

Tapio Juntunen

## “We Just Got to Keep Harping On About It”

Anti-Nuclearism and the Role of Sub-Regional Arms Control Initiatives in the Nordic Countries During the Second Cold War

### 1. Introduction

There is widespread agreement among Cold War historians that the mobilizing effect of the anti-nuclear campaigns in both Europe and the U.S. had an impact on the formulation and timing of decisions made by NATO in the context of the Euromissile crisis.<sup>1</sup> The same can be said about the effect of the transnational disarmament community and the non-aligned movement on the Soviet Union's turn towards disarmament activism during the Gorbachev era. This pivotal turn led to the signing of the INF and START treaties.<sup>2</sup> As in the rest of Europe, the heyday of anti-nuclear protest in the Nordic countries was between 1980 and 1983. A quite rapid revival of the peace movement, spearheaded by veteran activists, led to the establishment of non-hierarchical civil society movements like the “No to Nuclear Weapons” campaigns in Norway and Denmark in the early 1980s.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most evident examples of the effect of public opinion and the transnational peace movements on foreign policy during this era comes from Denmark, where the opposition parties, holding a majority in the Danish parliament, the *Folketinget*, pushed the center-right minority government to pursue its so-called “footnote policy” between 1982 and 1988. During this period Denmark added several reservations to NATO's operations and procedures. This was in line

1 See Angela Santese, Ronald Reagan, the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign and the Nuclear Scare of the 1980s, in: *The International History Review* 39/3 (2017), pp. 496–520; Thomas Risse-Kappen, Did “Peace Through Strength” End the Cold War? Lessons from INF, in: *International Security* 16/1 (1991), pp. 179–185. Maria Eleanora Guasconi, Public Opinion and the Euromissile Crisis, in: Leopold Nuti, Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey, and Bernd Rother (eds.), *The Euromissile Crisis and the End of the Cold War*, Washington, D.C. 2015, pp. 271–289; Lawrence S. Wittner, *Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the Nuclear Disarmament Movement*, Stanford/CA 2009, pp. 129–136.

2 See Matthew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War*, Ithaca 2002, pp. 269–338.

3 See Michael A. Krasner and Nikolaj Petersen, Peace and Politics: The Danish Peace Movement and Its Impact on National Security Policy, in: *Journal of Peace Research* 23/2 (1986), pp. 156–173.

with the Danish government's decision to reduce its support for the Double-Track Decision in 1979, followed by a partial withdrawal on the 1983 decision to deploy Pershing II and Tomahawk Cruise Missiles in Europe. The "footnote policy" started to lose its meaning only after the signing of the INF Treaty, when, in spring 1988, the government—led by the Conservative Party—decided to reframe the "footnote policy" as an issue affecting Denmark's commitment to full NATO membership by calling parliamentary elections.

The change in public opinion fell on especially fertile ground in Nordic countries with a strong liberal-egalitarian identity, such as Norway and Denmark. It was in many ways natural for their governments to emphasize the centrality of the arms control component in NATO's Double-Track Decision. Both Denmark and Norway had long decided not to allow the deployment or positioning of nuclear weapons on their territories during peacetime. This tradition of nuclear restraint had already made the two Nordic members of NATO react somewhat differently from other small NATO members like Holland and Belgium when it came to the reception of NATO's Double-Track Decision in 1979. "Nuclear realists," advocating the stabilizing effect of enhanced nuclear deterrence, were clearly in the defensive mode when it came to public opinion in Scandinavia.

Regarding the reception of the INF Treaty in Nordic countries, it is also important to note that its focus on land-based missile deployments in Central Europe left unsolved an emerging security dilemma in the northernmost part of the continent. The INF Treaty did not address the prospect of military buildup in and around the Northern sea areas, especially in the Kola Peninsula and its surroundings, and this omission was a major concern among the Nordic political elite and civil society movements even after the signing of the INF Treaty. Indeed, the prospect that the maintenance of deterrence through new flexible options and technologies would merely shift from Central European soil to the Northern sea areas was perceived as potentially worrisome. Thus, the perception shared by many in the Nordic countries was that, as important as the INF Treaty was on a political level, it was also a necessary but insufficient first step in a path towards more comprehensive arms control agreements that would take into account the role of sea-based nuclear deterrence in the maintenance of regional and strategic stability.

Built on these insights, the present essay will be based on two broad arguments. Firstly, the role of the Nordic countries has often been ignored in studies covering the Euromissile crisis and the INF Treaty. Understandably, this branch of research has mainly focused on Central Europe and intra-Alliance politics.<sup>4</sup>

4 See Nuti et al. (eds.), *The Euromissile Crisis and the End of the Cold War*, Washington, D. C. 2015; Philipp Gassert, Tim Geiger, and Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Zweiter Kalter Krieg und Friedensbewegung. Der NATO-Doppelbeschluss in deutsch-deutscher und internationaler Perspektive*, Munich 2011. There is also a flux of literature on neutrality and small state foreign policy, also with a historical approach, but the studies tend to focus either on comparative cases or on the characteristics of neutrality, neutralism and non-alignment as historically distinctive foreign policy postures. See Sandra Bott, Jussi M. Hanhimäki, Janick Marina

I argue that, in order to portray a more precise picture of how the Euromissile crisis and the INF process unfolded, we need to complement the existing literature with studies that grasp the geopolitical and societal consequences of nuclear weapons politics and arms control processes in the Northern “flank” of Europe. Indeed, these dynamics should be studied from the perspective of the Nordic societies themselves by taking into account their egalitarian and peace-oriented state identities as well as the close ties at societal level within the sub-region, which consists of both militarily-allied and neutral states.<sup>5</sup>

Secondly, in order to understand the socio-political dynamics and the strong anti-nuclear sentiment in the Nordic region, the *positive* arms control agenda within the sub-region needs to be taken into account. In particular, it is important to recognize how the initiative to establish a Nordic nuclear-weapon-free zone (NNFZ), originally suggested by the Finnish president Urho Kekkonen in 1963 and repeated in a more elaborate form in 1978,<sup>6</sup> matured into a shared practical connection between the anti-nuclear movement and certain parts of the Nordic political elite during the 1980s. The NNFZ initiative can be seen as an attractive and connective issue among the Nordic states and societies during an era otherwise characterized by intra-Alliance tensions and the *negative* prospects of nuclear buildup.

Based on original research made in four archives in Finland, the latter part of this essay examines the impact the NNFZ initiative had on the Nordic debate over the Euromissile crisis and INF Treaty. I argue that the diplomatic process around the NNFZ initiative formed a counter-doxastic practice; it made visible the indirect negative consequences of the doxastic arms control practices that characterized the maintenance of the superpower-led bipolar order, especially its focus on Central Europe during the Euromissile crisis and the INF negotiations.

Schaufelbuehl, and Marco Wyss (eds.), *Neutrality and Neutralism in the Global Cold War: Between or Within the Blocs?*, New York 2015; Heinz Gärtner (ed.), *Engaged Neutrality. An Evolved Approach to the Cold War*, Lanham 2017; Andrew Cottey (ed.), *The European Neutrals and NATO: Non-Alignment, Partnership, Membership?*, London 2018; Johanna Rainio-Niemi, *The Ideological Cold War. The Politics of Neutrality in Austria and Finland*, New York 2014.

- 5 The Nordic sub-region has been described as a model security community by several scholars. See Håkan Wiberg, *The Nordic Security Community: Past, Present, Future*, in: *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook* (2000), pp. 133–135; Ole Waever, *Insecurity, Security, and Asecurity in the West European Non-War Community*, in: Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities*, Cambridge 1998, p. 72.
- 6 Urho Kekkonen, *Suomen turvallisuuspolitiikka. Tasavallan presidentti Urho Kekkonen turvallisuuspoliittisia puheita vuosilta 1943–1979*, Helsinki 1982, pp. 89–92 and pp. 95–102. See also Osmo Apunen, *Three 'Waves' of the Kekkonen Plan and Nordic Security in the 1980s*, in: *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* 11/1 (1980), pp. 16–32.

## 2. The “Nordic Syndrome” and the “Flanks Problem”

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the Nordic NATO members—Denmark, Norway and Iceland—from the outset of their joining the Alliance in the precarious post-war security environment of the late 1940s, is their ambiguity in attitude stemming from a firm alignment with western democratic values but, on the other hand, their rather reserved attitude towards great power politics. This was evident in concerns they held that the Western Alliance and its small liberal member-states would become mere objects of the heavily militarized bipolar Cold War security logic. Alyson Bailes has aptly described this as the “Nordic syndrome”—the fundamental sentiment stemming from a combination of egalitarian liberal values and a tendency to perceive international politics through a rather cynical prism of small state realism.<sup>7</sup>

Bailes picks out two key examples that illustrate how the “Nordic syndrome” worked in practice during the Cold War. The first one, Denmark’s “footnote policy” in the 1980s, is probably the best known of these examples. The second, “Norwegian dallying with the nuclear-free zone idea” was something that characterized basically all Nordic countries during the 1980s, especially Finland, as I will elaborate in detail later on in this essay. Of these two examples Denmark’s policy of nuclear restraint (which Norway partially shared) has received considerably more attention in the canon of Cold War historiography than the Nordic nuclear-weapon-free zone initiative.

The Nordic syndrome was also based on geostrategic considerations. Key arms control agreements of the early 1970s reinforced a sense of strategic balance between the two superpowers. But a lack of attention to managing regional level security in Europe, together with the rise of ideological fundamentalism in superpower relations and intra-Alliance anxiety over the level of U.S. commitment to Europe, started off a vicious circle of misperceptions that eventually led to the emergence of what is now known as the Euromissile crisis.<sup>8</sup> The spiral of mistrust made both sides assume the worst about the intentions of the other. The security dilemma was reinforced by the ambiguous symbolism of new weapons technologies, such as the Soviet intermediate SS-20 missiles, U.S. plans to deploy neutron bombs in Europe, and second-generation Cruise Missiles, together with certain developments in nuclear strategic thinking (such as the “countervailing”

7 Alyson Bailes, *The Nordic Countries from War to Cold War—and Today*, in: *Scandinavian Journal of History* 37/2 (2012), p. 158.

8 See Nuti et al. (eds.), *The Euromissile Crisis*; James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, *When Empathy Failed: Using Critical Oral History to Reassess the Collapse of U.S.–Soviet Détente in the Carter-Brezhnev Years*, in: *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12/2 (2010), pp. 29–74; Ken Booth and Nicholas Wheeler, *The Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics*, Houndmills 2008, pp. 120 f.

strategy that seemingly put an emphasis on one side's ability to dominate escalation at theater level).<sup>9</sup>

The prospect of the "Europeanization" of the threat of nuclear war had deep ramifications in Western European societies, the Nordic countries being no exception.<sup>10</sup> From the Nordic perspective, then, the geopolitical predicament posed by the Euromissile crisis (and partly too by the solution brought by the INF Treaty) looked very different from how it did from the perspective of Central Europe. The maintenance of a bipolar security order through arms control agreements that focused on land-based weapon systems was always in danger of omitting the potential repercussions of the growing importance sea-based nuclear deterrence was taking on in the European "flanks." As Olav Riste points out, during the latter part of the Cold War, the strategic analyses within NATO "remained fixed on a scenario in which the massive strength of Warsaw Pact armies would break [through] the Fulda Gap and invest [sic!] most of the European continent. Any action on the flanks would be ancillary to the main battlefield."<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Denmark and the Period of "Footnote Policy"

During the Euromissile crisis Denmark's foreign policy was characterized by a reserved attitude towards NATO's nuclear planning. Between 1982 and 1988 Denmark added several critical footnotes to NATO's official communiqués. The immediate cause of this "footnote policy" can be traced back to domestic political contingencies. The so-called "four-leaf clover" minority cabinet, formed in 1982 and led by the Conservative People's Party,<sup>12</sup> prioritized domestic political and economic reforms. This helped the Social Democrats call the tune in Denmark's foreign policy. As the biggest party in the opposition with a qualified majority in the *Folketinget*, the Social Democrats were able to mobilize an alternative majority against the cabinet. At this point, the Social Democrats had already revised their foreign policy line, especially their stand on NATO's nuclear politics, including the Double-Track Decision of 1979, and had moved towards a more

9 See Jonathan Haslam, *Moscow's Misjudgment in Deploying SS-20 Missiles*, in: Nuti et al. (eds.), *The Euromissile Crisis*, pp. 33–37; Risse-Kappen, *Lessons from INF*, pp. 176–178; Booth and Wheeler, *The Security Dilemma*, pp. 118–123.

10 David Holloway, *The Dynamics of the Euromissile Crisis, 1977–1983*, in: Nuti et al. (eds.), *The Euromissile Crisis*, pp. 19–22.

11 Olav Riste, *NATO's Northern Frontline in the 1980s*, in: Olav Njostald (ed.), *The Last Decade of the Cold War: From Conflict Escalation to Conflict Transformation*, Abingdon 2004, p. 301.

12 In addition to the Conservatives, the government also consisted of the Liberal Party (Venstre), Christian People's Party and the Center Democrats (a splinter group from the Social Democratic Party). Formation of minority governments was already at this point an established political practice in Denmark. See Rasmus Brun Pedersen, 'Footnote Policy' and the Social Democratic Party's Role in Shaping Danish EEC Positions, 1982–1986, in: *Scandinavian Journal of History* 38/5 (2013), p. 638.

critical orientation.<sup>13</sup> This endangered the so-called Atlantic Consensus since politicians, especially the Social Democrats, were allowed to call reservations on Denmark's participation within NATO, so long as they did not put Alliance solidarity into question altogether.<sup>14</sup>

However, Denmark's policy of nuclear restraint had deeper roots in its pragmatic and peace-oriented small state *habitus*. As aptly explained by Cindy Vestergaard:

Denmark's approach to nuclear weapons has historically tried to reconcile its status as a country publicly opposed to nuclear weapons [...] on the one hand with its status as a member of a military nuclear alliance on the other [...] With a strong national desire for declared non-nuclear status juxtaposed with the same desire for maintaining NATO unity, the history of the Danish Kingdom is characterized by protest, politics and external pressures.<sup>15</sup>

Vestergaard's characterization indicates a tradition of diplomatic balancing between domestic sentiments and the demands deriving from belonging to an intergovernmental military alliance with a joint nuclear planning policy. The Danish policy of "willfull blindness"—a double nuclear policy—emerged gradually from the late 1950s onwards in relation to questions on whether to allow calls at ports by naval ships from nuclear weapon states and on the role of Greenland as a geographical and logistical area for NATO and the U.S.<sup>16</sup>

The Danish government, as well as its opposition, followed general Scandinavian sentiment in supporting disarmament, arms control and global détente. As one contemporary observer described the reception of the INF Treaty in Denmark: "The symbolic message carried by the treaty and the Washington declarations is appreciated all across the political spectrum [in Denmark]."<sup>17</sup> The underlying tension between the recognized value of the extended nuclear deterrence offered by the U.S. and, opposing it, a strong pro-nuclear disarmament sentiment in civil society was also visible in Denmark's responses to sub-regional nuclear arms control initiatives such as the NNFZ.

13 Nikolaj Petersen, 'Footnoting' as a political instrument: Denmark's NATO policy in the 1980s, in: *Cold War History* 12/2 (2012), pp. 297–299.

14 See Fredrik Doeser, *Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy Change in Small States: The Fall of the Danish 'Footnote Policy'*, in: *Cooperation and Conflict* 46/2 (2011), pp. 222–241. During the "footnote" period the opposition parties (with majority seats in the *Folketing*) forced the Danish minority government to a total of 23 footnotes to NATO's communiqués on the Euromissile deployments, tactical nuclear weapons and Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

15 Cindy Vestergaard, *Going non-nuclear in the nuclear alliance: the Danish experience in NATO*, in: *European Security* 23/1 (2014), p. 106.

16 *Ibid.* Double nuclear policy had its foundations in the 1953 decision to ban the permanent stationing of Allied forces in Denmark's territory and on the 1957 ban on nuclear weapon deployments.

17 Ove Nathan, *Danes look to détente for greater security*, in: *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 44/2 (1988), p. 32.

The effect of the Danish footnotes, opt-outs and annotations on NATO's policy was mostly performative. According to Anders Wivel they merely "expressed the Danish dissatisfaction with superpower relations in general and the nuclear policy of NATO in particular and were marketed as an explicit response to hardened U.S. rhetoric towards the Soviet Union and the intensification of the Cold War."<sup>18</sup> In this sense, the period of Danish footnote diplomacy is a good example of how domestic politics can affect the direction and timing of small state foreign policy change. It was not until spring 1988 that the "footnote period" came to an end. This happened when the Conservative-led government fully confronted the opposition's foreign policy line by calling general elections. The immediate cause was a Social Democrat demand for more explicit nuclear restrictions in the Danish port call permission policy, a policy that was based on the "neither confirm nor deny" principle. Leading Social Democratic politicians saw the port call resolution as a prerequisite for the establishment of NNFZ, which was at this point being negotiated at preliminary level by an inter-governmental working group consisting of government officials from the five Nordic countries (see more below).<sup>19</sup>

After colorful events in the chambers of the *Folketing*,<sup>20</sup> the parliamentary deputies once again voted in favor of the resolution sponsored by the Social Democrats. This time, though, instead of settling for footnotes, Prime Minister Poul Schlüter framed the issue as a threat to Denmark's ability to continue as a full member in NATO. New general elections were arranged for May 1988, only a few months after the previous elections of 1987. Although Schlüter's coalition was not able to reach a majority position in the *Folketing*, a change of sides by the Danish Social Liberal Party (who had modified their stance towards NATO's nuclear policy as a reaction to changes in public opinion over the issue) along with continuing support from the Center Democrats and Christian People's Party, this time from an opposition position, guaranteed them a de facto majority. This, subsequently, effectively ended the footnote period.<sup>21</sup>

#### 4. Norway and the Model of Sub-Regional Balancing

Although Norway witnessed minority cabinets during this era, too, the domestic political setting and parliamentary set-up was not as propitious to splinter party "foot-dragging" as was the case in Denmark.<sup>22</sup> Like Denmark's, Norway's state identity and foreign policy culture was based on "a strong liberal/meliorist belief

18 Anders Wivel, Still Living in the Shadow of 1864? Danish Foreign Policy Doctrines and the Origins of Denmark's Pragmatic Activism, in: Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook (2014), p. 127; see also Pedaliu, "Footnotes".

19 See Doeser, Fall of Danish 'Footnote Policy', pp. 229 f.

20 See Petersen, 'Footnoting' as a political instrument, pp. 307–310.

21 See Doeser, Fall of Danish 'Footnote Policy', p. 234.

22 See David Arter, Scandinavian Politics Today, second edition, Manchester 2008, p. 317.

that the world can become a better place” and a sense of active agency in achieving this.<sup>23</sup> Norway’s “peace exceptionalism” and tendency towards strategic isolationism from great power conflicts after the experiences of World War II left their mark on its NATO policy. According to Riste, “the two main features that set Norway apart from the mainstream of alliance policy were self-imposed restraints on allied military presence and activities on Norwegian soil, and its anti-nuclear stance in its various permutations.”<sup>24</sup>

For the European North, despite its peace-oriented foreign policy posture, the final phase of the Cold War amounted to a major geostrategic challenge. The combination of NATO’s focus on Central Europe and major efforts by the Soviet Union to reinforce its submarine-based strategic nuclear deterrence (beginning in the early 1970s) made Norway’s long coastal areas more and more vulnerable.<sup>25</sup> The increasing operational activity of Soviet submarines in the Baltic Sea was met with speculation that the USSR might be preparing to isolate Norway and the Nordic region in a pincer movement from its bases in the Kola peninsula and in the Baltic, should a regional crisis erupt. These concerns became even more alarmist after several incursions of Soviet nuclear submarines into the territorial waters of both Norway and Sweden in the early 1980s.<sup>26</sup>

Although the Norwegian Labor Government accepted NATO’s Double-Track Decision in 1979, the strong anti-nuclear sentiment displayed by the Norwegian public, shared by several left-wing members of the Labor Party, along with the positive sub-regional arms control agenda provided by the new impetus given to the NNFZ proposal, pushed the Norwegian government towards emphasizing the arms control track of NATO’s Double-Track Decision. Eventually, as Riste points out, “the wear and tear caused by the ‘dual-track decision’ and the parallel debate on a Nordic nuclear-free zone contributed to Labour’s fall from power in the autumn of 1981.”<sup>27</sup> The Labor-led government was succeeded by Kåre Willoch’s Conservative government, which, in the eyes of the newly elected U. S. President Ronald Reagan, restored Norway’s position as a reliable Ally.

To counter the strategic challenge posed by the USSR, Norway decided to increase its defense cooperation with the U. S. From as early as 1976 it had begun negotiations with the U. S. (and, to a lesser extent, with Britain and Canada) on

23 Halvard Leira, ‘Our Entire People are Natural Born Friends of Peace’: The Norwegian Foreign Policy of Peace, in: *Swiss Political Science Review* 19/3 (2013), p. 338.

24 See Riste, *NATO’s Northern Frontline*, p. 306.

25 See Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 3rd edition, Houndmills 2003, pp. 239–330.

26 Of these the most famous is perhaps the 1981 “whisky on the rocks” incident when a nuclear-capable Soviet Whisky-class submarine shipwrecked near a major Swedish naval base in Karlskrona, causing a serious diplomatic crisis between the two countries and almost leading to a confrontation between Swedish coastal forces and approaching Soviet surface ships. See Milton Leitenberg, *The Stranded USSR Submarine in Sweden and the Question of a Nordic Nuclear-Free Zone*, in: *Cooperation and Conflict* 17/1 (1982), pp. 17–28.

27 See Riste, *NATO’s Northern Frontline*, p. 305.



pre-positioning heavy equipment and supplies for ground forces in Norwegian bases. These were intended to be a preventive means of enhancing NATO's deterrence in the region and of avoiding the unnecessary escalation that such maneuvers could cause during potential conflict. Measures were introduced to increase interoperability and logistical support so that the U.S. Air Force could operate more easily from Norwegian bases. Negotiations on a Prestockage and Reinforcement Agreement on pre-positioning a U.S. Marine Amphibious Brigade's equipment in northern Norway were finalized in 1981.<sup>28</sup> The United States also introduced a new, more aggressive forward-based maritime strategy in 1982 amid the heated vertex of the Euromissile crisis.<sup>29</sup>

From the perspective of the Nordic countries the latter development—reinforcing deterrence in the European Northern flank without balancing arms control processes—was a double-edged sword. Indeed, the focus on strategic parity and on the Central European theater threatened to leave the Northern flank of Europe exposed to increasing military buildup and tensions. According to Nate Jones, the U.S. shift towards a more aggressive forward-based maritime strategy in the early 1980s was received with extreme suspicion by the already paranoid and aging Soviet leadership, thus providing one more factor in the series of misperceptions that gradually led the Euromissile crisis towards full war scare, supposedly culminating during NATO's Able Archer exercise in the fall 1983.<sup>30</sup>

During the period of Willoch's Conservative government between 1981 and 1986, Norway restrained itself from criticizing NATO's approach both to the Euromissile crisis and to Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). It was only after the Labor party returned to power in 1986 that Norway briefly joined the chorus of "footnote countries" like Denmark, refusing to sign NATO's communiqué that supported U.S. policy on defense and space weapons. At this point, Norway also tightened its policy on port visits and decided to export submarine-related equipment to the Soviet Union, causing notable resentment from the hardliners in the U.S. government. As with the Danish case, this created a short period of discord in the bilateral relationship during the crucial period of negotiations between Reagan and Gorbachev over an INF treaty.<sup>31</sup>

Of course, there was also an external dimension at work in Norway's dual approach of commitment and restraint. The decision made in 1960, and confirmed in 1961, of not accepting nuclear arms into Norwegian territory during

28 See Simon Duke, *United States Military Forces and Installations in Europe*, Oxford 1989, p. 224.

29 The key component in the 1982 strategy, should deterrence fail, was to have the ability to seize the initiative, that is, to establish "sea control in key maritime areas as far forward and as rapidly as possible [and] wage an aggressive campaign against all Soviet submarines, including ballistic missile submarines."; see Linton F. Brooks, *Naval Power and National Security: The Case for the Maritime Strategy*, in: *International Security* 11 (1986), p. 65.

30 See Nate Jones, *Able Archer 83: The Secret History of the NATO Exercise that Almost Triggered Nuclear War*, New York 2016, pp. 26 f.

31 Riste, *NATO's Northern Frontline*, p. 305.

peacetime was an integral part of the so-called Nordic balance model, developed by Norwegian foreign policy experts at the time.<sup>32</sup> The basic idea behind the model was that Norway (and Denmark to a lesser extent) could use their policy of peacetime nuclear restraint and the absence of foreign military bases as a preventive leverage or deterrent against the Soviet Union should the latter not restrain itself vis-à-vis Finland and not respect its status of limited but active peacetime neutrality (though there remained the *option* of abandoning this line of policy should a regional crisis occur).<sup>33</sup> The declared and internationally recognized neutrality of Sweden and its strong defense posture acted as a metaphorical pointer balancing the two pans of the scale.

Finland did not endorse this kind of mechanical reading of the Nordic balance model, since it might give room for an interpretation that the Norwegian and Danish NATO policy could determine its standing in relation to the Soviet Union.<sup>34</sup> But this did not hinder the acceptability of the broader idea that “strategic balance” in the Nordics was based on a certain level of commitment to military disengagement on behalf of both of the superpowers. Thus, instead of speaking about balance in a strictly mechanical sense, Finnish foreign policy leadership advocated a looser conception of maintaining sub-regional *stability*. This was based on the recognition that the security doctrines of the Nordic countries were interdependent: political decisions in regard to security made by one Nordic country would necessarily affect the strategic position of the whole region.<sup>35</sup>

Another aspect of the external dimension was the shared social identity among the Nordic countries, based on their tendency to advocate liberal egalitarian and meliorist values, which has already been mentioned.<sup>36</sup> This was also evident in the extensive support for a pro-disarmament agenda among those in civil society, expert groups, and parts of the political elite. The role of social democratic parties was also strong during the Cold War era.<sup>37</sup> Thus, although the dominant narrative of the research literature tends to emphasize the isolationist element—the tendency of countries such as Denmark and Norway to disengage themselves from the militarized logic of great power politics—we should also take into account the centripetal effect caused by the shared Nordic identity and the shared geopolitical understanding of being located in a sometimes neglected yet strategically important sub-region.

32 See Arne Olav Brundtland, *The Nordic Balance: Past and Present*, in: *Cooperation and Conflict* 2 (1965), pp. 30–63; Erik Noreen, *The Nordic Balance: A Security Policy Concept in Theory and Practice*, in: *Cooperation and Conflict* 18/1 (1983), pp. 43–56.

33 Finland’s limited peacetime neutrality was based on its position within the Soviet Union’s sphere of interest through the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed between the Soviet Union and Finland in 1948.

34 See Osmo Apunen, *Linjamiehet. Paasikivi-seuran historia*, Helsinki 2005, pp. 132–135.

35 See Apunen, *Linjamiehet*, p. 325.

36 See Leira, *Norwegian Foreign Policy of Peace*; Wivel, *Danish Foreign Policy Doctrines*.

37 See Arter, *Scandinavian Politics Today*.

## 5. Explaining the Nordic Paradox—the Paradigmatic Case of Denmark

Of the two Nordic NATO members' approaches, it is probably Denmark's footnote diplomacy that provides the paradigmatic example of how foreign policy decisions are affected by a complex set of internal and external factors, such as traditions of domestic politics, public opinion, intra-party debates, transnational diffusion of disarmament norms and ideas, and sub-regional geostrategic concerns.<sup>38</sup> In short, there are several reasons to believe that the domestic political situation (dominated by the effect of the economic crisis and parliamentary composition after general elections) cannot by itself explain Danish foreign policy activism during the 1980s.

Firstly, the role of public opinion needs to be taken into account. This is evident in the way Schlüter's cabinet framed the 1987 port visit resolution into a general debate over Denmark's NATO membership, steering the discussion into wider issues than nuclear weapons and arms control alone. It is important to note that support for NATO as such did not deteriorate in Denmark after the Double-Track Decision and the start of American missile deployments in neighboring Western European countries in 1983. Indeed, support of NATO membership was at its highest (69 per cent) in 1983, perhaps the most tense year of the period. It peaked again at 66 per cent in 1988 when the government decided to call elections on Denmark's foreign policy line.<sup>39</sup> Thus, public opinion was against the assertive nuclear weapons policy of NATO, not against the military alliance itself. The resurgence of the anti-nuclear movement during the period also corroborates this conclusion.<sup>40</sup>

Secondly, continuity in the Danish strategic culture needs to be taken into account when explaining the country's foreign policy activism during the Euro-missile crisis. The Danish liberal-egalitarian state identity and the buildup of the Nordic welfare state model during the Cold War amalgamated with a more pragmatist and realistic reading of world politics dominated by the great powers, a worldview that stemmed from historical experiences.<sup>41</sup> This liberal-egalitarian state identity can be seen as a driving factor behind the strong anti-nuclear sentiment within the Danish foreign policy establishment and in society in general. Wivel points, as well, towards the traditional small state mentality of power balancing and cooperative behavior to explain Denmark's dual approach to peace policy. It did not want to rely too heavily on protection provided by a

38 See Brun Pedersen, 'Footnote policy', pp. 639 f.

39 See Doeser, *Fall of Danish 'Footnote' Policy*, p. 233.

40 See Krasner and Petersen, *The Danish Peace Movement*, pp. 114, 119.

41 Anders Wivel, *Forerunner, follower, exceptionalist or bridge builder? Mapping Nordicness in Danish foreign policy*, in: *Global Affairs* 4/4–5 (2018), pp. 419–434.

single great power, so its positioning included forthright cooperation with other Nordic countries (both Allied and neutral ones), and a stance “locating Denmark firmly within the U.S.-based Cold War foreign policy posture.”<sup>42</sup>

In a similar vein, Pedaliu traces the origins of the “footnote period” and Denmark’s intra-Alliance dissent to a “longer gestation period” of suspicion (from the 1950s onwards) over the willingness of the U.S. to protect the national interests of its smaller European allies. The abandonment of the doctrine of massive retaliation in the 1960s by the Kennedy administration and Washington’s grand strategy shift towards Asia and preoccupation with the Vietnam War were key formative experiences indicating the potential volatility of U.S. transatlantic policy.<sup>43</sup>

Indeed, Denmark exercised a “double nuclear policy” from the late 1950s onwards. In 1957 Copenhagen declared an official policy of peacetime nuclear restraint, according to which Denmark would not allow the stationing or deployment of nuclear weapons on its soil or the flying of nuclear-armed aircraft in its airspace; and this included the vast area of Greenland. Nevertheless, behind the official policy of nuclear restraint, successive Danish governments turned a blind eye to U.S. nuclear weapons stationed in Greenland between 1958 and 1965 and to the continual overflights of nuclear-armed aircraft as part of the U.S. airborne alert system, right up to the time of the 1968 “broken arrow” incident in Thule Air Base, Greenland.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, the era of superpower summits and the U.S. decision to proceed with plans for détente directly with the Soviet leadership increased suspicions as to whether the U.S. would take the interests of its smaller Allies in Europe into account. Following the Soviet Union’s military buildup in the Kola Peninsula from the 1960s onwards, these concerns were felt as even more daunting.

Finally, when explaining the strong anti-nuclear sentiment during the 1980s, we need to take into account both the role ties at societal level had among the Nordic countries and the effect of transnational movements. Amidst the increasing superpower tensions in 1983, peace protests and anti-nuclear demonstrations drew several hundreds of thousands of people into the streets of major Nordic cities. In Finland alone over 215,000 people—approximately 5 per cent of the

42 Wivel, *Danish Foreign Policy Doctrines*, p. 125.

43 See Pedaliu, “Footnotes”, pp. 242–245.

44 See Vestergaard, *The Danish experience in NATO*, pp. 106–117. The Danish and U.S. governments lied about why an American B-52 bomber had crashed in Thule Air Base, Greenland, in 1968 to avoid the fact—revealed after the end of the Cold War—that U.S. bombers with nuclear weapons on board flew continuously over Thule as part of the airborne alert system. In 1995 the Danish government revealed that the U.S. had also stored nuclear weapons in Greenland between 1958 and 1965. The U.S. government informed the Danish government amidst a heated domestic debate in Denmark over the issue, immediately after Danish Foreign Minister Niels Helveg Petersen had reassured the Danish public that there had never been any nuclear weapons on Danish soil.

total population—participated in the anti-nuclear protests of November 1983, the biggest demonstrations held in the Nordics for several decades.<sup>45</sup>

Although NATO's Euromissiles were eventually deployed, it can fairly be said that the massive peace protests and demonstrations made some mark. Arguably, they had an effect on the foreign policy agenda in the Nordic countries, as seems evident in the dialogue and intergovernmental cooperation on NNFZ, especially from the early 1980s onwards.

I will now go on to examine the life cycle of the NNFZ initiative and the way the diplomatic activities around it permeated into a practical connection between the Nordic countries amid the Euromissile crisis and became a semi-permanent arrangement. The idea even outlived the signing of the INF Treaty.

## 6. Origins of Finnish Sub-Regional Arms Control Activism During the Cold War

By the end of the 1970s, the initiative to establish a Nordic nuclear-weapon-free zone (NNFZ) had matured into a discernible element in the Finnish foreign policy toolbox.<sup>46</sup> The process of maturing lasted some 15 years after President Urho Kekkonen first publicly presented his idea of establishing a sub-regional nuclear arms control arrangement in the Nordic region in May 1963. Kekkonen's original proposal was based on previous nuclear arms control initiatives put forward by the Soviet Union, by the Polish and Swedish Foreign Ministers Adam Rapacki and Östen Undén, by the British Labour politician Hugh Gaitskill, and by Yugoslavia's Premier, Josip Broz Tito.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the idea of nuclear-weapon-

45 It is important to recall at this point that there were also cases of friction within the Nordic peace movement, as was the case in Western Europe as a whole. Nonpartisan peace organizations, such as the Committee of 100, protested against both the Soviet and the Western nuclear weapons buildup. "Anti-imperialist" organizations, on the other hand, who swore allegiance to the Soviet Union, directed their protests against NATO's Double-Track Decision. That said, underneath the rather politicized surface, these massive peace protests were motivated more by a transnational anti-nuclear and pro-peace sentiment promoted by the European Nuclear Disarmament movement (END) rather than specific "Great Power" political antagonisms. See Elli Kytömäki, *Viisikymmentä vuotta toimintaa ydinaseriisunnan puolesta*, in: Elli Kytömäki (ed.), *Ei ydinaseille: suomalaisen aktivismin historia*, Helsinki 2014, pp. 40–42. See also Wittner, *Confronting the Bomb*, pp. 119 f.

46 This section is based on my previous archival research collected from the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland (UMA), Archives of the Cabinet of the President of Finland (PKA), from President Kekkonen's archives (UKA) and President Mauno Koivisto's archives (MKA) held in the National Archives. See Tapio Juntunen, *Kaavoihin kangistumista vai käytännöllistä viisautta? Suomen alueellinen ydinasevalvontapolitiikka kylmän sodan aikana*, in: *Kosmopolis* 46/1 (2016), pp. 27–44. See also Apunen, *Three 'Waves' of the Kekkonen Plan*; Clive Archer, *Plans for Nordic Nuclear-weapon Free Zone*, in: *Kosmopolis* 34 (2004), pp. 201–207.

47 See Ingemar Lindahl, *The Soviet Union and the Nordic Nuclear-Weapons-Free-Zone Proposal*, London 1988, pp. 47–57. Max Jakobson, Kekkonen's political advisor at the time, has

free zones was given new impetus in the early 1960s, when discussion on nuclear disarmament intensified after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 (among other incidents).

Kekkonen's original proposal was that each Nordic country should reaffirm its *de facto* non-nuclear status by making a series of unilateral, reciprocal, and binding commitments. As founding members, Norway and Denmark had been in NATO since 1949. Kekkonen reasoned that, since they had committed themselves to non-nuclear status during peacetime, the simple process of recognizing the present nuclear-free status of the region would not compromise the security commitments and foreign policy doctrines of the concerned countries.<sup>48</sup> However, the original NNFZ proposal was effectively a non-starter, since the actual substance of the initiative was of secondary importance compared to the implicit agenda. Kekkonen used the initiative both to appease Soviet concerns about Finland's foreign policy and to signal concern about the possible unintended geopolitical consequences in the Nordic region of U.S. plans to establish a Multilateral Nuclear Force (MLF) in Europe.

For some researchers, the main rationale behind the 1963 NNFZ initiative was to emphasize the Nordic region, in terms of security politics, as an undivided and somewhat interdependent whole.<sup>49</sup> For others, the original NNFZ initiative also aimed to redirect international discussion over Northern Europe towards the idea of reinforcing the balance between the Eastern and Western blocs—one of the fundamental tenets of the Finnish foreign policy posture during the Cold War.<sup>50</sup> In other words, Finland's initiative aimed for system maintenance by recognizing the leading role of the nuclear weapon states. (The initiative did not lay any demands on them.)

The lukewarm reception of the 1963 NNFZ initiative in other Nordic countries and in the West in general hardly came as a surprise to Helsinki's Foreign Policy establishment. Finland's plan was perceived to favor the Soviet Union, who would use the NNFZ as a tool to achieve the neutralization of the Nordic region. Denmark and especially Norway had no intention of abandoning their option of receiving all the military aid that was possible should there be a time of crisis—especially if there were no significant concessions on the Soviet side.<sup>51</sup> During the remainder of the 1960s Finland shifted its focus on the emerging front of multilateral nuclear disarmament diplomacy, as is evident in its role as one of

said that Kekkonen's 1963 NNFZ initiative was prepared rather hastily in just two weeks by him and some of his closest advisors after the Finnish Premier had discussed the topic with Tito during a state visit to Yugoslavia. See Max Jakobson, *Veteen piirretty viiva. Havaintoja ja merkintöjä vuosilta 1953–1965*, Helsinki 1980, pp. 317–319.

48 See Apunen, *Three 'Waves' of the Kekkonen Plan*, pp. 17 f.

49 See Kari Möttölä, *The Finnish Policy of Neutrality and Defence: Finnish Security Policy Since the Early 1970s*, in: *Cooperation and Conflict 17/4* (1982), pp. 287–313.

50 See Apunen, *Linjamiehet*, pp. 129–131.

51 See Osmo Apunen, *Silmän Poliitiikka. Ulkopoliittinen instituutti 1961–2006*, Helsinki 2012, pp. 110–112.

the facilitators in the negotiations that led to the signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the United Nations in 1968. (Together with Ireland, Finland was the co-sponsor and the first nation to sign the Treaty.)<sup>52</sup>

## 7. The Agenda-Setting Function of the NNFZ Initiative

The NNFZ initiative was restored to the Finnish foreign policy agenda in the context of the discussions on Mutual and Balanced (conventional) Force Reductions (MBFR) in Europe under the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and the UN disarmament regime during the first half of the 1970s.<sup>53</sup> But it was during the Euromissile crisis and amid deteriorating superpower relations in the late 1970s that the NNFZ agenda started to resonate among the political elites of other Nordic countries too. A key change in this regard came in 1975 when Sweden added the idea of a “safety belt” to the NNFZ agenda. It suggested that any sub-regional arms control arrangement in the European Northern flank should also include restrictions and reductions to the Soviet Union’s intermediate-range missile deployments in its immediate vicinity.<sup>54</sup>

At the same time, a new generation of diplomats in the Finnish Foreign Ministry continued to modify and redevelop the NNFZ initiative in case a situation came up in which Finland could make another formal proposal to start negotiations over the arrangement.<sup>55</sup> The time to carry through these plans came when the Finnish foreign and defense policy elite realized that the routes of the new American second-generation cruise missiles might fly over Finland’s airspace.<sup>56</sup> It was feared that this could give the Soviet Union the impetus to demand consultations over defense cooperation from Finland. They could do this by appealing to the obligations stated in the Finno-Soviet Treaty of 1948, to unite in countering any threat posed by Germany or its allies.<sup>57</sup>

52 See Max Jakobson, 38. kerros. Havaintoja ja muistiinpanoja vuosilta 1965–71, Helsinki 1983, pp. 129–147.

53 See Apunen, *Silmän politiikkaa*, p. 114.

54 See Anders Thunborg, *Nuclear Weapons and the Nordic Countries Today—A Swedish Commentary*, in: *Ulkopolitiikka 1* (1975), pp. 34–38.

55 UMA, NNFZ and procedures relating to it, March 4, 1976 [date added by handwriting], PYY-PAJ 1975–81 kc 15.

56 UKA, Personal letter/discussion memorandum to President Kekkonen by Jaakko Kalela, Discussions with professor Bykov, February 17, 1981, TOK, PM/JK, UKA, IV: 10; UMA, Klaus Törnudd, Seppo Pietinen, Juhani Suomi, Arto Mansala, Jaakko Laajava, and Pauli Järvenpää [signed by Undersecretary Klaus Törnudd], Report on key near-term developments affecting Finland’s security policy, Finnish-Soviet relations and Finland’s neutrality policy, pp. 11–15, December 8, 1983, Highly classified documents, 82–87kc 16.

57 These fears actualized in 1978 when Soviet Defense Minister Dmitry Ustinov privately proposed joint military exercises between Finland and the Soviet Union whilst visiting Finland. Although the suggestion was averted in private talks between President Kekkonen and Ustinov, officials in the Finnish Foreign Ministry connected it directly with the strategic

The independent status of Finnish defense forces was regarded as the sacred core of Finland's otherwise rather compromised status as a country of limited peacetime neutrality. The aging president Kekkonen reasoned that the NNFZ non-starter could be used once more as an agenda-setting instrument—that is, to pave the way for negotiations through which Finland could yet again share its concern over the possible unintended sub-regional consequences of nuclear weapons politics.

Kekkonen presented his revised NNFZ initiative in a speech held at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs in May 1978, this time in the form of a comprehensive arms control regime coupled with negative security assurances from the nuclear weapon states, verification procedures, and other confidence-building measures. The proposal was followed by a round of bilateral talks between Finland and other Nordic countries as well as talks with the two superpowers separately. As was perhaps to be expected, Finland's shuttle diplomacy did not open new ground for the realization of the NNFZ. Norway, Denmark, and the U.S. remained critical, while the Soviet Union was, also predictably, pleased with Finland's efforts to promote sub-regional military disengagement in a way that pointed to Western weapons systems as the source of the international problem.<sup>58</sup>

This time Sweden wanted to add the Baltic Sea to the discussions, most likely because of the increasing tensions created by Soviet submarine activities in the area. The most critical stance in the round of bilateral negotiations was presented by the U.S. Ambassador to Finland, Rozanne Ridgway, who stated that the Finnish proposal did not accord with the strategic thinking of the United States. Indeed, Ridgway went on to say that it would cause serious problems for the cohesion of NATO and thus impair U.S. security interests in Northern Europe, although U.S. diplomats were also from time to time signaling that they understood the political predicament that pushed Finland towards these kinds of activities. A summary made by the Finnish Foreign Ministry on the discussions with Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the U.S., and the Soviet Union was very realistic in its conclusions: there was almost no room for any hope that NNFZ could be actually realized.<sup>59</sup>

tensions in the Northern maritime area. UMA, Juhani Suomi and Arto Mansala, The visit of USSR's Defense Minister, Marshal D.F. Ustinov, in Finland, July 10–14, 1978; propositions over military cooperation, September 11, 1978, 18–0 1978–81.

58 Apunen, *Silmän politiikkaa*, p. 119.

59 UMA, Arto Mansala, Summary of the discussions on NNFZ, November 9, 1978, p. 5, PYV-PAJ 1975–81—erittäin salaiset kc 15; UMA, Arto Mansala, Summary on the discussions concerning the NNFZ thus far, November 13, 1978, p. 5, PYV-PAJ 1975–81—erittäin salaiset kc 15. Another key takeaway from the 1978 NNFZ discussions was that other Nordic countries, especially Norway, and the U.S. now seemed to have a better understanding of the legitimate security concerns that had pushed Finland to make the initiative in the first place.



## 8. Arms Control as the Connecting Factor: How the NNFZ Matured into a Shared Practical Agenda Between the Nordic Countries

But the tides in the Nordic countries were also changing. Great power politics and the practices of systems maintenance—including nuclear deterrence policies—were increasingly being regarded more as a liability than a solution. Among the Nordic public, this was evident in the rapid rise in popularity of anti-nuclear civil society movements during the early 1980s. This did not go unnoticed by the Finnish foreign policy elite. Finnish diplomats reported back to Helsinki that some influential figures in the Norwegian Labor Party—particularly former Minister Jens Evensen and, to a lesser extent, Defense Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg and the future Defense Minister Johan Holst—were urging a continuation of the NNFZ discussions in their domestic debates.<sup>60</sup>

Even if the task of getting all the interested parties, especially the U.S, to favor such a resumption seemed infeasible, the NNFZ agenda itself was becoming an institutionalized, or at least semi-permanent practicality between the Nordic countries. This became evident in 1981 when the Nordic Council of Ministers referred to the NNFZ in a joint statement for the first time: public discussion on NNFZ had gathered such momentum that it was no longer possible to avoid it when dealing with the nuclear issue, as the Danish Foreign Minister Kjeld Olesen reportedly admitted during the meeting.<sup>61</sup>

The discussions over NNFZ were again given fresh impetus when, during an interview with the Finnish newspaper *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* in June 1981, Leonid Brezhnev proposed that the Soviet Union was ready to give negative security assurances to the states involved in NNFZ.<sup>62</sup> Brezhnev also hinted that the USSR might be ready to make reciprocal arrangements in the Soviet territory near the Nordic region. Brezhnev's underpinnings were, of course, merely tactical in nature, as he certainly knew that American sentiments towards the NNFZ agenda remained highly critical. In Finland the conclusions drawn from the discussions following the 1978 proposal were mostly deemed disappointing: none of the countries involved in the discussions were ready for official negotiations over the substance of the comprehensive NNFZ agenda. Rather, the discussions were seen

60 UMA, Tapani Brotherus, Norway's NNFZ memorandum to NATO, February 3, 1981, PYV 89 H, file I; UMA, René Nyberg, Nuclear Weapons on Norwegian (and Danish) soil, October 15, 1981, PYV 89 H, files III–IV.

61 See UMA, Deputy Head of Department Pekka J. Korvenheimo, Nordic nuclear-weapon-free zone in the meeting of Nordic foreign ministers, September 2–3, 1981, p. 1; September 14, 1981, PYV 89 H 1981 III–IV; UMA, Acting Deputy Head of Department Erkki Mäentakanen, Nuclear-weapon-free Nordics, September 16, 1981, p.3, PYV 89 H 1981 III–IV.

62 See Bengt Broms, Proposals to Establish a Nordic Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, in: Michigan Journal of International Law 10/2 (1989), p. 352.

as a fruitful way to market the basic foreign and security political orientation of Finland as part of the Nordic whole.<sup>63</sup>

Creating and maintaining practical spaces for a security political dialogue between the Nordic countries themselves formed the basic rationale for what could be labeled the fourth generation of NNFZ policies, which lasted from the early 1980s until the end of the Cold War. From the Finnish perspective the basic idea was to enhance the sense of fellowship and interdependence among the Nordic countries. NNFZ policies were redirected towards the level of everyday diplomatic encounters of diplomats and officials. President Mauno Koivisto, Kekkonen's successor as President of Finland in 1982, had a more reserved attitude towards Kekkonen's NNFZ aspirations, especially when it came to the rather intrusive style that Finland had exercised with its unilaterally formulated public initiatives.<sup>64</sup> Still, Koivisto, too, saw the instrumental value in the process of the NNFZ discussions itself, although he emphasized that there was no point in making proposals just for the sake of their performative effect. Koivisto also had a reserved stance towards new variants of the NNFZ initiative, including the idea of a mini-zone consisting of only Sweden and Finland, and alternatively a maximalist proposal with disengagement zones outside the Nordic region.<sup>65</sup>

Discussions and practical encounters around the NNFZ issue were used to anchor Finland's international position more firmly to the Scandinavian bedrock. Despite this, there were concerns within the Finnish security political elite on whether the establishment of NNFZ would have positive strategic repercussions for sub-regional stability at all. This was evident in a secret memorandum drafted by the Operative Department of the General Staff Headquarters of Finnish Defense Forces in 1986. The memorandum reasoned that the establishment of NNFZ might also increase Western anxieties about Soviet influence in the region and, more alarmingly, create more favorable conditions for the conventional forces of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, thus potentially destabilizing the military balance in the Nordic sub-region. Inclusion of the Baltic Sea was mentioned as a particularly problematic issue, both in terms of international law and strategy.

63 UMA, NNFZ; report by the Political Department. Summary on the project's past, present and perspectives on Finnish actions [signed by Head of Department Seppo Pietinen], March 30, 1984, p.17, 14–4.

64 This attitude is evident in several of Koivisto's draft notes ahead of private discussions with foreign state leaders and diplomats between 1981 and 1983. See MKA, memorandum from the discussions with Norwegian Prime Minister Kåre Willoch during a state visit in Norway in March 1983, Koivisto's handwritten notes, March 10, 1983, Ulkopoliittiset selvitykset, 1983 I; MKA, memorandum from the discussions with Vice President Bush, July 3, 1983, Ulkopoliittiset selvitykset, 1983 II.

65 MKA, handwritten notes by President Koivisto ahead of the state visit of the Chair of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union N.A. Tihonov to Finland, December 10, 1982, Ulkopoliittiset selvitykset, lokakuu 1981–1982.

From the perspective of the Finnish politics of peacetime neutrality and the Nordic balance/stability model, the most interesting claim in the memorandum was that the actualization of NNFZ would actually increase the risk of conventional military intervention within the region, through the waning of the nuclear deterrent effect there. So it is interesting to note the Defense establishment in Finland repeating the U.S. criticism of the NNFZ initiative almost word for word and sharing in its implicit optimism regarding the functioning of nuclear deterrence.<sup>66</sup>

But the primary function of the NNFZ initiative, at this point, was to maintain the process of dialogue itself. As has been aptly described by Finnish diplomats such as Keijo Korhonen and René Nyberg, who both worked on arms control issues in the Finnish Foreign Ministry during the 1970s and 1980s, Finland's NNFZ policies were essentially an exercise in diplomatic shadowboxing. This is captured rather eloquently in a metaphor used by Korhonen: "So valuable a fish is the salmon, it makes sense to try fishing for one, even if there is no prospect of catching any."<sup>67</sup>

The instrumental value of the NNFZ process was already recognized outside Finland. For example, during a private discussion in Stockholm in 1985, the Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme encouraged Koivisto to keep on pushing the NNFZ agenda. Interestingly, it was Koivisto who was the more reluctant of the two statesmen in this regard. Palme insisted that "we just got to keep harping on about it [the NNFZ agenda]," and pointed out that public opinion in Denmark and Norway showed considerable responsiveness to the idea. Palme hinted that the governments of Norway and Denmark might benefit from Sweden and Finland maintaining the momentum on arms control initiatives that the political elites in Norway and Denmark could not actively support.<sup>68</sup>

66 UMA, The effects of the NNFZ from the military perspective [signed by Vice Admiral Jan Klenberg and Lieutenant General Rolf Wilhelm], January 2, 1986, pp. 3–4, 14–4 PYV, Suomen toiminta ja kannanotot 1984–86.

67 "Lohi on niin kallis kala, että sitä kannattaa pyytää vaikkei saisikaan [...]" Translated by the author of this essay from Jukka Rislakki, *Paha sektori. Atomipommi, kylmä sota ja Suomi*, Helsinki 2010, p. 169. René Nyberg in critical oral history sessions organized by the research project 'Reimagining Futures in the European North at the End of the Cold War' (FA268669) in Helsinki, September 23, 2014.

68 "Meidän täytyy vain jatkaa asian jauhamista." Translated by the author of this essay from the discussion memorandum written by Undersecretary Klaus Törnudd. PKA, Meeting between the President of the Republic and the Swedish Prime Minister in Stockholm, January 7, 1985, p. 9, January 18, 1985, Jad:2 1985–89.

## 9. Towards Conclusions: The INF Treaty and the Security Dilemma in the Northern Sea Areas

When, after several preparatory meetings between the heads of each MFA's Departments of Political Affairs during winter 1986/87, the Nordic countries eventually established a joint intra-governmental working group to deliberate the NNFZ agenda in 1987, the strategic focus in Europe was already shifting from Central Europe towards the "flanks." President Koivisto addressed these concerns in one of his key foreign policy speeches in 1986.<sup>69</sup> Koivisto's handwritten notes and exchange of letters with Vice President Bush indicate that the Finnish president had an increasingly pessimistic view of the INF negotiations in late 1985 and early 1986.<sup>70</sup> Koivisto reasoned that there was an urgent need to move forward in the confidence- and trust-building measures (CBM) in the Northern sea areas, following the basic guidelines of the CSCE process. Koivisto also referred to the psychological aspects of the nuclear arms race and went on to consider the most likely reason for war or even nuclear confrontation in the Nordic region: they would, he thought, be based on misperceptions. The NNFZ agenda, he maintained, was to be seen as an "ongoing process".<sup>71</sup>

It is also important to remember that the heated Danish debate over its policy vis-à-vis NATO continued after the signing of the INF Treaty. In 1988, in an interview conducted by a Danish journalist, Paul Warnke, the U.S. chief SALT II Negotiator in 1977–78, hinted that the U.S. had routinely violated the Danish policy of no port visits by ships bearing nuclear arms.<sup>72</sup> A public debate followed, leading to the *Folketing* passing the abovementioned resolution requiring the Danish government to remind all visiting warships of the fact that they were not allowed to visit Danish ports if carrying nuclear weapons. This raised worries among Denmark's allies over the cohesion of NATO, and gave rise to major diplomatic pressure on Denmark from the U.S., French, and British governments. Most notably, it resulted in the resignation of the Danish right-wing minority government on April 19.<sup>73</sup>

When it comes to the INF negotiations and the reception of the Treaty itself, it is important to realize that public opinion in Scandinavia maintained a strong pro-nuclear disarmament sentiment throughout the 1980s, and that this was so even for people in the NATO countries Norway and Denmark. Moreover, the anti-nuclear movements in the Nordic countries continued to develop their

69 See Mauno Koivisto, *Maantiede ja historiallinen kokemus. Ulkopoliittisia kannanottoja*, Helsinki 1992, pp. 54–58.

70 MKA, Koivisto's letter to Bush, December 16, 1985, pp. 1–2 *Ulkopoliittikka/selvityksiä* 1985; MKA, Koivisto's handwritten notes ahead of a state visit to Switzerland, March 24, 1986, pp. 5f., *Ulkopoliittikka/selvityksiä* 1986 tammikuu–kesäkuu.

71 Mauno Koivisto, *Historian tekijät. Kaksi kautta II*. Helsinki 1995, p. 43.

72 See Vestergaard, *The Danish experience in NATO*, p. 111.

73 *Ibid.*, pp. 111f.

approach, incorporating issues such as SDI and demands for a comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT) in their agenda.<sup>74</sup> The US–Soviet rapprochement and the INF negotiations between the superpowers were therefore received as positive news in the region. However, due to its focus on land-based nuclear weapons, the INF Treaty threatened to increase the geostrategic significance of the Northern sea areas. It can therefore be concluded that from the Nordic perspective (if there ever was such a unified stance), the INF Treaty was recognized as a historically and symbolically significant political achievement, but at the same time considered to be merely the first incremental step in a process that should lead to more comprehensive arms control arrangements.

Although there were major differences between the foreign policy postures of the Nordic countries, the last decade of the Cold War era brought their strategic concerns closer together. There were several reasons behind this: a sense of solidarity, shared identity and kinship and, to a lesser degree, a shared perception of the idiosyncratic nature of their sub-regional geopolitical environment in the Northern “flank” of the European theater. When it comes to the NNFZ initiative, Finland used it as a diplomatic non-starter and agenda-setting instrument to signal its security–political concerns to fellow Nordic countries, and to the U. S. and NATO. During the 1980s the NNFZ discussions matured into a semi-permanent practical connection among the Nordic countries themselves.

Indeed, it is rarely noticed in the existing literature that, at the turn of the 1980s, the informal negotiation *process* around the NNFZ and its maturation into a shared Nordic practice very clearly overlapped with the proceedings of the Euromissile crisis. The point here is not to claim that relations between the Nordic countries would have been without friction without it. Especially during the 1960s and 1970s, arms control initiatives such as the NNFZ created tensions between the Nordic countries, and even the two neutral Nordic countries did not have identical geostrategic positions.

To sum up, the NNFZ agenda formed a practical policy process that was used to create conditions for a security–political dialogue between the Nordic countries themselves (with minimal interference from external parties). This helped to create a sense of interdependence. Moreover, it provided a positive agenda that tied together the interests of the Nordic arms control community, peace researchers, and activists as well as the political parties at the Center and Left of the political spectrum. Inter-parliamentary meetings and summits around the NNFZ question were also organized. This positive agenda had its roots in the egalitarian and peace-oriented state identity that was shared by all the Nordic countries, but it also reflected geostrategic concerns about the status of the European Northern flank during arms control processes that focused exclusively on land-based missile deployment in Central Europe. The NNFZ initiative, then, was first and foremost used as an instrument to highlight the need for sub-regional sensitivity in the broader play of the great power order and its management.

74 Wittner, *Confronting the Bomb*, p. 193.

