that the positive importance of these elements, especially of economic cooperation, had so far been underestimated in the discussion about the European security conference.¹⁰⁷

Meanwhile, Brandt's growing interest in the CSCE had also been evident in his decision to set up a specific CSCE working group in the *Auswärtiges Amt*, to discuss issues related to the security conference. On 12 June, Ulrich Sahm was appointed to lead the working group.¹⁰⁸ During the summer, prior to submitting its final report shortly after the federal election in October, this working group was convened for at least eight sessions.¹⁰⁹ One of the opening moves of the working group during the summer of 1969 was to widen its agenda. Instead of focusing on political

and security issues alone, it was considered necessary to include economic and cultural contacts as well as common projects on energy and traffic, for instance, in the working group meetings.¹¹⁰

Accordingly, in his speech to the *Bundestag* Foreign Policy Committee in late August, Brandt pleaded forcefully for serious consideration of the possibilities opened by the conference. Since not even the Soviets were counting on the conference to be convened in the near future, Brandt argued, 'the West is rather stupid if it only ever talks about the label on the bottle, instead of focusing on what is supposed to be inside the bottle. The subject matter at stake here is more important than the procedural questions.'¹¹¹ This emphasis on the softer elements of the proposed security conference, increased East–West cooperation in a number of different fields ranging from large-scale economic cooperation to individual scientific projects, was definitely a crucial part of the thinking of Brandt and Bahr. Instead of solidifying the East–West divide with uncompromising positions, the only way forward in Europe was to make the iron curtain more permeable. There was genuine interest in enhanced cooperation, as a means towards the 'European peace order'. In fact, on this track the discussions within NATO on the 'list of issues' proceeded quite rapidly over the summer. Summing up the state of play so far, an SPC report in July grouped the topics under four categories: (1) measures to reduce tension and promote confidence; (2) arms limitations and disarmament; (3) measures for economic, technological and cultural cooperation; and (4) Germany and Berlin.¹¹²

Yet the substantive interest in the security conference was only one dimension of Brandt's and Bahr's policies – tactical manoeuvring was at least as important. In addition to an endearment to the substance, Brandt was clearly also aware of the usefulness of the 'bottle' itself. Before anyone was allowed to taste its contents, the promise of a security conference was to be put to use in seeking a solution to the most pressing issue of West German foreign policy. Thus, throughout the summer, Brandt's optimistic tones on East–West cooperation were constantly accompanied by references to the need to bring clarity to the inner-German relationship prior to the convocation of the conference.

Already in his WEU speech in early June, Brandt had firmly underscored that the inner-German relationship had to be clarified before the conference, if it was to have a chance of success.¹¹³ Within the *Auswärtiges Amt*, Bahr went significantly further on these lines. In a high-level meeting in the ministry in June, Bahr admitted that the security conference itself would not be able to solve the German question – the conference should thus focus on enhancing security and economic links between East and West. But Bahr argued that the CSCE could be utilised for the purposes

of the German question. As far as Bonn's Eastern policy was concerned, Bahr considered there to be three main obstacles to West German attempts at rapprochement with Eastern Europe: borders, nuclear issues and the GDR. The first two could be solved with a renunciation-of-force agreement and with the non-proliferation treaty (NPT). The security conference, in Bahr's view, could provide the lever with which to deal with the third problem. Therefore Bahr argued for turning a solution to the inner-German relationship into a prerequisite for the security conference. Most of Bahr's colleagues, while agreeing with the goal, were hesitant to put such a controversial demand at the heart of the West German contribution, worried that Bonn would as a result be blamed for the postponement of the conference.¹¹⁴ Regardless of the sceptical reception, this meeting marked the first occasion when Bahr explicitly made the case for a direct linkage of the CSCE with progress in the inner-German relationship.

In mid-June, Brandt reassured the Soviet Ambassador in Bonn that the Federal Government was still not setting any preconditions for the security conference. At the same time, however, the Foreign Minister argued that during the lengthy preparations it would be very useful for everyone involved if the relationship between Bonn and East Berlin could be improved before the actual convocation of the conference. Otherwise the German question would 'considerably burden the work of the conference'.¹¹⁵ There certainly was also genuine concern in Bonn about the affect an unsolved German question might have on a CSCE, and *vice versa*.¹¹⁶ Ensuring that an eventual conference would not founder on the issue of GDR participation, with the blame for it put on the FRG, was 'uppermost' in the thinking of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, as a US embassy official was assured in Bonn.¹¹⁷ In late August, one paper drafted in the *Auswärtiges Amt* warned that even a substantial improvement in the inner-German relationship might not be enough to prevent problems arising from East German participation. In fact, dreading as it was a 'mammoth conference on German questions', the rhetoric of the paper closely resembled that of Brandt's fiercest critics from the CDU/CSU backbenchers a few months earlier.¹¹⁸

Yet the motives behind constant references to the troublesome impact of the 'German quarrels' on the conference were also of a tactical nature. In view of the number of 'third world' countries that had recently recognised the GDR, what was left of the Hallstein Doctrine was rapidly crumbling. However, the FRG still wanted to maintain the initiative in regulating the relationship with its Eastern neighbour. And in this respect, by far the worst case scenario for Bonn was broad international recognition of the GDR and a European security conference with both German states participating in it prior to an inner-German agreement. Therefore, as Bahr's

planning staff argued in early July, it was essential to continue holding up all developments leading towards a general recognition of the GDR.¹¹⁹

During the summer of 1969, Brandt and Bahr seem to have started to see the security conference not only as one of the symptoms of the problem, but also as a possible cure for it. In a meeting of European Socialist leaders in early July, Brandt told his colleagues that the participation of both German states in a security conference would not be a problem to him. But the time during the preparations of the conference, he argued, should be devoted to seeking some kind of *modus vivendi* between Bonn and East Berlin. Indeed, the approaching conference might be used to apply pressure on the East German Government to respond to earlier proposals. Significantly, Brandt asked for support from the Allies for this policy: 'if West Germany's friends could give the Russians similar advice on this it could be helpful'.¹²⁰

Unwilling to take the blame for slowing down the preparations, the *Auswärtiges Amt* and Brandt at its head were at pains to deny that they were setting their own preconditions for the conference. In fresh instructions sent to NATO Ambassador Grewe in late June, Ruete emphasised that the West German insistence on a resolution in inner-German relations was not a precondition, but that an improvement in that relationship was essential if any results were to be expected from the conference.¹²¹ Bahr, on his behalf, argued that the West German position was merely an 'expectation' – just as the Soviet Union took it for granted that the GDR would participate in the conference, the FRG took it for granted that the mutual relationship of the German states was clarified before it.¹²²

Semantics aside, it was quite obvious that the West German officials were doing precisely what they denied: turning progress in the German question into a precondition for a security conference. No matter how careful and subtle the formulations were, they were making clear to their allies and to the Soviet Union that the FRG would insist on reaching at least some kind of agreement with the GDR before agreeing to enter a CSCE. Suitably, in a meeting of the CSCE working group of the *Auswärtiges Amt* on 22 July, Sahn stated that the main interest for the FRG in the security conference was to use it as a means to make advances in Bonn's *Deutschlandpolitik*, and, as Bahr then added, to 'unblock' West German relations with Eastern Europe.¹²³

Whereas a consensus was slowly emerging within the Foreign Ministry about the suitable line for the Federal Republic to take on the security conference, on the level of domestic politics it remained a controversial and potentially explosive issue in the run-up to the federal election in September. For its part, the opposition party FDP had been an outspoken

advocate of the CSCE already for some time. At their party conference at the end of June, the Free Democrats passed a resolution for the forthcoming election, setting a European peace order as the central foreign policy goal of the FRG. In order to achieve this peace order, 'a European security conference without preconditions', in which members of both military alliances as well as other European states would take part, was needed.¹²⁴

By contrast, Chancellor Kiesinger and his foreign policy advisors still refused to become entangled with the conference in any way. On the parliamentary level the disagreements between the CDU/CSU and the SDP over the security conference did not prevent attempts to discuss the matter, but the bridging of the divide between the Chancellery and the *Auswärtiges Amt* turned out to be a next to impossible task. Kiesinger's attitude towards the conference was apparent in the preparations for the Chancellor's *Bundestag* address on the 'state of the nation in divided Germany' on 17 June, commemorating the East Berlin uprising of 1953. In late May, Bahr's planning staff had drafted a paragraph on the security conference to be included in the speech. In this draft, Bahr certainly did not paint too enthusiastic a picture of the CSCE, arguing that it was not certain whether the time was yet ripe for a conference: 'The aim is not to hold a conference at any price. In other words, more important than all the formalities of a conference is its substance. A conference not resulting in any notable progress would be a setback for European security.'¹²⁵ Yet this formulation was not cautious enough for Kiesinger. In the coalition talks a week before his speech, Kiesinger made it clear that he was reluctant to mention the CSCE at all. It is worth noting that faced with the Chancellor's opposition, Brandt did not insist on its inclusion either, arguing that recent information from the Finns suggested that not even the Soviets counted on the conference being convened any time before 1971.¹²⁶ Accordingly, in the declaration Kiesinger gave to the *Bundestag* on 17 June, there was not a single reference to the security conference.¹²⁷

Nevertheless, in the *Bundestag* discussion following Kiesinger's statement the CSCE was brought up by the leader of the CDU/CSU group, Rainer Barzel. While offering assurances that his party also wanted a European peace order, he went on to stress that the Christian Democrats were sceptical of the Warsaw Pact's invitation to a European security conference since the words of the Budapest Appeal were contradicted by completely different deeds. Therefore, Barzel welcomed recent statements by Brandt and the Dutch Foreign Minister Joseph Luns, both of whom had stressed the importance of progress on the German question before the conference would make any sense. In the ensuing discussion, Brandt replied that one had indeed to judge the Budapest Appeal with

a fair amount of scepticism. To Brandt, a core element in the appeal had been the abstinence from demanding a diplomatic recognition of the GDR as a precondition for the conference. In his view, if this claim were to be included retrospectively due to East German pressure, it would no longer be possible to take the Budapest Appeal seriously, regardless of how well it would fit in with ideas about a European peace order.¹²⁸

This fairly harmonious exchange between Barzel and Brandt was a far cry from the contradictions between the latter and Kiesinger. In numerous background briefings with German and international journalists during the summer, Kiesinger openly acknowledged this difference of opinion, adding, however, that Brandt did not sincerely believe in the conference project either. Although the Foreign Minister was talking about the conference a lot more than the Chancellor would have preferred, Kiesinger explained that Brandt had assured him that he was using it only as a tactical means. In Kiesinger's view, Brandt was using his positive statements on the CSCE to present himself as an important 'peace politician' and to win capital for his own party. As for his own position, Kiesinger stressed that he did not have any illusions about the security conference. For reasons of *Deutschlandpolitik* it was unwise to reject it straight away, but in the Chancellor's opinion there was not much to be expected from it.¹²⁹

The widening gap between Kiesinger and Brandt had not escaped Western observers. 'There was no fixed federal policy as yet on this matter', a British memorandum noted in July.¹³⁰ The US embassy in Bonn reported in June that the Christian Democrats remained far more sceptical of the conference than Brandt. However, the CDU had not yet launched a public offensive against Brandt, 'perhaps because it suspects that there may exist latent support for the project among the Western German public'.¹³¹

But if the Christian Democrats were reluctant to confront Brandt openly at home, they did not have similar inhibitions when it came to making their view understood in Washington. At the end of June, the CDU parliamentary Kurt Birrenbach met the US Secretary of State, William Rogers, in Washington, conveying a message from Kiesinger. 'Notwithstanding what he [Rogers] might hear from other quarters, the Chancellor firmly believed that a European security conference should come about only at the end of very careful preparations and negotiations and that the Federal Government would strictly keep within the limits of the NATO resolution on this subject'.¹³² The West German Ambassador to Washington, Rolf Pauls, supported Kiesinger's view, telling Henry Kissinger in July that 'he did not think a European Security Conference was desirable at this time since it was bound to fail and produce a situation worse than the existing one'.¹³³

During his state visit to the United States in early August, Kiesinger continued to sow suspicion about Brandt's comments. When the Chancellor met Nixon and Kissinger, he referred to the understandable need to make sanguine statements about the CSCE, if one wanted to improve relations with the East. But, Kiesinger told the US leadership, Brandt himself was convinced, and had told the Chancellor so, that the security conference would never be convened.¹³⁴ Interestingly, in this respect Kiesinger spoke beyond the talking points prepared for him for the meeting. Although sceptical of the conference, the points Carstens had drafted for the Chancellor did not include any references to Brandt. In fact, the Carstens paper was very close to the line represented by the Foreign Minister, arguing as it was for using the CSCE to influence the East German leader: 'If the Soviet Union is really interested in the security conference, it should put pressure on Ulbricht accordingly.'¹³⁵ This element, however, was omitted by Kiesinger in his talks.

In all, Kiesinger's systematic efforts to downplay Brandt's positive remarks about the security conference during the summer of 1969 are partly explained by the truly conflicting views of the Chancellor and his Foreign Minister, not to mention the accelerating election race between the coalition partners. However, Kiesinger's repeated references to Brandt explicitly admitting in private that he did not actually believe in the prospects of the conference do suggest that Brandt might in fact have done just that. In retrospect, Egon Bahr considers that this may well have been possible. It was a time, Bahr points out, when Brandt said one thing about the conference to the Chancellor to calm him down, and another to the Americans to encourage them to take it seriously.¹³⁶

Brandt's attempts to calm Kiesinger were obviously futile. But in the view of the allies of the Federal Republic – especially the smaller ones – the overtures of the West German Foreign Minister were also problematic, for two reasons. On the one hand, Brandt's statements had raised worries of the Germans 'going it alone'. Echoing old Rapallo fears, referring to collusion of West Germany with Soviet Russia in a treaty signed in 1922, some of the Western partners were afraid that the FRG was trying to bypass the Alliance structures completely in settling the most important European question, the inner-German relationship, in order to move forward to the conference.¹³⁷ In addition, the idea of having to wait for this inner-German agreement before a CSCE could be kicked off was also irritating to some of the smaller NATO countries. Perhaps partly due to the Finnish initiative in May, the interest in advancing the security conference was on the rise and pressures for a rapid drafting of a first version of the list of issues for East–West negotiations, as prescribed at the NATO ministerial meeting in April, were mounting. Already in June, other members

of the Alliance were criticising the Bonn Group members, and especially the West Germans, on the slow progress made in preparing the elements regarding Berlin and Germany. In Brussels, the West German NATO Ambassador 'expressed irritation at what he said Bonn felt was undue pressure on questions of vital concern to FRG'.¹³⁸ Paradoxically, then, the West Germans felt they were being 'attacked both for a "Rapallo deal" and for restrictive preconditions'.¹³⁹ In other words, for moving too fast and too slowly at the same time.

But what mattered most to Bonn, naturally, was the mood of the three major Allies – the United States, Britain and France. During the summer, embassy reports confirmed that all of them remained strictly sceptical of the security conference.¹⁴⁰ In trying to figure out whether the Soviet Union was using the Budapest Appeal to look for genuine détente or just to pursue its old goals and divert attention from the Prague invasion, all of the Three Powers considered the latter option to be more likely.¹⁴¹ During Kiesinger's visit to Washington in August, leading State Department officials expressed their deep concern about the possible impacts a security conference might have on the coherence of the Western Alliance.¹⁴²

With the Three, who were anything but enthusiastic about the CSCE, implementation of the 'linkage' strategy hatched in the *Auswärtiges Amt* during the summer seemed to be possible, at least theoretically. For as long as the major Allies were not interested in a rapid convocation of the security conference, it was thinkable that the FRG could postpone the conference long enough to enable some kind of progress in the inner-German talks before that. Furthermore, if the West Germans were in charge of the schedule leading up to the security conference, it could even be used to squeeze concessions from the East Germans in those talks.

Yet there were several obstacles in the way of this plan. First of all, while Brandt certainly supported this 'linkage' strategy most strongly advocated by Bahr, he was also genuinely interested in the substantial questions to be dealt with at a conference. This led to a paradoxical situation for Brandt and many officials in the *Auswärtiges Amt* – like trying to have their cake and eat it, they wanted to support the process towards the conference because of its subject matter, yet wanted to slow down the same process because of its instrumental value. Moreover, even if the Foreign Ministry had been able to come up with a firm and unequivocal position, there was not much Brandt could accomplish without the support of Kiesinger. The visible disagreement between Chancellor and Foreign Minister in this particular matter, not to mention the general paralysis in the foreign policy of the Grand Coalition during the summer, ensured that such support was not to be expected. In addition, the criticism from Western Allies for going

either too fast or too slowly in the conference issue made the West German position all the more difficult.

In these complicated circumstances, any moves concerning the CSCE during the final weeks before the election in late September were almost destined to lead to controversies in Bonn. The delivery of the West German response to the Finnish security conference initiative, at first sight a routine diplomatic procedure, turned out to be a case in point.

Chancellery versus *Auswärtiges Amt*

Although the Finns had previously indicated to West German officials that they did not expect a formal reply to their initiative, in the late summer of 1969 the original oral acknowledgement given upon the delivery of the memorandum no longer seemed sufficient. In August, the Finnish Government informed recipients of the May initiative that it had already received positive replies from seventeen countries, including four NATO members (the UK, the Netherlands, Portugal and Norway) but not the Federal Republic.¹⁴³ To the *Auswärtiges Amt* in Bonn, this situation started to feel awkward. According to Political Director Ruete, a formal response would only be an ‘unbinding act of political courtesy to the Finns’, and thus not harmful for the FRG. But in Ruete’s view the foremost reason in favour of giving an official reply at this stage was to avoid the risk of remaining among the few European governments who ‘had not even considered the Finnish peace gesture worthy of an answer’.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, fear of isolation was a main motive for the decision to respond to the Finns.

During the next few weeks a West German reply was drafted in the Foreign Ministry and on 9 September it was sent to Detlev Scheel, the new head of the FRG’s trade mission in Helsinki. Scheel was advised to present the text orally and to submit the text only as a non-paper.¹⁴⁵ He carried out these instructions on 12 September. The text of the West German reply which Scheel delivered at the Finnish Foreign Ministry did not contain anything dramatic – it merely welcomed the fact that the initiative had also been addressed to the North Americans, greeted its ‘constructive spirit’ and emphasised the need for careful preparation of a conference.¹⁴⁶ In fact, as Haftendorn has argued, the reply was characterised by a considerable lack of commitment, deliberately avoiding taking a definite position for or against the security conference.¹⁴⁷ But, symptomatic of the lack of communication between the coalition partners as well as between the Chancellery and the *Auswärtiges Amt*, the delivery of the statement led to a minor storm within the government in Bonn.

When Brandt made a public announcement of the West German reply to the Finns at a press conference in Bonn on 16 September, he argued that the Federal Government saw the Finnish initiative as a 'constructive step towards the creation of a just and durable European security order, which we are also aiming at'.¹⁴⁸ In fact, however, there had not been an official government decision about the response. Brandt, in both of his memoir volumes, has flatly rejected later accusations by the controversial leader of the Bavarian CSU, Franz Josef Strauss, according to whom Brandt as Foreign Minister had authorised a reply to the Finns without prior consultation with Kiesinger.¹⁴⁹ But the archival evidence suggests that Strauss's claims were not completely unfounded. Due to a set of misunderstandings, and with Brandt's tacit approval, it seems, the *Auswärtiges Amt* did in the end take the matter into its own hands, giving the West German reply without explicit authorisation from the Chancellery.

The draft of the reply had already been completed in the *Auswärtiges Amt* by the end of August. On 1 September Brandt approved the text and decided that the next thing to do, before sending the instructions to Helsinki, was to inform the Chancellery about the procedure. Nevertheless, Brandt added that if no response was received from the Chancellery within forty-eight hours, the instructions should be sent without further confirmation.¹⁵⁰ On 4 September, State Secretary Duckwitz wrote a letter to the head of the Chancellery, Karl Carstens, arguing for the need to reply to the Finnish security conference initiative and attaching the text of the reply. Duckwitz also told Carstens that the West German mission in Helsinki would be instructed to deliver the text to the Finnish Foreign Ministry.¹⁵¹ No date was mentioned, but it was clear from the letter that action would be taken soon. When there had been no response from the Chancellery by 8 September, the head of Brandt's bureau called the responsible desk officer in the *Auswärtiges Amt* and told him to proceed with the instructions to Helsinki on the following day.¹⁵²

On 11 September, however, Carstens wrote back to Duckwitz, arguing that the reply to the Finnish initiative was such an important question of foreign policy that it should be dealt with on cabinet level. No reply to the Finns should be given before that.¹⁵³ By then, as we have seen, the instructions to Helsinki had already been sent. The Foreign Ministry made no last-minute efforts to stop Scheel from acting as previously instructed. Instead, Duckwitz replied to Carstens only *ex post facto*, after the statement had been delivered in Helsinki, explaining that the West German statement did not include anything that had not already been said in the name of the Federal Government and that, lacking objections from the Chancellery, the instructions had been sent according to the original plan.¹⁵⁴ Meanwhile, Carstens had himself learned from a telegram from Helsinki

that the statement had indeed been made, in spite of his insistence on a preceding cabinet decision. There was no longer anything to be done, but the sequence prompted a further bitter correspondence between the Chancellery and the *Auswärtiges Amt*. Although Carstens admitted that he had received Duckwitz's letter on 4 September, he claimed that he had been promised by the Foreign Ministry that no steps would be taken before the Chancellor had commented on the matter.¹⁵⁵

Obviously, the election campaign did cast its shadow over this controversy. More than about the lack of communication between Kiesinger and Brandt, however, the story is indicative of an institutional antagonism between the Chancellery and the *Auswärtiges Amt*. Whenever it came to foreign policy matters, these institutions had traditionally been battling for the top position. In addition, there certainly was no sympathy lost between the respective top officials, Carstens and Duckwitz. At least in part precisely because of its relatively unimportant and uncontroversial subject matter, the issue of responding to the Finnish security conference initiative provided the State Secretaries with a brilliant opportunity to teach each other a lesson. The controversy was, above all, a final showcase of the bureaucratic infighting within the Grand Coalition.

Emphasis on Linkage: Bahr's Foreign Policy Plans on the Eve of the Election

In the planning staff of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, Egon Bahr was not distracted by the intensifying election campaign. On the contrary, in the month of September alone, Bahr drafted a large number of long-term plans for the foreign policy of the Federal Republic, many of which addressed the security conference as well.¹⁵⁶ Regardless of the strained situation within the government, Bahr maintains that they were written on the assumption that the Grand Coalition would remain in office after the election.¹⁵⁷ In these memoranda, Bahr's earlier idea of using the conference primarily as an instrument of *Deutschlandpolitik* was crystallised and elaborated further.

As far as an actual conference was concerned, Bahr's long-term vision reserved only a transitional role for it. Bahr had for a long time been keen on making the distinction between a temporary security system (*Sicherheitssystem*) and a permanent European peace order (*Friedensordnung*), the former being not an end in itself, but rather a necessary station on the road to the latter. Within this conceptual framework, Bahr considered the East–West negotiations on a security conference to be useful in opening the way towards the first stage, a temporary security system.¹⁵⁸

In the beginning of September, Bahr circulated a detailed memorandum, laying out his vision for a Western – and West German – position on the European security conference, which is worth a closer look. In addition to the four essentials already agreed in NATO (no preconditions, thorough preparation, reason to expect useful results, participation of the US and Canada), Bahr stressed the importance of developing and pursuing Western goals for the procedure and agenda of the conference, as counterweights to Soviet suggestions. In the sphere of political security, he argued, the West should prepare a treaty focusing on renunciation of force and principles of sovereignty. On military security, Bahr suggested that the conference should result in a permanent eight-power disarmament commission for Europe, which would, above all, deal with balanced force reductions. But as far as economic cooperation was concerned, Bahr was very reserved. Substantial advances could be expected only once progress had been made in the security issues.¹⁵⁹

In all, Bahr did not have high hopes of the substance of the security conference. In his view, if the West were to insist on solving all important questions before the final CSCE, it would be easy for Eastern propaganda to put the blame on the West for a possible failure of the conference. Thus, Bahr argued for aiming at a conference that would issue only broad declarations of intent, with the details then further developed in one or several permanent committees. 'If these were not to achieve results later on, at least the actual conference would not have collapsed. A failed ESC would be a serious setback for Western détente policy.'

Rather than multilateral security and cooperation, therefore, the true core of Bahr's memorandum on the security conference was clearly its implications for the German question. He once again emphasised the need for mitigating the inner-German relationship before the beginning of a CSCE. Instead of being a precondition, he claimed, this was merely a part of careful conference preparations. Holding on to this principle, Bahr admitted, was going to be difficult – but possible, provided that the key Allies backed it.

It will also depend on how manifestly we make the point that we will not take our seat at the table of an ESC without a preceding clarification of the relationship between the two parts of Germany In the West, we cannot count on an understanding of our position from all states, whether part of the Atlantic Alliance or not. But for as long as we have the support of the Three Powers, we can stay the course without larger difficulties.¹⁶⁰

Moreover, Bahr also suggested that the West should propose a joint resolution on the German question. To be signed by all the conference participants, this resolution would request the Four Powers responsible for Berlin

and Germany as a whole and the two German states ‘in the interest of European security, to conclude an agreement on the relationship between the FRG and the GDR as well as on the external relations of the two parts of Germany’, as an interim solution before a reunification.¹⁶¹ In other words, Bahr wanted to mobilise the preparations for a European security conference to put pressure on the GDR to enter inner-German negotiations.

Bahr presented some of these thoughts to his NATO colleagues in mid-September, at the autumn meeting of the Atlantic Policy Advisory Group, which focused on issues related to troop reductions and a possible security conference. Bahr’s idea of using the preparatory phase of a CSCE to improve the relationship between the German states was received approvingly. Generally, the meeting was characterised by a common unease with the development towards the conference – the Soviet position was seen to be strong, the Western weak. The participants shared a concern about public opinion at home. ‘Especially the younger generation’ was clearly expecting some kind of *détente* gesture from the West.¹⁶²

Less than two weeks before the federal election scheduled for 28 September, Bahr circulated two further significant foreign policy documents: an analysis of a future ‘framework agreement’ (*Rahmenvertrag*) with the GDR and a more general paper entitled ‘Reflections on the foreign policy of a future Federal Government’. These documents reflected Bahr’s desire for using the security conference as a tool of *Deutschlandpolitik*. As far as inner-German relations were concerned, Bahr’s main message was that West German foreign policy had to come to terms with reality. While the German division would probably be sustained for an indefinite period, the GDR would achieve world-wide recognition during the next few years, whether or not the FRG opposed it. Therefore, if the Federal Republic wanted to gain something in return for the enhanced international status of the GDR, it had to act quickly. ‘Abstaining from preventing the international recognition of the GDR is a reward we can offer the GDR only for as long as we are able to do so. ... The sooner the GDR can expect to reach its goal without our involvement, the smaller will be the value of the reward.’¹⁶³

In Bahr’s view, this had direct and crucial implications for future West German foreign policy, including the policy on the security conference. Although Bahr was by no means certain that a CSCE would actually be convened, he was sure that the debate about it would continue with varying intensity. Regardless of the likelihood of success of the actual conference, Bahr was keen on the possibilities the process opened up for the Federal Republic. The Soviet conference proposal, he argued, should be ‘instrumentalised’ for West German purposes:

we have to try to use it as an instrument for the realisation of our interests. It gives a possibility to submit suggestions aiming at a security system in Europe and creating ... conditions for a peace order. Above all, we should use the conference idea as a lever, forcing the GDR to agree to a rapprochement of the two German states. We should utilise the interest of the East European countries and, if necessary, of the Soviet Union in the ESC for this.¹⁶⁴

Thus, more explicitly than before, Bahr was making the case for a direct linkage of the European security conference and progress in the inner-German dialogue. The 'framework agreement' between Bonn and East Berlin would in the end enable frictionless participation of both German states in the conference. But before agreeing to participate in the security conference, the Federal Republic should use it as leverage on the GDR. Or, to put it the other way round, Bonn should show the green light to the CSCE only after an inner-German treaty had been concluded. This crystallisation of the instrumental value of the security conference was crucially important for the FRG's CSCE policy. Instead of perceiving the security conference as a threat and focusing on defensive preconditions to minimise the damage inflicted on *Deutschlandpolitik*, Bahr's approach called for a more offensive strategy in which the FRG would actively use the conference as a bargaining chip to pursue its own interests.

This approach, outlined by Bahr in a memorandum concluded in New York during the UN General Assembly, where Brandt was meeting his colleagues, may have had an immediate impact on the Foreign Minister's discussions. Bahr wrote later that Brandt, having read his foreign policy suggestions during the New York trip, had commented: 'Not bad at all. I hope we can use this soon.'¹⁶⁵ It is obviously very hard to distinguish between subtle changes in tone on the basis of the written record, but there seems to be a slightly more assertive touch than before in the way Brandt referred to the CSCE in New York. The Foreign Ministers of the three major Allies – Rogers, Stewart and Schumann – all agreed with Brandt that all possible attempts should be made to keep the conference free from the 'German quarrels', preferably through inner-German talks prior to the conference.¹⁶⁶ In his discussion with the Soviet Foreign Minister, Brandt also made the by then standard remark that 'at the present stage the "German quarrels" would completely overshadow the conference'. More concretely, Brandt added that progress in Bonn's negotiations with East Berlin on traffic and postal issues would be helpful. Gromyko stressed that no attempts to call for a change in the policy of the GDR as a precondition for the security conference would be acceptable. Yet Brandt did not back down: 'We do not wish to nor will we set any preconditions. We are only saying that elimination of difficulties on our soil, such as travel restrictions, would ease the way towards the conference.'¹⁶⁷

Indeed, in his memoirs Brandt suggests that it was already around this time, shortly before the federal election of September 1969, that he realised that the security conference might actually provide the Federal Republic with some leverage.¹⁶⁸ Yet given the disagreements between the coalition partners, none of these deliberations had any hope of being implemented for as long as the Grand Coalition was in office. Therefore, the result of the election on 28 September was of fundamental significance to the future CSCE policy of the Federal Republic.

Bonn and the Security Conference during the Interregnum

The federal election of 1969 was an extremely close-fought one. In fact, when the polls in West Germany had closed and the first results started pouring in, the US President Richard Nixon already called Kiesinger to congratulate him on his re-election. As it turned out, however, Nixon had been too hasty.¹⁶⁹ Although the Christian Democrats (CDU and CSU) successfully defended all but one of their seats in the *Bundestag* and maintained their position as the largest parliamentary group, substantial gains (3.4 percentage points and twenty seats) made by the Social Democrats enabled Brandt to take the initiative. He chose to start negotiations with the Free Democrats, relying on a thin but sufficient parliamentary majority for a 'social-liberal' coalition. The FDP, for its own part, had been the main loser in the election, scoring its worst result ever and only narrowly making it over the five-percent hurdle needed to enter the *Bundestag*.¹⁷⁰ This equation opened the way for the first fundamental change of government in the twenty-year history of the Federal Republic. The Christian Democrats were left in opposition for the first time, and Brandt was set to become the first Social Democratic Chancellor of the Bonn Republic.

In spite of the narrowness of the mandate, the West German electorate had clearly sent a message for change with its increased support for the Social Democrats. And in the autumn of 1969, the main motive for change was in the field of foreign policy. Catching the essence of this, Peter Pulzer has argued: 'No election is ever decided by one single issue, but if any predominated in this one it was the question of relations with the East. It was an irony that foreign policy, the midwife of the Great Coalition, had become the grounds for divorce.'¹⁷¹ On the other hand, as Wolfgang Jäger has pointed out, the importance of foreign policy should not be overestimated either – in the autumn of 1969 nobody could foresee just how rapid the advances in *Ostpolitik* were about to become.¹⁷² And for sure, while foreign policy may have tipped the balance in favour of Brandt instead of

Kiesinger, the question of the European security conference had certainly not been an issue at the election.

In any case, although much of the transitional period between the election and Brandt's official appointment as Chancellor by the *Bundestag* on 21 October was consumed by the intense coalition negotiations between the SPD and the FDP, foreign policy was not the bone of contention. And just as with *Ostpolitik* in general, the Social Democrats and Free Democrats also found it relatively easy to agree on the general line to take with regard to the CSCE. Freed from the controversies so dominant in the Grand Coalition, the foreign policy consensus between the new coalition partners finally promised to make the implementation of an agreed CSCE policy of the government possible. As it happened, Bahr and the leading foreign policy thinker of the FDP, Wolfgang Schollwer, did not really get on and were never engaged in a thorough exchange of opinions.¹⁷³ All the same, although with different goals in mind, both saw opportunities for the FRG in the security conference. In October, Schollwer's working paper on West German foreign policy positioned the preparation and convocation of a European security conference, respectively, at first place among both the medium- and long-term objectives.¹⁷⁴ Bahr, for his part, continued to emphasise the instrumental value of the conference. In a draft foreign policy programme for the future government, presenting most of the central thoughts made public in the Chancellor's government declaration a few weeks later, Bahr argued that the conference idea should be used to force the GDR to agree to an inner-German rapprochement.¹⁷⁵

On the institutional level, moreover, expectations for smoother cooperation were further supported by the personnel reshuffle resulting from the change of government. Brandt brought many of his trusted men at the *Auswärtiges Amt* to the Chancellery, including Egon Bahr as State Secretary and Ulrich Sahn as head of the department responsible for foreign policy and inner-German questions. In addition, Brandt had a close relationship with Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, who continued as State Secretary in the Foreign Ministry. In fact, Brandt's hold on foreign policy issues was so strong that it took some time before the chairman of the FDP, Walter Scheel, could effectively take control of his own house as the new Foreign Minister. Not only during the early stages, but for a good part of the first year of the Social-Liberal Coalition, the making of West German foreign policy was clearly dominated by the Chancellery.

Meanwhile, the *Auswärtiges Amt* was beginning to take a more careful position on the security conference. This was visible already in early October in the final report of the CSCE working group which had been set up in June. According to the detailed fifty-page report, the Budapest Appeal had already been a success for the Soviet Union. Moscow had been able

to set the agenda and the course of the discussion on European security, forcing the West to act as a *demandeur* if it wanted to achieve its own objectives. Therefore, the mere proposal had given the Soviet Union substantial advantages. Regarding the participation of the German states in the CSCE, the report suggested the development of a model for a ‘qualified’, ‘all-German’ participation. In order to avoid setting a dangerous precedent for the participation of the GDR in other international conferences and organisations, the representation of the two German states at the conference was to be subordinated to an institutional cooperation in specific committees consisting of the Four Powers, the FRG and the GDR. Some sort of regulation of the inner-German relationship before the conference was considered absolutely necessary, but the report included no hint of actually trying to use the CSCE process as a means to that end.¹⁷⁶ By contrast, some officials in the *Auswärtiges Amt* predicted that the ongoing discussion about the security conference would bring difficult times for maintaining the unity of the Western Alliance. In particular, there was growing concern that the European security conference would turn into a general conference on Germany, in which decisions would be made more about the FRG, less with the FRG.¹⁷⁷

But during the transitional period in October, these worries were overshadowed by Bahr’s enthusiasm for the instrumentalisation of the security conference. In his meeting with Kissinger in Washington in mid-October, Bahr gave Nixon’s national security adviser a broad outline of what was to be expected from the foreign policy of the new West German Government. Bahr told Kissinger that they wanted to see the inner-German relationship ‘normalised’ before the security conference, although this could not officially be formulated as a precondition. If this condition was not met, the Federal Republic would rather not take part in a conference, including a preparatory conference, at all. To his surprise, Bahr wrote, the Americans did not object to this. Helmut Sonnenfeldt from the White House National Security Council, also present at the meeting, explained that while the United States did not reject the conference idea altogether, they considered that it was up to the Europeans to decide what to do about it.¹⁷⁸

The changing of the guard from the Grand Coalition to the SPD-FDP Government was completed on 21 October, when the *Bundestag* elected Brandt as the fourth Chancellor of the Federal Republic. One week later, Brandt gave his first government declaration to the *Bundestag*, laying out the main principles of the future policy of the Social–Liberal Coalition.¹⁷⁹ This declaration is best remembered for its section on *Deutschlandpolitik*, in which Brandt publicly accepted the existence of ‘two states in Germany’, but added that they could never ‘be foreign countries to each other’. The declaration also touched upon the proposed European security confer-

ence. In it, Brandt declared on behalf of the Federal Government that it was committed to the position given in the official reply to the Finnish Government on 12 September. 'After careful preparation', the new Chancellor continued, 'such a conference can become an important leg on the road to greater security with less armament and to progress between the partners in Eastern and Western Europe'.¹⁸⁰ Thus, the security conference was closely linked with the concept of a European peace order, a goal which the government pledged to work towards in the first sentence of the declaration.

The focus being on bilateral *Ostpolitik*, in October 1969 the security conference was obviously not at the top of the foreign policy agenda of the new government. Nevertheless, the change of government had important repercussions on that front as well. Having secured at least the passive support of the major Western ally to proceed as they saw fit, and with no disagreements in principle with the junior coalition partner at home to worry about, there seemed to be no impediments for Brandt and Bahr to start implementing their version of a West German policy towards the CSCE. Albeit at first glance contradictory in nature, both tracks of the plans developed in the *Auswärtiges Amt* during the last six months of the Grand Coalition were now about to be united, shaping the official approach of the Federal Republic on the project of a European security conference in the first half of the 1970s. On the one hand, there was Bahr's pet project, the tactical linkage approach. According to it, the West Germans should attempt to use their agreement to participate in the multilateral conference as a bargaining chip in order to receive concessions from the East in bilateral negotiations. On the other hand, there was an interest in advancing the substantive elements of the security conference. Arrangements to improve security in Europe and increased East–West cooperation promised to bring the elusive long-term goal, the European peace order, at least a few steps closer. The evolution of each of these halves of the West German policy during the CSCE preparations and at the conference itself will be analysed in the following chapters.

Conclusion

The short era of the Grand Coalition was significant for the formation of the West German CSCE policy in the 1970s. International as well as domestic developments occurring during the Kiesinger–Brandt Government had an important impact on subsequent choices made in Bonn. To begin with, on the international level, the years 1966–69 witnessed a substantial change in Western perceptions of the idea of a European security confer-

ence. Having been equally mistrustful of Warsaw Pact calls for a CSCE throughout the 1960s, the unity of the Atlantic Alliance began to crack towards the end of the decade. Some of the smaller NATO members started to take the conference proposals more seriously, forcing them on the agenda of the NATO machinery in Brussels. Although détente was dealt a major setback by the Prague invasion in August 1968, two documents distributed in the following spring – the Warsaw Pact’s Budapest Appeal in March and the Finnish memorandum in May 1969 – speeded up the CSCE discussion in the West. In their semi-annual meeting in Washington in April, the NATO Foreign Ministers instructed the Political Committee to draft a list of issues for possible East–West negotiations before the end of the year, thus in effect starting multilateral CSCE preparations within the West.

The West German role in these early Western discussions reveals two key characteristics that were also present later on. First of all, the security conference was clearly an issue where it was possible for the Federal Republic to show initiative and assume a high profile. Given the importance of the German question for any deliberations on European security, West German opinions were carefully listened to in the Allied capitals. Especially during the final year of the Grand Coalition, Foreign Minister Brandt eagerly seized this opportunity, working hard to convince his more sceptical colleagues that the security conference could turn out to be useful for the West and would not just give a propaganda victory to the East. But on the other hand, the period dealt with here also showed the limitations – or rather perceived limitations – of the West German freedom for manoeuvre. Politicians and officials in Bonn were constantly very alert to even the smallest signs of Allies disagreeing with West German positions. Opposition from the smaller NATO members was something that could be lived with, but ending up at odds with one or more of the Three Powers (United States, United Kingdom and France) was immediately seen as posing a danger of isolation within the Alliance. Thus, at times perhaps more than was actually needed, the West Germans felt they were dependent on finding a consensus with their three major allies.

Although these two main features of the Federal Republic’s international role in the CSCE context – a new opportunity to exert influence, limited by heightened sensitivity to dynamics within the Alliance – were beginning to show already during the Grand Coalition, in 1966–69 the CSCE was first and foremost a question of domestic politics for the FRG. Due to the disagreements between the Chancellor and the Foreign Minister, the approaching federal election as well as the bureaucratic infighting between the Chancellery and the *Auswärtiges Amt*, the Federal Republic never had an official CSCE position during the Grand Coalition – no mat-

ter how much Brandt discussed the security conference with his colleagues abroad. Then again, at the same time as the coalition partners were rapidly drifting apart, the SPD and the FDP began to find common ground in foreign policy issues, the CSCE included. This rapprochement laid the foundation for the foreign policy of the Brandt–Scheel Government.

But why was the European security conference such a contested issue within the Grand Coalition? As has been shown above, there clearly were genuine substantive disagreements about the security conference between the various actors on the domestic level. At the heart of these disagreements were conflicting views about the correct way forward in addressing the German question. The long-term goal of a European peace order as a possible solution was shared by all major German parties, but their definitions of the characteristics of such an order were not identical. And different approaches called for different measures, also towards the CSCE. Yet at times the still hypothetical CSCE also provided the individuals, parties and institutions with a suitable excuse to argue. Because all the participants saw that the actual conference was not yet topical, they could afford to use it in the domestic power struggles. And as the federal election drew closer, these power struggles became more apparent. The election of Gustav Heinemann as Federal President in March 1969, resulting from cooperation between the SPD and FDP to defeat the candidate of the Christian Democrats, was a sign of what was to be expected. For the remaining six months before the federal election, the Grand Coalition entered a ‘time of political paralysis’.¹⁸¹ The election battle started ahead of schedule, badly disrupting the work of the government for the rest of its term.

One should also not neglect the impact of personal chemistry. There were more than enough examples of functioning cross-party cooperation within the coalition: Herbert Wehner and Kurt Georg Kiesinger, Karl Schiller and Franz Josef Strauss, as well as Helmut Schmidt and Rainer Barzel, all got along reasonably well.¹⁸² But, with the most importance for foreign policy, there was never a similar meeting of minds between Kiesinger and Brandt, let alone between the Chancellor and Bahr. In fact, already in 1967 Kiesinger confidentially told a West German journalist that he considered Bahr to be a ‘very dangerous man’, whose influence in the *Auswärtiges Amt* ought to be limited.¹⁸³ Furthermore, shared ambitions played into the intensity of the rivalry. As Christian Hacke has argued, Kiesinger was one of the most passionately foreign-policy oriented Chancellors in the history of the Federal Republic.¹⁸⁴ Bahr himself has admitted that the ‘misery of the Grand Coalition resulted from the abundance, not from the lack, of ambitious foreign-policy talents’.¹⁸⁵

Despite the paralysing effect the domestic controversies had on the foreign policy of the Grand Coalition, these talents were not completely lost. Extensive planning work in Brandt's *Auswärtiges Amt* had resulted in a 'blueprint' for a new foreign policy of the Federal Republic. After the election in September 1969, there were no longer any internal obstacles to its implementation. Regarding the European security conference, as has been shown in this chapter, the plans consisted of two main elements: instrumental and substantive approaches to the CSCE. This twin-track approach to the security conference is actually a perfect example of the two sides constantly present in the foreign-policy ideas put forward by Brandt and Bahr. The instrumental approach, to a larger extent Bahr's contribution, was based on *realpolitik* and linkages. The substantive approach, then again, better represented by Brandt, was building on a more ideological view of cooperation and the vision of a European peace order.

With the inauguration of the Brandt–Scheel Government in October 1969, this blueprint was put to the test. As will be shown in the chapters below, the implementation of plans incubated during the Grand Coalition was by no means an easy and straightforward task. And in comparison with the preparations of the bilateral *Ostpolitik* treaties, which the Federal Republic was at least to some extent able to control, the development towards a multilateral CSCE turned out to consist of a far greater number of variables. The decisive battles were fought within the West more often than between East and West.

Notes

1. Archiv der sozialen Demokratie (AdsD), Dep. Bahr, 396, Bahr to Pommerening, 1 Sep 1969.
2. Willy-Brandt-Archiv (WBA), A3, 311, Brandt's speech in Eastbourne, 16 June 1969.
3. See Werner Kilian, *Die Hallstein-Doktrin: Der diplomatische Krieg zwischen der BRD und der DDR 1955–1973: Aus den Akten der beiden deutschen Ausussenministerien*, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 2001.
4. For the European peace order, see Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 16–19; Helga Haf-tendorn, *Sicherheit und Entspannung: Zur Aussenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1955–1982*, Baden-Baden: Nomos 1983, 296–8.
5. *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages* (VdDB), Stenographische Berichte, V. Wahlperiode, 80. Sitzung (V/80), 13 Dec 1966, 3656–65.
6. See Rüdiger Marco Booz, '*Hallsteinzeit*': *Deutsche Aussenpolitik, 1955–1972*, Bonn: Bouvier 1995, 135–64.

7. For the text of the declaration, as well as other documents related to the Bucharest meeting, see the PHP website.
8. EA 1967, D 259–66.
9. Haftendorn, *Sicherheit und Entspannung*, 418.
10. AAPD 1967, doc 268, Diehl, 17 July 1967.
11. VdDB, V/141, 7 Dec 1967, 7232.
12. PHP collection on the Harmel Report; Wenger, 'Crisis and Opportunity'.
13. NATO Communiqués, <<http://www.nato.int/docu/comm.htm>>, Declaration on 'Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions', 24–25 June 1968. See also Christoph Bluth, *The Two Germanies and Military Security in Europe*, Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2002.
14. Helga Haftendorn, 'The Harmel Report and its Impact on German Ostpolitik', in: Loth and Soutou (eds.), *The Making of Détente*, 103–16.
15. AAPD 1968, doc 99, Ruete (AA) to Natogerma, 20 Mar 1968.
16. AAPD 1968, doc 114, Grewe (Natogerma) to AA, 28 Mar 1968; AAPD 1968, doc 157, Lankes to Duckwitz, 13 May 1968.
17. Author's interview with Wolfgang Schollwer, 17 Dec 2003. For the two 'Schollwer Papers', see Archiv des Liberalismus (AdL), NL Schollwer, 10804. See also Baring, *Machtwechsel*, 218–29; Hildebrand, *Von Erhard zur Grossen Koalition*, 339–52; Volker Erhard, 'Die Schollwer-Papiere von 1962 und 1967: Meilensteine auf dem Weg der FDP zur neuen Deutschland- und Ostpolitik', in: Reinhard Hübsch and Jürgen Frölich (eds.), *Deutsch-deutscher Liberalismus im Kalten Krieg: Zur Deutschlandpolitik der Liberalen 1945–1975*, Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg 1997, 237–51.
18. Genscher, *Erinnerungen*, 90–101; author's interview with Hans-Dietrich Genscher, 20 Jan 2005.
19. VdDB, V/165, 2 Apr 1968, 8648.
20. VdDB, V/168, 5 Apr 1968, 8958–9.
21. VdDB, V/180, 20 June 1968, 9703, 9743.
22. AAPD 1968, doc 207, Bahr to Duckwitz and Brandt, 27 June 1968; 'Wie Egon Bahr Deutschland neutralisieren will', *Quick*, 27 Sep 1973; Bahr, *Sicherheit für und vor Deutschland*, 60–82. On Bahr's later recollections about this working paper, see Bahr, *Zu meiner Zeit*, 226–9. For the various drafts preceding the memorandum, see AdsD, Dep. Bahr, 316 (folder 3).
23. Alexander Gallus, *Die Neutralisten: Verfechter eines vereinten Deutschlands zwischen Ost und West, 1945–1990*, Düsseldorf: Droste 2001, 296–308. For Bahr's view, see for instance Dettmar Cramer, *Gefragt: Egon Bahr*, Bornheim: Zirngibl 1975, 103–5.
24. Anthony J. Nicholls, 'Der Dritte Weg im Zeitalter des Kalten Krieges – einführende Überlegungen', in: Dominik Geppert and Udo Wengst (eds.), *Neutralität – Chance oder Chimäre? Konzepte des Dritten Weges für Deutschland und die Welt 1945–1990*, München: Oldenbourg 2005, 17–29.
25. Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 80.
26. AAPD 1968, doc 207, Bahr to Duckwitz and Brandt, 27 June 1968.
27. AAPD 1968, doc 207, Bahr to Duckwitz and Brandt, 27 June 1968.
28. Gassert, *Kanzler zwischen den Zeiten*, 680, 755; Klaus Schönhoven, *Wendjahre: Die Sozialdemokratie in der Zeit der Grossen Koalition 1966–1969*, Bonn: Dietz 2004, 404–5.
29. Dirk Kroegel, *Einen Anfang finden! Kurt Georg Kiesinger in der Aussen- und Deutschlandpolitik der Grossen Koalition*, München: Oldenbourg 1997, 336.
30. EA 1969, D 151–3, Budapest Appeal, 17 Mar 1969. For some recently declassified documents from East European archives, see the PHP website. In more detail, Csaba Békés,

- 'The Warsaw Pact and the CSCE Process from 1965 to 1970', in: Loth and Soutou (eds.), *The Making of Détente*, 201–20.
31. See Haftendorn, *Sicherheit und Entspannung*, 428–9, and Clay Clemens, *Reluctant Realists: The CDU/CSU and West German Ostpolitik*, Durham: Duke University Press 1989, 50–1.
 32. WBA, A3, von Alten to Bahr, 18 Mar 1969.
 33. VdDB, V/221, 19 Mar 1969, 11963, 11981.
 34. *Archiv der Gegenwart* (AdG), Vol. 5, 4761, Brandt's statement to the Hungarian news agency MTI, 19 Mar 1969. See also WBA, A3, 299.
 35. See, for example, Ulrich Sahn's meeting with a Soviet embassy official, in Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (PAAA), B150, 149, Sahn to Moscow and New Delhi, 19 Mar 1969.
 36. PAAA, B43, 107294, Sahn to Brandt, Duckwitz and Kiesinger, 19 Mar 1969.
 37. PAAA, B40, 179, Pommerening, 24 Mar 1969.
 38. PAAA, B1, 350, Blumenfeld, 26 Mar 1969.
 39. PAAA, B40, 179, Pommerening, 24 Mar 1969.
 40. PAAA, B150, 149, handwritten note from Duckwitz to Sahn, 23 Mar 1969.
 41. Bundesarchiv (BArch), B136, 6346, Boss to Kiesinger, 21 Mar 1969.
 42. The National Archives (TNA), FO 1042/313, Quadripartite Meeting, 20/21 March 1969.
 43. TNA, FO 1042/313, Jackling (Bonn) to FCO, 25 Mar 1969; AAPD 1969, doc 110, Duckwitz to Brandt, 24 Mar 1969.
 44. Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik (ACDP), I-226, A290, an Austrian document of a meeting between Kiesinger and Klaus, 28 Mar 1969.
 45. EA 1969, D153. The source for the German-language version of the Budapest Appeal cited in EA is Neues Deutschland. There are different English translations of the document, often contradictory, especially with regard to the word Hauptvoraussetzungen. The clear distinction in German between Voraussetzungen and Vorbedingungen is, however, in my opinion best reflected by using 'prerequisites' and 'preconditions', respectively.
 46. PAAA, B1, 350, 18 Mar 1969. Brandt's handwritten notes on the AA press review on the day after the Budapest Appeal: 'Vorbeding. oder Verhandl.gegenst.'.
 47. PAAA, B1, 350, meeting Brandt-Tsarapkin, 1 Apr 1969.
 48. AAPD 1969, doc 116, meeting Brandt-Tsarapkin, 4 Apr 1969.
 49. PAAA, B40, 179, Pommerening, 24 Mar 1969. See also PAAA, B43, 107294, Sahn, 19 Mar 1969.
 50. PAAA, B150, 149, Sahn, 26 Mar 1969.
 51. PAAA, B150, 149, Grewe (Natogerma) to AA, 24 Mar 1969.
 52. See, for instance, PAAA, B40, 179, Allardt (Moscow) to AA, 9 Apr 1969.
 53. AAPD 1969, doc 118, Ruete (Washington) to AA, 9 Apr 1969; AAPD 1969, doc 120, Ruete (Washington) to AA, 11 Apr 1969; PAAA, B150, 150, van Well, 14 Apr 1969.
 54. WBA, A3, 300, 10–11 Apr 1969. See also AdG, Vol. 5, 4777.
 55. AAPD 1969, doc 121, Ruete (Washington) to AA, 11 Apr 1969.
 56. At this moment the organisational structure of the AA contained two political directorates. Until their fusion into one political directorate in June 1970, Paul Frank was Political Director of the Politische Abteilung I (responsible for Western Europe, the United Nations and the 'Third World'), whereas Hans Ruete's Politische Abteilung II concentrated on German questions, Eastern Europe, the US and Canada, NATO and the WEU, as well as on issues concerning disarmament and European security.
 57. AAPD 1969, doc 121, Ruete (Washington) to AA, 11 Apr 1969.

58. NATO Communiqués, Final Communiqué of the Ministerial Session of the North Atlantic Council in Washington, 10–11 Apr 1969.
59. TNA, FCO 41/538, Jackling (Bonn) to FCO, 15 Apr 1969. For the Soviet declaration on 9 Apr 1969, see EA 1969, D 237–42.
60. Becker, *Die frühe KSZE-Politik*, 111.
61. PAAA, B43, 107294, Ruete, 14 Apr 1969, PAAA, B150, 150, Ruete, 14 Apr 1969; PAAA, B40, 179, undated.
62. NATO Communiqués, Final Communiqué of the Ministerial Session of the North Atlantic Council in Washington, 10–11 April 1969.
63. Mayer, 'National Foreign Policy', 82.
64. See, for example, 'Differenzen', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), 12 Apr 1969, 1.
65. BArch, B136, 6449, Carstens to Kiesinger (Bebenhausen), 10 Apr 1969.
66. Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung, Bonn 1969, Kiesinger's speech at a CDU rally in Ludwigshafen, 11 Apr 1969.
67. BArch, N1337, 668, Carstens to Kiesinger, 14 Apr 1969.
68. BArch, N1337, 591, Carstens to Brandt, undated handwritten letter draft, April 1969.
69. PAAA, B150, 151, Ruete, 17 Apr 1969.
70. AAPD 1969, doc 128, Weber, meeting Kiesinger-Erlander, 17 Apr 1969.
71. WBA, A3, 301, Brandt's speech at the SPD party conference in Bad Godesberg, 18 Apr 1969.
72. BArch, B136, 6346, Wentker to Kiesinger, 21 Apr 1969.
73. Parlamentsarchiv des Deutschen Bundestages (PA-DBT), Auswärtiger Ausschuss, 5. Wahlperiode (3104 5/3), Prot. 87, 24 Apr 1969.
74. VdDB, V/229, 25 Apr 1969, 12627–8.
75. VdDB, V/229, 25 Apr 1969, 12670, 12676–12677, 12679. Further on CDU/CSU reactions, see Daniela Taschler, *Vor neuen Herausforderungen: Die aussen- und deutschlandpolitische Debatte in der CDU/CSU-Bundestagsfraktion während der Grossen Koalition (1966–69)*, Düsseldorf: Droste 2001, 363–6.
76. Waldemar Besson, *Die Aussenpolitik der Bundesrepublik: Erfahrungen und Massstäbe*, München: Piper 1970, 433.
77. PAAA, B150, 151, Gnodtke (Natogerma) to AA, 22 Apr 1969.
78. NATO Archives (NATO A), AC/119-R(69)31, 5 May 1969; NATO A, C-M(69)24, 9 June 1969.
79. PAAA, B150, 151, Pommerening, 30 Apr 1969.
80. NATO A, C-M(69)18(Final), The State of East–West Relations and its Implications for the Alliance, 5 May 1969.
81. For the official English version of the Finnish memorandum, see *Ulkopolitiittisia lausuntoja ja asiakirjoja* 1969 (ULA), Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs: Helsinki 1970, 65–6. A German translation is printed in EA 1969, D309–10.
82. The very first paragraph of the memorandum reads 'The Government of the Soviet Union approached recently the Governments of European countries in the matter of the arrangement of a European security conference and of its preparations. This proposal concerning a special preparatory meeting was extended to the Government of Finland on April 8, 1969', ULA 1969, 65.
83. Urho Kekkonen arkisto (UKA), Vsk 1969, 115, Kekkonen, 8 Apr 1969.
84. Kimmo Rentola, 'Finland, the Soviet Union, and the European Security Conference Idea', paper presented at the conference *Der Dritte Weg im Zeitalter des Kalten Krieges*, Berlin 4–5 July 2003. See also Kimmo Rentola, 'Der Vorschlag einer europäischen Sicherheitskonferenz und die stille Krise zwischen Finnland und der Sowjetunion 1968–71', in: Geppert and Wengst (eds.), *Neutralität – Chance oder Chimäre?*, 177–202.

85. Kimmo Rentola, *Vallankumouksen aave: Vasemmisto, Beljakov ja Kekkonen 1970*, Helsinki: Otava 2005.
86. Author's interview with Keisalo. Already in the summer of 1969 a British diplomat reported from Helsinki that the initiative 'had been kicked around in various Foreign Ministry papers for the last 12 months', see TNA, FCO 41/542, Stuart (Helsinki) to Waterfield (FCO), 4 June 1969.
87. Numerous, somewhat contradictory versions of the details in the genesis of the memorandum exist. None of them, however, mentions the 1968 draft referred to by Keisalo. Seppo Hentilä, *Kaksi Saksaa ja Suomi: Saksan kysymys Suomen puolueettomuuspolitiikan haasteena*, Helsinki: SKS 2003, 107–10; Risto Hyvärinen, *Virkamiehiä, viikkautta ja vakoilua*, Helsinki: Otava 2000, 98–100; Max Jakobson, *38. kerros: Havainnot ja muistiinpanoja vuosilta 1965–71*, Helsinki: Otava 1983, 219–26; Juhani Suomi, *Taistelu puolueettomuudesta: Urho Kekkonen 1968–1972*, Helsinki: Otava 1996, 205–9; Juhani Suomi (ed.), *Urho Kekkonen päiväkirjat 1969–1974*, Helsinki: Otava 2003, 44–5.
88. Keijo Korhonen, *Sattumakorpraali: Korhonen Kekkonen komennossa*, Helsinki: Otava 1999, 229–32.
89. Jakobson, *38. kerros*, 220; Max Jakobson, *Tilinpäätös*, Helsinki: Otava 2003, 64.
90. Liimatainen, 'Taikuri itsekin oli hämmästynyt', 23 May 1969, in: Urho Kekkonen, *Nimellä ja nimimerkillä 1*, Helsinki: Otava 1977, 310–13.
91. PAAA, B43, 107295, Ruete to Brandt and Duckwitz, 5 May 1969; UKA, 21/160/3, Salomies (Bonn) to UM, 5 May 1969; Ulkoasiainministeriön arkisto (UMA), 7B, 11.0, Väänänen, 7 May 1969.
92. PAAA, B150, 152, Allardt (Moscow) to AA, 8 May 1969; PAAA, B150, 152, Kempff (Helsinki) to AA, 9 May 1969.
93. AdsD, Dep. Bahr, 341, Bahr to Brandt, 2 May 1969.
94. Brandt's speech at the Überseetag in Hamburg, 7 May 1969, Bulletin 59/1969, 497–500.
95. Haftendorn, *Deutsche Aussenpolitik*, 209; Haftendorn, *Sicherheit und Entspannung*, 427.
96. UMA, 7B, 11.3, Suomen muistio 2.5.69 (folder I), Salomies (Bad Godesberg) to UM, 14 May 1969; UMA, 7B, 11.3, Suomen muistio 2.5.69 (folder II), Salomies (Bad Godesberg) to Hyvärinen (UM), 20 May 1969.
97. PAAA, B150, 152, Gnodtke (Natogerma) to AA, 9 May 1969.
98. AAPD 1969, doc 155, Ruete (AA) to Natogerma, 12 May 1969.
99. PAAA, B150, 153, Grewe (Natogerma) to AA, 20 May 1969.
100. TNA, FCO 41/540, Burrows (UK NATO) to FCO, 15 May 1969; NATOA, C-R(69)22, 4 May 1969.
101. PAAA, B150, 152, Grewe (Natogerma) to AA, 14 May 1969.
102. EA 1969, D 320–2.
103. PAAA, B43, 107294, Ruete to Duckwitz, 30 May 1969.
104. Maresca, *To Helsinki*, 6.
105. PAAA, B150, 154, Blankenhorn (The Hague) to AA, 6 June 1969.
106. WBA, A3, 311, Brandt's speech in Eastbourne, 16 June 1969.
107. Brandt's speech in Frankfurt on 10 July 1969, AdG, Vol. 5, 4826–7.
108. PAAA, B40, 179, Brandt to Duckwitz, 11 June 1969; PAAA, B40, 179, Ruete, 12 June 1969. See also Becker, *Die frühe KSZE-Politik*, 92.
109. According to Sahn's entries in his pocket diaries, BArch, N1474, 22. In retrospect, Sahn refers to 'countless' meetings of the group, Ulrich Sahn, *Diplomaten taugen nichts*, 222–3; author's interview with Ulrich Sahn, 23 Aug 2003.
110. PAAA, B40, 179, Pommerening, 15 July 1969; PAAA, B40, 179, Sahn, 17 July 1969.

111. PA-DBT, 3104 5/3, Prot. 96, 27 Aug 1969. Brandt had used the same metaphor (bottle – label – contents) already in July 1969 during a meeting of European leaders in Harpsund, Sweden. See TNA, FCO 41/544, PMV (S), Copy No. 54.
112. NATOA, C-M(69)34, List of Issues for Possible Negotiation with the East, 14 July 1969.
113. PAAA, B150, 154, Blankenhorn (The Hague) to AA, 6 June 1969.
114. Sahn's handwritten notes of the meeting in BArch, N1474, 73, 12 June 1969.
115. PAAA, B150, 155, Buring, meeting Brandt–Tsarapkin, 19 June 1969.
116. AAPD 1969, doc 186, meeting Duckwitz–Macovescu, 3 June 1969; PAAA, B40, 179, 10 July 1969.
117. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), RG 59 (1967–69), Box 1538, Fessenden (Bonn) to State, 21 June 1969.
118. PAAA, B40, 179, 25 Aug 1969.
119. AAPD 1969, doc 217, Bahr, 1 July 1969.
120. TNA, FCO 41/544, PMV (S), Copy No. 54, undated.
121. AAPD 1969, doc 208, Ruete (AA) to Natogerma, 24 June 1969. See also PAAA, B150, 157, Ruete, 28 July 1969.
122. AdsD, Dep. Bahr, 431B, undated and untitled, with a handwritten note 'MB Herrn Bahr mit Dank zurück Schilling 25/6'.
123. Sahn's handwritten notes, BArch, N1474, 74, 22 July 1969.
124. For this section of the federal election agenda issued at the FDP party conference in Nürnberg on 25 June 1969, see 'Deutsche Politik für eine europäische Friedensordnung', AdG, Vol. 5, 4837–9.
125. AdsD, Dep. Bahr, 342, Planungsstab, 23 May 1969.
126. ACDP, I-226, A010, Carstens, 10 June 1969.
127. VdDB, V/239, 17 June 1969, 13245ff.
128. VdDB, V/239, 17 June 1969, 13281–2, 13285.
129. ACDP, I-226, A008, 12 and 19 June, 11 and 24 July 1969.
130. TNA, FCO 41/544, Morgan to Bendall, 24 July 1969.
131. NARA, RG 59 (1967–69), Box 1538, Fessenden (Bonn) to State, 21 June 1969.
132. NARA, RG 59 (1967–69), Box 1538, meeting Rogers–Birrenbach, 24 June 1969.
133. NARA, Nixon Presidential Materials Program, National Security Council (NSC) Files, NSC Country Files, Europe, Box 682, Folder 1, Sonnenfeldt, 7 July 1969.
134. AAPD 1969, doc 257, meeting Kiesinger–Nixon, 7 Aug 1969; NARA, NSC Country Files, Box 682, Folder 3, meeting Nixon–Kiesinger, 7 Aug 1969.
135. BArch, N1337, 670, Carstens, undated.
136. Author's interview with Egon Bahr, 18 July 2003.
137. This point was emphasised by the Foreign Minister of Luxembourg, but he implied that his feeling was shared especially by the Americans. See PAAA, B150, 154, Lüders (Luxemburg) to AA, 12 June 1969; B150, 155, Lüders (Luxemburg) to AA, 16 June 1969.
138. NARA, RG 59 (1967–69), Box 1538, Fessenden (Bonn) to State, 7 June 1969; NARA, RG 59 (1967–69), Box 1538, Cargo (US NATO) to State, 11 June 1969.
139. TNA, FCO 41/543, Jackling (Bonn) to FCO, 26 June 1969.
140. PAAA, B150, 155, Wickert (London) to AA, 21 June 1969; PAAA, B150, 156, von Braun (Paris) to AA, 9 July 1969; PAAA, B150, 156, Pauls (Washington) to AA, 15 July 1969.
141. PAAA, B40, 179, 10 July 1969.
142. PAAA, B150, 158, Sahn (Washington), 7 Aug 1969.
143. PAAA, B43, 107295, Kempff (Helsinki) to AA, 12 Aug 1969.
144. PAAA, B43, 107295, Ruete to Brandt and Duckwitz, 22 Aug 1969.
145. PAAA, B43, 107295, Ruete to Helsinki, 9 Sep 1969.

146. PAAA, B43, 107295, Scheel (Helsinki) to AA, 12 Sep 1969. For the complete text of the German reply, see UMA, 7B, 11.3, Suomen muistio 2.5.69 (folder IV), Vanamo, 12 Sep 1969.
147. Haftendorn, *Sicherheit und Entspannung*, 430.
148. WBA, A3, 323, 16 Sep 1969.
149. Brandt, *Erinnerungen*, 183; Brandt, *Begegnungen und Einsichten*, 248; Becker, *Die frühe KSZE-Politik*, 136.
150. PAAA, B43, 107295, Ruete to Duckwitz, 2 Sep 1969; PAAA, B43, 107295, Rantzau to Ruete and Duckwitz, 16 Sep 1969.
151. PAAA, B43, 107295, Duckwitz to Carstens, 4 Sep 1969.
152. PAAA, B43, 107295, Rantzau to Ruete and Duckwitz, 16 Sep 1969.
153. PAAA, B2, 177, Carstens to Duckwitz, 11 Sep 1969.
154. PAAA, B2, 177, Duckwitz to Carstens, 15 Sep 1969.
155. PAAA, B2, 177, Carstens to Duckwitz, 15 Sep 1969; PAAA, B2, 177, Carstens to Duckwitz, 18 Sep 1969.
156. For a collection of the confidential and secret documents of the planning staff in 1969, see AdsD, Dep. Bahr, 396.
157. Bahr, *Zu meiner Zeit*, 243–7.
158. AdsD, Dep. Bahr, 396, Bahr to Sahm, 25 Aug 1969 (sent on 4 Sep 1969); AdsD, Dep. Bahr, 396, Bahr to Pommerening, 1 Sep 1969.
159. AdsD, Dep. Bahr, 396, Bahr to Pommerening, 1 Sep 1969.
160. AdsD, Dep. Bahr, 396, Bahr to Pommerening, 1 Sep 1969.
161. AdsD, Dep. Bahr, 396, Bahr to Pommerening, 1 Sep 1969.
162. AdsD, Dep. Bahr, 396, Bahr, 24 Sep 1969.
163. AAPD 1969, doc 295, Bahr, 18 Sep 1969. See also Andreas Vogtmeier, *Egon Bahr und die deutsche Frage: zur Entwicklung der sozialdemokratischen Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik vom Kriegsende bis zur Vereinigung*, Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz 1996, 150–1.
164. AAPD 1969, doc 296, Bahr (New York), 21 Sep 1969; Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 68.
165. Bahr, *Zu meiner Zeit*, 247.
166. PAAA, B150, 161, Ritzel to Boss, 23 Sep 1969.
167. AAPD 1969, doc 297, meeting Brandt-Gromyko, 22 Sep 1969.
168. Brandt, *Begegnungen und Einsichten*, 248.
169. Peter Merseburger, *Willy Brandt 1913–1992: Visionär und Realist*, München: DVA 2002, 574; Reinhard Schmoeckel and Bruno Kaiser, *Die vergessene Regierung: Die Grosse Koalition 1966–1969 und ihre langfristigen Wirkungen*, Bonn: Bouvier 1991, 115–6. In an effort to mend fences with Brandt, Nixon later joked that he had been wrongly connected by the White House telephone operator.
170. For official statistics on all federal election results in the FRG to date, see <<http://www.bundeswahlleiter.de>>.
171. Pulzer, *German Politics*, 88.
172. Wolfgang Jäger, 'Die Innenpolitik der sozial-liberalen Koalition 1969–1974', in: Bracher, Jäger and Link (eds.), *Republik im Wandel*, 13–160, here 21.
173. Author's interview with Schollwer.
174. Wolfgang Schollwer, 'Kurz-, mittel- und langfristige Aufgaben für die deutsche Außenpolitik', 21 Oct 1969, cited in Baring, *Machtwechsel*, 188–90.
175. AdsD, Bahr, 436, Bahr to Brandt, 1 Oct 1969.
176. PAAA, B40, 185, 6 Oct 1969; PAAA, B150, 162, Ruete, 10 Oct 1969. See also Sahm, 'Diplomaten taugen nichts', 222–3.
177. PAAA, B40, 180, Pommerening, 9 Oct 1969.
178. AAPD 1969, doc 314, Bahr, 14 Oct 1969; Bahr, *Zu meiner Zeit*, 271.

179. VdDB, VI/5, 28 Oct 1969, 20–34.
180. VdDB, VI/5, 28 Oct 1969, 31–2.
181. Dennis L. Bark and David R. Gress, *A History of West Germany: Vol. 2, Democracy and Its Discontents, 1963–1991*, Oxford: Blackwell 1993, 141.
182. For the latter couple, see Andrea Schneider, *Die Kunst des Kompromisses: Helmut Schmidt und die Grosse Koalition 1966–1969*, Paderborn: Schöningh 1999.
183. Hildebrand, *Von Erhard zur Grossen Koalition*, 327; Kroegel, *Einen Anfang finden*, 173. See also Karl Carstens, *Erinnerungen und Erfahrungen* (edited by Kai von Jena and Reinhard Schmoeckel), Boppard am Rhein: Boldt 1993, 361.
184. Hacke, *Weltmacht wider Willen*, 125.
185. Bahr, *Zu meiner Zeit*, 212.