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FRANCE, GREAT BRITAIN, AND POLISH CONCEPTIONS  
OF DISARMAMENT, 1957-1964

In the propaganda of the Polish People's Republic, Polish conceptions of disarmament have been treated as a manifestation of independence in foreign policy and the important role of Warsaw in the development of international relations. In academic literature, the opinion on this topic is completely different, though access to many essential source materials, especially sources from Moscow, has made a full analysis of this situation difficult<sup>1</sup>. Accessible documents for the study of this topic, preserved at the Quai d'Orsay and in the Public Record Office, allow for an analysis of French and British diplomacy in these initiatives and, more importantly, for an orientation of the intentions of Moscow in this area. A full understanding of the reaction to Polish conceptions of disarmament demands, however, placing the issue in the broader context of the contemporary political situation in Europe.

The Paris agreements signed on October 23, 1954, and then their ratification by the National Assembly and the Council of Republic on December 30, 1954, lay at the base of the political and military consolidation of Western Europe, exemplified by the association of Italy and West Germany with the Western European Union as well as the invitation of Bonn to NATO (May 8, 1955). These agreements also became the next step on the road to an escalation of tensions between the two competing blocs, which brought fear and the danger of nuclear confrontation closer to the West European public<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Works on this topic deserving of mention include the following: T. Łoś-Nowak, *Polskie inicjatywy w sprawie broni nuklearnej w Europie środkowej 1957-1964 (Polish Nuclear Defense Initiatives in Central Europe, 1957-1964)*, Wrocław 1989; P. Wandycz, *Adam Rapacki and the Search for European Security*, in: G. A. Craig, *The Diplomats: 1939-1979*, Princeton, New York 1994, pp. 289-317; J. R. Ozinga, *The Rapacki Plan: The 1957 Proposal to Denuclearize Central Europe and an Analysis of its Rejection*, Jefferson, North Carolina and London 1989.

American dominance in the field of atomic defense, along with Moscow's fears of the possibility of West German access to atomic weapons, provided the impetus for the Soviet proposals to disarm from 1955 to 1958 and for Khrushchev's acceptance of the idea of the so-called "double maneuver" in foreign politics. These proposals were meant to signify the application of a strategic defense in Europe (in order to maintain their hold on this part of the continent) and the beginning of an offensive in Third World countries and to draw the West's attention away from the Soviet consolidation of the eastern bloc in 1955 (the Warsaw Pact was signed on May 14th of that year)<sup>3</sup>.

The disarmament proposals, together with other Soviet diplomatic initiatives, such as the agreement for a conference in Geneva, the signing of a state treaty with Austria (May 15, 1955), or the initiative to establish diplomatic relations with West Germany (June 7, 1955), were intended to introduce to the Western powers the doctrine of so-called "peaceful coexistence" announced officially at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1956<sup>4</sup>. The doctrine's task was not only to convince the politicians and public in the West of the peaceful tendencies of Soviet politics, but also to deflect onto the Western powers responsibility for the eventual fiasco of conversations on disarmament. The means to achieve this goal was to deepen and take advantage of the divisions in the camp of the opponent, which in consequence would lead to the collapse of the Atlantic Pact<sup>5</sup>.

The Soviet activity in this field forced the states of NATO to undertake counter offensives by advancing their own solutions (the modified plan of Anthony Eden was introduced in Geneva in 1955 at the initiative of Hugh Gaitskell, George Kennan, Denis Healey, and others)<sup>6</sup>. The pressure of Western public opinion, longing for a relaxation of international tensions, meant that the United States and its allies, for whom — at least in official

<sup>2</sup> For more on this topic, see M. Pasztor, *Między Paryżem, Warszawą a Moskwą. Polityczne uwarunkowania stosunków polsko-francuskich w latach 1953–1956 (Between Paris, Warsaw, and Moscow: The Condition of Polish–French Relations, 1953–1956)*, "Dzieje Najnowsze" 2, 2002, pp. 41–66.

<sup>3</sup> G. H. Soutou, *La Guerre de Cinquante Ans. Les relations Est-Ouest 1943–1990*, Paris 2001, pp. 303–304.

<sup>4</sup> M. P. Rey, *L'URSS et la sécurité européenne 1953–1956*, "Communisme" 49/50, 1997, pp. 130–131.

<sup>5</sup> G. H. Soutou, *op. cit.*, pp. 325–326.

pronouncements — a united Germany was a condition of safety in Europe, were forced, because of their fear of appearing unsuccessful in their negotiations with the Kremlin, to make concessions. Such a concession was their agreement to a proposed discussion with the Soviets on security on the European continent without previous consideration of the German question at the forum of the Subcommittee on Disarmament in London on March 27, 1956<sup>7</sup>. Soviet documents attest that this was easier, as French and British politicians came out in favor of beginning talks on collective security before the unification of Germany in face to face discussions with Soviet diplomats<sup>8</sup>. The abovementioned initiative of the Soviets from March 1956, including the idea of creating an atomic free zone on the territories of both German states and in Poland and Czechoslovakia and a ban on the placement of all types of nuclear arms, was intended to make impossible the nuclear arming of the Bundeswehr and, as a consequence, to limit the range of American nuclear guarantees for the West. The inclusion of the territory of West Germany within the area threatened by a Soviet nuclear attack would lead to the collapse of solidarity and a break in NATO<sup>9</sup>. Further variants of so-called Soviet disarmament plans, Nikolai Bulganin's plan of November 17, 1956 and Valeri Zorin's plan of March 18, 1957, had the same aims<sup>10</sup>.

It seems also that the Rapacki plan, the initiative announced by Adam Rapacki, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the October 2, 1957 meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations, was subordinated to the abovementioned goals and the activization of propaganda for Western public opinion. Rapacki proposed the creation of an atomic free zone on the territories of Poland, the German Democratic Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, and later Czechoslovakia<sup>11</sup>. The Rapacki plan, and

<sup>6</sup> On disarmament plans described as "disengagement" see T. Łoś-Nowak, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-50.

<sup>7</sup> G. H. Soutou, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>8</sup> Rosijskij Gosudarstwennyj Archiw Nowiejszej Isstorii (henceforth, *RGANI*), Moskva, Fond 5, Opis 28, Delo 283, pp. 255-268. In conversation with Soviet diplomats, Robert Lacoste, Robert Schuman, Edgar Faure, Jean-Paul Palewski and Vincent Auriol offered the need to stay within the framework of NATO as an explanation for the position of the French government. According to Soviet diplomats, the English were significantly more cautious, though they took a position essentially similar to the French.

<sup>9</sup> T. Łoś-Nowak, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>10</sup> J. R. Ozinga, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

especially the problem of its authorship, is to this day a topic of controversy in historical literature. Some view the plan as a further variant of the disarmament conceptions of the USSR, the realization of which was entrusted to Poland; others state that the Rapacki plan was an idea developed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs with clear authority from Moscow<sup>12</sup>.

The announcement of the plan on the day before the launch of Sputnik on October 4, 1957, not only shocked Western public opinion but also undoubtedly had an effect among the political elite<sup>13</sup>. The possibility of the loss of supremacy in the area of long-range rocket ballistics was consciously intended to make the NATO states more receptive to the "peaceful" proposition of

<sup>11</sup> The Czechoslovak government supported the Polish project already during the twelfth session of the UN General Assembly and confirmed its agreement for the creation of an atomic free zone in a declaration from December 14, 1957 as well as in notes sent to the governments of NATO countries in January 1958. (In a speech during the general debate at the twelfth session of the UN Assembly on October 2, 1957, Rapacki did not mention Czechoslovakia. See *Przemówienie Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych PRL, Adama Rapackiego wygłoszone w debacie ogólnej XII sesji Zgromadzenia Ogólnego ONZ, Nowy Jork, 2 października 1957 r.* (Speech of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Polish People's Republic, Adam Rapacki, at the twelfth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, New York, October 1957), in: *Prawo i Historia Dyplomatyczna. Wybór dokumentów* (Law and Diplomatic History: Selected Documents), intro. L. Gelberg, Warszawa 1960, p. 537. It seems, however, that the matter of including Czechoslovakia in an atomic free zone was the subject of tension between Poles and Czechs because the Czechs were left out of the discussion. From the documents of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it turns out that Czechoslovakia was included in the zone after Rapacki consulted with Gromyko on February 2, 1958. The results of this meeting and the plan developed then was introduced to the Czechs by the Polish delegation during its visit in Prague from February 8–9, 1958. In accordance with the memorandum of the Polish government from February 14, 1958 in the matter of creating an atomic free zone in Central Europe, the zone, besides Poland, West Germany, and East Germany, was supposed to include Czechoslovakia. Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych w Warszawie (Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw, henceforth, AMSZ), fas. 23, vol. 163, l. 14, pp. 77–78.

<sup>12</sup> For the first variant, see J. L. Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*, Oxford 1997, p. 138. According to Gaddis, the Rapacki plan was a further attempt to undermine the position of the West German government and not a serious attempt in the direction of détente. T. Łoś–Nowak (*op. cit.*, pp. 101–104) and P. Wandycz (*op. cit.*, pp. 289–317) are partisans of the second variant.

<sup>13</sup> The launching of Sputnik was intended to confirm the success of the Soviets in testing the first intercontinental ballistic rocket in the world in August 1957. See L. S. Kaplan, *L'impact de spoutnik sur la politique extérieure américaine*, "Relations Internationales" 71, 1992, p. 330; W. Zubok, K. Pleszakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War From Stalin to Khrushchev*, Harvard University Press 1996, pp. 231–232; J. Prados, *The Soviet Estimate: US Intelligence Analysis and Soviet Strategic Forces*, Princeton, New Jersey 1986, pp. 62–64.

the Eastern bloc. Soviet trials of multiheaded ballistic rockets of intercontinental range (R-7) were only in the experimental stage; if the Americans discovered this, the Soviet bluff would put an end to the Soviet fight for world dominance<sup>14</sup>. The diplomacy of the Polish government, which took advantage of the enthusiasm of the West for the Polish October of 1956, tried to place on the international stage the idea that taking a broader initiative than other marginal countries on one's own could contribute to the growth of the prestige of Warsaw and also deepen the existing divergences of opinion among NATO members in light of their relationship to initiatives of the Eastern bloc. And the mood dominating in the Atlantic union caused by the position of the United States in the 1956 Suez crisis had long been long known to Moscow and other satellite countries. Not only did this mood end effective French-British military cooperation, it also weakened the conviction of the Western allies in Washington's solidarity for its European allies<sup>15</sup>.

A misunderstanding in the Supreme Command of NATO in Europe, which deprived Paris of real influence on the most important decisions of NATO, and the refusal to revise Brian MacMahon's law for the benefit of France<sup>16</sup> inclined Paris to search for its own method of acquiring atomic weapons. The "special relationship" of Great Britain with the United States, which led to a remarkable abrogation of law for the benefit of London (October 25, 1957), did not make for a real partnership between Britain and France; rather, it contributed to a strengthening of mutual hatred on both sides of the English Channel<sup>17</sup>. France's essentially negative position to the strengthening of

<sup>14</sup> W. Zubok, K. Pleszakov, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-242. Compare T. Łoś-Nowak, *op. cit.*, p. 94. In the opinion of CIA experts and the subcommittee of Senator L. Johnson, the Soviet Union achieved dominance in ICBM defense in 1957. President Eisenhower also shared this opinion. J. Prados, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-66.

<sup>15</sup> M. Vaïsse, *La Grandeur. Politique étrangère du général de Gaulle 1958-1969*, Paris 1998, p. 17.

<sup>16</sup> The McMahon Law of 1946 forbade the US government from transferring material and information relating to atomic defense to other states. See M. Vaïsse, *La Grandeur*, p. 18; *idem*, *Une sortie programmée (1958-1966): Indépendance et solidarité 1958-1963*, in: *La France et l'OTAN 1949-1996*, ed. M. Vaïsse, P. Mélandri and F. Bozo, Bruxelles 1996, pp. 220-221.

<sup>17</sup> The decision for the "strengthening of special relations" between Great Britain and the United States was undertaken during conversations in Bermuda (March 20-23, 1957) and in Washington (October 23-25, 1957). G. Warner, *De Gaulle and the Anglo-American "Special Relationship" 1958-1966: Perceptions and Realities*, in: *La France et l'OTAN*, pp. 247-251.

West Germany within NATO, and above all to the access of Bonn to weapons of mass destruction, developed from the threat felt by the French; this threatening feeling resulted in Paris becoming for Warsaw the primary territory of diplomatic operations connected with the Rapacki plan<sup>18</sup>. For Polish diplomats, the decidedly negative position toward the Polish proposal of Jules Moch, the French representative at a session of the General Assembly, was an unpleasant shock<sup>19</sup>. The approaching meeting of the Council of the Atlantic Pact in Paris (December 16–19, 1957), during which a decision relating to the arms of American allies in atomic defense was expected, activated Polish diplomacy. In accordance with Rapacki's instructions, Polish diplomats devised a broad scale propaganda action intended to "complicate and delay the realization of the plans of NATO" as well as to "contribute to the difficulties and limitation on the freedom of movement of leading circles of NATO". The plan of the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs was the tool for the realization of the abovementioned goals. The promotion of the plan for the benefit of the Western public, political elites, and journalists as a "means of contributing to the lessening of international tension and the risk of atomic confrontation between two blocs" became the main task of Polish diplomats in this period. Practically, A. Rapacki anticipated the "management of this action" in two ways: "through the propaganda of the press" and "diplomatic" lines, "both at home and abroad"<sup>20</sup>. Warsaw also worked out a long-term scenario. In a document developed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs entitled *The Establishment of Further Action of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in connection to the Plan of Minister Rapacki*, leading circles of this department recommended further not only winning over "a part of the capitalist public opinion in the West, which betrays a certain central tendency in relationship

<sup>18</sup> Documents Diplomatiques Français (henceforth, DDF), 1957, vol. II (1er juillet–31 décembre), Paris 1991, nr 430, *M. de Carbonnel, Ambassadeur de France à Varsovie à M. Pineau, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, Varsovie 9 décembre 1957*. Rapacki tried to convey to the others the threat posed to France by the intensification of German armaments.

<sup>19</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, l. 71, vol. 982, p. 104. *Stanowisko rządu Francji wobec "Planu Rapackiego", ściśle tajne; depesza z Nowego Jorku nr 551 z dn. 13 XII 1957. (Position of the French Government on the Rapacki Plan, top secret; dispatch from New York, nr 551, from December 13, 1957)*, AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 981, l. 71, pp. 15–16.

<sup>20</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 981, l. 71, pp. 14–16, *A. Rapacki do S. Gajewskiego (A. Rapacki to S. Gajewski)*, Warszawa, 6 XII 1957.

to NATO", but also pointed out the "necessity of maintaining influence and the development of an optimal atmosphere for actions with similar goals to the plan of Rapacki". In connection with this, Polish diplomats in the West recommended the following: a) keeping the Rapacki plan for a longer time as the center of attention by appropriately enriching the discussion on this topic and by gradually specifying its different aspects; b) effectively dispelling doubts and reservations about the plan and putting forth convincing counter arguments; c) consolidating and broadening the influences of circles positively inclined to the plan. The leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommended the immediate intensification of contacts above all with politicians and journalists who viewed the Rapacki plan relatively positively. A consultation with the Soviets was also held "with the goal of explaining matters connected to the further progress and speed of the working out of the Rapacki plan, in particular in questions of control". After "consultation" with the Soviet Union, the intention was to inform other countries of the Warsaw Pact about the results<sup>21</sup>. This broad scale propaganda activity of Polish diplomats took a plan known only in narrow diplomatic circles and made it significantly popular among public opinion and politicians (especially those in the opposition) in the West<sup>22</sup>.

Meanwhile, in spite of the characteristic reserve of the position of the French authorities toward the American proposal announced at the NATO council in Paris<sup>23</sup> to place rocket launchers and ballistic rockets with nuclear heads on French soil, Premier Felix Gaillard in an interview for *US News and World Report* (from December 27, 1957, printed December 31, 1957 by *Le Monde*) called the Rapacki plan "very dangerous" and "not deserving of consideration"<sup>24</sup>, considering its eventual conse-

<sup>21</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 981, l. 71, pp. 73-75, *Plan I. Zakończenie dalszej akcji MSZ w związku z Planem Min. Rapackiego (Plan I. Further Action of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Plan of Minister Rapacki)*, no date.

<sup>22</sup> Public Record Office (henceforth, PRO), Foreign Office (henceforth, FO), 371/137081 *From F. Roberts to sir A. Rumbold, February 9, 1958*.

<sup>23</sup> The Allies' supply in atomic arms was supposed to be realized under certain conditions, among others, complete US control. On December 13, 1957, Félix Gaillard declared in the foreign affairs commission of the United Nations that France did not object "in essence" to the installation of rocket launchers on its territory; however, such a decision was not undertaken. See M. Vaïsse, *Une sortie programée*, p. 221.

quences (such as the withdrawal of American troops from Europe). The intervention of Gaillard, however in agreement with the opinion of the Quai d'Orsay, the British, and the Americans presented at the meeting of the Atlantic Council (December 16–19, 1957), nevertheless caused certain troubles and confusion in Western political circles. In the opinion of both the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of the Foreign Office, Marshal Bulganin's support of the Polish initiative in letters to Western leaders (December 10–14, 1957 and then on January 16, 1958) forced the powers to "carefully study" the plan, making it impossible to trivialize or silence it<sup>25</sup>. The popularity of the plans proposed by the Eastern bloc and the public's fear of atomic confrontation inclined the Western powers, especially the Foreign Office, to undertake an internal discussion on the issue and to offer counter proposals. The discussion at the meeting of the Atlantic Council of NATO was supposed to lead to the working out of a project, meant to show the unreality of the East's proposal and to prove the bad will of the USSR and its satellites and their intent to attain military dominance in the world. The singularly negative position of Gaillard, neither in accordance with the remaining members of the Atlantic Pact nor, it seems, with his own Ministry of Foreign Affairs, met with the critical opinion of the Allies, including Great Britain, which in spite of a fundamentally similar position on the Polish proposal, did not intend to publicly declare solidarity with the French premier<sup>26</sup>. In instructions for the British ambassador in the Stockholm Foreign Office, it was clearly stressed that Britain does not want "to call forth the impression that the Polish proposal was ignored or rejected out of hand even if in its present form it is not able to be accepted"<sup>27</sup>. Moreover, in the opinion of the British minister, the

<sup>24</sup> Interview with French Prime Minister Félix Gaillard, "US News and World Report", December 27, 1957. "Do you think the Polish proposal for 'denuclearization' of Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia worth exploring? F. Gaillard: No. It is a very dangerous idea because any nuclear disarmament of Europe would remove the American forces and require them to turn home while the Russians could remain".

<sup>25</sup> See J. Winiewicz, *Copamiętasz z długiej drogi życia (What Do you Remember from the Long Road of Life)*, Poznań 1985, p. 566.

<sup>26</sup> DDF, 1957, vol. II (1er juillet–31 décembre), Paris 1991, nr 474. *Note de la direction d'Europe (Service d'Europe centrale). Le plan Rapacki*. PRO FO 371/137080. M. Gaillard Interview, A. Rumbold to Sir F. Hoyer Millar, January 3, 1958.

<sup>27</sup> PRO FO 371/137078 *Western Department to the Chancery British Embassy, Stockholm, January 2, 1958*.



project supported by Bulganin in letters to Western leaders should be considered at the next session of the NATO Council so that a common response to the message of the Soviet premier calling for an East–West summit could be worked out<sup>28</sup>. According to the chief British diplomat John Selwyn Lloyd, “studying the Polish proposal and then rejecting it was a better tactic” and then only by the use of “rational argumentation” and “concrete counter proposals”. The growing interest of public opinion in “neutral” plans forced Western governments at the meetings of the Council of NATO to come up with precise argumentation explaining the negative opinion of the West toward the Eastern bloc initiative<sup>29</sup>. This caused Selwyn Lloyd to come out in favor of discussion on the Rapacki plan at the nearest meeting of the Council of the Atlantic Pact<sup>30</sup>.

Given these facts, the position taken by the Quai d'Orsay becomes more understandable; for tactical reasons, its own press representative and the French ambassador in Poland, Eric de Carbonnel, had to smooth over the unfavorable impression in Warsaw and in other European capitals caused by the uncompromising response of Gaillard<sup>31</sup>. This did not change the fact that in the opinion of the head of the department and his leadership cadre the plan could not be accepted as a “basis for discussion” of disarmament at a future summit. From the point of view of French politics, the plan contained the following flaws:

<sup>28</sup> PRO FO 371/137078 A. Rumbold to sir. F. Hoyer Millar, December 30, 1957. Calling for a conversation with officials of the French Embassy in London, Rumbold suggested that the response to the Soviet proposal, which included the Rapacki plan, should be agreed upon first by the three powers.

<sup>29</sup> PRO FO 371/137078 J. Selwyn Lloyd to Sir Ch. Steel (Bonn), January 4, 1958. In conversation with the West German ambassador H. von Herwarthe, the head of the Foreign Office suggested deposing a memorandum offering counter arguments to the Rapacki plan.

<sup>30</sup> PRO FO 371/137078 J. Selwyn Lloyd to Dr. H. von Brentano, January 4, 1958.

<sup>31</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 947, l. 68, p. 41. S. Skrzyszewski do szefa kancelarii sejmu, 31 I 1958. On January 7, 1958 a representative of the Quai d'Orsay declared that the proposal advanced by Rapacki “is discussed presently in the capitals of many Western states”. He also stressed that “this important proposal will be seriously studied”. De Carbonnel also assured Rapacki of this. AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 936, l. 67, p. 21. *Notatka [H. Bireckiego] z rozmowy z amb. Francji p. de Carbonnel w MSZ w dniu 4 I 1958 roku oraz (Note of H. Birecki in conversation with the Ambassador of France De Carbonnel in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on January 4, 1958 and), AMSZ, fasc. 17, vol. 129, l. 21, pp. 58–64. Notatka [H. Bireckiego] z rozmowy tow. min. Rapackiego z amb. Francji p. de Carbonnel w dn. 10 I 1958 r. (Note of H. Birecki in conversation with Minister Rapacki with the Ambassador of France De Carbonnel on January 10, 1958).*

1) it maintained the official division of Germany, which meant it lost the propaganda argument in West German public opinion, which still maintained the idea that German unity was the foundation for security in Europe and the starting point for any and all disarmament projects which the West would be ready to approve; 2) its eventual implementation would mean the neutralization of Germany and determine the terms of that country's membership in the Western world. The neutralization of East and West Germany was supposed to initiate a period in which these countries would become the subject of the attentions of the superpowers, which could lead to a German turn in the direction of an "Eastern alliance" with the aim of attaining unification; 3) the reception of the Rapacki proposal marked, according to the leadership of the Quai d'Orsay, an agreement for the withdrawal from Europe of American forces and, consequently, the loss of American rocket bases in Europe, which in turn would lead to "our isolation and weakness in light of the colossal Soviet empire"<sup>32</sup>. These flaws seemed to threaten the French priority in relationship to Bonn, which was the integration of West Germany within the West European system and to make it necessary for France to cooperate with West Germany in the production of atomic weapons<sup>33</sup>. The energetic protests of the West German authorities against the Rapacki plan, which they saw as an attempt to effect the weakening and disintegration of the Atlantic Pact, to end their efforts to gain access to weapons of mass destruction, and to maintain the division of Germany, forced French and British politicians to behave especially carefully<sup>34</sup>. In

<sup>32</sup> DDF, 1957, vol. II (1 juillet–31 décembre), Paris 1991, nr 474, *Note de la direction d'Europe (Service d'Europe centrale). Le plan Rapacki, Paris, 28 décembre 1957*; DDF, 1958, vol. I (1er janvier–30 juin), Paris 1992, nr 2 and 7, M. Pineau, *Ministre des Affaires étrangères à M. de Caronnel, Ambassadeur de France à Varsovie, Paris, January 2 and 6, 1958*.

<sup>33</sup> Cooperation in the area of nuclear defense between the West Germans and the Italians (with the condition that arms would be produced in France with the "scientific and financial" help of the allies) in light of the expected withdrawal of the American military from Europe was the subject of a secret meeting of new members of Gaillard's government on November 15, 1957. The decision to cooperate closely with the West Germans was made at this meeting. The consequences of this conference were the mentioned protocol. G. H. Soutou, *L'alliance incertaine: Les rapports politico-stratégiques franco-allemands, 1954–1996*, Paris 1996, p. 83.

<sup>34</sup> On the relationship of West Germany to the Rapacki plan, see D. Bingen, *Die Polenpolitik der Bonner Republik von Adenauer bis Kohl 1949–1991*, Baden-Baden 1998, pp. 61–65.

discussions with the British, the French stressed bluntly that "they are not prepared to exert pressure on the German government to accept a limitation of their liberty"<sup>35</sup>.

London, attempting to discourage French diplomats from undertaking independent discussions with Warsaw before the NATO meeting, also showed this "sensitivity toward the Germans" in this regard. Selwyn Lloyd drew the attention of the French to the fact that though he was not a supporter of the plan for the same reasons as the French, the issue should be discussed in the Atlantic Council. His analysis of the issue at the meeting of the Atlantic Council could have led to the development of counter proposals, resulting in the eventual possibility of striking a bargain with the Soviets on the question of excluding medium range rockets (IRBM) from the territory of Germany. The head of the Foreign Office added, "the NATO project should rely on the unification of Germany and then expect the demilitarization of the Eastern half of the country. Perhaps also propose the denuclearization of a certain territory on both sides of the border of the united Germanies and subject that territory to inspection"<sup>36</sup>. The British proposal, however unrealistic in the context of the Soviet position, seemed easier for NATO members to accept, as the alliance was fundamentally not inclined to grant the acquisition of nuclear arms to West German politicians<sup>37</sup>. The advancement by the West of a counter project which there was no chance Moscow would accept resolved for NATO the uncomfortable matter of placing weapons of mass destruction in the hands of the Germans and also made possible the taking over of Soviet responsibility for the lack of success in the disarmament negotiations. In Western public opinion, this was seen as an essential argument for the placement of American nuclear arms in Western Europe. The Allies agreed wholeheartedly that the "general situ-

<sup>35</sup> PRO FO 371/137078, *Conversation between the Secretary of State and the French Ambassador [J. Chauvel] on January 4, 1958. Mr. John Selwyn Lloyd to Sir Gladwyn Jebb (Paris), January 9, 1958.*

<sup>36</sup> PRO FO 371/137078, *Conversation between the Secretary of State and the French Ambassador [J. Chauvel] on January 4, 1958. Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Sir G. Jebb (Paris). Ibidem, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Sir Ch. Steel (Bonn), January 4, 1958.*

<sup>37</sup> PRO FO 371/137081, *Visit of M. Laloy, Director of Europe in the Quai d'Orsay, to London, February 10-11, 1958. Meeting in the FO at 11:30, February 11.* "Mr. Ramsbotham emphasized that our thinking about disengagement was based on the assumption that neither we nor the French wanted to put nuclear weapons into German hands".

ation" and the great power ambitions of the Soviet Union did not favor undertaking constructive negotiations with that country<sup>38</sup>. The arguments put forth by the Foreign Office for the sake of discussing the project resulted in the determination of the Quai d'Orsay, against the Rapacki plan, to take advantage of the eventual debate at the NATO forum for the strengthening of its own position within NATO. The means of realizing French ambitions was an offer to create a working group within the Atlantic Pact and then a leading group with representatives from three countries (the United States, Great Britain, and France) to work out positions on the most important political questions (including the Rapacki plan)<sup>39</sup>. As the price of British support for this idea, France was ready, against its initial position, to back the British initiative to discuss the Rapacki plan in the Atlantic Council and to join actively in the work and construction of counter proposals<sup>40</sup>. In the event the Americans failed to support this initiative, the French proposed to the British further coordination in NATO between Paris and London<sup>41</sup>. The alternative for France, which did not shy away from the British, was a tightening of atomic cooperation with West Germany, beginning with the protocol from November 28, 1957<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> PRO FO 371/137078, *The Polish Proposal, A Nuclear Zone in Europe, January 7, 1958*.

<sup>39</sup> G. H. Soutou is mistaken when he writes that Gaillard set up a consultation in NATO for all members, and not just the three powers. See G. H. Soutou, *L'alliance incertaine*, p. 103. Conversations between the Quai d'Orsay and the Foreign Office testify to Gaillard's ambitions relating to admitting France to the triumvirate at the heart of NATO. PRO FO 371/13708, *Visit of M. Laloy, Director of Europe at the Quai d'Orsay to London, February 10-11, 1958*; PRO FO 371/137081, *Sir G. Jebb, Paris to Sir A. Rumbold, January 31, 1958*; PRO FO 371/137080, *D. Ormsby-Gore, FO Minute, February 3, 1958*.

<sup>40</sup> PRO FO 371/137078, *J. Murray to Mr. P. F. Hancock, British Embassy (Paris), January 9, 1958*. J. D. Jurgensen, deputy representative of France in the NATO Council, stated in conversation with J. Murray that "(...) the Quai (as well as M. Gaillard) thoroughly disliked the Polish proposals. But they confirmed to see merit in what they understood to be our view that if IRBM were not in fact to be stationed in Germany we should represent this as a concession and try to negotiate some counter-concession by the Russians".

<sup>41</sup> PRO FO 371/137080, *M. Chauvel's proposal for French-United Kingdom Policy Coordination, February 3, 1958*; PRO FO 371/137080, *Mr. Ormsby-Gore, FO Minute, January 31, 1958*.

<sup>42</sup> On French-German-Italian cooperation in the area of atomic defense, see G. H. Soutou, *L'alliance incertaine*, pp. 83-95. See also PRO FO 371/137080, *M. Chauvel's Proposal for French-United Kingdom Policy Coordination, February 3, 1958*.

The French initiative, tied to the idea of the leadership of the three powers, among which France would occupy the least equal position in the company of the British and Americans, met with a decidedly negative reaction from the American State Department. The Americans correctly interpreted the actual intentions of the French lying behind the changing of their position on undertaking discussions on the Rapacki plan at the Atlantic Council<sup>43</sup>. Washington's firm position meant that London had to seek the support of Paris for its proposal to discuss the Rapacki plan at the NATO forum and maintain loyalty toward Washington at the same time.

The readiness to support the British proposal did not change opinions of the project expressed within the leading circles of French politics abroad. The French recognized the project of Rapacki as an element of Soviet tactics and a further variant of earlier proposals advanced by Moscow. If the plan with the aforementioned proposals of Bulganin were officially accepted, the origin of the Rapacki plan, the French head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Christian Pineau, declared, "does not have the least significance"<sup>44</sup>. Meanwhile, Polish authorities in discussions with Western diplomats and politicians did not spare any efforts to convince the West that the Rapacki plan was an original Polish initiative. Pointing out the difference between the Polish proposal and others advanced by the Soviets, Polish authorities stressed their flexibility on the problem of the control of the atomic free zone and the form of understanding between the two Germanies (which was a condition of creating the zone). They also exposed their fears of a threat from West Germany, which did not recognize the Oder-Lusatian Neisse border<sup>45</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> PRO FO 371/137078, FO Minute, P. F. Hancock, January 8, 1958. Hancock in conversation with B. Hooker from the American Embassy called the idea of creating in the heart of NATO a working group "dangerous". He also expressed doubts that the French really intended to discuss the Rapacki plan. See also *ibidem*, J. Murray to Mr. Hancock, British Embassy, Paris, January 9, 1958. "Jurgensen-wrote Murray-marked anti-American bias, ended with a fiery diatribe against Mr. Dulles and American policy".

<sup>44</sup> DDF, 1958, vol. I (1er janvier–30 juin), Paris 1992, nr 7, M. Pineau à M. de Carbonnel, *Ambassadeur de France à Varsovie, Paris, 6 janvier 1958*. "enfin, le plan Rapacki, quelle que soit son originalité, ne diffère que faiblement de la proposition présentée le 18 mars 1957 par M. Zorine au sous-Comité du désarmement".

<sup>45</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 982, l. 17, pp. 58–64, *Notatka [H. Bireckiego] z rozmowy Tow. Min. Rapackiego z amb. Francji p. de Carbonnel w dn. 10 I 1959, Warszawa 13 I*

Both Ambassador De Carbonnel and his British colleague Sir Eric Berthoud were convinced that the plan was a Polish undertaking and that its genesis lay in Warsaw's fear of West Germany being drawn into a wartime adventure by its Western allies and using atomic weapons. They also emphasized Polish ambitions to play a more independent role in international politics<sup>46</sup>. The argument of De Carbonnel that "independent of the sources for the inspiration of the plan, the plan lay too completely in Poland's interests for Polish authorities not to treat it as its own" seemed, however, in the moment of the Soviet "reception" of the plan (in Bulganin's letter to Western leaders) to have only secondary significance for Paris<sup>47</sup>. Discussions with Polish diplomats (to assure that the Polish authorities supported a united Germany<sup>48</sup>) appeared to confirm for the Quai d'Orsay the idea that the Rapacki project, regardless of its origin and that it contained in its original version an attempt to regulate the question of the Polish border at the Oder–Neisse line, became for Moscow another occasion to act for its benefit on the matter of Germany (and its neutralization) and to gain control over Western Europe<sup>49</sup>. The broadening of the atomic free zone, advanced in Soviet proposals

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1958. Rapacki told De Carbonnel that "We think that an agreement without an intermediary between East and West Germany is the most simple but only one of the possible ways leading to the realization of our proposal". Ambassador Gajewski even suggested in conversation with Gaillard, on January 3, 1958, that "the unification of Germany lies in the interests of Poland". See DDF, 1958, vol. I, nr 7, *M. Pineau à M de Carbonnel, Paris, 6 I 1958*. Vice-Minister J. Winięwicz, in conversation with Western diplomats, even proposed Soviet–American control in the atomic free zone. PRO FO 371/137078, *Sir E. Berthoud (British Embassy, Warsaw) to FO, January 13, 1958*.

<sup>46</sup> PRO FO 371/137078, *Sir E. Berthoud to FO, British Embassy (Warsaw), January 13, 1958*. The Ambassador wrote that in the opinion of his French and American colleagues the Rapacki plan was, however, in accord with the Warsaw Pact, a Polish initiative and that the Soviet Union positively resented its reception in the world.

<sup>47</sup> DDF, 1958, vol. I (1er janvier–30 juin), Paris 1992, nr 7 footnote 2; tél. de Varsovie du 5 janvier 1958.; *ibidem*, nr 19. *M. de Carbonnel, Ambassadeur de France à Varsovie, à M. Pineau, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, Varsovie, 11 janvier 1958, 10h*; DDF, *ibidem*, nr 22. *Note du Secrétariat des Conférences. Désarmement: Proposition Rapacki*.

<sup>48</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 17, vol. 158, l. 21, pp. 58–64. *Notatka [H. Bireckiego] z rozmowy tow. min. Rapackiego z amb. Francji p. de Carbonnel w dniu 10 I 1958, Warszawa, 13 I 1958 (Note of H. Birecki in conversation with Minister Rapacki with the Ambassador of France De Carbonnel on January 10, 1958, Warsaw, January 13, 1958)*. DDF, 1958, vol. I (1er janvier–30 juin), Paris 1992, nr 7. *M. Pineau, Ministre des Affaires étrangères à M. Carbonnel, ambassadeur de France à Varsovie, Paris, 6 I 1958*.

and encompassing Italy and Scandinavian countries, was meant to lead, in the opinion of Minister Pineau, to the neutralization of all of Europe and eventually to the liquidation of the Atlantic Pact and Moscow's dominance on the European continent<sup>50</sup>. London, for whom the question of the plan's authorship remained a secondary matter, maintained a greater distance from the Polish proposal. London's position on the entire undertaking came down to the following statement: "though the initiative could have come from the Poles, in practice we will have to deal with the Russians"<sup>51</sup>.

British diplomats, along with warnings from Washington by Henri Spaak, the Secretary General of NATO, meant for Frank Roberts, London's permanent representative in the Council of NATO, reported that "the Russians are not serious and the Rapacki plan as well as all Russian proposals are traps". Such reports caused a certain disorientation in the Foreign Office, which pressured its ambassador in Warsaw to once and for all "explain what is happening with the Poles". Assuring Spaak of the British government's negative views of the Polish initiative, Roberts tried, in line with the instructions of Selwyn Lloyd, to convince Spaak to initiate discussion on the Rapacki plan at the

<sup>49</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 981, l. 71, pp. 88–89, S. Gajewski do A. Rapackiego, *Paryż 14 I 1958* (S. Gajewski to A. Rapacki, Paris, January 14, 1958). In conversation with Gajewski, Pineau said, among other things, that "politically he considers this plan sensible and even interesting, but only in the aspect of Polish-German relations there is the possibility of disturbing the Oder-Neisse border and the problem of German unification"; he was, however, against the plan in terms of NATO-Warsaw Pact relations, because, in his opinion, the plan must as a consequence lead to the desire for the neutralization of other countries, for example, Hungary, Romania, Belgium, Italy and, moreover, France, which without a general arrangement on matters of disarmament and control would disrupt the balance of power, which lies in no one's interest. The West did not accept the neutralization of Germany. See M. Couve de Murville, *Une politique étrangère 1958–1969*, Paris 1971, p. 193.

<sup>50</sup> "Journal Officiel de la République Française. Assemblée Nationale. Débats Parlementaires". N° 5, du 23 I 1958.

<sup>51</sup> PRO FO 371/ 137078, *Recommendations [for the head of the Foreign Office in conversation with Ch. Pineau], A. Rumbold, January 23 1958*; PRO FO 371/ 137080. The position of the US on the plan was introduced in the document, US Views on the Rapacki Plan [from the US Embassy], February 5, 1958. "After careful study [of this Plan], our reaction is heavily negative. While it might have some surface attraction, it poses totally unacceptable risks. [...] The Poles put forward the Rapacki plan in the UN some months ago. While it attracted relatively little attention, the initial degree of interest in Western opinion which it has aroused since Bulganin's endorsement makes it essential that the NATO governments adopt a common line on the proposal and the concepts it involves".

next meeting of the Atlantic Council. Besides the repeated argument regarding the mood dominating in the British public, Roberts justified the position of Her Majesty's Government with the need "to test Russian negotiating positions in the coming year". An important argument advanced by the British diplomat, speaking before the preliminary discussion of the plan, was supposed to be the loss of influence in the countries of Asia and Africa for the benefit of the Communists, who "did not like", according to Roberts, the "West's negative position toward the disarmament initiatives of the Eastern bloc". Clearly referring to Washington's dislike for the undertaking of a debate, Roberts called this approach "defeatism", leading him to say that it is "never possible to speak with the Russians without some loss"<sup>52</sup>. Premier Harold Macmillan's January 16, 1958 response to Bulganin's letter was a careful expression of British diplomacy in light of Soviet initiatives, including the Rapacki plan and undertaking of negotiations with Moscow. Macmillan stated that "in spite of clear objections [to the plan], the British government is examining it for elements which could become the foundation for an alternative proposal"<sup>53</sup>. Macmillan's response contrasted with the sure tone of formulations contained in Premier Gaillard's letter of January 14, 1958. The French premier stressed that the plan "disregards political aspects of European problems [such as the unification of Germany — MP], limiting it to a proposal of a military character, though its effectiveness in light of the impossibility of controlling an atomic free zone is doubtful"<sup>54</sup>.

The American State Department's position on the Rapacki plan had in this period an undoubted influence on the uncompromising position of the French government. Paris' conditions for the acceptance of French desiderata as well as the abrogation of the McMahon Bill (which made it possible for the French to acquire from the Americans enriched uranium used for French submarines of atomic speed) made it impossible, it seems, for the French to take a position on disarmament different than the hard

<sup>52</sup> PRO FO 371/137078. *Sir F. Roberts (UK Delegation, Paris) to Sir A. Rumbold, January 14, 1958. FO Minute Western Department, Sir F. Hoyer Millar, January 7, 1958.*

<sup>53</sup> PRO FO 371/137080, *Disengagement. J. K. Drinkall to Mr. P. A. Rhodes, February 3, 1958.*

<sup>54</sup> A response to Bulganin's letter was developed at the meeting of the NATO Council; see "Le Monde" 1956, nr 2345.



line toward Moscow presented by the American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles<sup>55</sup>.

Perhaps the intensive propaganda activity of the Polish embassy in Paris led the French authorities to their unyielding position on the Rapacki plan, in addition to their hopes of expected support from the United States for the ambitions of Paris. Taking advantage of the anti-American mood of broad public opinion and the political center, the propaganda activity, in line with instructions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, tried "to spark attention to the Polish proposal", making possible the undertaking of "broad action on behalf of the Rapacki plan". The primary goal was "making the situation of the French government difficult", which was more important because the government supported "entirely the American position in the matter of eventual negotiations with the East". The instructions from Warsaw recommended concentrating on socialist and radical centers of "different shades", not resigning from reaching "certain elements of Movement républicain populaire (People's Republican Movement)"<sup>56</sup>.

This task was more difficult than it seemed, as the socialist party (SFIO), of which Minister of Foreign Affairs Ch. Pineau was a member, took a negative position on the disarmament plans, and in particular on the Rapacki plan. Undertaking activity in accordance with the above instructions of the Polish embassy strengthened the influence of the opposition wing led by Guy Mollet, which "turned out to have a great interest in the Rapacki plan". According to the report of Gajewski, activists of this opposition (Robert Verdier, Alain Savary) as well as André Philip, excluded from the SFIO, even considered the possibility of taking advantage of the plan as a "platform in the fight with the leadership of the party and as a link with laborites and the SPD"<sup>57</sup>. Polish diplomats also placed great hope in Gaullist circles. In the opinion of Polish diplomats, Gaullist circles, "de-

<sup>55</sup> G. H. Soutou, *L'alliance incertaine*, pp. 108–109; M. Vaïsse, *La filière sans issue: l'histoire du premier sous-marin atomique français*, "Relations Internationales" 5 (1989), pp. 339–341.

<sup>56</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 982, l. 71, p. 121, *Możliwości dalszej akcji w sprawie Planu Rapackiego we Francji (The Possibility of Further Action on the Rapacki Plan in France)*, no date.

<sup>57</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 982, l. 71, p. 161, S. Gajewski to P. Ogrodziński, *wyciąg (S. Gajewski to P. Ogrodziński, excerpt from correspondence)*, Paris, February 17, 1958.

fending the political independence of France and fighting for access to atomic weapons, placed along side the anti-German political circle connected to General De Gaulle, sought rapprochement with the East". For this reason, it was concluded, French activists around De Gaulle seemed open to Polish arguments on the question of the Rapacki plan<sup>58</sup>. In the reports of Polish diplomats, politicians from a tight circle of general's (Jacques Soustelle and Jacques Chaban-Delmas) declared support for the Polish initiative. In their opinion, General De Gaulle also accepted the Polish initiative; on January 23, 1958, De Gaulle had stressed the meaning of the Rapacki plan for the "proper solution to the German question" in a conversation with Ambassador Gajewski. De Gaulle's position became a source of great misunderstanding and disillusionment in Warsaw after that politician's return to power. Supporters of the Rapacki plan included senators connected to the Polish embassy, the Gaullist Debu Bridel and Leon Hamon, and the former premier and radical party activist Edgar Faure<sup>59</sup>. Faure saw in the plan "the only real way out of this impasse [regarding disarmament] at this moment" and declared himself a supporter of economic cooperation with the Soviet Union and of "strengthening relationships with Poland"<sup>60</sup>.

Jules Moch also reported that the Rapacki plan became a subject of discussion in the National Assembly on January 21–22, 1958, on the occasion of a debate on French foreign politics. The plan won the unconditional support only of communists and radicals such as Pierre Cot and Edgar Faure. Jules Moch came out for a conditional "consideration of the plan" (with a defining of controls and a broadening of the atomic free zone into Hungary). Minister Pineau maintained his negative position throughout the debate. In Pineau's interpretation, the main idea of

<sup>58</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 982, l. 71, pp. 135 and 150, S. Gajewski do H. Bireckiego, wyciąg koresp. z Paryża (S. Gajewski to H. Birecki, excerpt from correspondence from Paris), January 21, 1958 and S. Gajewski do P. Ogrodzińskiego, wyciąg koresp. z Paryża (S. Gajewski to P. Ogrodziński, excerpt from correspondence from Paris), January 25, 1958.

<sup>59</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 981, l. 71, p. 9, J. Wiechecki do H. Bireckiego, wyciąg koresp. z Paryża (J. Wiechecki to H. Birecki, excerpt from correspondence from Paris), December 14, 1957.

<sup>60</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 982, l. 71, pp. 93 and 134, S. Gajewski do P. Ogrodzińskiego, wyciąg koresp., Paryż (S. Gajewski to P. Ogrodziński, excerpt from correspondence from Paris), January 16 and 20, 1958. According to Gajewski, the words of Faure should not be taken to have "great weight".

the plan “was to be the creation of a ‘particular situation’ (*une situation particulière*)” between Germany and Poland, which could make the “certain day” of preliminary discussions of the “delicate question of the German–Polish border” easier. In Pineau’s opinion, the Russians changed, though, the significance of the entire proposal, and “the inclusion of Czechoslovakia, a proposal directed toward the Italians and Scandinavians, a new proposal related to the deatomization of the Near East” attested to the fact that “the present proposal aims toward a completely different goal”. “Taking into consideration the range of present rockets, the proposal lost [...] its practical military significance. [...] But the issue also has political significance. We cannot give the Soviets the means to disintegrate NATO’s defense system and allow the withdrawal of the Americans from the European continent, especially to the degree that it leads to the neutralization of Europe”. The Gaullist François de Menthon reached an identical evaluation of the proposal, calling the entire undertaking a “trap”<sup>61</sup>.

How did London view the Rapacki Plan? The material shows that the pressure of British public opinion, lessening international tension, and the popularity of the idea of “disengagement”, promoted by the Labour Party (75% of Britons supported the idea, according to James R. Ozinga<sup>62</sup>) played essential roles in this case. As Warsaw saw the situation, the British government, in conversations with representatives of the Polish embassy in London, took a more favorable position toward the Polish idea than the French<sup>63</sup>.

Meanwhile, the news reaching Paris and London about the consultations on the plan between Polish and Soviet authorities (a meeting of Khrushchev with Gomułka on January 14–17, 1958 and a meeting of Andrei Gromyko with Rapacki from January 28 to February 1, 1958) became a subject of interest in both the Foreign Office and the Quai d’Orsay. In light of reports in the

<sup>61</sup> “Journal Officiel de la République Française. Débats Parlementaires. Assemblée Nationale”, N° 5, AN, 1958, 3e Législature Séance du mardi 21 Janvier et 1ère et 2e séance du mercredi, le 22 Janvier 1958.

<sup>62</sup> J. R. Ozinga, *op. cit.*, p. 89. On the favorable position of British public opinion toward “disengagement” projects, see H. Hoff, *La Grande-Bretagne et la RDA 1949–1973*, in *La RDA et l’Occident [1949–1990]*, ed. U. Pfeil, Asnières 2000, pp. 194–195.

<sup>63</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 9, vol. 696, l. 53, *Raporty radcy ambasady PRL w Londynie do K. Małczyńskiego (Report of Advisor to the Polish Embassy in London to K. Małczyński)*; see T. Łoś–Nowak, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

Western capitals from Moscow and Warsaw, the subject of Polish–Soviet consultations was a problem raised with regard to the project of the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs that constituted a fundamental objection, namely the lack of effective control of the atomic free zone. Certain officials in the Foreign Office even feared that “the Poles and Russians, longing to force the West to undertake discussion on the project, were making the proposal ‘attractive’”, so that, as formulated, “rejection of the plan on the basis of political views would become impossible”. These officials stressed that a refusal to discuss the Rapacki plan would place the West not only in a delicate situation in light of Western public opinion, but it also made possible the advancing of the accusation that the West was missing an opportunity to “raise” the Iron Curtain<sup>64</sup>. The leadership of the Quai d’Orsay’s Eastern department directed attention to this possible accusation in the context of the Rapacki plan<sup>65</sup>. Both Paris and London decidedly rejected speculation of its diplomats relating to Warsaw’s troubles with the opinion of the Russians as to certain solutions contained in the proposal, which further argued for Polish authorship of the plan<sup>66</sup>. Suggestions pointing out that “perhaps the USSR felt offended by the success of the Rapacki plan” (of which a consequence was supposed to be its torpedoing of the plan by the broadening of the atomic free zone to include the Scandinavian countries, as indicated in additional letters Bulganin sent to Western leaders) were recognized as unreliable<sup>67</sup>. The Soviet support for the Rapacki plan in Nikita Khrushchev’s speech in

<sup>64</sup> PRO FO 371/137080, *Rapacki–Gromyko meeting. Submissions: D. E. Murray, February 11, 1958; H. T. Morgan, February 11, 1958.*

<sup>65</sup> DDF, 1958, vol. I (1er janvier–30 juin), Paris 1992, nr 65. *Note de la Direction d’Europe (service d’Europe centrale). Etudes sur des projets de stabilisation militaire et politique en Europe, Paris 31 I 1958.*

<sup>66</sup> AMAE, EU 1944–1960, *Pologne*, vol. 240, pp. 11–12, *M. de Carbonnel, Ambassadeur de France à Varsovie à M. Pineau, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, Varsovie, 24 janvier 1958. On suppose ici que le plan Rapacki a été le sujet principal de l’entretien [Khrushchev–Gomułka — MP]; on croit généralement que les soviétiques souhaitent, d’une part, intensifier la campagne en sa faveur et, d’autre part, étendre l’axe d’application. DDF, 1958, vol. I (1er janvier–30 juin), Paris 1992, nr 44, M. Dejean, Ambassadeur de France à Moscou, à M. Pineau, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, Moscou, 27 I 1958.* The French Ambassador in the Soviet Union M. Dejean reported on the Rapacki–Gromyko conversations relating to the Rapacki plan. AMAE, *Europe 1944–1960, Pologne*, vol. 240, *Ambassadeur de France à Moscou, M. Dejean à M. Pineau, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, Moscou, 2 II 1958*, pp. 13–14. See PRO FO 371/ 137080, *Sir E. Berthoud to FO, Warsaw, February 3–4, 1958.*

Minsk on January 22, 1958, linked to the Soviet offer to begin negotiations between the two blocs, forced the West to work out a common position on the proposal, which, given important differences among NATO members, was not an easy task<sup>68</sup>. The British-French agreement in Chequers (January 18), which had as its aim only preliminary discussions on the Polish proposal at the meeting of the Atlantic Council Pact, did not solve the problem<sup>69</sup>. At a closed meeting of the NATO Council (January 23, 1958), the Rapacki plan became a subject of a debate that did not lead to any concrete decisions<sup>70</sup>. The French initiative introduced to the British in February 1958 was, it seems, an attempt to break the impasse. The leadership of the Quai d'Orsay considered going to the Russians with "a positive proposal, which would be a combination of Eden's plan from 1955 and the Polish proposal of an atomic free zone". Jean Laloy, the Director of the Department of Europe, even obliged himself to work out his own project, directed toward the USSR, which would include an offer for the unification of Germany through free elections and a prohibition against their political or military neutralization. A united Germany was supposed to resign from membership in NATO and their participation in the acts of the Pact, which practically meant the withdrawal of foreign defense forces (American and Soviet) from this country in exchange for international guarantees of their safety. In the opinion of the British diplomats, the rooting of the present system in West Germany was so strong, that the entire undertaking could be beneficial for the West and "worth paying the price". The fact that France did not really want Moscow

<sup>67</sup> PRO FO 371/137078, *T. Brimelow to sir E. Berthoud, January 27, 1958*. "We did not agree with the view of your French and American colleagues that the Soviet government has resented the success of the 'Rapacki plan' and may be trying to torpedo it. [...] But we are pretty sure that it was approved by the Russians before it was launched, and it has been publicly backed in two sets of letters addressed to other heads of government by Bulganin".

<sup>68</sup> G. H. Soutou, *La guerre de Cinquante Ans*, pp. 354-355. Khrushchev proposed, among other ideas, a break from attempts of nuclear defense and a non-aggression pact between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

<sup>69</sup> DDF, 1958, vol. I (1er janvier-30 juin), Paris 1992, nr 36. *Note de la Direction d'Europe. Conversations à Londres, le 18 janvier, entre M. Pineau et M. Selwyn Lloyd, Paris, 21 janvier 1958*.

<sup>70</sup> PRO FO 371/137078, *Telegram from Sir F. Roberts to the Foreign Office, Paris, January 23, 1958*. It was agreed that the Rapacki plan should be the subject of further discussion at the NATO Council meeting and that the the plan demanded the development of a counter proposal.

to accept this proposal deserves special attention. On the contrary, the French counted on Moscow to reject it. The goal of the undertaking was to reveal to the public that the West was ready to "offer something positive" and to throw responsibility for the rejection of the plan onto the USSR<sup>71</sup>.

Conversations between Jean Laloy, Director of the Quai d'Orsay's Department of Europe, Anthony Brimelow, head of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office, and Anthony Rumbold, personal secretary of the head of the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs on February 10–11, 1958 were intended to lead to the working out of a common platform on the Soviet proposal for an East–West summit. This led to the acceptance of one of Laloy's assumptions, that the response of the West to the Rapacki plan, which in his opinion had as its goal the reunification of Germany (contradictory to the aims of the West) should be worked out so as to be a "counter proposal attractive to public opinion and basically separated from the unification of Germany". To the extent possible, the Western project should also contain a "seed" which can become in the future the seed of the disintegration of the Eastern Bloc<sup>72</sup>.

A new action by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the *Memorandum of the Polish Government On Creating an Atomic Free Zone in Central Europe*, appeared on February 14, 1958 after consultation with the Soviets and was delivered with notes to the diplomatic representatives of the West and the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany<sup>73</sup>. The memorandum could

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<sup>71</sup> PRO FO 371/137081, *Minutes from Sir P. E. Ramsbotham to Sir A. Rumbold, Preparations for Summit Talks, February 12, 1958*. "At dinner at the French Embassy last night, M. Laloy gave me his views on some of the points which he thought the West might usefully develop at a Summit Conference. [...] M. Laloy considered it important that the West should be ready with something positive to offer. Our proposals should at least appear reasonable even though the Russians rejected them. [...] The Russians would almost certainly reject such an offer, but our position would be a good one".

<sup>72</sup> PRO FO 371/137081, *Visit of M. Laloy, Director of Europe at the Quai d'Orsay, to London, February 10–11, 1958. Record of Meeting in the FO at 4, Monday, February 10; Record of Meeting in the FO at 11:30, Tuesday, February 11, 1958*.

<sup>73</sup> Archives of Modern Records — AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/17, p. 34, *Rapacki, Warszawa [bez daty dziennej], luty 1958, ściśle tajne (Warsaw, [undated], February 1958, top secret)*: "In the enclosure I am sending the message of the text of the Memorandum of the Polish government in the matter of creating an atomic free zone in Central Europe. This text results from consultations held in Moscow from January 28th to February 1st of last year and takes into consideration certain remarks made by the governments of Czechoslovakia and East Germany

not bring about changes in the position of the West in these circumstances. Director Laloy expressed a negative position on this memorandum in conversation with Gajewski on February 28, 1958, stating that the document “did not lead to any essential change and the position of the Quai is still basically negative”. Laloy warned here that the cornerstone of Western politics is the “refusal to allow the creation of a neutral Germany and its exit from NATO, which the USSR intends”. Yet again Laloy cited arguments speaking to the rejection of the plan. This time, the main objection raised by Paris was that the plan “leads to the neutralization of Germany and does not take up the matter of unification (! — MP)”<sup>74</sup>. In this situation, when France did not hide its negative relationship to the initiative, a request for a positive response to the memorandum, especially one coming from Bonn with the goal of a conversation on the matter of creating an atomic free zone, could only cause some difficulty for Paris<sup>75</sup>. During a conversation with his West German counterpart Heinrich von Brentano in Bonn on March 28, 1958, Minister Pineau expressed the opinion of Paris in light of the desiderata of the Poles. He declared that “the Rapacki plan cannot be accepted”<sup>76</sup>.

The plan seemed even more unacceptable to the French because Moscow, having promoted the Polish solution, decidedly refused preliminary discussions tied to the German question, as the West anticipated. In a letter to Pineau from March 1, 1958, the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Gromyko stressed yet again that “the matter of German unification has nothing in common with the atomic free zone and so cannot be the subject

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in the course of consultations held in Paris and Berlin on February 7–8 of last year. This text will be sent today, February 12, to the Soviet ambassador to inform and make possible eventual remarks from the Soviet *MID* USSR”. The text of this memorandum as well as Rapacki’s speech can be found in T. Łoś–Nowak, *op. cit.*, pp. 118–119.

<sup>74</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 982, l. 71, p. 184, S. Gajewski do P. Ogrodzińskiego, wyciąg koresp z depezy z dn. 28 II 1958 r. (S. Gajewski to P. Ogrodziński, excerpt from correspondence from dispatch from February 28, 1958).

<sup>75</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 926, l. 66, p. 35, Notatka [H. Bireckiego] z rozmowy z Dyr. Generalnym francuskiego MSZ p. R. Seydoux w dniu 24 lutego 1958 r. (Note of H. Birecki in conversation with Director General of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs R. Seydoux on February 24, 1958).

<sup>76</sup> DDF, 1958, vol. I (1er janvier–30 juin), Paris 1992, nr 220. *Conversations de Bonn* (28 mars 1958). I. Entretien entre M. Pineau et M. von Brentano. (28 mars, 11 h. 45).

of a meeting at a future summit conference". The Russians added that German unification is "a question of the relationship between the two German states, which must be regulated by the force of an agreement between them"<sup>77</sup>. The Soviet position indicated in essence a return to Bulganin's proposal of December 10, 1957 and marked an impasse in negotiations on the calling of an East-West summit. At the same time, the Soviet agreement on February 28, 1958 to call a meeting of foreign affairs ministers from four countries placed the West in a delicate situation. The West feared that the Russians would saddle them with guilt for the fiasco of the summit conference. The appearance of Khrushchev on March 14, 1958, in which he charged the Western states with blocking initiatives calling for a summit conference seemed not only to confirm this scenario but also marked a crisis in negotiations between both blocs, which placed the significance of the Polish initiative under question.

The mood dominating among British and French public opinion did not allow the leaders of these countries, in contrast to Washington, to firmly reject Moscow's proposal. In this situation, Paris proposed to its allies an intervention with a concrete counter proposal to the Rapacki plan, an idea the Americans did not approve<sup>78</sup>.

The Bundestag's March 25, 1958 resolution allowing the possibility of outfitting the Bundeswehr with nuclear arms made the French government uneasy, in light of the the inflexible position of Paris toward the peace initiatives advanced by the Kremlin. As signaled by Maurice Dejean, the French ambassador in the Soviet Union, perhaps the possibility of the Soviets abandoning a "neutral" position on Algeria and taking a more active engagement in the conflict of the French with Algeria, together with the lack of American support for French politics in this

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<sup>77</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 982, l. 71, pp. 233-240. *Réponse, en date du 1er mars de M. Gromyko à la lettre du 13 février de M. Pineau.*

<sup>78</sup> DDF, 1958 (1er janvier-30 juin), vol. I, Paris 1992, nr 179. *Compte rendu (non verbatim) de l'entretien Pineau-Dulles-Lloyd.* Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne à Manille, mercredi, 12 mars 1958. The French suggested in the first stage of their counter proposal the liquidation of strategic arms (after the introduction of controls) in the atomic free zone and in the next stage, the liquidation of tactical arms. A 'certain number of foreign military' were expected to withdraw at the moment of the withdrawing of tactical arms". The realization of detailed phases would depend on the "lack of military intervention in the political life of the zone". J. F. Dulles rejected this proposal.



region, was for Paris a serious threat<sup>79</sup>. The lack of American and West German acceptance of French ideas, proof of a link in the search for a consensus between the two blocs, did not keep Paris from giving this idea to Warsaw. The proposal assumed the creation of an atomic free zone, meant to be “realized in stages”, and “each of these stages would make simultaneous progress toward disarmament and German unification”. Repeating the old argument that “success of the Rapacki plan depends on the unification of Germany”, French diplomats, in conversation with representatives of the Polish embassy in Paris, even proposed that Warsaw pick up the French initiative. “Poland”, as Etienne Manac’h, the political director from Minister Pineau’s office, stated, “should be most interested because: 1) the unification of Germany would eliminate the need for Soviet forces to be stationed on Polish territory; 2) a united Germany would be, according to information possessed by the Quai, ready to recognize the border at the Oder as inviolate”. Manac’h encouraged the Poles to seek contact with West Germany<sup>80</sup>. After his return from Bonn, Pineau attempted to make Gajewski aware of the necessity of accepting the French proposal for the Eastern bloc, arguing that the Rapacki plan might be under discussion at further East–West conferences only under the condition, that “the issue of German unification will be raised and considered and that the realization of the plan could not lead to the withdrawal of American forces from West Germany”. If these conditions were fulfilled, the French declared themselves ready for debate and agreement “on an eventual compromise”. Pineau even declared (as seems completely without foundation — in a shorthand report on the conversation with Bonn, there is a lack of information regarding a discussion of Polish issues<sup>81</sup>) that “in Bonn they want a normalization

<sup>79</sup> DDF, 1958, vol. I (1er janvier–30 juin), nr 191, Paris 1992, M. Dejean, *Ambassadeur de France à Moscou, à M. Pineau, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, Moscou, 15 III 1958*. The position of France in this region became especially dramatic after the bombardment by the French air force of the Tunisian villages Sakiet, Sidi, Yousef (February 8, 1958), where a base of Algerian rebel forces was located. The Americans, who supplied Tunisia with arms, proposed mediation to regulate the conflict, along with the English, which provoked dissatisfaction in Paris.

<sup>80</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 982, l. 71, pp. 190–192, J. Wiechecki do P. Ogrodzińskiego, *Paryż 10 III 1958, notatka dotycząca rozmowy Wiecheckiego z Manac’hem* (J. Wiechecki to P. Ogrodziński, Paris, March 10, 1958, note relating to the conversation of Wiechecki with Manac’h); S. Gajewski do H. Bireckiego, *Paryż 30 III 1958, notatka z rozmowy Wiecheckiego z Manac’hem* (S. Gajewski to H. Birecki, Paris, March 30, 1958, note from conversation of Wiechecki with Manac’h).

of relations with Poland but the cost is the recognition of East Germany and German unity". Wanting to encourage the Poles to undertake activity in the direction they desired, Pineau testified that "if a summit meeting would lead to a minimal relaxation of tensions", a visit by the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs would be positively viewed in France, and he did not resign from eventual future visits with Gomułka and Cyrankiewicz (at this time Warsaw aimed only for a visit of the Premier)<sup>82</sup>.

From the documents of the Quai d'Orsay and the Foreign Office, we know that the Polish initiative continued to create serious problems of interpretation for Western diplomats, and the motivation of the Polish side for bringing up the Rapacki plan was still a subject of controversy among diplomats and politicians<sup>83</sup>. In spite of assurances from the ambassador of France (from April 1958) that the French government "has already prepared a project in response" to the Polish memorandum of February 14th, such a project never reached the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Eric de Carbonnel suggested that this response was announced after a meeting of the defense ministers of NATO. He did not hide from his Polish counterparts the fact that France did not agree with the conception of the Rapacki plan and that the main objections this time concerned the military aspects of the plan (according to French staff officers, the plan entirely crushed France's air defense<sup>84</sup>).

<sup>81</sup> DDF, 1958, vol. 1 (1er janvier–30 juin), Paris, 1992, nr 220 and 221 *Conversation franco-allemandes de Bonn (28 mars 1958)*.

<sup>82</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 982, l. 71, pp. 200–202. S. Gajewski do P. Ogrodzkiego, *Paryż 1 IV 1958, notatka z rozmowy z Ch. Pineau (S. Gajewski to P. Ogrodzki, Paris, April 1, 1958, note from conversation with Ch. Pineau)*.

<sup>83</sup> PRO FO 371/137082, E. Berthoud to T. Brimelow, *Northern Department (British Embassy, Warsaw), February 13, 1958*. Ambassador Berthoud stated that the main motive of Warsaw is the fear of a Western border, and that Warsaw's main goal is to make it impossible for West Germany to get atomic weapons. He wrote also that by placing the international atomic free zone under international control, the Poles wanted to make it impossible for the Soviets to place rocket launchers for atomic defense in Poland. He determined that the goal of the plan is not the eventual unification of Germany, because then the Poles would not have brought it up. Compare DDF, 1958, vol. 1 (1er janvier–30 juin), Paris 1992, nr 205. *Note de la Direction d'Europe orientale. Evolution de la Pologne, Paris 19 III 1958*. According to the Eastern Department of the Quai d'Orsay, the main goal of the Soviets was to break NATO, which the Polish government tied to the withdrawal of the Soviet military from Poland.

<sup>84</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 23, vol. 163, l. 14, p. 126. *Notatka [P. Ogrodzkiego] z wizyty pożegnalnej amb. Francji w Warszawie E. de Carbonnela, Warszawa 19 IV 1958. (Note of P. Ogrodzki from farewell visit of the Ambassador of France in Warsaw, E. De Carbonnel, Warsaw, April 19, 1958)*.

The conservative government of Macmillan agreed with the French position on the Polish memorandum<sup>85</sup>. The situation, in the opinion of the Foreign Office, had become more dangerous, as a representative of the West German government in the NATO Council pressured Western powers to make the question of German unification a *sine qua non* condition of an East–West summit. The Germans proposed that the problem of unification be tied with a discussion of security questions and disarmament in Europe, which, in the opinion of the British, complicated the entire situation even more. West German diplomats did not hide the fact that direct negotiations with Moscow on the question of German unification were an alternative for a lack of acceptance of their demands<sup>86</sup>. Like the United States and West Germany, Great Britain (in a response from May 16, 1958) did not accept the Polish proposal, basing its refusal on the fact that the proposal “does not include any solution guaranteeing the security of Western Europe”<sup>87</sup>.

The collapse of the Gaillard cabinet (April 15, 1958) and the engagement of France in Algeria made impossible more political activity. The two-week government of Pierre Pflimlin (May 13–28, 1958) did not lead to any change in this matter. Ambassador Gajewski, expecting René Pleven to be nominated as premier, sought Pleven’s favor in the matter of the plan. However, Gajewski limited himself in his discussion with Pleven to the confirmation that the Rapacki plan “remains a broad possibility for discussion”. Like his predecessors, Gajewski put pressure on the necessity of linking the question of disarmament with the matter of German unification<sup>88</sup>. As Ambassador Gajewski officially reported, neither French circles in the government of Gaillard nor

<sup>85</sup> PRO FO 371/13079, *Avant-projet français de réponse à la note du Gouvernement polonais*. C. M. Anderson, *Minutes*, May 5, 1958. The French consulted with the Foreign Office about a response to the Polish memorandum.

<sup>86</sup> PRO FO 371/137081, *UK Delegation*, F. Roberts to Foreign Office, Paris, February 15, 1958. On February 14, 1958, Adenauer came out to his colleagues in favor of the necessity of expressing to the Soviets the idea of linking the questions of security, disarmament, and German unification. In March 1958, he gave the Soviet Ambassador in Bonn, Smirnow, to understand that free elections in East Germany were an intermediate stage to German unification. G. H. Soutou, *La guerre de Cinquante Ans*, pp. 353–354.

<sup>87</sup> T. Łoś–Nowak, *op. cit.*, pp. 147–149.

<sup>88</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 982, l. 71, p. 272, S. Gajewski do P. Ogrodzińskiego, *Paryż 25 V 1958* (S. Gajewski to P. Ogrodziński, Paris, May 25, 1958).

in the short-lasting government of Pflimlin "indicated any greater interest for a relationship with our country"<sup>89</sup>.

Warsaw placed great hope for change in the relationship of France to Poland in the return to power of General Charles De Gaulle. The demands of Paris for leadership reform within NATO were meant to be a confirmation of France's position as a world power in connection with events in the Near East in 1958, together with the fulfillment of its nuclear ambitions. Washington's failure to accept these demands resulted in De Gaulle taking steps intended to relax France's ties to NATO, France then becoming for Moscow a potential ally in weakening the bonds of the Atlantic Pact<sup>90</sup>. To encourage the position De Gaulle and his circle expressed on the Rapacki plan at the beginning of 1958, Warsaw initiated renewed activity in Paris with the goal of breaking the impasse on the Polish project.

Ambassador Gajewski, recalling the position of De Gaulle on the Rapacki plan from the period in which the French politician was in the opposition, suggested sending him a letter on this matter through Premier Cyrankiewicz. In connection with this, Przemysław Ogrodzkiński, head of the Department of Western Europe in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, instructed him to discuss the Rapacki plan with De Gaulle and "determine if the present [that is, after arriving in power — MP] views of De Gaulle on the Rapacki plan open the possibility of positive dialogue". Ogrodzkiński would consider Gajewski's suggestion depending on the results of the ambassador's conversation with the general<sup>91</sup>. However, the conversation of July 7, 1958 did not yield a confirmation of De Gaulle's earlier position. Referring to the Rapacki plan, De Gaulle declared that the "unification of Germany is temporarily not realistic, and France is completely uninterested in the advancement of this idea at the present moment". Un-

<sup>89</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 935, l. 67, p. 116, *Raport polityczny za I półrocze 1957 r. S. Gajewski do MSZ (Political Report for first half of 1957, S. Gajewski to Ministry of Foreign Affairs)*.

<sup>90</sup> M. Vaïsse, *Une sortie programmée*, pp. 223–224. After the *coup d'état* in Iraq on July 14, 1958, the British and Americans intervened, sending British military forces to Jordan and American forces to Lebanon without previous consultation with De Gaulle, which was not in accordance with earlier British-French agreements from June 29–30, 1958.

<sup>91</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 23, vol. 163, l. 14, p. 95, *Notatka [z instrukcji P. Ogrodzkińskiego do S. Gajewskiego], Warszawa 5 VII 1958 (Note, from instructions of P. Ogrodzkiński to S. Gajewski, Warsaw, July 5, 1958)*.

doubtedly, this indicated that the general, like his predecessor, interpreted the plan as a Polish method of regulating the German problem. Moreover, from De Gaulle's later statements, it turned out that he was against the Polish initiative. De Gaulle referred critically to the Soviet proposal for a ban on experiments in nuclear defense, in connection with France's own aims to possess nuclear weapons. However, without rejecting the Rapacki plan as a base for further discussion, De Gaulle stated that France had two different reservations regarding the plan. First, the plan should be tied to a complete solution for the problems of disarmament. Second, the territory under a ban on nuclear weapons and control should be broadened to the east of Poland, for otherwise, the West will be disadvantaged because it can go no further than the Atlantic<sup>92</sup>. De Gaulle's unrealistic suggestion of broadening the atomic free zone to include the European part of the Soviet Union was in essence a refusal of the Polish initiative. De Gaulle's response was linked to the agreements that had fallen apart during the French–British discussions in Paris on June 29–30, 1958, where the general succeeded in convincing the British Minister of Foreign Affairs Selwyn Lloyd of his support during an East–West summit. At the same time accepting the British view, which considered the Rapacki plan as “probably a Polish initiative authorized by Moscow”, De Gaulle was against its “brutal rejection”<sup>93</sup>.

In further conversations with the Poles on July 26, 1958, the head of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maurice Couve de

<sup>92</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 17, vol. 139, l. 71, pp. 191–192, S. Gajewski do P. Ogrodzińskiego, wyciąg koresp. z depezy z dn. 7 VII 1958 (S. Gajewski to P. Ogrodziński, excerpt from correspondence from dispatch from July 7, 1958). In conversation with the American Secretary of State Dulles, De Gaulle expressed an identical opinion on the Rapacki plan. See *Compte rendu de conversation du secrétaire d'Etat avec le général de Gaulle, Paris, le 5 juillet 1958*, in: B. Ledwidge, *De Gaulle et les Américains. Conversations avec Dulles, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Rusk 1958–1964*, Paris 1984, pp. 28–29.

<sup>93</sup> DDF, 1958, vol. I (1er janvier–30 juin), Paris 1992, nr 459. *Comptes rendus des entretiens franco-britanniques des 29 et 30 juin*. Participating in the conversations from the French side were De Gaulle, M. Couve de Murville, L. Joxe, J. Chauvel, G. Pompidou, J. M. Boegner, C. Lebel. Representing the British were H. Macmillan, J. Selwyn Lloyd, G. Jebb, W. Hayter, G. Young, C. O'Neill, A. Rumbold. In the matter of the Rapacki plan, it was agreed that acceptance of the atomic free zone would be possible only if it were broadened to the east up to the Urals. Making a distinction between the placement of tactical weapons and strategic weapons was suggested. A possible formula for acceptance of the plan would include limiting the placement of tactical weapons and banning entirely strategic weapons. The need to establish effective control was stressed.

Murville, and his secretary general Louis Joxe repeated De Gaulle's opinion that "the basic argument against the Polish proposal is the disproportion in territory, that is, the fact that the West, should the plan be realized, can go no further than the Atlantic when the territory of the USSR reaches to Vladivostok"<sup>94</sup>. In conversation with Henryk Birecki on October 1, 1958, Ambassador Burin des Roziers tantalized the Poles by saying that "rather one should evaluate France's lack of a response to the memorandum to this time positively [from February 14, 1958] as it would be easiest for France to repeat the eventual arguments of the USA and Great Britain". The French diplomat even put forth the statement that France "shares this 'incomplete' argument and still wonders about the Rapacki plan". He also stressed that "General De Gaulle wishes that there be no hints on the German question between Poland and France"<sup>95</sup>.

Rapacki's declarations from October 30th to November 4th, which modified the first plan<sup>96</sup>, could not change the West's negative position on the Polish project. The second version of the plan depended on the resolution of its realization (as seems in accordance with the suggestion of France) in two stages. The first established a ban on the production of atomic weapons on the territories of Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and West Germany and at the same time obligated the freezing of atomic defense in this zone. The second would lead simultaneously to the reduction of conventional forces and the entire denuclearization of the zone under international control<sup>97</sup>. The intention of

<sup>94</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 981, l. 71, pp. 121-122, *Opracowanie Departamentu Organizacji Międzynarodowych dotyczące odgłosów zachodnich kół rządowych, parlamentarnych i prasowych w związku z planem Rapackiego na arenie międzynarodowej, 15 V-15 X 1958* (Review of the Department of International Organization of the comments of Western parliamentary and press comments on the Rapacki plan in the international arena, May 15 to October 15, 1958).

<sup>95</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 947, l. 68, p. 7, *H. Birecki do P. Ogrodzińskiego, Warszawa 1 X 1958, notatka z rozmowy z ambasadorem Francji Burin des Roziers w dniu 1 X 1958* (H. Birecki to P. Ogrodziński, Warsaw, October 1, 1958; note from conversation with the Ambassador of France Burin des Roziers on October 1, 1958).

<sup>96</sup> AAN, KC PZPR, XIA/17, *Plan Rapackiego*. At a press conference in Oslo on October 30, 1958, A. Rapacki declared the consideration of a tie between atomic disarmament in Central Europe and the reduction of conventional forces in the zone on the condition that defense forces in this zone cease arming themselves with tactical atomic weapons. The new version of the plan was announced at a press conference of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw on November 4, 1958.

<sup>97</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 23, vol. 163, l. 14, pp. 1-4, *Memorandum*. T. Łoś-Nowak mentions the memorandum, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-172.

the new project was, as defined by the Ambassador of the USSR in Warsaw, "to engage the attention of public opinion, which had recently weakened somewhat". As reported by Peter Abrasimov, the Soviet ambassador, "Rapacki intended to take advantage of all diplomatic means still at the disposition of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote the plan"<sup>98</sup>. In the opinion of Burin des Rozières, the new proposals were without doubt developed in cooperation with the USSR and their main goal was to prevent West Germany from acquiring atomic weapons. The French ambassador suggested that by introducing international control in the atomic free zone, the Polish authorities wanted to make the installation on their territory of a Soviet nuclear base impossible<sup>99</sup>. The Quai d'Orsay, however inclined to share this view, expressed the opinion that improvements to the modified version did not change the essence of the initiative in any way, the priority of which was the neutralization of Germany and the withdrawal of American forces from Europe. The vicedirector of the Department of Eastern Europe, François de Liencourt, expressed this same opinion and told the advisor of the Polish Embassy Jerzy Wiechecki that, "the Rapacki plan intends to eliminate the element of force from the German problem. The country's zones of 'disengagement' would be condemned to the same independence from the USSR as Finland. And this the West does not accept"<sup>100</sup>. Also sharing this view were the American and British allies of France, who were inclined to act with the goal of "burning" the plan at the next meeting of the Council of the Atlantic Pact on November 19, 1958<sup>101</sup>.

<sup>98</sup> Ministerstwo Innostrannykh Diet Rossijskoj Fjedjeracii (Moskwa), Refierentura po Polsce, opis 42, papka 357, p. 349. *Posolstwo SSSR w Polskoj Narodnoj Rjespublikie, Informacija [P. Abrasimova] o pojezdkie ministra Inostrannykh Diet w Norwegiju, 15 XI 1958.*

<sup>99</sup> DDF, 1958, vol. II (1er juillet-31 décembre), Paris 1993, nr 348, footnote 1. M. Burin des Rozières, *Ambassadeur de France à Varsovie à M. Couve de Murville, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, Varsovie 7 novembre 1958.*

<sup>100</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 937, l. 97, p. 192, *Notatka z rozmowy z F. de Liencourt, Dyrektorem Europy Wschodniej na Quai d'Orsay z dnia 25 listopada 1958 r., Paryż 26 XI 1958 (Note from conversation with F. de Liencourt, Director of Eastern Europe at the Quai d'Orsay, November 25, 1958, Paris, November 26, 1958).*

<sup>101</sup> DDF, 1959, vol. II (1er juillet-31 décembre), Paris 1995, nr 348, M. de Courcel, *Représentant de la France au Conseil de l'O.T.A.N. à M. Couve de Murville, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, Paris 20 novembre 1958.* The Council of the Pact decided to refrain from an official position until they received an official communication on the matter from the Polish government; however, according to the Foreign Office, the intention of members of the Council was to "burn" the Rapacki plan.

However, the Berlin crisis, Khrushchev's further attempt to solve the German problem from a position of strength, did not change the gloomy outlook for the Rapacki plan; rather, it contributed to Warsaw's consciousness that the worsening of international relations stiffened the position of the West and made the suitability of this kind of initiative questionable<sup>102</sup>. The Berlin crisis dealt a blow to the hopes of Warsaw to play an active role in the international arena and to increase in prestige. Moscow accepted a further version of the Rapacki plan, seeing in the plan, it seems, propaganda benefits and the possibility to deepen the divergence of opinions in NATO. There is no evidence that Moscow tried to use the Rapacki plan to deal with the German problem. A lack of any mention of the plan in Gomułka's conversations with Khrushchev in November 1958 seems to indicate that no significant weight was attached to the plan. The confirmation of Polish "official persons" in conversation with Burin des Rozières that "the rejection of the Rapacki plan with the well-known negative position of France led to the Berlin crisis with all of its dangerous consequences" seems to reflect more Polish frustration than actual reality<sup>103</sup>. The firm position taken by De Gaulle in the period of the second Berlin crisis in light of Khrushchev's demands in an ultimatum of November 27, 1958 (arising from the French politician's "unyielding defense" of the maintenance of the status of Berlin) did not have a paradoxical influence on the position of the Allies regarding the Rapacki plan<sup>104</sup>. The Berlin crisis did not influence the position of the Western powers on this initiative. In this crisis situation, it was easier to convince both the public and opposing political circles of the necessity of taking a firm position on projects advanced by the Eastern bloc.

In an analysis of the new version of the Rapacki plan sent to the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs on December 1, 1958, the French pointed out that "even if a first step in the direction of detente or disarmament is necessary, the Rapacki plan is not the

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PRO FO 371/137095, *Rapacki Plan*. FO Minute. C. M. Rose, December 12, 1958.

<sup>102</sup> P. Wandycz, *op. cit.*, p. 308. P. Wandycz has said that the Berlin crisis represented "a first class funeral" for the Rapacki plan.

<sup>103</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 936, l. 67, p. 7, *Notatka J. Wiecheckiego z rozmowy z [J] Laloy, dyrektorem departamentu Europy Quai d'Orsay, Paryż 26 III 1959 (Note of J. Wiechecki in conversation with J. Laloy, Director of European Department, Quai d'Orsay, Paris, March 26, 1959)*.

<sup>104</sup> B. Buffet, *La politique nucléaire de la France et la seconde crise de Berlin (1958-1962)*, "Relations internationales" 59 (Autumn 1989), pp. 352-353.



actual [solution]". They found the plan unacceptable for many reasons. First, the plan led to the neutralization of West Germany, the maintenance of which was indispensable for the West. Moreover, West Germany was recognized as of greater importance than the remaining three countries (Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany), which were also supposed to be neutralized. Second, the means of control established was meant to affect the four countries in the atomic free zone, while the entire production of weapons of mass destruction was located in the Soviet Union. Third, the plan was not acceptable because it included nuclear rockets with a range of three thousand kilometers, which placed a large part of the Soviet Union beyond reach. It was finally concluded that the basic aim of all these types of projects was the neutralization of a fundamental part of the atomic shield of Western Europe and the withdrawal of American forces from Europe<sup>105</sup>.

The analysis of the Foreign Office included a similar opinion, identical with that coming out of the evaluations of the American State Department in the beginning of November 1958<sup>106</sup>. According to British diplomats, the main flaws of the new version of the plan included a failure to solve the German problem and the limitation of a reduction of conventional forces to the countries of the atomic free zone, which allowed the USSR to keep its advantage in this type of weapons, and the question of effective control of this zone<sup>107</sup>. According to the head of the Foreign Office's Northern Department, "Polish tactics for the Rapacki plan took advantage of those who were in opposition, particularly in Western European opposition parties"<sup>108</sup>. In conclusion, the Foreign Office, like the Quai d'Orsay, determined that though "the plan may be an authentically Polish initiative, it has Soviet

<sup>105</sup> PRO FO 371/137095, *Ambassade de France Londres, a/s Nouvelle version du plan Rapacki. From Mr. Huré, December 1, 1958.*

<sup>106</sup> P. Wandycz, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-308. According to the State Department, the plan was directed to a segment of public opinion in the West. The plan neither eliminated fundamental reservations in the United States and the West nor merited serious consideration.

<sup>107</sup> PRO FO 371/137095, *Notes for supplementaries [undated] in connection with the discussion on the Rapacki Plan in Parliament on December 4, 1958; Disengagement and the New Rapacki Plan, outward tg from Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 15th December, 1958.*

<sup>108</sup> PRO FO 371/137095, *Northern Department. For observation. Th. Brimelow, January 2, 1959.*

support and harmonizes well with Soviet aims, even if these aims do not entirely agree with Polish motivations"<sup>109</sup>. The negative positions of Paris and London also strengthened the intensive measures of West German diplomacy, which, like the Quai d'Orsay and Foreign Office, acted energetically against the revised version of the Rapacki plan<sup>110</sup>. The British government succeeded in cleverly turning the discussion away from the topic of new versions of the plan in the House of Commons, by arguing that the plan had not been brought before the British government in an official form. Such a position, moreover, favored the attitude of the opposing Labour Party, with whom government circles agreed on tactics in the case of discussing the plan in the House of Commons<sup>111</sup>. Western fears of engaging in long-lasting and unpromising negotiations with Moscow, who did not spare propaganda efforts intended to win over at least certain circles of Western public opinion and tried to make the Atlantic Pact responsible for the impasse in East-West negotiations, condemned this type of initiative as a fiasco.

The second version of the Rapacki plan, like the first, did not warrant an official position of French government circles. During a press conference on March 25, 1959, De Gaulle repeated his position, worked out during a French-British conference in June 1958, objecting to the idea of disengagement. De Gaulle stated that "the disarmament zone should be satisfactorily broad to assure the safety of France" and that in the east, it should reach to the Urals. De Gaulle did not mention the Rapacki plan directly, but clearly tied his comments to it, declaring, among other things, that "this *dégagement* or *désengagement*, including Germany in a neutralized territory, is not in itself unworthy. If disarmament does not encompass a zone reaching almost to the Urals, and on the other side to the Atlantic Ocean — then how can France be safe? In case of a conflict, what would keep a possible aggressor from crossing the undefended German territory by surprise?"

<sup>109</sup> PRO FO 371/137095, *Rapacki Plan*. FO Minute C. M. Rose, December 12, 1958.

<sup>110</sup> PRO FO 371/137095, FO Minute. Sir F. Hoyer Millar, December 23, 1958. According to the opinion introduced by the West German ambassador in London, H. von Herwath, "the second version of the Rapacki Plan was really no better than the first, esp. since it contained no provision for German reunification".

<sup>111</sup> PRO FO 371/137095, P. F. Hancock, November 26, 1958. The Labour Party delegate Laskey suggested that, regardless of its real position on the Rapacki plan, the government should "look over the plan" for tactical, parliamentary reasons.

What a narrow area of the West would remain between the river Meuse and the ocean for the concentration and taking out of resources! We are most certainly supporters of controlling and limiting all types of weapons. But for this understanding, having as its appearance a humanitarian character, to not place us at risk of a catastrophe, the zone should be sufficiently large that France would be defended and not be placed in danger"<sup>112</sup>.

Nothing new came up in the conversation of Jerzy Wiechecki with Jean Laloy, the director of the Department of Europe, who said that "each formula, which does not include an essential part of Soviet military potential in Europe, is condemned to a lack of success, if in the least degree, it does not diminish tension"<sup>113</sup>. De Gaulle confirmed his position again in a conversation with Ambassador Gajewski on April 22, 1959. He stated that France is not in principle against the Rapacki plan. However, he added that "realization of a plan which would allow the Soviet bloc to be established on the Rhine with the maintenance of full Soviet security is unthinkable. 'Disengagement' interests the French only if the security of France is guaranteed and not that of the Eastern bloc"<sup>114</sup>.

From 1959 to 1962, the negative position of France and Great Britain to the idea of a zone of limited arms, including the Rapacki plan, did not change. The position was based on the thesis that the "weakening" of long-range rockets and the control of arms (the effectiveness of which was not believed) limited to a narrow atomic free zone did not diminish the Soviet threat to Western Europe. French and British political circles saw in the Rapacki plan a method for the realization of Soviet political plans, leading in essence to the neutralization of a united Germany, which, separated from the Western bloc, could not maintain itself for long without falling into the orbit of the USSR. The French and British rejected projects of "disengagement" that, because they

<sup>112</sup> *Conférence de presse tenue au Palais de l'Élysée, 25 mars*, in: Ch. de Gaulle, *Discours et messages avec le Renouveau, mai 1958-juillet 1962*, vol. III, Paris 1970, p. 85

<sup>113</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 936, l. 67, pp. 2-3, *Notatka J. Wiecheckiego z rozmowy z Laloy, dyr. Dep. Europy na Quai d'Orsay, Paryż 26 III 1959* (*Note of J. Wiechecki in conversation with Laloy, Director of European Department on Quai d'Orsay, Paris, March 26, 1959*).

<sup>114</sup> AMAE, Europe 1944-1960, Pologne, vol. 246, *J. M. Boegner. Note pour le Ministre des Affaires étrangères, Paris, le 22 Avril 1959*, pp. 234-236.

gave a strategic advantage to the Soviets and socialist countries, did not present any benefit for their own<sup>115</sup>.

De Gaulle's aim to rebuild the political position of his country and assure it a leadership position in Europe, by supporting its own nuclear arms (the explosion of the French atomic bomb took place on February 13, 1960) and by clearly limiting the military engagement of France in NATO, contributed to a further stiffening of France's position regarding disarmament. France, independent of the American and NATO "strike force", covered the construction of bombs itself, as an expression of the sovereignty of France and the need to act as a "scarecrow" for the Soviet Union. France increasingly disengaged itself from the dialogue on disarmament. The result of this evolution was France's refusal to participate in the work of the 1962 Conference for the Disarmament of Eighteen Countries in Geneva<sup>116</sup>. France ceased to occupy itself with the problem of universal and complete disarmament, still maintaining its negative position to initiatives in this regard, and also to so-called half steps, such as the Rapacki plan. French diplomats put forth the thesis that disarmament was above all a political problem and that progress in this area depended on concrete decisions on controversial questions, such as the issues of Germany or Berlin. The considerations mentioned above (as well as the project of creating a European strike force advanced by France) meant that France was not interested in disarmament. Moreover, the idea that Polish foreign politics was strictly dependent on the Soviet Union caused leading circles in French politics to treat the abovementioned initiative as "a subterfuge under the cover of Polish etiquette for more attractive ideas [born] of Soviet inspiration"<sup>117</sup>. In conversation with the Polish ambassador Jan Druto in February 1962, the Director of the Department of Eastern Europe Jean-Marie Soutou declared simply that, for France, the problem of disarmament was not one

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<sup>115</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 17, vol. 159, l. 21, pp. 256-259. S. Gajewski do S. Rogulskiego, wyciąg koresp. z Paryża, 14 I 1961 (S. Gajewski to S. Rogulski, excerpt of correspondence from Paris, January 14, 1961). PRO FO 371/ 137095, Rapacki Plan, February 25, 1960.

<sup>116</sup> France participated in disarmament talks until June 1960. In March 1960, France, together with Canada, the USA, Italy and Great Britain, introduced a "universal and complete plan of disarmament" with a framework of ten committees.

<sup>117</sup> AMAE, Europe 1961-1965, Pologne, vol. 1823, Note de service d'Europe orientale a/s politique extérieure et intérieure de la Pologne, 8 II 1962.

of the most urgent, as “France must make a great effort not only on the road to atomic weapons but also to create its own army of modern strength, independent of its relationship to the United States”<sup>118</sup>. De Gaulle, rejecting a disarmament conference at the highest level, proposed in the Conference for the Disarmament of Eighteen Countries a reference to the negotiations between the four nuclear powers, in the course of which was mentioned above all the problem of controlled nuclear disarmament; France’s clear goal was to be recognized as the fourth nuclear power and to break the monopoly that remained in the hands of the United States and the Soviet Union<sup>119</sup>.

The increasing fear that the Bundeswehr would acquire atomic weapons as part of the American program of 1960–1964 of multilateral nuclear strength and the coming French–German rapprochement, of which the crowning was the signing of the Elysée Treaty on January 22, 1963, contributed to the renewing of activity of Polish diplomats, who appeared at a forum of the Conference for the Disarmament of Eighteen Countries in Geneva on March 28, 1962 with a third version of the Rapacki plan<sup>120</sup>. At the forum of this organization, the Polish minister proposed the creation in Central Europe of an atomic free zone and the limiting of arms. The Polish project established the elimination of centers used to transport nuclear arms and freeze nuclear potential, followed by its complete elimination<sup>121</sup>. However, this plan was not mentioned in Geneva. France, which did not participate in the work of the Conference for the Disarmament of Eighteen Countries did not take a position on the new version of the plan. Polish measures taken to win the favor of Great Britain for the project did not bring the desired results either. Dependent on American politics and afraid of a negative reaction from West Germany, British diplomats did not intend to engage themselves

<sup>118</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 17, vol. 159, l. 21, p. 8. *Departament IV. Francuskie koncepcje rozbrojenia przed konferencją genewską, Warszawa, [brak daty dziennej], luty 1962* [Department IV, French conceptions of disarmament at the Geneva Conference, Warsaw (undated), February 1962].

<sup>119</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 9.

<sup>120</sup> From the beginning, France took a hostile position on the American proposal of creating multilateral military forces. In 1965, De Gaulle said the following: *La MLF est morte, c'est moi qui l'ai tuée*. From C. Barbier, *La France et la Force Multilatérale (MLF)*, in: *La France et l'OTAN*, p. 303.

<sup>121</sup> T. Łoś-Nowak addresses the genesis of the third version of the Rapacki plan, *op. cit.*, pp. 184–187.

in an undertaking doomed to fail from the start and to occupy a position different from the United States, which on April 3, 1962 rejected the third version of the Rapacki plan<sup>122</sup>. Announced in Płock on December 28, 1963 and then to the Western states in a memorandum of February 29, 1964, the so-called Gomułka plan met a similar fate. The plan had at its center the freezing of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons on the territories of Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and West Germany<sup>123</sup>. Though the Gomułka plan stressed the chance that the Bundeswehr would acquire nuclear arms within the framework of multilateral nuclear forces, France did not show any interest. That France did not sign the Moscow agreement on the partial ban of nuclear attempts (August 5, 1963) between the Soviet Union and the British and Americans determined its position on this type of solution<sup>124</sup>. Measures taken by Polish diplomats for the support of France were doomed to fail from the start. A conversation between Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Marian Naszkowski and the head of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs Couve de Murville on February 11, 1964, before the official announcement of the Gomułka plan, did not result in any change on this issue. The efforts of Naszkowski, who, clearly soliciting French support for the project, indicated the resignation of Poland from the "more ambitious" Rapacki plan which aimed for complete deatomization in favor of "the more realistic, anticipated weapons freeze of the Gomułka plan", came to nothing. Assurances that the plan is a "Polish plan, which was edited after consultation with our allies, and in particular those most interested, East Germany and Czechoslovakia" were not effective. The Polish Vice-Minister also tried unsuccessfully to convince his colleague that the "new plan" referred essentially to American and Soviet arms and was beneficial for West Germany. Couve de Murville justified the negative position of his country to the project by pointing to the necessity

<sup>122</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 8, vol. 68, l. 1, *Rozmowa A. Rapackiego z S. Lloydem z dnia 12 XII 1962 oraz ambasadora PRL w Londynie W. Rogozińskiego z Lordem Home (Conversation of A. Rapacki with S. Lloyd, December 12, 1962 and W. Rogoziński, Ambassador of the Polish People's Republic in London, with Lord Home)*; from T. Łoś-Nowak, *op. cit.*, pp. 202, 282.

<sup>123</sup> T. Łoś-Nowak mentions the specifics of the Gomułka plan, *op. cit.*, pp. 256-275.

<sup>124</sup> J. Doise, M. Vaisse, *Politique étrangère de la France. Diplomatie et outil militaire 1871-1993*, Paris 1992, pp. 608-608. The Moscow treaty banned its signatories from nuclear testing in space and under water.

to cooperate with a West Germany fearful of returning to the politics of Rapallo. At the same time, the French diplomat tried to make Naszkowski aware of the fact that German neutralization was for Poland a "serious" threat. He stated bluntly that German neutralization, to which the Rapacki plan and its variants led, was the reason for its rejection by France and that the Polish plan threatened the current peace by disturbing the military equilibrium in Europe. The goal of this new version was meant to be the gradual disarmament of West Germany and then submission to the Soviet Union. In spite of Naszkowski's assurances that the goal of Polish politics was not the neutralization of Germany, the French side expressed the conviction that "this further variant of the Rapacki plan does not include any new elements"<sup>125</sup>. The consequence of such a position was that Paris ignored the Polish proposal. Another conversation between Naszkowski and Couve de Murville on September 10, 1965 during Premier Cyrankiewicz's visit in France confirmed, despite Warsaw's hopes, the disinterest of French political circles for this type of solution<sup>126</sup>. Great Britain also rejected the Gomulka plan on May 6, 1964. Parliamentary elections in October 1964 and the assumption of power by the Labour Party, whose leaders referred to the Polish plan favorably during the election campaign, did not lead to any change in this regard. The taking of power by Harold Wilson only cooled the position of the Labour Party on the Rapacki plan<sup>127</sup>.

The growth of tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, intensifying during the 1964-1965 war in Vietnam, caused the international climate to deteriorate and regional disarmament projects to collapse. At the same time, projects on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons advanced by the Soviet

<sup>125</sup> AMAE, Europe 1961-1965, *Pologne*, vol. 1823, p. nlb. *Entretien entre M. Couve de Murville et M. Naszkowski, vice-ministre des Affaires étrangères de Pologne, le 11 février à 12 h 30*.

<sup>126</sup> AMAE, Europe 1961-1965, *Pologne*, vol. 1824, p. nlb. Direction des Affaires Politiques, Paris, le 20 septembre, secret. *Entretien entre M. Couve de Murville et M. Naszkowski, vice-ministre des Affaires étrangères à Paris, le 10 septembre 1965 à 12h; AMSZ, fasc. 17, vol. 159, l. 21, pp. 4-5, S. Staniszewski do J. Kosztuskiego, Paryż 1965 (S. Staniszewski to J. Kosztuski, Paris, 1965)*. Poles nourished the hope that, together with changes in the position of France regarding cooperation with the Soviet Union and countries of the camp, "there will follow modifications of the approach of Paris to the many initiatives of our countries in matters of disarmament".

<sup>127</sup> For more on the discussion of the Gomulka plan in the House of Commons, see T. Łoś-Nowak, *op. cit.*, pp. 282-284, 301.

Union and the United States at the United Nations and the Committee for the Disarmament of Eighteen Countries drew back from a further plan for this type of solution, the result of which was that the "attractiveness" of these plans for the public ceased to be an essential propaganda instrument for the Soviets, who had to declare their peaceful intentions. The development of Soviet nuclear and ballistic potential in this area meant that Moscow became an equal partner in discussions on halting the spread of atomic weapons<sup>128</sup>. The Soviet idea of calling a pan-European conference on security (excluding the United States), introduced at the United Nations forum by Minister Rapacki on December 14, 1964, put an end to this type of project. In addition, an analysis developed by the Department IV of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs "of the actual state of conversations and tactics on the subject of the Polish initiatives" rightly placed pressure on "the necessity of ending the entire action and temporarily withdrawing from conversations on this topic"<sup>129</sup>. The Soviets proposed the calling of a European security conference many times during sessions of the Political Advisory Committee of the Warsaw Pact (in July 1966 in Bucharest and in March 1967 in Budapest and during a conference of communist and workers' parties in Karlovy Vary in April 1967). In light of the French abandonment of the military structure of the Atlantic Pact in March 1966 and the worsening of French-American relations, the Polish ambassador in Paris, Jan Druto, encouraged his government to initiate conversations with France regarding European security. He maintained that the French had not changed their negative position on the Rapacki Plan but that they also had not come out clearly against the Gomulka plan. "As the well-informed French tell us" — wrote Druto — "the French government still has not elaborated a precise position regarding the various aspects of the Gomulka plan". Druto moreover reported, truthfully enough, that there was not much chance of initiating concrete discussions on matters of disarmament, but he also suggested sounding out Paris on the idea of calling a European conference on security. From the abovementioned report, the Polish government concluded that the idea of calling a European security conference could be the basis for further inquiries in conversations with the

<sup>128</sup> G. H. Soutou, *La Guerre de Cinquante Ans*, pp. 458–459.

<sup>129</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 24, vol. 70, l. 6. See T. Łoś-Nowak, *op. cit.*, p. 302.



French<sup>130</sup>. During a visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs Couve de Murville to Warsaw, Adam Rapacki, speaking with him on May 19, 1966, tried again to refer to the Gomulka plan, only to meet with the dismissal of the French minister, who stressed the necessity of maintaining an equilibrium between the two blocs. Taking a position on the question of a security conference, De Murville stated that with regard to the German problem (Germany could not be present at such a conference), the calling of such a conference is not possible in the present moment<sup>131</sup>.

Perhaps the abovementioned conversation was an attempt to determine the attitude of Paris on the question of security before De Gaulle's visit to the Soviet Union in June. At the same time, direct conversations between the Americans and the Soviets in December 1966, concluding with the acceptance of a compromise formula in which the Americans rejected projects relating to multilateral nuclear forces in exchange for the undertaking of negotiations on a ban to halt the spread of nuclear weapons, meant that the position of France lost significance, just like the proposal advanced by Warsaw. Moreover, during a conversation with Minister Rapacki in Paris in January 1967, Minister Couve de Murville explained that the issue was not subject to any evolution in this situation. Avoiding the taking of a position on an eventual agreement not to use force in relationships between European countries, Minister De Murville repeated the position of France that the basic element of security in Europe was the general balance between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Minister De Murville stressed that European security under the current conditions is moving toward the question of the presence of foreign military on European territory; this problem did not have much chance of a solution given the situation in Vietnam. On the matter of a European conference, the minister took a position similar to Warsaw's, stressing that the goals of such a conference would be difficult to achieve given current conditions<sup>132</sup>. The

<sup>130</sup> AMSZ, fasc. 17, vol. 124, l. 16, p. 83, *J. Druto do M. Łobodycza, Paryż 30 IV 1966* (*J. Druto to M. Łobodycza, Paris, April 30, 1966*); *ibidem*, p. 88, *Notatka min. A. Rapackiego z rozmowy z ambasadorem Francji z ambasadorem A. Waplerem w dniu 7 IV 1966* (*Note of Minister A. Rapacki from conversation with French ambassador with A. Wapler, April 7, 1966*).

<sup>131</sup> AMAE, EU 1966-1970, *Pologne*, vol. 2498, *Premiers entretiens entre les ministres des Affaires étrangères de France et de Pologne, le 19 mai 1966 à 10h. au Ministère des Affaires étrangères à Varsovie*, pp. 20-21.

deepening isolation of France in its relationships with the countries of the West did not have a bearing on the change in its position on the disarmament plans advanced by Polish diplomats. Neither did this isolation affect the position of Paris on the proposals of Moscow to call a European security conference without the participation of Washington, which Paris saw as "the driving of a wedge between the United States and Europe". The acceptance by the Atlantic Pact of NATO (in December 1967) of the report of Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Pierre Harmel, the base of which was the strengthening of the military pact on one side and the undertaking of negotiations with Moscow on the other, was an attempt to find a compromise for the various tendencies represented in this organization<sup>133</sup>. Paris was also unsuccessful in trying to stop direct dialogue between Moscow and Washington, of which the agreement to halt the spread of nuclear weapons signed on July 1, 1968 was a result<sup>134</sup>. France, interested in the development of its own nuclear potential, was not interested in accepting a solution of nonproliferation (on August 24, 1968, France carried out the explosion of a hydrogen bomb).

Both the Rapacki plan and the Gomulka plan that followed, independently from Polish intentions and as French and British diplomats accurately noticed, comprised for Moscow a propaganda instrument having as its goal not only the gaining of Western public opinion but, above all, the deepening of the already existing divergences within the Atlantic Pact. Support for the plan by the Soviet Union caused Paris and London to take positions independently from the unfriendly position of Washington and to not reject at once the Polish initiative and to employ delaying tactics. The improvements advanced by Warsaw, which were meant to make the plan more acceptable, relegated the plan to public opinion and the opposition parties. Further versions,

<sup>132</sup> AMAE, EU 1966–1970, *Pologne*, vol. 2497, pp. 1–11, *Entretien entre les ministres des Affaires étrangères de France et de Pologne, Quai d'Orsay, le vendredi 27 janvier 1967 à 10h. 30*.

<sup>133</sup> G. H. Soutou, *La Guerre de Cinquante Ans*, p. 477.

<sup>134</sup> The agreement was signed in Moscow, London, and Washington. Its realization depended on the 40 signatory countries submitting ratifying documents; the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and China did not ratify the agreement. Kissinger and Brandt signed the agreement for their governments on November 28, 1968. See T. Łoś–Nowak, *op. cit.*, pp. 305–317.

because of these suggested improvements, could not bring the results Polish diplomats desired. Paradoxically, the support from the Soviets "authenticated" the plan, but that support also frustrated any constructive discussions, not to mention the plan's acceptance. The position of the Western powers that the goal of Moscow was to discredit them in the eyes of public opinion by involving them in intricate and long-lasting diplomatic negotiations, of which the effect was supposed to be the neutralization of Germany, meant that the Polish initiative was doomed to fail from the beginning. The plan did not bring Warsaw any real benefits or growth in international prestige or within the Eastern bloc; instead it forced the Poles to spend resources the country did not have enough (for example, on the heavy propaganda campaign in the West). The division of the world into two blocs meant that this type of initiative, intended to destabilize the balance holding each power at bay, was condemned to failure.

*(Translated by Sean Martin)*