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The Rapacki Plan during the Cold War.

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Denuclearization in Central Europe? The Rapacki Plan during the Cold War

As the Cold War started after the Second World War, Europe quickly became its most important political battleground for many years. The majority of European countries became members of a belligerent alliance system, and most countries raised their defence budgets considerably. There was a rising menace of war between these groups, lead by the USA and the USSR, as humanity entered the atomic age in August 1945. After the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki nobody could realistically believe that nuclear weapons would not be used in the event of a Third World War. This became obvious when the USA lost its monopoly on nuclear weaponry, following successful English and Soviet test detonations. Many public figures, including leading scientists, politicians, and artists soon began to voice their concerns, and various plans were hastily developed to circumvent such a catastrophe. If we examine it superficially, the plan proposed by Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki on October 2nd, 1957 fits into these ideas.

During the 12th term of the United Nations General Assembly, the Polish Foreign Affairs Minister suggested¹ that creating a 'nuclear-free' zone in Central Europe would go a long way to alleviating the political tension of the times. According to his proposal, if the two German states were willing to prohibit the production and storage of nuclear weapons on their territory, the Polish People's Republic would follow suit. The very next day, the Czechoslovakian Government joined the Polish in their proposal. On October 5th, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) also agreed to join the initiative,² and on December 9th, following these first signs of approval, the Polish Secretary of State distributed written copies of his speech of October 2nd, together with the relevant explanations, to representatives of various foreign powers. In the following days he held negotiations with the Swedish, Norwegian, Austrian, Soviet, Czechoslovakian, and east German delegates. On December 10th, after an almost two-month silence, a memorandum on behalf of the USSR was taken by the Prime Minister Nyikolaj Alexandrovics Bulganin to Paris, Bonn, London and Washington. In it, the USSR committed itself to the Rapacki Plan and asked the Western powers, in order to reduce political tension, to contribute to the establishment of a nuclear free zone that would cover a territory containing over 100 million inhabitants. On January 8th, 1958 a second Soviet memorandum was issued, in which Moscow suggested a summit meeting where issues such as the Rapacki Plan could be clarified. Henceforward, for almost 8 years, the Rapacki Plan was discussed internationally and three further texts (1958, 1962, and 1964) appeared. The goal of this study is to give a comprehensive analysis of the coming into existence, content and the international context of the Rapacki Plan. What gives novelty to the research is that, in addition to the theme-based approach and traceable, specialised sources, relevant reports made by the Austrian and Hungarian diplomatic corps are also analysed. This should give an interesting and comprehensive analysis of the diplomatic atmosphere at the time, and the nature of various, contemporary diplomatic sources related to the Rapacki Plan.

Antecedents of the Rapacki Plan's Formation

The Rapacki Plan was certainly not the first diplomatic initiative aiming to reduce the risk of nuclear war. The Soviet Diplomatic Corps had already suggested the freezing of all nuclear weapons at the end of the Second World War, but American government, conscious that they possessed a nuclear monopoly, was not keen on doing so³. After the Soviets had developed their own nuclear weapons in 1949, both superpowers began to concentrate on their nuclear programs. At the time, they lacked only the right

¹ The proclamation of Rapacki dated October 2, 1957 can be read in the first appendix.

² The People's Chamber of GDR had already submitted a decision on the 8th of August 1957 in which they proposed not to accept the presence of nuclear weapons in the German states, and to use what nuclear technology they did have for purely peaceful purposes. LABOOR: p. 5.

³ The USSR had superiority in traditional forces particularly in Europe. Considering this, it is obvious that the Soviet proposal could not have been taken seriously.

delivery vehicle – which restricted the effective range of their arsenals to those places at greatest risk of conflict. For example, American troops stationed in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in the early 1950s had units equipped with atomic charges⁴ in 1954. By then, the United Kingdom had already developed its own nuclear weapons (1952); and the two superpowers had developed the Hydrogen-bomb (H-bomb). In the final stages of the Korean War the Americans had a serious opportunity to use their weapons, albeit they decided not to. Not long after that, during the Suez crisis, the USSR's threat of a nuclear attack worked wonders in forcing the participants to negotiate.

In the midst of general armament and military tension, the USA and the USSR were also intent on improving their respective strategic positions. At the beginning of 1950s, with the enlargement of its Army bases, the rearming of Japan and the FRG, and with the establishment of further regional, defensive alliances such as ANZUS, and CENTO, the USA tried to surround Moscow and the countries of the Soviet bloc. Meanwhile, the USSR not developed its military force considerably and built up its own federal system, known as the Warsaw Pact. With the establishment of neutral zones it also strove to loosen the grip of the Americans⁵. This kind of Soviet policy made many important political developments possible, including Finland's neutralization in 1952, the signing of the Austrian treaty in 1955, and even Vjacseszlav Mihajlovics Molotov's suggestion in 1952 to establish a uniform and neutral Germany. The latter arose from the Soviet belief that a neutral and militarily weak Germany could theoretically have been a useful buffer state between the forces of the two superpowers. Yet, the original form of Molotov's plan would have obviously given greater advantage to the Soviets than to the Western powers, and as such was summarily dropped, even though the plan was reasonably popular in the Foreign Office of the FRG⁶. At the same time, the Soviets rejected the withdrawal of troops from the territory of the GDR. Karl Georg Pfleiderer had hoped⁷ that this would bring about separation of troops and that "German question" could be solved by its unification, yet this was not to be.

The idea proposed in 1953 by Belgian Secretary of State, Paul van Zeeland, was more realistic. According to his suggestion, the American and British troops would move from the occupied German territories into France and onto the territory of the Benelux countries, while the Soviet military forces would be stationed from the Vistula to the east. According to the plan, the multinational teams of the European Defence Community (EDC) would occupy the united German territories, from the Oder to the west, and the territories between the Oder and Vistula would be held exclusively by Polish troops. In exchange for this, the united Germany would have acknowledged the Oder-Neisse boundary⁸. This proposal granted mutual advantages and might have been favoured in Bonn over the previous ideas – which would have granted advantages for only one of the sides. Nevertheless, it was not acceptable to the Soviets. After all, the EDC – which failed anyway because of French resistance – would have actually meant the teams of NATO's member states. The Bonn plan, continuing to develop the Belgian suggestion, would have disarmed the territory between the Oder and the Vistula; moreover it would have included Czechoslovakian and Austrian, and even (according to certain versions) Yugoslavian and Italian territories. In the end, the proposal was deemed irresponsible not only by the Soviets, but also by the Chancellor of the FRG, Konrad Adenauer, who considered the FRG's NATO membership and continental integration more important than such an uncertain endeavour.

Ultimately, high-level diplomatic talks between the two parties only started at the Geneva negotiations in 1955. Albeit they did not lead to concrete results, the very act of discussing these problems bore serious lessons for both sides. It became evident that both sides were aware of the threat of mutual annihilation should a nuclear war break out, and that to fight one was in neither of their interests. Another important

⁴ LABOOR: p. 7.

⁵ FISCHER: pp. 169-173.

⁶ There was a substantial difference between the territorial and economical potential of the FRG and the GDR in favour of the FRG, so the USSR would have gained considerable advantages by the withdrawal.

⁷ AdR 01 Pol-II BRD/424. 1957/218389. Vollgruber, the Austrian Ambassador to Paris, in his confidential report dated on 25th March 1957, writes about his discussions with French diplomats, in which they complained that the „Austrian solution” is very popular among their German colleagues.

⁸ PFLEIDERER: p. 83.

⁸ LABOOR: p. 9.

lesson for the western powers came in learning of the power struggle going on at the time, following the death of Stalin. In practice, this meant that the Party leadership was taking a more conciliatory approach in order to reduce, international tension; the signing of the Austrian treaty and the execution of the timetable justified occupation of Austria suggested to the West that an agreement could be made with the Soviets. On this basis, the British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden came forward with his proposal again. According to him, the German question could be solved as following: the GDR would go under the supremacy of the FRG; at the same time a pact on comprehensive limitation of armaments would put an end to the arms drive, and an international pact would define the maximum size of the military forces of Germany and its neighbouring states. Furthermore, a mutual control system would insure⁹ the effectiveness of the pact. The Eden plan demonstrated that mutual concessions and paying heed to the interests of the opposition had become accepted in western realpolitik. Nevertheless, this idea also failed in that due to the contemporary atmosphere of suspicion and animosity. In light of their experiences during the last decade, Western leaders did not believe the Soviets, based on an international agreement, would indeed withdraw their troops from the German territories. Adenauer soon drove Eden's proposal into the direction of the previous Bonn plan, which was certainly unacceptable for the Soviets. However, at the Secretary of State conference held on 31st October 1955, Molotov seemingly accepted Eden's idea and agreed that the size of military forces stationed in the GDR, FRG, and in the neighbouring states, as well as the principal of the mutual control, should be defined in a four-power agreement. Yet, in their suggestion the Soviets had failed to include or endorse any plans to unify Germany under Bonn's control, leaving it a one-sided and therefore unacceptable proposition from the West's point of view. At this point it should be noted that the background for the Soviet's new diplomatic approach, which was quite flexible compared to the previous years' dogmatic one, stood the Soviet reversal of political leadership and policy: for instance, Stalin's and Zhdanov's thesis on the inevitability of the World War was no longer infallible¹⁰ after February 1955. In addition, in February 1956, at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Khrushchev officially announced their newly adopted policy of peaceful coexistence. His words were taken seriously by Western diplomats, who after deep consideration gave back the Porkkala naval base to Finland, and the harbour of Port Arthur¹¹ to China, as a show of good will and support for the new attitude of the USSR.

This global reversal of Soviet diplomacy was deeply influenced by the fact that the rapidly growing arms race had become a big burden for the USSR and its allies. Also, the Russians had to face the serious increase of forces standing against them: in 1954 with the Paris Agreements the restoration of the FRG's sovereignty was completed, and in May 1955 it became a fully qualified member of the NATO. The progressive rearmament of the formerly great German power had remarkably changed the military situation in the area of conventional warfare in Europe. In addition, in December 1955, the NATO Council decided that it would provide its member states with a set of instruments suitable for carrying tactical nuclear weapons. The prospect of the FRG having an effective nuclear arsenal became a real and immediate danger for Moscow – one which they would go to great lengths to remove. The Soviets were not the only ones made nervous by the idea of Germany becoming a nuclear power: even 10 years after Nazi Germany had been defeated, neither the French, nor the British were too enthusiastic about the idea. It is no great surprise that the Soviet diplomatic circle spent most of its energy attacking the FRG when the session of the Political Advisory's Commission of the Warsaw Pact was held on January 28, 1956. For obvious reasons, one of the main issues during this summit was the question of creating a special sector, or buffer-zone, between the West and the East. And so, the following decision was made: the military forces of the two German states and their ally states must be seriously restricted, and all nuclear weapons within East and West Germany should be frozen. This was effectively the first concrete suggestion on establishing a nuclear free zone in Europe. Andrej Gromiko, the Deputy Foreign Minister outlined the plan as a Soviet suggestion during the session of the Committee on Disarmament of the United Nations

¹⁰ LABOOR: pp. 10-11.

¹¹ LABOOR: p. 11.

¹² MOL XIX-J-1-j-Szovjetunió-100t-002923/1957 The proclamation of the Soviet government about dismantling and about the lessening of international tension was sent to Budapest in a strictly confidential report on 10th June 1957 by the Hungarian Embassy of Moscow.

¹³ LABOOR: p. 12.

Organisation held in London, on March 27, 1956¹². The Soviet diplomatic corps was aware of the fact that NATO would not accept a plan that would give the USSR an advantage, and in order to prove their trustworthiness, they announced the unilateral reduction of their military forces.

However, the Soviet policy of detente broke down. When revolution broke out in Hungary in October, 1956, it was brutally stamped out by the Soviet army in order to discourage dissent. Later, at the time of the British-French-Israeli action against Egypt the Soviet leadership threatened to use nuclear weapons to end the conflict. The end of the temporary detente ended when it became evident that nothing could stop the rearmament of the FRG on the field of conventional weapons. An added concern surface when, in 1957, The United States President agreed to Bonn's request to have tactical nuclear weapons stationed on West German soil¹³. In the same year, the British H-bomb was developed, and the USA and UK equipping rockets with these devastating warheads. Then, in the summer of 1957, the Soviets successfully tested their first intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and two days after the Rapacki speech the first Soviet satellite, Sputnik, entered the Earth's orbit, paving the way for an entirely new type of warfare. Indeed, the entire strategic board shifted, as the USSR now had it within its power to launch an effective nuclear strike against the American continent without the need for forward bases¹⁴.

Paradoxically, despite the ongoing talks about disarmament and dismantling, nuclear war seemed nearer and more devastating in 1957 than it ever had. During this period of general arms-craze, more and more interest groups spoke out against the new threat of the Atomic Age and the nuclear arms race; on April 12, 1957 the leading nuclear scientists accepted the Göttingen proclamation addressed against nuclear arms and on April 23, Albert Schweitzer asked in his famous speech the cessation of arms production and experimental detonations¹⁵. Of course, the power politics of the times could not initially take into consideration what was regarded as unreal idealism. However, after some time, these ideas influenced public opinion in the West, and in order to win elections politicians could not ignore the voter's opinion. For entire decades, they were forced to carry on negotiations about dismantling and the limitation of nuclear weapons with the Soviets, while the number of the nuclear weapons kept growing steadily until the end of the cold war. Many proposals came forward and quickly fell apart, such as that of Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, which appeared on several occasions, mainly for the benefit of an anxious public, and outlined plans to disband the Warsaw Treaty and establish a neutral zone from Finland to Switzerland, while maintaining NATO as a functional alliance¹⁶. Another such proposal was made by the British Labourite, Hugh Gaitskell dealing with the formation of a neutral and unified Germany, and with the political neutralization of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria. However, in view of the aforementioned atmosphere of anxiety, suspicion, and competition, these ideas lacked realism and pragmatism¹⁷. In this respect, Rapacki Plan was the first proposal concerning the limitation of arms that received not only public attention and interest in both the East and West, but was also seriously addressed during diplomatic negotiations.

Background of the Rapacki Plan's Diplomatic Welcome

¹⁴ These atomic weapons of course – just like the newly set up military force of the FRG – were under the NATO command, meaning that the FRG had not in effect become a nuclear power. Nobody doubted that Bonn was technologically capable of manufacturing its own nuclear weapons. Already at the very beginning, many states would have liked to prevent it, especially the USSR, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

¹⁵ FISCHER: pp. 175-177.

¹⁶ The USSR was gloated as it witnessed this process in the Western states, since communist states did not believe in social freedom, and did not have to count on similar resistance. Nevertheless, in the countries of the Soviet bloc, the communist parties organized peace movements for their own reasons. The crushing of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 had all but ruined the Russians' reputation, and supporting such initiatives was one attempt at repairing its reputation in the circles of Western left-wing sympathizers, as well as providing an outlet for anti-nuclear sentiment. FISCHER: p. 177.

¹⁷ LABOOR: p. 12. The reason of this amazingly naive idea was that the Warsaw Pact was seen as an 'offensive' alliance, apparently based on a spirit of aggression, and that disbanding it would supposedly strengthen universal peace. On the other hand, NATO is a primarily *defensive* alliance, and therefore does not endanger peace in any way.

¹⁷ LABOOR: p. 14.

The Rapacki Plan quickly became the object of intense and secret diplomatic negotiations, because every state actively participating in the contemporary system of international relations found something in the idea that would further their own interests. It was difficult to find anything objectionable in it, as the suggestion offered almost the same advantages for both sides:

- In contrast to the previous ideas, with the addition of Czechoslovakia, the territories intended to join the nuclear free zone represented an equal contribution in area from both sides of the Iron Curtain; according to Warsaw, there was no relevant difference considering the economic capacity, either;
- In the plan the presence of troops with conventional weapons was not touched i.e. nobody had to withdraw from a single square centimetre territory;
- the suggestion did not deal with the German question directly – it did not touch the occupation sectors and left the question of Berlin alone, but would nevertheless reduce the tension around the German question by preventing the FRG from acquiring atomic weapons;
- the Great Powers had to take into consideration the fact that the proposal had been made to the entire UNO General Assembly where it received publicity and became relatively popular even in the circle of non-committed states.

Based on all these factors it can be concluded that the Rapacki Plan was good for arousing attention. However, there were various reasons why some countries dealt with it more than others did:

- the USSR and the countries of the Eastern Bloc believed the Polish proposal capable of preventing FRG's military force from acquiring nuclear weapons, and found this worth the price of not being able to place their own warheads on GDR, Polish or Czechoslovakian soil. It would have been unnecessary in any event, since the advent of the ICBM had made distance all but irrelevant.
- The government of the FRG knew very well that Germany's rearmament was at stake, especially the opportunity to gain a nuclear arsenal. From their point of view, the consequences of the Polish plan would result in the withdrawal of American troops and the most serious crisis NATO had ever seen. The FRG had the Cold War to thank for its quick rehabilitation, the recovery of its sovereignty, and its remilitarization after its defeat in the Second World War. For this reason, it did not really have much interest in arranging a relationship that would preserve the Oder-Neisse boundary and the two separate German states. For this reason - as we will see - Adenauer soon connected the negotiations related to the Rapacki Plan with the notorious question of the two German states – a quagmire of conflicting interests in every previous proposal of this nature had so far sank.
- As a member of NATO, the United Kingdom and France assisted the integration of the FRG and German rearmament; however the prospect of a German atomic arsenal – after Charles de Gaulle gained power - was not really welcomed¹⁸. As the USA had been the ones assisting in the placement of nuclear weapons on German soil, they could not make a public issue out of it, since they had a vested interest in having American troops stationed in Europe. The Rapacki Plan offered an opportunity to prevent this in a way that cost nothing for the British or the French. Even so, the Quai d'Orsay later rejected the plan, considering French-German relations more important than the prevention of German nuclear weapons¹⁹.
- The USA considered the Rapacki Plan, which had been proposed by the Polish, as a Soviet idea and rejected it immediately on principle. However, this standpoint soon dissolved, when American analysts expressed their opinion of the initiative as an independent Polish idea. They believed that there may have been disagreements within the Warsaw Pact in the background. This opportunity led to some serious brainstorming by the analysts of the State Department, since they did not have any real proof to support this claim. Furthermore, as we will soon see, even after 50 years the work of the researcher is still not

¹⁸ AdR 01 POL-II BRD/482. 1958/55235. Report of the Austrian Ambassador of Paris, Rotter dated July 19, 1958 regarded as strictly confidential.

¹⁹ AdR 01 POL-II Polen/513. 1958/544499. The Austrian Ambassador of Paris, Vollgruber, in his strictly confidential letter of 19th February 1958, he reported on the conversation with the leaders of the political department of Quai d'Orsay. According to Vollgruber's report, he was interested in Paris's opinion about the completed Rapacki Plan. M. Daridan stated that their negative attitude had not changed because the perspective goal of the whole proposal is the neutralization of Germany, the sending home of the American troops and on a final row the disbanding of NATO, which is opposite the French objectives. „Considering Poland we declared that the proposal is being examined thoroughly but it was and it is unenforceable.”- said the French diplomat.

easy. What we can be sure of is that during 1956-57, the US State Department paid to Poland²⁰, because they believed that the Polish could be separated from the Soviet federal system. This was possibly the reason for the financial aid for Warsaw²¹ from the states in the late 1950s – needless to say, this caused strong Soviet disapproval²².

An independent Polish initiative or a proposal co-authored with the Soviets?

It is generally agreed that the Soviet Federal System operated under the strict direction of the Kremlin. We can state with great certainty that the member states of the Warsaw Pact did not have anything resembling independent foreign policy, especially not those countries living under Soviet occupation – a good example of this is the suppression of the Hungarian revolution in 1956, and of course, it was openly declared in the Brezhnev Doctrine in 1968. The question is really the following: in these delicate years, did the Polish diplomatic corps really have the opportunity for an independent initiative such as the Rapacki Plan or not, and if so, did they grasp it? The ever-determined Kremlin, in the Stalinist period was changing too: in January 1956, in a letter written by Molotov before the session of the Warsaw Pact in Prague he told the governments of the Member States that besides preserving the unity, which is an external question, independent initiative from each country must be encouraged, and from the USSR's part, he promised more information and consultation. Wladyslaw Gomulka, the new first Polish Secretary, was balancing on a razorblade in 1957. On one hand, Khrushchev's program to clean up the mess left by Stalinism was clear for him. This program wrought deep changes in the relationship of the allies after the XX. Congress of the CPSU, like the statement about the equal relationship with the allies made by the Soviet Government on October 30th, 1956, and the promise that in the future the USSR would keep in mind the history and the national character of each ally country. On the other hand, some days after this statement, the USSR crushed the Hungarian revolution when dissenting Hungarians demanded the withdrawal of Soviet troops, and intended to become a neutral state.

Based on what was found in the given diplomatic sources, one might think that Gomulka's announcement of this new policy at the VII. Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (October 1956) was an attempt to extend his margins against Moscow. If we take this view, it follows that there was possibility and room for such individualism within Soviet diplomacy at the time²³. Among the member states of the Warsaw Pact, the Polish Foreign Ministry led by Rapacki, who took up his post in October 1956, was the first one to arrange their relationships with France, the United States of America, Italy, the Benelux-states, and the Scandinavian states. The USA was declaredly open to the Polish initiative: on one hand they believed that Poland is detachable from the federal system of the Kremlin, on the other hand the presidential administration wanted to gain²⁴ the sympathy – and the vote – of the million Polish living in America. Remember, if you will, the position of George Kennan, who had

²⁰ AdR 01 POL-II Polen/452. 1957/221523. In his letter of June 4, 1957, Verosta, the Austrian Ambassador to Warsaw, gave a detailed account on the changes occurred in Polish-American relationship and on the negotiations related to American loans.

²¹ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-48t-00694/1961 Ambassador Dezső Szilágyi in his top secret report of 10th January 1961 analyses the Polish-American relationship. According to his data, since Douglas Dillon announced the economic assistance of Poland at the American Poles Congress in Chicago on October 2nd, 1956, Warsaw had received \$426.3 million in aid altogether, 85% of which was for buying agricultural products. By 1961 Poland had received the most-favoured-nation clause, they had been accepted into the GATT and they addressed the issues regarding rights of ownership that had arisen during and after the Second World War.

²² MOL XIX-J-1-j-USA-47t-002388/1957. The Hungarian Embassy in Washington sent a top secret letter of on the 4th of May, 1957, giving a summary of American foreign policy in the year 1956.

²³ AdR 01 POL-II Polen/513. 1958/546268. The Austrian Deputy Ambassador to Warsaw, Liedermann, in his letter of 21st February 1958, expressed his belief that the Rapacki Plan has been the first independent proposal since the Second World War ended.

²⁴ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-48t-0096/1/1958 The Hungarian Ambassador János Katona sent a top secret letter from Warsaw to Budapest on 25th March 1958 in which he mentions the question of Soviet-Polish tension, as well as the intention of the „west imperialist circles” to tear Poland from the socialist camp. The document points out that the most disturbing question for Moscow during 1957, when their relationship was improving, was the unwillingness of the Polish leadership to „submit to the leading role of the USSR which was adopted by the rest of the friendly states.” He also mentions that the cause of this is tactical in the first place, namely the Polish inhabitants are very nationalist. The analysis mentions that in order to increase its strength on the playing field, Warsaw had strengthened its relationship with China and Yugoslavia.

already suggested in 1952 that the USA should accept Molotov's proposal about the unified but neutral Germany. With this the legal ground to station Soviet troops on German soil would end, and it would mean their withdrawal from the Poland as well²⁵.

It is, of course, a valid question whether Gomulka and the Polish leadership wished the Soviets' withdrawal. One can presume that it would not have been regretted if Soviet troops were not stationed on Polish territory, and if their country was not surrounded by pro-Soviet states²⁶. They were not able to embrace this wish openly – especially considering the example that was made of the Hungarians in 1956 – because this would have certainly meant political suicide. Let us not forget that, despite whatever reservations the Polish might have had, the Soviet battalions did provide protection against the potential military aggression of the FRG. It was, unfortunately, within the interests of the Poles to accommodate Soviet troops at least until the German question had been solved; we could even say that a viable solution to the German issue was considered the prerequisite for Soviet withdrawal from Poland²⁷.

Even if the withdrawal of Soviet forces did not become a reality, we can be sure, based on the sources, that the leaders of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs led by Rapacki, believed in traditional Polish national politics²⁸. From the point of view of the Polish nation, dangerous clouds were gathering on the horizon in 1957. The remilitarizing FRG, which might in a few years have nuclear weapons at their disposal, and stubbornly refused to acknowledge the GDR and the Oder-Neisse boundary, was a serious threat for Warsaw. The Poles felt more and threatened each day, in fact, because Bonn was not willing to readdress and stabilize its relationships, and what is more they refused to start a diplomatic relationship²⁹ on the basis of the Holstein Doctrine. What really frightened the Poles were the actions of Khrushchev, in his attempts to displace the German question from the deadlock. Although it does not seem likely that Moscow would indeed have considered such plans, there were reports from various diplomats suggesting that, in the spirit of Molotov's suggestion made in 1952, the FRG and the USSR would reach a settlement, and in compensation the united Germany would receive territories from the Oder-Neisse line

²⁵ AdR 01 POL-II Politische Berichte/528D. 1958/2-Pol-58. The Austrian Ambassador to Warsaw, Verosta in his report of January 9th 1958 (confidentiality unknown), pointed out that Kennan's radio talks held in London in December declaredly harmed the Soviet's welcoming of the Rapacki Plan because in his speech he explained his thoughts above mentioned. Thus, he paid the Kremlin's attention on the hidden perils of the Polish proposal.

²⁶ AdR 01 POL-II Polen/452. 1957/225522. The Austrian Ambassador to Warsaw, Verosta in his report of September 28th 1958 (confidentiality unknown) analyses that from Polish viewpoint the value of the Baltic Sea had significantly raised lately being the single opened boundary of the country.

²⁷ AdR 01 POL-II Politische Berichte/428D. 1958/1-Pol-58. The Austrian Ambassador of Warsaw, Verosta in his report of 7th January 1958 (confidentiality unknown) emphasized that the goal of Gomulka is the withdrawal of the Soviet troops with the help of the Polish national interest. Nevertheless, it is only possible if the German question is solved and the international tension – at least in the region - ends.

²⁸ AdR 01 POL-II Polen/646. 1960/72923. The Austrian Ambassador of Warsaw, Verosta in his report of 11th February 1960, gives a detailed biography of the leaders of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs; since, from October 1956 to 1968 the Management of Foreign Affairs was constant, we shall focus our attention on a few interesting things. The source pointed out that Rapacki was born in a lower noble family in 1909 in Lemberg, but his father already had a part in the labour movement. Rapacki fell into German captivity in the war, but managed to escape into Italy. From 1945 he was an active member of the Polish Socialist Party, and later participated in the establishment of the Polish United Workers' Party in 1948. In the period of Stalinism, he was Minister of Education, and from autumn 1956 he is clearly Gomulka's man. The deputy Foreign Minister, Marian Naskowski was 50 years old, also born in Lemberg, a socialist politician of Jewish descent, he got the rank of general while fighting in the Polish army on the Soviets' side. In 1944 he was the first Ambassador from Moscow to Poland, until 1956 he was considered as a Stalinist but he moved to Gomulka's side just in time to retain his position and reputation. Jósef Winiewicz, the second deputy Foreign Minister, also age 50, was born in Posen and before the war he was the editor of a nationalist newspaper. During the war he lived in London for some time, but disconnected his relationships with the government in exile in time to become the Ambassador of Poland to Washington from 1946 to 1954. It is interesting that he was not a party member as a deputy foreign minister either, however he frequently referred to himself with the expression „we old nationalists”. He and Naskowski did not like each other, but he was in Rapacki's confidence on the first place. Przemyslaw Ogrodzinski, the Head of Department, 44 years old, born in Lemberg, he was a real careerist within the party, who stood only onto Gomulka's side in October 1956. He was not far removed from Polish nationalism's sphere of interest. The Austrian Ambassador considered him the instigator of the Rapacki Plan, he was one of the brain trusts of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Maria Wierna, the Head of Department, age 44, an old communist activist of Jewish descent, one of the high-ranking leaders of the resistance, a real Stalinist, who accepted Gomulka's takeover only after a proverbial whipping. The source points out something interesting about this individual: Mrs. Wierna, one of dominant personalities of the old Jewish communists, took exclusive control of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1944 and she could only keep her seat in 1956 in order to represent continuity during the Soviet mopping-up.

²⁹ FISCHER: p. 159.

to the east from Poland³⁰. This threat was strengthened by Adenauer's visit to Moscow in September 1955 and with the emergence of a diplomatic relationship between the FRG and the USSR. Even if, with the benefit of hindsight, we regard this information as mere alarming rumours, we must not forget that, in those days, the Polish generation of politicians had been alive when Berlin and Moscow divided Poland into parts in 1939. It is neither coincidence nor surprise that, upon hearing such news, Gomulka and Rapacki took a stand next to the independent and active Polish foreign policy. However, it could easily mean danger for them. Czechoslovakia was also clearly a good ally in this case, as Prague was afraid of losing the Sudet territory. The two countries carefully harmonised their steps in the foreign policy³¹. It is a fact that the Polish government had consulted not just with Prague, but the member states of the Warsaw Pact before its idea was launched. At the end of September 1957, they did the same with Hungary³². Most of the allies of Warsaw backed the initiative and helped hold the proposal on political program. Even the tension³³ started after October 1956 between Poland and West Germany disappeared: on 11th December 1957, President Otto Grotewohl's communiqué was accepted. It consisted of four points which were synchronized with the Rapacki Plan. On 28th January 1958 in his radio speech in both German states he proposed a referendum about the joining the nuclear-free zone³⁴. But Bonn refused it so nothing happened.

Additionally, there was a question as to whether the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs had incorporated Soviet ideas into the Rapacki Plan. It can be assumed that negotiations took place, but it is not clear if they had agreed on the date of the publication. If it had been a harmonised date, Moscow would certainly not have timed it two days before the Sputnik launch on October 4, and the Polish would have found a better date. As it was, the centre of the international focus became the Soviet satellite. This was another reason why the USSR only voiced its support next to the Rapacki Plan in December. After all, any declarations related to disarmament would have been strange. In the course of October, Moscow put vociferous emphasis on their technical superiority in the field of rocketry and space research, causing the Sputnik shock in the western world³⁵. On the eve of the 40th anniversary of the 1917 revolution, it was obviously far more telling to speak about the victory than about the dismantling. In case of a harmonised Polish-Soviet viewpoint, it is possible that Gromiko would not have talked solely about the necessity of reducing the conventional armaments in his speech on the 21st of September, at the UNO General Assembly³⁶. The date was most likely decided by Warsaw, and the reason for choosing October was definitely the winning of Adenauer on the election in September 1957. This caused disquiet in Warsaw as the chancellor had already promised activity³⁷ in the campaign, which was bad for the country³⁸.

In light of the above, let us examine what advantages Warsaw would have had in the event that the proposal had been realized:

³⁰ AdR 01 POL-II BRD/482. 1958/557631. The Austrian Ambassador, Verosta was clearly talking about such pieces of information in his report of 2nd December 1958. There were talks about the handing-over of Stettin and Lower-Silesia to the GDR in the Soviet-Polish negotiations. In return, Poland would receive Grodno and perhaps the territory around Tarnopol. After the territorial reordering, they would conclude with a German peace-treaty.

³¹ AdR 01 POL-II BRD/424. 1957/224171. The Austrian Ambassador of Prague, Dr. Wilhelm-Heininger, confidentially wrote about the institutionalised Polish-Czechoslovakian negotiations in his report on September 5th, 1957.

³² MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-98t-004333/1957 On September 25, 1957, Deputy Foreign Minister István Sebes informed the first Vice-Chairman of the Hungarian government, Ferenc Münnich, about a Polish idea outlined for him by the Polish Ambassador in Budapest in a top secret document on 21st September. He asked about the official attitude of the Hungarian government in regard to this. He also indicated that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports the Polish launching in harmony with the USSR. It is evident from the document that the proposal was already known in diplomatic circles before its launching on 2nd October.

³³ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-48t-0096/1/1958 The Ambassador in Warsaw, János Katona, touches the Polish-East German question of tension in his top secret report sent to Budapest on 25th March 1958, although its improvement was his responsibility in the first place.

³⁴ LABOOR: p. 22.

³⁵ FISCHER: p. 176.

³⁶ AdR 01 POL-II UN/463. 1957/547974. The aforementioned source contains the speech of Gromiko in German translation.

³⁷ AdR 01 POL-II BRD/424. 1957/225513. The Austrian Ambassador of Bonn, Rotter in his report of 8th October 1957, (confidentiality unknown), he was dealing with the eastern policy of FRG that is expected to become active. Important element of it would have been the establishment of unofficial diplomatic relations for example with Warsaw, nevertheless without the acknowledgment of the Oder-Neisse boundary and the GDR, which was obviously unacceptable for Warsaw.

³⁸ AdR 01 POL-II BRD/424. 1957/216309. Declared by Austrian Ambassador to Bonn, Mr. Rotter, in his report of 18th October 1957, when he confidentially and thoroughly analysed the results and the consequences of the elections.

- without nuclear weapons, the military threat of the FRG would have decreased significantly, which would have helped to stabilize the relationship between Bonn and Warsaw, as well as the relationship between Bonn and Prague, an important element of which would have been the acknowledgement of the Oder-Neisse border,
- with the disarmament of the FRG, the tension concerning the German question would have lessened which would have helped the agreement and – with relevance to Polish interests – the stabilization of relations between the two German states,
- if the opposition among the superpowers had decreased, or if it had ended in the German question, there would have been no need for the occupation of the GDR by the Soviets (i.e. the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Poland would have also been possible³⁹),
- the plan would have prevented the FRG from developing or storing nuclear weapons on its territory, which in turn would circumvent the location of further Soviet troops – possibly also equipped with nuclear weapons - into the territory of Poland⁴⁰ or the GDR, which would have geared up the influence of the Kremlin on these countries.

Regardless of the long-term outcome of the plan, it could have granted favourable possibilities for Warsaw in the short term.⁴¹ For example, it helped to form the image of an independent Poland, and to establish a general favourable and respectable reputation for Poland. It also helped to establish stronger relationships with the various non-aligned movements and with the neutral states, as well as their relationship with the western social-democrats who had assisted disarmament.

The fact that the Rapacki Plan was familiarized with the Kremlin just shortly before its first announcement does not mean that it did not fit into the row of the proposals released by the USSR by the end of 1957. In terms of Moscow's goal of possessing temporary technical superiority, further bans on nuclear tests were instilled. In addition, it urged the mutual abandonment of nuclear weapons usage. On account of this, the Kremlin manifested its consistent desire to organise an international summit conference, on which they would have liked to negotiate general disarmament with the United States in the first place. The disarmament was also backed by various international peace movements, which were, in turn, supported by the USSR⁴². Subsequently, Soviet Prime Minister Bulganin released his annex on December 10th, 1957, in which he aligned himself with the Rapacki proposal, after the first waves of shock of the Sputnik launching. Bulganin affirmed this in a letter to the American President, also suggesting another summit conference, with one of the agendas being the creation of a denuclearised zone⁴³ (February 2, 1958).

The second edition of the Rapacki Plan

Western media had an important role in making the Polish suggestion public and well known in the next two months after the Rapacki Speech. Rapacki himself received more publicity in the months following the speech than he had expected. *Le Monde*, *Die Welt*, *The Times*, *Der Spiegel* all dealt with his plan⁴⁴. The telephones rang continuously in Warsaw, and the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs was asked for interviews and his position on this question.

³⁹ AdR 01 POL-II Polen/513. 1958/546362. On March 7, 1958, Vienna informed its embassy in Moscow and Warsaw that the goal of the Rapacki Plan is the settling of the German question and to force the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland. For this reason, Warsaw were in fact grateful for the many rejections that the Plan received from the Western powers, since this would calm the Soviets and let their attention wander elsewhere; in the long-term, however, the Polish government counted very much on the West's eventual acceptance of the proposal.

⁴⁰ MASTNY: p. 51.

⁴¹ ROYEN: p. 221.

⁴² MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-98t-002288/1958 The Rapacki Plan was analysed by the 2nd Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary. Gyula Németh, the Secretary of Embassy who wrote the analysis pointed out as merits of the Polish suggestion that, first of all, it confused the Western government circles before the Parisian term of the NATO, secondly, it gave concrete objectives to the international peace movement, and thirdly, that it was a viable basis for international negotiations. At the same time he pointed out that it was dangerous for Polish society, because it might have increased „the worship of the West”.

⁴³ AdR 01 POL-II Polen/513. 1958/546268. Liedermann, the Austrian Ambassador's Deputy in Warsaw, in his report of February 21st, 1958 (confidentiality level unknown), talks about the supposed Russian activity related to the Rapacki Plan.

⁴⁴ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-5d-00780/1958 Poland. The Hungarian Ambassador, János Katona's strictly confidential report from Warsaw.

The politicians and diplomats' opinions were more moderate and critical, and both Warsaw and Moscow were reproached particularly for the roughness and the sketchiness of the concept, especially that part which dealt with mutual supervision. Paul Henri Spaak, Secretary General of NATO raised the issue of Central Europe's freedom from nuclear weapons, claiming that the idea of a denuclearised zone was militarily useless, since contemporary rocket technology had significantly increased the effective range of nuclear missiles⁴⁵. The President of the United States of America, in his answer written to Bulganin on January 12th 1958, rejected the idea of a nuclear-free zone, because he did not find it an effective way to ease international tension. At the same time he indicated that he would investigate the question more thoroughly with his government's allies⁴⁶. Chancellor Adenauer, in his answer written to Bulganin on January 20th, stated that it was unimportant from the point of view of the Federal Republic of Germany where the nuclear weapons were stored, as well as agreeing with Spaak that the nuclear free zone would be pointless from a strategic point of view. According to him, the most important question would be the total prohibition of nuclear weapons production⁴⁷. The French minister of Foreign Affairs, Christian Pineau, in his answer written to Gromiko on February 13th, insisted on arranging a summit on Germany's reunion, which was also suggested by the Soviet Union. According to him, the Rapacki Plan would be an item on the agenda of that meeting. Consequently, summarising the reaction of NATO's leader states we can conclude the following: The first version of the Rapacki Plan was either completely refused, or was subject to such conditions and demands that either could not have been met under the circumstances of the cold war or were themselves among the causes of the cold war, such as the German question⁴⁸.

Naturally, there were countries that insisted on debating the Rapacki Plan thoroughly, such as Sweden, Norway and Denmark. After internal deliberations, the British labour party also took sides with the plan along with many other European states' leftist parties.

As the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Rapacki himself put it down as a definite success that the suggestion had evoked such a strong reaction, they decided to elaborate the suggestion. At this time, an independent Polish initiation was out of question. There was a secret reconciliation among the member states of Warsaw Pact between 9-10th January 1958, and in the course of this meeting, the member states synchronized their steps in accordance with primarily the soviet ideas. A secret Khrushchev-Gomulka negotiation was also organised⁴⁹. On February 2nd 1958, Rapacki and Gromiko held talks as well, finalizing the specific contents of the plan subject to disclosure. Among others they came to the decision that the Rapacki Plan was an important part of the Soviet suggestions on general disarmament, and that these various suggestions should be treated as a unit instead of separately. As a result of these Soviet steps and policies, the previously simple and practical Rapacki had quickly come to resemble its cumbersome and controversial forerunners. It was no coincidence, of course, that the Soviet Union suggested the idea of a North-European denuclearised zone right after this. Some time later, the Soviet Union also mentioned similar plans in connection with the Near-East, but these various schemes never bore fruit⁵⁰. In any event, Rapacki soon found that the "mutual agreement" of the Warsaw Pact's member states had left his hands tied in phrasing the second version of the Plan.

⁴⁵ LABOOR: p. 23.

⁴⁶ LABOOR: p. 24.

⁴⁷ It is worth pointing out that Adenauer's reasoning was in accordance with the Federal Republic of Germany's interests. They were not willing to give up the nuclear weapons installed in their territory. As the country nuclear weapons of its own, it would be willing to back up the general prohibition of nuclear arms, which would of course be rejected by both Moscow and Washington; hence. Everything would remain as it was.

⁴⁸ AdR 01 POL-II Polen/513. 1958/545732. Waldheim, the Austrian Ambassador in Ottawa, pronounced in his strictly confidential bulletin, written February 12th 1958, that according to diplomatic sources the Polish suggestion would be deleted from the agenda because of the Western powers' rejection, primarily Washington, Rome, Bonn, Paris, in the face of Warsaw's efforts. According to Waldheim, Washington did not dedicate enough effort to handling the question at all, which was taken by Ottawa with great regret.

⁴⁹ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-5d-00780/1958 Ambassador János Katona's strictly confidential report from Warsaw. AdR 01 POL II. Polen/513. 1958/547497. With some delay, Austrian Ambassador Verosta also gave a summary of these Soviet-Polish negotiations in his report written on 28th March 1958 (confidentiality unknown). He regards it as a Polish success that they could temporarily prevent soviet nuclear weapons from being installed in Poland by having the Rapacki Plan made public. Nevertheless, they had to clear everything with Moscow from then on.

⁵⁰ The latter two Soviet suggestions were made with the sole purpose of diminishing the Rapacki Plan's significance. According to other judgements these two plans were only messages addressed to the states concerned and to international public.

At the same time, in an interesting development, Khrushchev made a slightly surprising statement on January 31st 1958, claiming that the Rapacki Plan is only the first step. After its successful execution, assuming that mutual control was successfully implemented, it could be followed by the next steps of disarmament, including the mutual withdrawal of foreign military forces stationed on the invaded territories of the time. Paradoxically, even though we can assume that Khrushchev did not truly mean it, it was his opinion and Kennan's radio speeches in London that influenced Western analysts the most regarding the possibilities hidden in the Rapacki Plan.

The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave the second version – attached in Appendix II – to the diplomatic representatives of those countries connected with it, on 14th February 1958. This version was made public on radio on the 18th of February⁵¹. Besides keeping the content of the first version, this version was much more elaborate. It specified that it would be prohibited for the states included in the zone to produce, possess or use nuclear weapons for their own purposes, or to station these on their territories. Moreover, the great powers of the world would accept the obligation not to station either nuclear weapons or their facilities and delivery vehicles, in these zones, and that they would not supply any organization of the denuclearized states with such devices⁵². As can be read in the Appendix, the Memorandum had already dealt with the question of control, suggesting the establishment of special control bodies.⁵³ These would have offered posts for not only the representatives of the two military alliances, but also for the representatives of states not concerned, as independent observers. Not recognizing each other the FRG and the GDR would not sign an international agreement with each other. Hence, in order to make it easier for the two German states to participate, the denuclearized zone would have been created not only by international agreement, but by the separate declarations of the individual states as well.

The Reception of the Second Version

In the following weeks after the document had been made public, the Rapacki Plan came to the forefront of the international diplomacy's attention. The archive sources of Vienna and Budapest also show that nearly every capital city was engaged in the matter. The Soviet government made a statement on February 19th, declaring their support of the Rapacki Plan⁵⁴. The GDR did the same on 28th February 1958, later followed by the members of the Warsaw Pact. After some negotiation, however, the governments of NATO members, one after the other, refused the creation of the denuclearized zone. Their most important qualm was that its creation would result in a disproportionate advantage for the Warsaw Pact, since Western Europe would become defenceless against the USSR with its superiority in traditional armament. Italy also objected on the grounds that the states of the zone would be defenceless against a nuclear attack, having nothing with which to defend themselves⁵⁵. The USA was primarily concerned with the issue of control, and in light of recent developments in rocket technology, did not see any reason for such a denuclearized zone⁵⁶. Canada, on the other hand, looked for a compromise. According to their suggestion, the preparation and stationing of short-range air-to-air missiles would be prohibited in the zone, but tactical weapons could remain there. The idea also arose that in the zone proposed by the Polish, only the great powers would be allowed to station nuclear weapons, and the smaller states would not. Apparently, however, these ideas remained just that – ideas – and finally this

⁵¹ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-98t-001755/1958 Ambassador, János Katona's strictly confidential report from Warsaw dated February 15th 1958. According to the document, the Hungarian ambassador received the memorandum together with the Albanian, Bulgarian and Romanian Ambassadors, which was later also received by the Soviet, American, French, Eastern German, Czechoslovakian, Danish, Canadian and Belgian ambassadors.

⁵² This phrasing reappears in the Non-Proliferation Treaty signed on 1st July 1968.

⁵³ KÜNTZEL: p. 19.

⁵⁴ AdR 01 POL-II Polen/513. A document without a registration number, date or signature.

⁵⁵ AdR 01 POL-II Polen/513. 1958/546443. Löwenthal, the Austrian Ambassador in Rome in his bulletin dated February 28th 1958, reports the statement of Italy in connection with the Rapacki Plan.

⁵⁶ AdR 01 POL-II. Polen/513. 1958/546448. In his bulletin written on February 28th 1958, the Austrian Ambassador in Washington reported in detail the State Department's observations, and he found that the Polish suggestion was dealt with seriously in Washington but was sure that it would be rejected. AdR 01 POL-II Polen/513. 1958/548951. Attaching the rejecting American bulletin, Austrian Ambassador Verosta in Warsaw spoke of it in his report dated May 6th, 1958 (non-confidential).

plan was rejected by Canada too⁵⁷. The initiative was rejected by the FRG as well. Adenauer was afraid that after the creation of the denuclearized zone, the Americans would withdraw not only the nuclear weapons stationed in the western German areas, but also their troops, having been deprived of their most modern weapons. This would make the FRG defenceless against Moscow in the event of the GDR's rearmament⁵⁸. Consequently, in Adenauer's eyes, the purpose of the whole Polish idea was to prevent the German rearmament and to force the withdrawal of American troops from Europe.⁵⁹ Thus the idea was different only in form from the Soviet suggestions of preceding years⁶⁰. Accordingly, it was not coincidence that the parliament of the FRG, together with the rejection, accepted a statement on March 25th which made it possible to supply the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons and which Warsaw had wanted to prevent. Nevertheless, because of social resistance, it was much more difficult for Adenauer to execute the decision under these circumstances. In an attempt to lessen dissent and stop the Rapacki Plan from becoming any more prominent in public discussion, the West German government came forward with their own proposal, written by Franz Joseph Strauss, the Minister of Defence, referred to colloquially as the Strauss plan. The main point of this was that the FRG would accept the denuclearized zone's creation if all member-states of the Warsaw Pact took part in it except for the Soviet Union. The other important stipulation was that the number and the strength of Soviet troops stationed on the territories of the member states would be equal to that of the foreign troops stationed in the FRG. This German suggestion was obviously unacceptable for Moscow, because it would have resulted in a military advantage for NATO.

It is also worth noting that the Western press and the European leftist parties in general – including the German SPD, the British Labour party and Italian socialists and communists⁶¹ – supported the Rapacki Plan, just as they had supported the Soviet idea of disarmament and peaceful coexistence. It seemed to Moscow and Warsaw that the question of the disarmament had become more and more popular in the Western public, and in order to take advantage, they tried to keep it on the agenda by all means. On May 5th 1958, the USSR urged the calling together of a summit meeting for the umpteenth time with one of its items on the agenda being the Rapacki Plan. Poland also did its best to breathe life back into the Plan after its rejection. Throughout the whole year, Rapacki negotiated, travelled, made statements, and tried to make all the diplomatic corps, but primarily the public, believe that the realization of the plan was possible. One part of this important process was that on April 12th 1958, the Polish, Czechoslovakian and the East German Foreign Ministers addressed the arriving answers in Prague, and spoke up for the idea in a unified statement.⁶² Subsequently, between May 2nd and 7th, top-level Czechoslovakian-Polish negotiations were held.⁶³ On November 4th 1958, Rapacki held a press conference to keep the plan on the agenda, reinforcing officially that the execution of his plan would be the first step of disarmament. This would be followed by the reduction of traditional weapons in Central Europe and all around the world.⁶⁴ In this, he identified himself with the soviet standpoint, wishing to negotiate for the reduction of

⁵⁷ AdR 01 POL-II UdSSR/518. 1958/546855. Waldheim, the Austrian Ambassador in Ottawa, wrote about the ideas of the Canadian government in his confidential letter written on March 7th, 1958.

⁵⁸ Adenauer would not even accept moderation, as the prestige and influence of the FRG had been growing in the western world since the signing of the Paris agreements, and would have been brought to an end by such a policy. It was also the opposition of the superpowers that made it possible for the FRG, 12 years after the Second World War, to gain access to nuclear weapons, even if only through NATO's command.

⁵⁹ NIDERBERGER: p. 393.

⁶⁰ AdR 01 POL-II Polen/513. 1958/546513. In his strictly confidential report, Austrian Ambassador Rotter in Bonn wrote about Bonn's answer on March 3rd 1958. As there was no diplomatic relationship between the FRG and Poland, the report was sent to Warsaw via Sweden. Following suit, Poland also sent the text of the Polish memorandum to Bonn through Stockholm. The German answer, whose text was not made public, did not address to the Polish suggestion of bilateral negotiations. At the same time, it admitted that the Rapacki Plan offers a solution for some of the regional problems. Bonn declared in this answer that the acceptance of the nuclear free zone plan is geared to the solution of the German question, and asked the Polish government to plead the matter of German reunion with Moscow.

⁶¹ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-98t-002288/1958

⁶² AdR 01 POL-II Polen/513. The Austrian Ambassador in Warsaw, Verosta in his report dated April 15th 1958 (non-confidential), wrote about the negotiations of the three countries supporting the Rapacki Plan and their communiqué.

⁶³ AdR 01 POL-II Tschechoslowakei/1958 Written on May 8th 1957 (non-confidential), the report of the Austrian embassy in Prague is about the visit of the Polish government's delegation to Prague.

⁶⁴ This form of expansion of the Rapacki Plan is regarded as the third version of the plan by certain diplomatic sources but that does not meet the facts. The modification happened only orally and, can rather be seen as a statement supporting the earlier idea.

conventional weapons, although there was not any chance for its acceptance. The leftist press celebrated Rapacki as the vanguard of disarmament and world peace to no effect; Bonn; followed by the other member states of NATO rejected the plan. Being a realist, Rapacki had to have known by the end of 1958 that the second version of the plan and its modified variant of November would fall, despite his attempts.

The Third Version and its Antecedents

The fact that, after its second failure, the Rapacki Plan did not end up in the world of the libraries and archives for good was primarily thanks to the Minister of Foreign Affairs having done his best to make it popular. In the following years, the plan became attached to his personality as it were. It also helped that those circumstances which had given rise and momentum to the plan did not fundamentally change in the following years either. The German question, in particular, remained unsolved in the political storms of the next few years. And so, it was one of the most important questions in contemporary international politics that was raised by the Soviet Union in 1959 and would be kept on the agenda for a long time. The Soviet idea of a German peace treaty caused alarm not only in Warsaw, but also in the circle of the GDR leaders, as both governments were afraid of the possibility that Moscow would sacrifice them on the altar of a neutral and unified Germany. After a promiscuous Soviet-Western agreement, the GDR provinces would be annexed by the FRG, and Poland would be obliged to give up some parts of the eastern German territories obtained in 1945. As has already been mentioned, the primary purpose of the Rapacki Plan for Warsaw had been to keep off the essentially territorial threat of the FRG. Thus, as long as the threat remained, the plan did exist and was of great importance for Rapacki and the Polish State. Many documents prove that they thought about the question in this way, including the Polish report of July 19th 1960,⁶⁵ Rapacki's negotiations in Austria in 1961⁶⁶, and his announcement made during his visit to Rome⁶⁷.

Consequently, the Polish diplomacy needed only wait for the chance to dust the plan off. Of course, this would only be possible in a period of political calm, since there was even less chance of the plan's success now than there ever had been. Therefore, until the Soviet Union forced the settlement of the disputes about the German peace contract or the Berlin issue, the realization of the Rapacki Plan was not a realistic goal. But as soon as the German question had reached a temporary state of calm following the construction of the Berlin Wall, it could be negotiated again. The question was brought out again at the beginning of autumn 1961, by none other than the very Western powers who had rejected it⁶⁸, as an alternative to the German peace treaty. Although Warsaw rejected this association, in his speech made at the general assembly of the United Nations, Rapacki announced that Poland would take the lead in establishing a denuclearized zone. Rapacki also had a meeting with Dean Rusk, the State Department's under-secretary of Foreign Affairs, who explained that the Polish suggestion had been rejected by the

⁶⁵ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-98t-005500/1960 The Hungarian Ambassador in Warsaw wrote a report on July 20th 1960 about the bulletin of the Polish government, made public on the previous day, calling the attention of all NATO member states to the danger of resurgent nationalism and repercussions in the remilitarizing FRG. The Polish memorandum emphasized that Bonn does not recognize the Oder-Neisse border, which creates the danger of war for Europe. Rapacki, Minister of Foreign Affairs frequently returns to this question on his personal journeys, for example on his journey to Denmark. MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-48t-004943/1960 The top secret report of the Hungarian ambassador in Warsaw, written on June 24th 1960.

⁶⁶ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-98t-003361/1961 The Hungarian Ambassador, Dezső Szilágyi's top secret report dated March 20th 1961, summarizes Rapacki's announcement, which was made in front of the Soviet, the Czechoslovakian and the Hungarian ambassadors concerning his visit and negotiations in Vienna. Rapacki brought on the question of his plan, which the Austrian minister of foreign affairs, Kreisky was ready to support according to his impressions.

⁶⁷ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-98t-008094/2/1961 The Roman Ambassador, Gyula Simó in his top secret report written on October 28th 1961, wrote about Rapacki's unofficial visit to Rome. Here, Rapacki gave a review of his visit to Washington for the ambassadors of the allied countries. Answering a question, he explained that the power relations had shifted towards the socialist wing since 1957. Consequently, the realization of the Rapacki Plan was no longer enough aim in itself but only a means in the interest of the greater goals. Naturally, he meant by this, the solving the German question in accordance with Polish interests, and of, course general disarmament.

⁶⁸ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lngyelország-98t-006087/2/1961 The Hungarian Ambassador, Dezső Szilágyi's top secret report written on September 23rd 1961, emphasizes that certain western politicians had begun to mention the Rapacki Plan far more often. It seemed that they supported it as the alternative to the German peace solution appearing in the Soviet suggestions, but this view was not shared by Warsaw or Moscow.

former American administration, but would be reconsidered.⁶⁹ There was a top level Polish-Czechoslovakian meeting as well, with the revival of the Rapacki Plan being one of the main issues on its agenda.⁷⁰

It is important to state in connection with the Polish waiting period that, in spite of the previous failure, the further floatation of the plan meant serious possibilities for growth in prestige⁷¹ mostly for those 3rd world countries not concerned⁷². Furthermore, the Polish initiation inspired further suggestions such as the French ex-Prime Minister, Pierre Mendes-France's plan, made public on April 3rd 1959.⁷³ Similar to the Eden plan, its purpose was to separate the two blocs. Yet, as it did not contain anything novel compared to previous, similar ideas, the matter was soon dropped.

After these initial developments, on March 28th 1962, the third version of the Rapacki Plan was delineated by the delegates of the Polish People's Republic during the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.⁷⁴ The choice of the location was appropriate, making it possible to put the question on the international stage in one step, and eliminating the need to initiate bilateral negotiations. In addition, all the members of the committee responsible for the disarmament could be acquainted with the suggestion. The timing could as likely as not have been the consequence of the temporary tranquillity in the area of the German question, because this, and particularly the matter of Berlin, had been under constant discussion since 1958-59. This latter fact had made any kind of constructive discussion of the Polish suggestion impossible. Naturally, there was not a big chance for agreement during 1962, either, but raising the question again gave an opportunity to deepen the conflict of interests concerning the question of nuclear weapons in NATO.⁷⁵

The document can be regarded as a rephrased and rearranged variation on the second version, containing the supplements announced to the public in November 1958 – which remained relatively unchanged as far as the subject-matter is concerned. On the other hand, it is worth noting that the participants are referred

⁶⁹ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-48t-007869/1961 The Hungarian Ambassador, Dezső Szilágyi's top secret report written on October 24th 1961. For the Polish, it was potentially advantageous to bring up the subject in the autumn of 1961, because after the elections, this was the soonest that the Kennedy administration could properly deal with the issue.

⁷⁰ AdR 01 POL-II Polen/719. 1961/33942. In his report written on October 26th 1961, Enderl, the Austrian Ambassador of Warsaw spoke about the reconciliation between the Polish and Czechoslovakian governments. He found it likely that a further version of the Rapacki Plan would come to light.

⁷¹ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-48t-003665/1959 Having arrived in Budapest on May 20th 1959, the top secret report of János Katona, the Ambassador reported on the Indonesian President, Sukarno's visit in Poland between April 29th and May 3rd. Sukarno supported the Rapacki Plan in his announcement. As Sukarno was one of the most important personalities of the movement of non-aligned states, this was a significant success for the Polish diplomacy.

⁷² MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-005599/1961 Dezső Szilágyi, the Hungarian Ambassador's top secret report from Warsaw dated June 21st 1961, assumes that the Polish raised the question because with their *apparently* independent initiative, and as the seeming vanguard of disarmament, they possessed the sympathy of dozens of countries. The latter was very favourable for the Polish in the forums of the United Nations and other international organizations. A subsequent report has mentioned that, because of Rapacki's international reputation and popularity it had become a possibility that he would be nominated to be the President of the UN's 20th General Assembly session. Unfortunately for him, his illness prevented this from coming to pass. MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-98t-002232/1964 The latter was mentioned by Ferenc Martin, Hungarian Ambassador to Warsaw, in his top secret report dated February 29th 1964.

⁷³ The main point of the former French Prime Minister's idea was that a completely disarmed zone and two lightly armed zones have to be created between the troops of the two opposing allies. LABOOR: pp. 34-35.

⁷⁴ MOL XIX-J-1-j-USA-100t-008236/1/1961 In his strictly confidential report dated December 19th 1961, Tibor Zádor, the Ambassador's deputy in Washington, made an announcement concerning the negotiations about disarmament which had been under discussion for years in Geneva. In contrast to the previous routine, as from 1962, after having decided to include the third world countries, these negotiations would be held with the participation of not 10 (5 Socialist and 5 Western) but 18 countries. The disarmament committee expanded with the third world countries would have been more likely to support the Polish suggestion.

⁷⁵ MOL XIX-J-1-j-USA-100t-005416/1962 The Ambassador's deputy in Washington, János Radványi's strictly confidential bulletin, dated May 30th 1962, reports the conflicts among the western allies in detail. The essence of the conflict was that the USA partly shared its nuclear secrets with the United Kingdom, but not with France. That is why de Gaulle's aim was to create an independent nuclear power and prevented London from taking part in the integration process. Consequently, the FRG ended up in a very delicate situation, because they wanted to be the number one ally of both the USA and France at the same time. In addition, good French-German relations gave Adenauer some security when he adopted a determined eastern policy. At the same time, Bonn itself was disconcerted with Washington because Kennedy had wanted to negotiate with Moscow about Berlin and the German question. In this situation, Bonn's mediator role had been appreciated even more, which did not serve the interests of the Polish. Raising the Rapacki Plan, which wished to block German nuclear armament, made French-German cooperation difficult, and further on it deepened the conflicts between the western allies.

to in the document as the ‘signing states’, that is to say, in contrast to the second version, it would be possible to join the zone merely by signing an international contract. This of course would have meant the FRG and GDR negotiating at the same table; obviously there was no chance of this happening a scant few months after the construction of the Berlin Wall. At the same time, the modification indicated the deepening relationship between the GDR and Poland.

Although the disarmament committee discussed the document, they did not deal with it favourably, and the informal reactions of certain countries depended mainly on their alliances and diplomatic connections. In connection with this version, it makes the research difficult that certain countries did not make written diplomatic reports, as they had not received the suggestion through the diplomatic corps. But we know from secondary sources that the reception of the NATO’s member states was negative. In addition, Bonn even rejected the subsequent Polish suggestion unequivocally. In contrast to the suggestion made in 1958, the plan was not followed with great attention either by the western press, or public opinion. Nevertheless, it was a tangible accomplishment that thanks to the plan, the connections between the Polish United Labour Party and the western social democrat parties had become deeper and more involved. For example, the leader of the British Labour Party, Gaitskell had numerous meetings in Warsaw. He assured the Polish that his party supported the Rapacki Plan, the idea of general disarmament and that they would prefer the FRG not to possess nuclear weapons, as would most of the British constituency.⁷⁶ Josip Broz Tito made his support of the plan clear during Rapacki’s visit to Yugoslavia.⁷⁷ The interest in the third version of the Polish suggestion had died down significantly by the summer, and the Cuban missile crisis bursting out not long after made it impossible to keep the issue on the agenda.

The fourth version

The Rapacki Plan gained prominence in Warsaw again upon the establishment of a multilateral nuclear NATO force. The main point of the American suggestion was for NATO to possess an autonomous nuclear force under its own command, which would be maintained through common funding by the Member States.⁷⁸ From Washington’s point of view, the plan would have obviously unburdened the budget of the USA, and solved the question of French and German nuclear armament, if the French and Germans could only obtain nuclear weapons within the framework of NATO. Moreover they would have contributed to the costs. Additionally, the question of the multilateral nuclear force could help to convince France that it was useless to establish an autonomous French nuclear force.⁷⁹ The American idea, which was immediately backed by Bonn, was met by strong protest from Warsaw and Moscow. Thus, diplomatic actions began against the setting up of the multilateral nuclear force. The Finnish Kekkonen plan concerning the disarmament of the whole Scandinavia, strongly influenced by the Soviets, was such a plan.⁸⁰ Another such initiative was the partial resurrection of the Rapacki Plan, under Gomulka’s name, similar to the original but with enough novelty to improve its chances, which was announced on

⁷⁶ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-98t-007465/1962 In his top secret bulletin dated September 20th 1962, Dezső Szilágyi, the Hungarian Ambassador in Warsaw, reported in detail on the talks that Gaitskell had in Warsaw.

⁷⁷ AdR 01 POL-II Polen/799. 1962/76582. In his non-confidential bulletin written on November 19th 1962, the Austrian embassy in Belgrade reported on Rapacki’s visit to Yugoslavia.

⁷⁸ MOL XIX-J-1-j-USA-100t-001017/1963 The Ambassador’s deputy, János Radványi’s top secret report dated January 16th 1963, thoroughly investigates the American-British so-called Nassau contract signed in the Bahamas. Based on this, London bought Polaris rockets and other technologies for use with nuclear weapons from the United States of America, but these were placed under NATO command. With this step, the establishment of NATO’s common nuclear force had begun, which was referred to as the “multilateral nuclear force” in most of the sources henceforward. Washington tried to dissuade France from the notion of establishing an autonomous nuclear arsenal. On the other hand they wanted to give the FRG nuclear weapons in such a way that they would stay under NATO command – that is the Americans’ command. The project was the source of debates inside NATO for some time. The Soviet Union wanted to preclude the plan, because it would have provided more resources for NATO’s nuclear programmes. Consequently, during international negotiations, Moscow organized the signing of an agreement similar to the subsequent Non-Proliferation Treaty. This was reported in the top secret bullet number MOL XIX-J-1-j-USA-97t-007168/1963 written by János Radványi, the Ambassador’s deputy in Washington, and which arrived in Budapest on November 1st 1963.

⁷⁹ The Nuclear Test Ban Treaty signed by the USA, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom, but not by France and China, in 1963, was aimed at setting the nascent French nuclear programme back by prohibiting nuclear tests.

⁸⁰ The Finnish idea, partially influenced by the Soviets, was formulated in 1963. It intended to influence, primarily the decision of Norway, so that it would not support the initiative of a NATO multilateral nuclear force.

December 28th 1963⁸¹. This plan can be read in the Appendix. The Polish and Soviet diplomacy got inklings that the question of the multilateral nuclear force generated serious debates among the Member States of NATO. Paris looked at the originally American-British idea with suspicion and doubt. Nobody was enthusiastic about the issue of German armament. West Germany's approval of the American proposal temporarily cooled French-German relations, which had been strengthened by the international contract signed in January 1963. As Bonn's determined eastern policy of the previous years was backed by the German-French relationships, the FRG temporarily became isolated during 1964, at least in Europe. This was partially because Adenauer, a strong man of the previous decade, relinquished his place to Ludwig Erhard on October 15th 1963, who was primarily an economist, and had difficulties in growing accustomed to the world of diplomacy. Warsaw in all probability counted on the support of West Germany for the fourth version of their plan, because for them Adenauer's resignation was a success and they thought that a more flexible leader in West Germany might serve their interests. It was also an important aspect that the proposal was brought out again just before the West German elections, due in 1965, which in terms of the elective campaign, could be favourable for the SPD.

Before the fourth version of the Rapacki Plan was made public – which, after the events in December, could also be considered as the second version of the Gomulka plan – there were comprehensive negotiations in Moscow on the 8th and 9th of January 1964, attended by the USSR, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the FDR, Hungary and Romania. These talks were made necessary by the negotiations on disarmament in Geneva, as a result of which the participating states attempted to harmonize their strategy, especially as regards the revival of the Polish proposal. Considering this, in the case of the fourth version we can again speak of a document carefully written for its time.⁸² Before any further steps were taken, the Polish diplomacy carried out inquiry meetings with numerous states including Sweden, Denmark, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, and even with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, U Thant.⁸³

The fourth variant which was disclosed on 28th February 1964 - the text of which can be read in the appendix - meant a return to the directives of the proposal announced in autumn 1957. It dealt with the reduction of conventional weaponry, its declared goal became exclusively the freezing of nuclear weapons on the territories of Poland, Czechoslovakia, the GDR and the FRG. The reaction of the various states did not bring any surprise: Moscow and its allies assisted it while the Member States of NATO refused the repeated Polish proposal. Their reasons were the well known ones, most important of which were: the disproportion between the number of bases to be disarmed per side, giving the potential advantage to the Warsaw Pact, and the discriminating character of the Polish proposal in its intention to remove nuclear weaponry from essentially one state – namely the FRG. There was also the obvious scantiness of the marked territory, considering that the rockets of the age had far greater effective ranges, combined with the fact that the proposal dealt solely with nuclear weapons, making the entire proposal somewhat of a strategic joke. The question of control of certain territories had also not been elaborated, leading many states to openly declare that the proposal wanted the present Polish-German boundaries to remain unchanged, which was completely unacceptable for them until the German peace-treaty was concluded, ending of the German question.⁸⁴ The hardest rejections came from the FRG and from the Netherlands, whereas the USA and the UK, despite their scepticism, emphasized the possibility for and

⁸¹ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-98t-00817/1/1965. The Hungarian Ambassador in Warsaw, Ferenc Martin, in his top secret bulletin dated January 22nd 1964, reported on the circumstances of Gomulka's speech in Plock. He explained that the speech was a simplified version of the Rapacki Plan, and dealt with only its first part, the matter of freezing nuclear weapons. From this source, it turns out that Gomulka's speech, far from giving up on the Rapacki Plan, was intended to pave the way for its public reappearance in a new version. The novelty of the Gomulka plan lay in not attacking the issue of the multilateral nuclear force, regardless of Soviet suggestions. The report touches on the fact that Warsaw was supported by Wilson, of the British Labour Party, and Nenni, of the Italian socialists.

⁸² MOL XIX-J-1-j-the USSR-100t-00802/1964. The top secret memorandum written by Péter Mód on January 13th 1964, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reported in detail the conference in Moscow, and the need to establish a European nuclear-free zone.

⁸³ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-98t-00817/1964 The Hungarian Ambassador in Warsaw, Ferenc Martin's top secret bulletin, dated February 11th 1964, reports in detail the tentative Polish negotiations, of which the chief executive of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave a summary to the representatives of all socialist countries.

⁸⁴ MOL XIX-J-1-j-Lengyelország-98t-00817/4/1964 Ambassador Ferenc Martin's top secret report, dated November 14th 1964, summarizes the answers given on the Polish memorandum.

importance of negotiation. Of course, it was not taken too seriously, since negotiations concerning disarmament had already been taking place for a decade without any serious results. In the end, regardless of Poland's attempts over several months to keep the proposal in play, it became evident by the end of the year that the Rapacki Plan, in all its variations, was ultimately doomed to failure.

The Fall of the Rapacki Plan

After the failure of the 1964 version, the Rapacki Plan no longer held any interest for most people in the diplomatic community. Since Warsaw's opinion had not changed regarding the matter, the proposal's total failure is best attributed to changes in external circumstances. These changes are the followings:

- The new Soviet administration, after the failure of Khrushchev, kept a tighter hold on the ally countries, and progressively narrowed the margins of Poland's foreign policy.⁸⁵ After the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, its independence came to an end. On the other hand, it is true that Warsaw did not have to fear of any Soviet-West deal regarding Germany, because of the more dogmatic Soviet leadership.⁸⁶

- The American-Polish relationship was also continuously worsening when it became evident for Washington that the developments of October 1956 were turning against the NAP. What is more, Warsaw was not moving away from Moscow politically, but in fact, after 1964, was even forced to advocate Moscow's viewpoint to the Chinese.⁸⁷

- In the second half of the sixties, the threat of the FRG was continuously declining. One reason for this was the loosening of German-French cooperation after the departure of Adenauer – it became evident after the de Gaulle's trip to Moscow that Paris would not assist the armament of West Germany, even through the project of the multilateral atomic strike-force.⁸⁸ Another reason was the gentle shift of the FRG's internal politics to the left that resulted in the governmental participation of the SPD from 1966. With this in the background, French-Polish relations were stimulated, and in May 1966 the French Foreign Minister visited Warsaw; the next year between January 26th and 28th, Adam Rapacki attended negotiations in Paris.⁸⁹

Despite all this, the Rapacki Plan had not disappeared totally. The Polish Foreign Minister, during his international negotiations returned to it regularly. According to diplomatic sources, during 1964 and 1965 he had talks on the subject in Mexico, New York, Rome, Stockholm, Tehran and Brussels⁹⁰; in November 1965 on the Polish-Yugoslavian negotiations for example, Tito expressed his support on the fourth variant known as the Gomulka plan.⁹¹ Furthermore, when Rapacki was in Stockholm in 1966, the Swedes assured him of their support for his proposal of a nuclear-free zone.⁹²

⁸⁵ AdR 01 Pol-II Polen/1191. 1967/34706. Proksch, the Austrian Ambassador in Warsaw, in his non-confidential report, dated November 23rd 1967, evaluated the Soviet-Polish relationship during the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Soviet Revolution in 1917. The analysis provides us with a precise picture of the pressure of the Brezhnev administration, being markedly more dogmatic than that of Khrushchev.

⁸⁶ AdR 01 Pol-II Polen/930. 1964/81345. Enderl, the Austrian Ambassador in Warsaw, in his non-confidential report dated November 20th 1964, analyzed at some length the Soviet-Polish relationship after Khrushchev's downfall.

⁸⁷ AdR 01 Pol-II Polen/930. 1964/79460. The Austrian Ambassador Enderl in Warsaw, in his non-confidential report dated October 13th 1964, wrote about the deterioration of the Polish-American relationship and its reasons.

⁸⁸ AdR 01 Pol-II BRD/974. 1965/144999. In his non-confidential report dated November 10th 1965, the Austrian Ambassador in Paris, Fuchs, analyzed the French-German relationship.

⁸⁹ AdR 01 Pol-II Polen/1191. 1966/14764. In his non-confidential report dated January 28th 1967, the Austrian Ambassador in Paris, Fuchs, reported Rapacki's negotiations in Paris. Rapacki was met by de Gaulle, Georges Pompidou, and Foreign Affairs Minister Couve de Murville, and even took part in a television interview. In his time there, Rapacki did not talk about the plan of the nuclear free zone as Paris would have said no to it considering the German-French relationship. Nevertheless, he made it clear that European safety and the German question are interconnected, and that was why the FRG had to acknowledge the current boundaries and the existence of the GDR, and why they had to make do without nuclear weapons. If this happened, a European safety conference may call peace in Europe into being for a long time. In my opinion, Rapacki's train of thought, touched on only briefly because of its complexity, can be identified with the Helsinki-process schedule.

⁹⁰ AdR 01 Pol-II Polen/997. 1965/133478 The Austrian Ambassador in Warsaw Enderl, in his non-confidential report dated March 10th 1965, wrote about his talks with Foreign Affairs Minister Rapacki. The Polish politician spoke about his journeys, emphasizing that he was negotiating of the European situation and the question of disarmament.

⁹¹ AdR 01 Pol-II Polen/997. 1965/145668. The Austrian Ambassador in Belgrade, Pasch in his non-confidential report written on November 24th 1965, gave a summary of the negotiations in Belgrade. He emphasized that the Polish wanted to sign a

At the same time, it is evident that during these bilateral negotiations, Poland became increasingly isolated. In London, in December 1965, British Prime Minister Harold Wilson also declared his disinterest in the proposal,⁹³ which was repeated during the negotiations in March 1967, although the British assured the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs of their understanding.⁹⁴ The same happened when Rapacki visited Copenhagen⁹⁵ and Brussels, after which the Belgian Foreign Minister expressed his disappointment to the Austrian Ambassador while they discussed the negotiations, because he felt that, compared to Rapacki's previous flexibility, he had become comparable to the Soviets in his stubborn positions, especially concerning the German question.⁹⁶

The reason for the loss of flexibility in the Polish point of view was the control of Moscow, which was getting tighter and tighter. The increasingly active Stalinist opposition from Gomulka might also have played some role in it. The so-called „partisan group” had also been making stronger attacks on the Polish leadership, which had not changed since October 1956. After the Arab-Israeli war in 1967, riots which were probably covertly organised by an outside influence broke out in March 1968. After these riots, the political attacks strengthened perceptibly, resulting in serious political purging. In the whole territory of Poland, an anti-Zionist campaign began, the unspoken target of which was Gomulka because his wife was of Jewish descent. Although he was left⁹⁷ in his place because of his international prestige, there were many replacements among the Party Leaders standing close to him. The purge also extended to other branches of the government authorities and the administration. Two-hundred people were laid off from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, among them twenty top managers, including the Deputy Minister, Naszkowski (of Jewish descent), General Director Wierna, who was the Chief Executive Officer dealing with the countries of the Eastern Bloc, Birecki (also of Jewish descent) who had led the department responsible for cultural relationships, and of course General Director Meller-Conrad, who was the Chief Executive Officer dealing with the Asian communist countries and who had for years tried to bring Moscow and Beijing eye to eye.⁹⁸ Even Rapacki, the Foreign Minister, was not able to prevent the replacements of staff.⁹⁹ The clear political defeat caused Rapacki to enter a state of depression, exacerbated by his genuine cardiac problems, and he did not enter the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for some months.¹⁰⁰

In such circumstances, it is not surprising that Gomulka, without any disagreement, approved the participation of Poland in the occupation of Czechoslovakia, which had until then been on good terms with Warsaw. This of course, encouraged the activities of the partisan group who, by the autumn of 1968, even had the open support of Moscow behind it. At the end of the year, staff replacements took place again, during which Rapacki lost his position in the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and so his position as the Foreign Minister, which meant the death of the Rapacki Plan. Rapacki lived two

communiqué principally against FRG, which he toned down because of the negotiations between Belgrade and FRG. But he supported, for example, the anti-West German idea of a nuclear-free zone.

⁹² AdR 01 Pol-II. Polen/1065. 1966/39351. Marquet, Austrian Ambassador in Stockholm, in his non-confidential report written on June 20th 1966, reported on Rapacki's visit to Sweden.

⁹³ AdR 01 Pol-II Polen/997. 1965/130304 Schwarzenberg, Austrian Ambassador in London, in his non-confidential bulletin reported in detail Rapacki's talks in London. He specified that Wilson, whose party had supported the Rapacki Plan before the electoral victory of 1964, now considered it to be of no interest. According to Wilson, the main point was no longer the place where the nuclear weapons were established, but where they were pointed. Rapacki was disappointed that after having taken over governance, the British Labour Party did not support the ideas discussed so many times in the previous years.

⁹⁴ AdR 01 Pol-II. Polen/1191. 1967/17490. The Austrian Ambassador, Schwarzenberg in his non-confidential letter written on March 2nd 1967, summarised Rapacki's talks in London. Rapacki explained that the premise of the settlement of the German question is that Bonn recognizes the Oder-Neisse border and the GDR, and give up its attempts to possess nuclear weapons.

⁹⁵ AdR 01 Pol-II. Polen/1191. 1967/34752. The Austrian Ambassador in Warsaw, Proksch, in his non-confidential report dated November 24th 1967, wrote about Rapacki's negotiations in Denmark.

⁹⁶ The Austrian Ambassador in Brussels, Cornaro, in his non-confidential report dated November 8th 1967, summarized Rapacki's negotiations in Belgium.

⁹⁷ Gomulka's place was taken over by Edward Gierek in December of 1970.

⁹⁸ AdR 01 Pol-II Polen/1392. 1968/126763. The Austrian Ambassador in Warsaw, Proksch's non-confidential report dated September 21st 1968, reports in detail on the political clean up.

⁹⁹ AdR 01 Pol-II Polen/1392. 1968/116351. The Austrian Ambassador in Warsaw, Proksch's non-confidential report dated April 9th 1968, reviewed the changes in Polish internal affairs.

¹⁰⁰ AdR 01 Pol-II Polen/1392. 1968/120182 The Austrian Ambassador's deputy in Warsaw, Stolberg, dealt with the question in his report written on July 12th 1968. Rapacki had survived two heart attacks already in 1958 and 1963, which were then followed by a more serious third one.

more years,¹⁰¹ but he did not stay active in the political life. Unfortunately, he was not alive when the FRG and Poland signed an agreement in November 1970, in which Willy Brandt, the leader of the new West-German government, acknowledged the Oder-Neisse boundary.¹⁰² He also normalized the relationships with Poland and ended the threat that Rapacki had spent so much time trying to end.¹⁰³ With the signing of the so-called ‘eastern contracts’ the Cold War tension began to diminish markedly in central Europe, and they became the precondition of the negotiations known as Helsinki.

Epilogue

In this study, I attempted to introduce the Polish proposal about the disarmament of Central Europe, which is known in history as the Rapacki Plan. I think, based on the archival sources from Budapest and from Vienna, that we were able to gain a general picture of the political background for the Polish proposal and its importance during this period of the Cold War, and that we had the chance to familiarize ourselves with its role in the German question. It can be said that, although none of the versions of the plan that were brought to the public came to fruition because of the opposition of the Great Powers, the Rapacki Plan was an important element of the international negotiations about disarmament and nuclear regulation in the period. In my view, the arguments about the Polish idea laid the path for international pacts like the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty signed in 1963, the Outer Space Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (or ‘Antarctic Treaty’) signed in 1968.

¹⁰¹ Adam Rapacki died on October 10th, 1970.

¹⁰² NÉMETH: pp. 428-429.

¹⁰³ FISCHER: pp. 264-271.

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I. Appendix

The declaration made by Minister Rapacki during the General debate of the XII General Assembly of the United Nations in October 1957

„In the interest of Poland’s security and detente in Europe, having agreed the initiative with other members of the Warsaw Pact, the Government of the Polish People’s Republic declares that if both German states agree to the introduction of a ban on a production and storage of nuclear weapons on their territory, the Polish People’s Republic is prepared to introduce on its territory the same ban.”

II. Appendix

The Memorandum of the Polish Government on 14 February, 1958

On 2nd October 1957 the Government of the Polish People's Republic presented to the United Nations General Assembly a proposal to establish a denuclearised zone in Central Europe. The Governments of the Czechoslovak Republic and the German Democratic Republic declared their readiness to accede to this zone.

The Government of the Polish People's Republic proceeded on the assumption that the establishment of the proposed denuclearised zone might improve the international atmosphere and promote broader talks on disarmament and the solution of other outstanding international problems, whereas the further growth of nuclear armaments and their extension to other countries would further perpetuate Europe's division into opposing blocs and aggravate the situation, particularly in Central Europe.

The Government of the Polish People's Republic repeated its proposal through diplomatic channels in December 1957.

In view of the broad repercussions caused by the Polish initiative, and also the conclusions drawn from the debate on this proposal, the Government of the Polish People's Republic hereby presents a more detailed statement of its proposals, which may facilitate the opening of negotiations and agreement on this subject.

I

The proposed zone should embrace the territory of Poland, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. No nuclear weapons would be produced or stored and no equipment or plant for their delivery installed in this territory; the use of nuclear weapons against the territory of the zone would be prohibited.

II

The commitments arising from the establishment of a denuclearised zone would be based on the following principles:

1. The States of this zone would undertake not to produce, stockpile, import for their own use, or allow the deployment in their territories of any types of nuclear weapons, and also not to install, or allow to be installed, in their territories equipment or installations for delivering nuclear weapons, including rocket launching ramps.

2. The four powers — France, the United States, Britain and the USSR — would undertake:

(a) not to maintain nuclear weapons among the armaments of their forces in the territory of the States comprising the zone; not to have or install in the territory of these States equipment or installations for the delivery of nuclear weapons, including rocket launching ramps;

(b) not to provide, in any way or in any circumstances, the governments or any other agencies in this territory with nuclear weapons, or their associated equipment or installations.

3. The powers possessing nuclear weapons should undertake that these weapons would not be used against the territory of the zone or any targets within it. Thus these powers would undertake to honour the status of the zone as a denuclearised territory against which no atomic weapons would be used.

4. Other States whose forces are stationed in the territory of any of the States comprising the zone would also undertake not to maintain nuclear weapons with the armaments of these forces and not to transfer such weapons to governments or other agencies within this territory. Nor would they install any associated equipment or installations, including rocket launching ramps, in the territory of the States belonging to the zone, or transfer them to governments or other agencies within this territory.

Detailed agreements could be mutually agreed for the method and procedure for carrying out these commitments.

III

1. To ensure the effectiveness and implementation of commitments set forth in paragraph II, items 1, 2 and 4, the countries concerned would undertake to establish a system of extensive and effective control in the territory of the proposed zone and would submit to it.

This system could comprise ground as well as air control. Control posts with rights and facilities for action ensuring effective inspection could also be established.

The details and forms of exercising control could be mutually agreed upon on the basis of the experience acquired in this field and the proposals submitted by various States in the course of disarmament talks held heretofore, in the form and to the extent applicable to the territory of the zone.

The system of control established for the denuclearised zone might serve as a useful experiment for putting into effect broader agreements on questions of disarmament.

2. An appropriate control machinery should be established to supervise the implementation of the proposed commitments. It might include, for instance, representatives appointed (possibly by name) by bodies of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty. It might also include citizens or representatives of States which do not belong to either of the military groupings in Europe. The procedure for the establishment, operation and reporting of the control organs could be the subject of further agreements.

IV

The simplest method of establishing the commitments by States belonging to the zone would be the conclusion of an appropriate international treaty. However, to avoid complications which some States might discern in such a solution it would be possible:

1. to embody these commitments in the form of four unilateral declarations in the nature of an international undertaking deposited with a country chosen by agreement;

2. to embody the commitments undertaken by the great powers in a joint document or in unilateral declarations, as indicated above;

3. to embody the commitments by other States, whose armed forces are present on the territory of the zone, in the form of unilateral declarations, as indicated above.

On the basis of the above proposals, the Government of the Polish People's Republic suggests negotiations to elaborate in detail a plan for the establishment of a denuclearised zone, the documents and guarantees connected with it, and the methods of putting the commitments into effect.

The Government of the Polish People's Republic is convinced that acceptance of the proposals for the establishment of a denuclearised zone in Central Europe would facilitate agreement on the restriction of conventional armaments and reduction of the foreign troops stationed in the territories of States belonging to the zone.

Annex

Summary of notes accompanying the memorandum

To the three major western powers:

France

The Polish Government recalls its views on the tendency of nuclear weapons to become widespread in Europe and the growing armaments in Western Germany, and supports the Soviet proposals for a conference between the major powers with the participation of Heads of Governments. The Polish Government hopes that France will study the more detailed proposals for creating a denuclearised zone in Central Europe.

United Kingdom

The Polish Government states that it has paid great attention to the interest shown by the United Kingdom Government in the Polish proposals, as expressed in the letter of 16th January 1958 from the Prime Minister, Mr. Macmillan, to the President of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Mr. Bulganin, and that the statements by several British statesmen and politicians and the expressions of public opinion in Great Britain on this subject are being studied in Poland with the attention due to them.

United States

The Polish Government expresses the hope that the Government of the United States will examine the detailed proposals for the creation of a denuclearised zone in Central Europe which is contained in the memorandum.

To those States other than the major western powers which have military units stationed
on the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany:
Belgium, Denmark and Canada

The Polish Government expresses the hope that the more detailed Polish proposals on the creation of a denuclearised zone in Central Europe will be welcomed by these governments.

Federal Republic of Germany (through the intermediary of Sweden)

The Polish Government proposes that representatives appointed by the Government of the Polish People's Republic and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany should hold conversations on problems raised in the memorandum.

To the countries of Eastern Europe concerned:
USSR

The Polish Government expresses its conviction that the Government of the USSR, which has supported the Polish proposal, will view with favour the detailed proposals contained in the memorandum and will continue to support the creation of a denuclearised zone in Central Europe.

Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany

The Polish Government expresses its satisfaction at the fact that these governments have previously declared themselves ready to accede to the denuclearised zone in Central Europe, and its conviction that the Polish Government can count on the full co-operation of these governments.

(1) Text of the memorandum handed by the Polish Government on 14th February 1958 to the representatives in Warsaw of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, Czechoslovakia, the Eastern German Democratic Republic and the USSR, and to the representative of Sweden for transmission to the Federal Republic of Germany — these recipient countries being those to be included in the proposed denuclearised zone and those with forces stationed therein. The memorandum was accompanied in each case by a note to the recipient government; those notes are summarised at annex.

III. Appendix

The Rapacki plan II.

Memorandum concerning the creation in Europe of a denuclearized and limited armaments zone.
Submitted on March 28, 1962 in Geneva by the Polish delegation to the 18-nation disarmament conference

Whereas the conference of the 18-Nation Disarmament Committee is to consider, simultaneously with the elaboration of a treaty on general and complete disarmament, proposals on steps and measures aiming at the lessening of international tension and increasing mutual confidence among states, thus to facilitate the implementation of general and complete disarmament:

Whereas the creation of denuclearized and limited armaments zone constitutes one of the most important measures and steps of this kind, the delegation of the Polish Peoples' Republic in agreement with the delegation of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, submits on the agenda of the Committee a proposal for the creation of denuclearized and limited armaments zone in Europe.

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Polish proposal is the elimination of nuclear weapons and nuclear delivery vehicles, a reduction of military forces and conventional armaments on a limited territory, on which this can contribute towards to lessening of tension and towards a substantial reduction of the danger of conflict on that territory.

2. Territorial scope

The zone ought to include basically the following states: the Polish People's Republic, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic. The agreement concerning the zone is open: other European states ought to have a possibility to accede to this agreement.

3. Rights and duties of states included in the zone or acceding to it

Rights and duties resulting from the creation of the zone should be carried out in the two following stages:

Stage one – freezing of all nuclear armaments and rockets and prohibition of the creation of new bases.

a, Rights and duties of states included in the zone

1. On the territory of states included in the zone, preparation of production and production of any kind of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles for them shall be prohibited.

2. States included in the zone shall be prohibited to introduce any kind of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles for them.

3. States included in the zone shall be prohibited to grant permission to establish new bases and facilities for stockpiling or servicing nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles for them.

b, Rights and duties of other states

1. All states which dispose of any kind of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles for them shall be prohibited to transfer them to states included in the zone.

2. All states which dispose of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles for them shall be prohibited to introduce new quantities of such weapons of any kind into the zone.

3. Establishing in the area of the zone of new bases and facilities for stockpiling or servicing of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles for them shall be prohibited.

Stage two – elimination of nuclear armaments and rockets and reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments.

a, Rights and duties of states included in the zone

1. Elimination from the national armaments of all nuclear delivery vehicles by the states included in the zone.

2. Reduction to an agreed level of military forces and corresponding reduction of conventional armaments by states included in the zone.

b, Rights and duties of other states

1. Withdrawal from the area of the zone of all kinds of nuclear weapons and all facilities for their stockpiling and servicing as well as of all nuclear delivery vehicles permanently or temporarily stationed by foreign states, and of all facilities for their servicing.

2. Reduction of foreign military forces stationed on the area of the zone to an agreed level with a corresponding reduction of their armaments.

4. Control

1. To secure the effectiveness of disarmament measures mentioned in part 3 of this Memorandum, a strict international control and inspection on the ground and in the air will be provided, the establishment of appropriate control posts included.

2. A special control body will be established to supervise the implementation of the proposed obligations. Composition and competence of this body as well as its procedure will be agreed upon by the states concerned.

The signatory states of the agreement concerning the creation of a nuclear-free zone will enter an obligation to submit to the control of the said body and provide all facilities and assistance in its activity.

3. The signatory states of the agreement concerning the creation of a nuclear-free zone will agree on the extent and measures of control in each of the two stages.

5. Guarantees

In order to guarantee the inviolability of the nuclear-free zone powers disposing of nuclear weapons will undertake to:

a, Refrain from any steps which might violate directly or indirectly the status of the zone;

b, Not to use nuclear weapons against the territory of the zone.

In view of the above, the delegation of the Polish People's Republic proposes the following:

1. The 18-Nation Committee will request the states concerned to take immediate steps to carry out the proposal concerning the creation of denuclearized and limited armaments zone.

2. The 18-Nation Committee will request to initiate appropriate consultations on the creation of the zone, with the states concerned and to submit a report on these consultations not later than 1962.

3. The 18-Nation Committee will also request the General Assembly of the United Nations to adopt a resolution concerning the creation of a denuclearized and limited armaments zone in Europe.

IV. Appendix

The Gomulka plan I. / The Rapacki plan III.

Extract from a speech made by Władysław Gomułka in Płock, on december 28, 1963

... Practical steps have to be taken to curb the arms race and facilitate further disarmament understandings. For instance, the countries concerned should examine the following as the most immediately urgent tasks:

FIRST, a freezing of nuclear arms in central Europe. Of course, a suitable system of control would have to be agreed. The question of limiting conventional weapons could also be discussed. Poland is prepared to submit this proposal in specifically worded terms.

SECOND, of the proposals discussed by the three great powers in New York and Washington last autumn the most urgent is the question of a non-aggression pact between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty and the elaboration of a set of measures to avert the danger of surprise attack. Consultations should now become concrete negotiations.

THIRD, determined efforts should once again be made to bring our views closer together and find agreement in the matter of general and complete disarmament, with the main emphasis on freeing the world from the horror of a nuclear cataclysm.

General and complete disarmament is the imperative of our times. There are many ways of hastening this goal. A good example has once more been given by the Soviet Union which has reduced its defence budget for the coming year by 600 million roubles. Other countries would be well advised to follow suit, especially as the financial burden of armaments is becoming increasingly oppressive even for the wealthiest.

FOURTH, the road to disarmament could also be opened through the adoption of partial measures which would widen the area of security in other parts of the world, regardless of the steps taken in central Europe.

FIFTH, Poland and the other socialist countries also attach great importance to the proper development of international economic collaboration. International trade – without any discrimination, of course – not only benefits all sides, but also promotes better understanding and brings nations closer together. Next year's trade and development conference offers a great opportunity for turning the problems of trade and development to the advantage of better and closer international economic relations, an ending of the cold war in the economic field and helping the countries whose development has been held black by years of colonial dependence. This chance must be seized in full.

V. Appendix

The Gomulka plan II. / The Rapacki plan IV. Polish Government memorandum on the freezing of nuclear and thermonuclear armaments in Central Europe Warsaw, 28 February 1964

The Government of the Polish People's Republic has already on numerous occasions manifested its consistent desire in the search for solutions aimed at bringing about international détente and disarmament and lent its support to all constructive proposals designed to achieve this end. The reduction of international tensions and creation of conditions of security in Central Europe have always been and continue to be the matters of particular concern to the Polish Government. This objective can and should be achieved above all by way of arresting the armaments race in this part of the world.

With this in mind the Government of the Polish People's Republic presented some time ago a plan for the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Europe which, as is known, aroused the interest of numerous States and of world public opinion. In the view of the Polish Government that plan continues to be fully topical.

The Polish Government believes that there are at the present time suitable conditions for undertaking immediate measures the implementation of which could facilitate further steps leading to a détente, to a strengthening of security and to progress in the field of disarmament.

Basing itself on these premises, the Government of the Polish People's Republic is submitting a proposal to freeze nuclear and thermonuclear armaments in Central Europe. The implementation of such a proposal would be of particular significance to the security both of Poland and of all countries of this region as well as of the whole of Europe, since, while in no way affecting the existing relation of forces, it would contribute to the arrest of the nuclear armaments race.

1. The Polish Government proposes that the freezing of nuclear and thermonuclear armaments include in principle the territories of the Polish People's Republic, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, with the respective territorial waters and airspace.

The Government of the Polish People's Republic sees the possibility of extending that area through the accession of other European States.

2. The freeze would apply to all kinds of nuclear and thermonuclear charges, irrespective of the means of their employment and delivery.

3. Parties maintaining armed forces in the areas of the proposed freeze of armaments would undertake obligations not to produce, not to introduce or import, not to transfer to other parties in the area or to accept from other parties in the area the aforementioned nuclear and thermonuclear weapons.

4. To insure the implementation of those obligations, an appropriate system of supervision and safeguards should be established.

The supervision over the implementation of other obligations not to produce nuclear and thermonuclear weapons covered by the freeze would be exercised in plants which are or could be used for such production.

To insure the implementation of other obligations, control would be established to be exercised in accordance with an agreed procedure in proper frontier railway, road, waterway junctions, sea and air ports.

The supervision and control could be exercised by mixed commissions composed of representatives of the Warsaw Pact and of the North Atlantic Treaty on a parity basis. Those commissions could be enlarged to include also representatives of other States. The composition, structure and procedure of the control organs will be the subject of detailed arrangements.

Parties whose armed forces are stationed in the area of the armaments freeze and which have at their disposal nuclear and thermonuclear weapons would exchange at periodical meetings of their representatives all information and reports indispensable for the implementation of the obligations with regard to the freezing of nuclear and thermonuclear armaments.

5. Provisions relating to the implementation of the proposal submitted above should be embodied in appropriate documents.

The Government of the Polish People's Republic is ready to enter into discussions and negotiations with the interested parties to reach an agreement on the implementation of these objectives.

The Polish Government will give due attention to all constructive suggestions which would be in accordance with the objectives of the present proposal and would aim at the freezing of armaments in Central Europe.

The Government of the Polish People's Republic expects a favourable attitude to the proposal submitted hereby.