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Reframing the Diplomat: Ernst van der Beugel and the Cold War Atlantic Community

Bloemendal, N.A.

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Author: Bloemendal, N.A.

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5. The Gaullist Challenge

Ernst van der Beugel regarded Charles de Gaulle's dream of an independent continental *Europe des patries* under French leadership as one of his worst nightmares endangering the post-war transatlantic relationship that he perceived to be fundamental to the security of Western Europe. It did not only threaten the evolution of the transatlantic relationship into a full blown Atlantic Community, but he feared it would also make the transatlantic ties that had been carefully woven during the preceding decades come apart at the seams. This threat to Atlantic unity, which he already perceived during his years as a civil servant, became even more pertinent during the early 1960's and – as mentioned in the preceding chapter – served as an important motivation for the continuation of Van der Beugel's role in transatlantic diplomacy in a private capacity. While much has been written on the transatlantic tensions caused by Charles de Gaulle during the 1960s, little attention has been paid to the role of the unofficial Atlantic elite and private foreign relations councils like the Bilderberg Meetings in trying to mediate these tensions.¹

Since the continuation of his role in the diplomatic process is key to what makes Ernst van der Beugel an interesting subject from the perspective of New Diplomatic History, this chapter will concentrate in more detail on what this 'diplomatic role' entailed, specifically in the context of the perceived Gaullist challenge to Atlantic unity. What did Van der Beugel try to achieve and why and what *modus operandi* did he apply to these ends? Through which channels did he move and what diplomatic tools did he wield as a private citizen? While it is clear who or what a formal diplomat represents, namely his or her country and its perceived national interest, this is less obvious for actors whose ties to the nation state have been severed – if they ever existed at all. Consequently, this also raises the question 'who or what did Ernst van der Beugel represent as a private actor on the diplomatic playing field?'

These questions will be at the heart not just of this chapter, but central to all three remaining chapters, each one focusing on Van der Beugel's private activities in response to a specific perceived threat to Atlantic unity. In doing so, they will also allow us to reflect on how Ernst van der Beugel's unofficial activities and the networks through which he moved related to the formal diplomatic realm, enabling a more holistic understanding of transatlantic diplomacy. Thus, true to the calling of New Diplomatic History these chapters will offer a more in depth exploration and analysis of the *process* and *machinery* of transatlantic

¹An excellent exception is the dissertation by Thomas Gijswijt, who does pay attention to the way in which the Bilderberg Meetings tried to deal with the Gaullist challenge. This chapter will offer new insight into the way in which the Bilderberg Meetings were used to address this challenge by incorporating different archival material, including newly released documents from the official Bilderberg Archive that shine new light on the role of the Bilderberg Secretariat and their attempts to manage the tensions following Charles de Gaulle's 1963 press conference. In addition, it places these Bilderberg Meetings in a broader context of unofficial efforts to counter the Gaullist challenge. See: Gijswijt, "Uniting the West", 243-278. For an overview of scholarly works on the Gaullist challenge to the Atlantic Community see: Sebastian Reyn, "Atlantis Lost," 21.

diplomacy with a focus on Ernst van der Beugel and the unofficial realm from which he operated. In doing so, they will demonstrate that an individual's 'diplomatic role' can better be determined by *what* our subjects do and *how* and *why* they do this than by where they sit in or out of officialdom.

Atlantic Crisis: A Nightmare Come True

"My nightmare of three years has come true", Ernst van der Beugel wrote to Henry Kissinger after President Charles de Gaulle's renowned press conference of January 14, 1963 had plunged both the EEC and the Atlantic alliance into a severe crisis. "How I long to talk to you. From time to time I have the feeling that you and I at our first meeting in the Golf Club in Wassenaar were practically the only human beings who saw what was coming."²

While Ernst van der Beugel had been terribly worried about Charles de Gaulle's rise to power since the 1950's, things seemed to look quite promising for the Atlantic alliance around 1960. The Western world had made a transition through the Marshall Plan, OEEC, EEC and NATO from a loose group of competing and quarreling nation states into a structured system of cooperation and interdependence that, from Van der Beugel's perspective, served as the foundation of an evolving Atlantic Community in the context of the Cold War. In July 1961 Britain had applied for membership of the EEC and – following the signing of the American Trade Expansion Act, which, according to Van der Beugel was meant to usher in "a new chapter in the evolution of the Atlantic Community"³ – President Kennedy introduced the concept of an Atlantic Partnership as part of his Grand Design for Western Europe. To be more precise, after declaring that the U.S. did not regard a strong and united Europe as a rival but as a partner, president Kennedy declared on July 4, 1962 that:

We see in such a Europe a partner with whom we can deal on a basis of full equality in all the great and burdensome tasks of building and defending a community of free nations. It would be premature at this time to do more than indicate the high regard with which we view the formation of this partnership. The first order of business is for our European friends to go forward in forming the more perfect union which will someday make this partnership possible.⁴

While he was skeptical about the emphasis the American president put on the precondition of the European countries to first form a "more perfect union" and about the idea that this European union (which would have to include the United Kingdom) would – or even should – prepare the way for a partnership between trans-Atlantic *equals*, these developments did arouse a sense of hope even in Ernst van der Beugel. As he put it: "It looked as if the process

² E.H. van der Beugel to H.A. Kissinger, February 19, 1963, file 7, EvdB.

³ Qtd. in: Van der Beugel, *From Marshall Aid to Atlantic Partnership: European Integration as a Concern of American Foreign Policy* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1966), 371.

⁴ John F. Kennedy, "Fourth of July Address at Independence Hall", Philadelphia, July 4, 1962, accessed 5 December 2016, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/jfkindependencehall.htm>.

of European integration would receive a new and indispensable momentum by the joining of the U.K. and other European countries and that a true partnership between the U.S. and a unified Europe could be embarked upon as a crowning achievement of this process of structuring the Western World, which was started around 1947.”⁵ On January 14, 1963 these hopes were crushed by Charles de Gaulle in what Ernst van der Beugel would describe as “a frontal attack on the concept of the Atlantic Partnership as conceived by the Kennedy administration and understood in a great part of Europe.”⁶

In his press conference, Charles de Gaulle expressed his intention to veto British membership to the Common Market while he underlined the affinity which, according to him, existed between the six continental countries. Meanwhile, he painted a picture of Great Britain as both an unwanted outsider and a rival challenging the Gaullist vision of European integration. By doing so, he clearly suggested that the differences between the Anglo-Saxons and the six were of a fundamental nature. Central to de Gaulle’s rejection of Great Britain were Britain’s close ties to the United States. De Gaulle equated British membership of the Common Market to the entry of an American Trojan horse, claiming that the EEC “would seem like a colossal Atlantic Community under American dependence and direction, and that is not at all what France wanted to do and is doing, which is a strictly European construction.”⁷ In addition, he rejected the supranational approach to European integration while promoting the centrality of the nation-state in an *Europe des patries*. He furthermore underlined the protectionist character he desired in the economic field (in particular with regard to a common agricultural policy) and claimed the right for France to develop its own nuclear arsenal, thereby rejecting the American idea to create a transatlantic multilateral nuclear force arguing that for the French “integration in this field is something that is unimaginable.”⁸ To make matters worse, de Gaulle’s press conference was followed eight days later by the signing of the Elysée Treaty; a Franco-German treaty of friendship “aimed at establishing common policies in foreign affairs, defense, education, and youth matters through an extensive system of bilateral meetings.”⁹ Thus, as Van der Beugel had feared, Charles de Gaulle came to represent a severe political challenge to the concept of European integration within an Atlantic framework under American leadership, which he perceived as fundamental to the security of the West in the context of the Cold War.

⁵ E.H. van der Beugel, “Introduction Prof. E.H. van der Beugel at the Atlantic Symposium”, Greenwich, October 3, 1967, box “Lezingen E.H. van der Beugel” (hereafter “Lezingen”), private archive Aukelien van Hoytema-van der Beugel (hereafter AHB).

⁶ Van der Beugel, *From Marshall Aid to Atlantic Partnership*, 376.

⁷ Qtd. in Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945: From “Empire” by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 123.

⁸ Qtd. in: Van der Beugel, *From Marshall Aid to Atlantic Partnership*, 378-379. See also: Sebastian Reyn, “Atlantis Lost: the American Experience with de Gaulle, 1958-1969” (PhD diss, Leiden University, 2007) p. 414-416; “The Multilateral Force Questions and Answers”, box 76, Arthur H. Dean Papers, Cornell University Library (CUL).

⁹ Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945*, 123.

Ernst van der Beugel had barely left KLM when Charles de Gaulle “dropped his bomb” on the hopes of those who desired a close-knit Atlantic partnership.¹⁰ While he was not surprised by this turn of events – after all he had warned against this for years – he was very upset about its consequences.¹¹ “I am terribly worried and after the first shock I see already in Europe that people still do not see the seriousness of what is happening,”¹² he told Kissinger. After the Franco-German Elysée treaty Van der Beugel also did not trust “the old man in Germany” anymore. Besides, he believed it was a “bad mark for Washington that they make the impression to be absolutely surprised by the events of the last months, and have not prepared any workable alternative.”¹³

As a response to these events and inspired by suspicions that the Elysée Treaty secretly incorporated nuclear ambitions, the Kennedy Administration had introduced a proposal within the NATO council in February to establish a multilateral nuclear force (MLF). The MLF-plan proposed the integration of a European nuclear force within NATO by producing a fleet of warships armed with Polaris ballistic missiles that were to be manned by mixed international crews under NATO command. Van der Beugel, who was not particularly thrilled by this idea, subsequently told Kissinger that he had the impression that the Americans were just trying “to patch things up” by means of the MLF project about which he had read a lot, but which nevertheless remained “completely unclear” to him. “Even if it would be clear”, Van der Beugel noted, “I do not think it would solve our problems.”¹⁴ Kissinger agreed that the multilateral force was not the answer: “I deplore General de Gaulle’s actions”, he replied. “On the other hand, a nuclear force in which the Germans will be the strongest single member does not send me exactly into simple transports of joy either.”¹⁵

So, what *should* be done? “I am deeply convinced that the Brussels’ process must be slowed down without throwing things away”, Van der Beugel told Kissinger in early March. “The only way the French will feel that they are deeply on the wrong track is to hurt them in their European plans and to a large extent Brussels is the place.”¹⁶ He hoped that the Dutch government would remain firm in its stand against de Gaulle as they had done in blocking the Gaullist attempt at creating a European Political Union by means of the Fouchet Plan in 1961-

10 E.H. van der Beugel to HRH Prince Bernhard, March 8, 1963, file 67, Collection “Bilderberg Conferenties: Secretariaat, 1952-2004” (hereafter “Bilderberg”), NAH.

¹¹ Van der Beugel, *From Marshall Aid to Atlantic Partnership*, 376, 377. As van der Beugel put it in his dissertation: “For those who read and analyzed his [de Gaulle’s] writings and speeches, the veto to Britain’s entry not only could be expected but was an inevitable consequence of the Gaullist concept (...) The optimism of the United States and most European countries about the outcome of the negotiations between the Community in Brussels and the United Kingdom was unfounded. The contents of the press conference of January 1963, were not new. They were a strictly logical consequence of everything De Gaulle had written or said in the previous years.”

¹² E.H. van der Beugel to H.A. Kissinger, 19 February 1963, file 7, EvdB.

¹³ E.H. van der Beugel to H.A. Kissinger, March 4, 1963, file 7, EvdB.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ H.A. Kissinger to E.H. van der Beugel, March 6, 1963, Correspondence from the private archive of dr. Henry A. Kissinger’ (hereafter “HAK”); H.A. Kissinger to E.H. van der Beugel, March 15, 1963, HAK.

¹⁶ E.H. van der Beugel to H.A. Kissinger, 4 March 1963, file 7, EvdB..

1962.¹⁷ While slowing things down in Europe, Van der Beugel believed that – as Kissinger had proposed in his January 1963 *Foreign Affairs* article “Strains on the Alliance”¹⁸ – “we should give serious thought to the Atlantic Community idea” and that this “should be done in a different way as we proceed in Europe, by which I mean that politics must have priority over economics.”¹⁹

Meanwhile, the prominent Dutch political journalist and columnist Jérôme Heldring perceived a useful role for Ernst van der Beugel in countering the negative effects de Gaulle’s actions might have for the transatlantic relationship. In a column published on the 10th of February Heldring warned his readers about the risks of antagonizing the American Congress.²⁰ “A Congress that for whatever reason would turn not only anti-French, but anti-European would be able to block all the pretty Atlantic plans of the Administration”, he argued. Even worse, it might turn away from Europe altogether by driving the Americans back into isolationism. Since the U.S. Congress depended more directly on the favor of the American public it would be of fundamental importance for the survival of Atlantic cooperation not to create the impression among the American public that “the anti-American de Gaulle” represented general European sentiments. To achieve this, Heldring called for the deployment of the Dutch public diplomacy apparatus for “an intelligent campaign” to prevent any such identification of the other Western European countries with the person and policies of Charles de Gaulle in the eyes of the American public. More specifically he argued that:

Such a campaign should not only be executed by civil servants of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Not because we hold anything against them, but because as civil servants they are less free in their expressions and formulations than a private individual would be. For that reason, such a campaign should also include the deployment of private individuals who – and that goes without saying – share the vision of the government, but who are not bound to a specific text, cautiously composed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or its embassy in Washington.²¹

From Heldring’s perspective these private individuals should be exempted from their daily occupations for a certain period “to give lectures in the United States and to maintain other

¹⁷ For the Dutch and the Fouchet Plan see: Jan van der Harst, “Dutch and U.S. Assessments of European Political integration”, in *Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations*, ed. Hans Krabbendam, Cornelis A. van Minnen and Giles Scott-Smith (Amsterdam: Boom, 2009); 641-651; Mathieu Segers, “De Gaulle’s Race to the Bottom: The Netherlands, France and the Interwoven Problems of British EEC Membership and European Political Union, 1958-1963”, *Contemporary European History*, 19 (2010): 111-132.

¹⁸ Kissinger, Henry A. “Strains on the Alliance”, *Foreign Affairs*, 41:2 (1963): 261-285.

¹⁹ E.H. van der Beugel to H.A. Kissinger, 4 March 1963, file 7, EvdB.

²⁰ This column was possibly a response to a column James Reston published in the New York Times on January 21, in which Reston argued that the United States would not be prepared to “defend a Europe which questions American good faith” and rejected Great Britain. Adenauer, Reston wrote, would have to choose between France and the United States. In a remarkable sign of US anger at de Gaulle, the State Department instructed its European embassies to make ‘urgent use’ of Reston’s column since it reflected the views of the White House.” See: Thomas Gijsswijt, “Uniting the West: The Bilderberg Group, the Cold War and European Integration 1952-1977” (PhD diss., Heidelberg University, 2007), 265.

²¹ J.L. Heldring, *De Rotterdamer*, 10 February 1963 (translation mine).

kinds of contact with Americans.”²² For this job, Heldring had two individuals in particular in mind, both of whom were well versed in the issues concerned and, also not unimportant, able to speak “with ease and authority” on these matters: Ernst van der Beugel and his former colleague at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs professor Jaap Kymmell.²³ Heldring warned his readers that like most public diplomacy campaigns, the purpose would be *preventive* action, meaning that no one should expect any tangible results because prevention cannot be measured in retrospect, but this did not make the job any less valuable.²⁴ While nothing indicates that the Dutch government took up the task assigned to them by Heldring in response to the column, Ernst van der Beugel did not need government direction to see that as a private individual he still had a role to play in countering the Gaullist challenge to transatlantic relations. In fact, this role would not be restricted to the private efforts at public diplomacy described by Heldring either.

While he hoped that the Dutch government would remain firm in its stance against de Gaulle and that the Americans would come up with a workable alternative to the Gaullist challenge to Kennedy’s goal of an Atlantic Partnership, Van der Beugel also went to work through his own private activities. Two weeks after de Gaulle’s press conference, he paid a visit to Paris with Prince Bernhard in preparation of the forthcoming Bilderberg conference in March 1963, which coincidentally happened to be planned in France.²⁵ The trip also offered Van der Beugel a chance to take the temperature of the situation in the French capital, which exceeded his already existing worries. “The mess in Europe and in our Atlantic world is worse than even I – and you know how pessimistic I was – expected”, Van der Beugel wrote to the American Bilderberger, publisher of Life Magazine, and expert on psychological warfare C.D. Jackson upon his return. “How are we going to do the repair job?” From Van der Beugel’s perspective, much depended on the upcoming Bilderberg conference in Cannes.²⁶

Beyond ‘facilitation’: the run-up to the Bilderberg Meeting in Cannes

After having been admitted to a hospital in early January 1963 to recover from the exhaustion caused by his turbulent times at KLM, Ernst van der Beugel decided to take things somewhat easier by “going in the sabbatical business” for a while.²⁷ In the process, he decided to embark on writing a doctors thesis in the form of a book on European integration as a

²² Ibid.

²³ Jaap Kymmell worked under van der Beugel at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see chapter 3) and in 1963 he would become van der Beugel’s doctoral supervisor at the University of Rotterdam.

²⁴ J.L. Heldring, *De Rotterdammer*, 10 February 1963.

²⁵ During this trip van der Beugel had met with the French Bilderberg Steering Committee members Baumgartner and Nebolsine among others. He also met with Sali de Gorter of the Dutch embassy to discuss a press communique about the Bilderberg Conference which de Gorter would make sure to spread among French journalists in advance of the conference. “Vergadering ten kantore van de Heer Rijkens, 22 February 1963, file 55, Bilderberg.

²⁶ E.H. van der Beugel to C.D. Jackson, 29 January 1963, box 109, C.D. Jackson Papers, EPL.

²⁷ “Rust voor v.d. Beugel”, *Het Parool*, 5 January 1963; E.H. van der Beugel to C.D. Jackson, 25 April, 1963, box 109, C.D. Jackson Papers, EPL.

concern of American foreign policy – a decision that also gave him more time to focus on his private diplomatic activities.

After his resignation from KLM worries arose among the American Bilderbergers that Van der Beugel might also consider leaving his post at Bilderberg. They showed great relief when Prince Bernhard assured them that these worries were ungrounded.²⁸ In reality Van der Beugel would only start to invest more time in Bilderberg by taking up more of the ‘diplomatic work’ as described by John Pomian after Van der Beugel’s succession of Retinger. Next to the fact that he had more time on his hands, Van der Beugel believed that Bilderberg’s importance had only increased with the revitalized Gaullist challenge to Atlantic unity. “Precisely under the current political tensions a Bilderberg conference could lead to constructive results,” he believed, “because it could create an opportunity to reduce, in an atmosphere of trust, the contradictions that have developed in Atlantic relations – the very goal of Bilderberg.”²⁹ In a letter to Prince Bernhard, Van der Beugel underlined the high stakes of the Cannes conference, pointing out that next to opportunities there were also very serious risks involved:

There is no doubt that this will be one of the most complicated conferences that Your Royal Highness will have to chair in the context of Bilderberg. The situation is explosive; the subjects are explosive; the participants are explosive and, in addition, it has become clear from my conversations that nobody knows what should happen after the General’s intervention. Both the Americans and the English lack a policy; the Germans are floating more than ever and the state of the Alliance is, in my opinion more serious and more confused than has ever been the case since 1945. All of this makes the Bilderberg conference extremely important, because it is the first time that this kind of group comes together after De Gaulle dropped his bomb. However, if the conference is not steered into the right direction, it contains grave dangers (...). In fact, it would not be difficult, for example, to chase all the French on one big angry heap during the first half hour, but it will be difficult to have these days end with a somewhat positive impression.³⁰

To steer the conference in the ‘right’ direction, Van der Beugel considered it “necessary that this time the Prince would give a rather strong guidance as to the atmosphere and proceedings of the discussion.”³¹ During a meeting of the core group of the European secretariat, which referred to itself as the ‘small committee’ and whose members were all Dutch³², it was decided that Van der Beugel would write an introductory note for the Prince

²⁸ Joseph E. Johnson to HRH Prince Bernhard, 28 January 1963, box 76, file 2, Arthur H. Dean Papers, CUL; Prince Bernhard to Joseph E. Johnson, 19 January, 1963, box 76, file 2, Arthur H. Dean Papers, CUL.

²⁹ E.H. van der Beugel to HRH Prince Bernhard, February 5, 1963, file 67, Bilderberg, NAH (translation mine).

³⁰ E.H. van der Beugel to HRH Prince Bernhard, 8 March 1963, file 67, Bilderberg (translation mine).

³¹ E.H. van der Beugel to Wilfrid S. Baumgartner and George Nebolsine, March 8, 1963, file 21, Bilderberg.

³² The European secretariat consisted next to van der Beugel of Secretary Arnold Lamping, Treasurer Paul Rijkens, A.E. van Braam Houckgeest (the personal secretary of Prince Bernhard) and two secretarial assistants.

to be presented at the beginning of the conference, which, after discussion in the small committee and approval by the Prince, would first be sent to all the members of the Steering Committee one week before the conference after which it would also be distributed to the other participants.³³

This introductory note, which started with some general remarks on Bilderberg stating that “What we have always tried to do is to analyze and to discuss problems of mutual concern and in our different jobs try to influence our friends outside Bilderberg with the aim of strengthening the Western Community and of fostering a better understanding not only between Europe and our North American friends but also inside Europe itself”, provided clear guidelines for the discussions in Cannes. While recognizing “that there are important disagreements within the Western Alliance”³⁴, the note warned the participants that they “should try to avoid being “too explosive” about some of the issues which have come so much into the open during recent months” and encouraged them “to analyze rather than to attack and finally to try to define what should happen from now on.”³⁵ In order to do this, a few specific points on which there seemed to be a wide divergence of opinion were introduced, including the following questions to guide the discussion:

- A. Will the growing strength of Europe tend to lead to a competition between Europe and the U.S. in the market of world power, or will it lead to an equal partnership in a single enterprise? What are the conditions for such a partnership? We should be more specific than we have been till now.
- B. Is the idea of a multilateral or multinational nuclear force a panacea for the troubles of the Alliance? What exactly does it mean? How is the problem of the ultimate political control of such a force to be solved? What is the relevance of this concept to the current general disarray of the alliance?
- C. How will economic relations between the Western countries be affected by the breakdown of the Brussels negotiations? Is the Trade Expansion Act a workable instrument after this breakdown? What chances are there after the Brussels breakdown for a more liberal trade pattern in the Western World and what can be done to avoid a further cleavage between the most important trading blocs?³⁶

³³ “Bespreking bij de Heer Rijkens”, March 8, 1963, file 55, Bilderberg; E.H. van der Beugel to HRH Prince Bernhard, 13 March 1963, file 67, Bilderberg.

³⁴ Van der Beugel’s original version actually mentioned “a deep schism” within the Western alliance, but this was taken out because it was considered to be too pessimistic. See: “Bespreking bij de heer Rijkens”, 8 March 1963, file 55, Bilderberg.

³⁵ Bilderberg Secretariat, “Preliminary Note Bilderberg Conferences Cannes 1963”, file 67, Bilderberg.

³⁶ Ibid.

These questions – which focused on analyzing the troubles faced by the Atlantic Community and practical instruments to overcome them – would remain central to discussions in Bilderberg during the ensuing years. What is more, the Bilderberg Secretariat had also already put some thought into the desirable outcome. During a meeting at the office of Bilderberg treasurer and founding chairman of Unilever Paul Rijkens, the ‘small committee’ under leadership of Ernst van der Beugel laid down a very specific aim for the upcoming Bilderberg conference with regard to *point A* of the introductory paper, stating that the “goal” of the Cannes conference should be to formulate a “better definition” for the concept of Atlantic Partnership, which would “not include the danger of a third force.” The report of this meeting of the European Secretariat states explicitly that “the Prince should work towards this.”³⁷ Thus, while it is often argued by those involved in the meetings that the Bilderberg conferences simply offered a meeting place facilitating a free exchange of views, a close study of the reports of the meetings of the European secretariat’s ‘small committee’ show that the Dutch organizers in fact had more specific goals and consciously tried to steer the conferences into a very specific Atlanticist direction.

While the Kennedy administration’s concept of Atlantic partnership implicitly excluded the idea of an integrated Europe as a third force, Van der Beugel believed that the Americans had been too vague about the kind of integrated Europe they desired (namely an Atlantic oriented Europe), and, consequently, too indiscriminatory in their support for any form of European integration that moved the process of a closer union among the Western European countries forward. As he wrote to Kissinger, “European integration is not *persé* a contribution to the strength of the Western World. If we give priority to the cohesion of the Atlantic World, European integration is only a contribution to that cohesion on specific conditions which have till now not been fulfilled. My preliminary opinion is that the support of the United States Administration up until 1963 to the continental European integration has not been discriminatory enough.”³⁸

Thus, what was needed, from Van der Beugel’s perspective, was a clear rejection of the Gaullist conception of an integrated continental Europe as a third force. It was important to remind everybody involved that this conception was incompatible with the goal of Atlantic Partnership and that any movement into this direction would undermine the transatlantic relationship. In addition, a rejection of the Gaullist conception by the European participants would be important to reassure the Americans that de Gaulle – whose actions not surprisingly had caused resentment among the Americans – did not speak for all of Europe.³⁹ At the same time, while trying to isolate the French, it was important that the meeting should not

³⁷ See: “Vergadering ten kantore van de Heer Rijkens”, 27 February 1963, file 55, Bilderberg (translation mine): “Doel conferentie: betere definitie te geven voor 'equal partnership' wat niet mag insluiten het gevaar van een 3de macht. De Prins moet hier naar toe werken.”

³⁸ E.H. van der Beugel to H.A. Kissinger, 5 September 1963, HAK. The EDC and the Fouchet Plan were examples of occasions in which the Americans had been ‘not discriminatory enough’.

³⁹ This, and in particular the effect on American public opinion, was also emphasized during the Cannes conference by an American participant. See: “Cannes Conference report.” Accessed December 5, 2016. <http://file.wikileaks.org/file/bilderberg-meetings-report-1963.pdf>.

estrangle or antagonize the French either – hence the warning to Prince Bernhard not to “chase them all on one big angry heap” and the cautious emphasis on not being “too explosive” and on “analyzing” instead of “attacking” in the introductory note.⁴⁰

The relationship with the French furthermore had to be treated with extra delicacy since several French participants had left the previous Bilderberg conference with a rather bad taste in their mouths. This was at least partly due to the fact that a New York Times column by James Reston that was critical of Charles de Gaulle had been a big hit at the 1962 Saltsjöbaden conference. In the column, Reston had drafted a fable in which various statesmen and countries were represented by animals – with Adenauer as an old fox, Macmillan as a lion, the United States as a buffalo and de Gaulle as a Giraffe (which was very proud and “taller than the Washington Monument, and he thought he could see farther than all the other animals”). As Thomas Gijswijt has pointed out, “the morale of the story was that if the giraffe and the old fox kept the lion out of the forest this might anger the buffalo that was responsible for defending the forest. Once the buffalo was gone and the old giraffe had died, the foxes took over. The bear in the East did not like this. Together with the tiger (China), the bear thereupon ate all the foxes and the giraffes.” The Bilderberg secretariat had distributed copies of this column to all conference participants and, at the conference “all the representatives referred to international personages by animal name rather than surname.” This whole episode had caused French participants to protest “against this insult to their Chief of State”. It probably did not help that the giraffe died of “a terrible sore throat.”⁴¹

This episode may also have contributed to the fact that President De Gaulle considered the 1962 conference in Saltsjöbaden to be “overly critical of France.”⁴² During the preparations for the upcoming Bilderberg Meeting, which was planned to take place in Cannes, the French government initially even insisted that the conference should avoid “acutely controversial issues.”⁴³ By doing so, they clearly demonstrated how seriously official government representatives took these unofficial meetings. In response, Van der Beugel prepped Prince Bernhard in November 1962 for a conversation with French “Bilderberg ambassador” Wilfrid Baumgartner by advising him to make it absolutely clear to the Frenchman that any request for topical restrictions meant to evade subjects sensitive to the French were in fact an “attack on the essence of Bilderberg.” The eventual conversation seemed to have its desired effect as Baumgartner afterwards convinced De Gaulle that the conference could only be hosted by the French if the government “refrained from trying to

⁴⁰ This caution in not angering the French might also have been influenced by events at the 1962 conference in Saltsjöbaden, Sweden, where a James Reston column which was critical of Charles de Gaulle had been a big hit. See: Gijswijt, “Uniting the West”, 263.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 269.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Joseph E. Johnson, “Memorandum for the American Steering Committee”, 25 October 1962, box 76, Arthur H. Dean Papers, CUL; “Copie telegram van de Heer van der Beugel”, 11 October 1962, file 62, Bilderberg: “Baumgartner told me last night after consultations with Pompidou that meeting is all right provided that subject would be agreeable to French.” See also: Gijswijt, “Uniting the West”, 269.

influence the discussions” after which the General gave in and agreed to welcome the Bilderberg conference without any conditions.⁴⁴

After the events of January 1963, the Bilderberg secretariat considered it of fundamental importance to keep the French engaged in the transatlantic conversation. Especially during this time of crisis the channels of communication had to remain wide open to avoid transatlantic estrangement, both intellectual – with regard to policy – but also on a very personal human level. During the 1960’s, in the absence of a formal trans-Atlantic political structure, the Bilderberg conferences served as a vibrant forum for this very purpose.⁴⁵ The Bilderberg secretariat tried to manage the transatlantic relationship and its challenges as well as possible by keeping everybody engaged in the Atlantic conversation, offering a channel for venting frustrations and irritations, fostering mutual understanding and reconciling differences. Ernst van der Beugel regarded Bilderberg as an important tool for mediating trans-Atlantic tensions before they would escalate and blow up the alliance during a very explosive situation. The Atlantic alliance had to be guided, as well as possible, through these stormy weathers. To this end, first of all, everybody was to remain aboard. Secondly, the ship had to be steered towards the Atlantic.

Cannes, 1963: “We now know what we are up against.”

In retrospect, Ernst van der Beugel regarded the Bilderberg conference in Cannes as “an exceptionally good meeting as far as the level of the participants and the frankness of their statements” was concerned but also “gloomy as to what it brought to the surface about the future.”⁴⁶ His pessimistic impressions concerning the state of the alliance had once more been confirmed. The Americans had been “off balance” and had no alternative policy after the breakdown of Brussels. The Germans appeared more confused than ever and the British were in a very difficult position as a result of their domestic scene.⁴⁷

The political topic on the agenda was introduced by the preliminary note Van der Beugel had drafted for Prince Bernhard followed by a paper by the Italian ambassador to Great Britain, Pietro Quaroni with the rather vague title “The Balance of Power in the Light of Recent International Developments”. During a meeting of the Bilderberg Secretariat, Deputy Secretary-General Lamping had asked Van der Beugel whether he did not want to prepare a

⁴⁴ Gijswijt, “Uniting the West”, 269; E.H. van der Beugel to HRH Prince Bernhard, 6 November 1962, file 62, Bilderberg (translation mine): “Zo scherp mogelijk gesteld, kan men zeggen, dat Baumgartner heeft aangeduid, dat er restricties zouden moeten worden geplaatst op de onderwerpen, die ter Bilderberg-conferentie in Frankrijk ter sprake zouden komen om Franse gevoeligheden te vermijden.”

⁴⁵ For a more elaborate study of how the Bilderberg Group reacted to the Gaullist challenge to both the Atlantic Alliance and an integrated Europe see chapter 5: Atlantic Partnership vs. l’Europe des Patries, 1958-1966, in: Gijswijt, “Uniting the West”, 229-292.

⁴⁶ E.H. van der Beugel to H.A. Kissinger, April 4, 1963, HAK; E.H. van der Beugel to S.G. Warburg, 11 April 1963, file 7, EvdB. From the American side participants included Undersecretary of State George W. Ball, Assistant Secretary for International Affairs of the Defense Department Paul H. Nitze, American ambassador to Germany McGhee and the State Department’s Director of Atlantic Policy Studies, Harold van B. Cleveland.

⁴⁷ E.H. van der Beugel to S.G. Warburg, 11 April 1963, file 7, EvdB.

speech for the conference himself, but Van der Beugel did not consider this necessary since his views were already reflected in Ambassador Quaroni's paper.⁴⁸ In his paper Quaroni emphasized the need "to remain loyal to NATO and to accept American superiority as a fact" – matters the conference participants "could generally adhere to", according to the conference report. Quaroni furthermore expressed bitter regret concerning the breakdown of the negotiations between the United Kingdom and the E.E.C. which he described as "a blow from which European integration might never recover."⁴⁹

In response to Quaroni's speech, Jacques Baumel, the Secretary-General of the French Gaullist party *Union pour la Nouvelle République*, very candidly shared Charles de Gaulle's perspective on Atlantic relations in an exposé that, to Van der Beugel's satisfaction, was "practically universally rejected"⁵⁰ by the participants of the Bilderberg conference. As van der Beugel confided to Henry Kissinger:

The French were absolutely impossible; the Gaullists stated their case and the others amongst whom Faure, former Prime Ministers and people like Fontaine and Baumgartner did not really dare to speak up. Since 1944 I never had the feeling that fascism was in a room where I was, but now I had. If after the Bilderberg meeting anybody would have any illusion about their attitude they must be nuts.⁵¹

The nuclear issue played an important role in Baumel's speech in which he "rejected the concept of a multilateral or multinational NATO nuclear force, and expressed the determination of the French government to continue with its policy of maintaining its own national nuclear deterrent." Baumel particularly stressed the Gaullist distrust of the American willingness to come to the aid of the European countries in all circumstances. While several Europeans, including some French participants, took issue with this statement, as with several others, there were also a few Europeans who appeared to share the Gaullist view. According to an American report for the Ford Foundation "this expression of doubt on the part of the Europeans aroused some bitter comments by Americans, who felt that our past performance gave no indication that we would not honor our pledge to defend Europe." In response, two Kennedy Administration officials defended the MLF, which was subsequently also supported by "several European speakers."⁵²

Deputy Secretary-General Arnold Lamping left the conference convinced that "the Gaullists had felt their isolation." He believed that the American statements, which had expressed "a deep-felt disappointment" concerning de Gaulle's recent actions, had left a deep impression on the participants. In addition, the French opposition to de Gaulle "seemed satisfied" since the meeting had provided them "the opportunity to voice their objections

⁴⁸ "Vergadering ten kantore van de heer Rijkens", 22 February 1963, file 55, Bilderberg.

⁴⁹ "Cannes Conference report."

⁵⁰ A.T. Lamping, "Rapport Conferentie Cannes", 3 July 1963, file 21, Bilderberg.

⁵¹ E.H. van der Beugel to H.A. Kissinger, 4 April 1963, Correspondence E.H. van der Beugel, HAK.

⁵² "Grant file Bilderberg 56-341", Reel 5473, FFA, RAC.

against the politics of their president at an international forum of a very high caliber”⁵³ – an opportunity which, according to Lamping, they received less and less. As his comment to Kissinger concerning the non-Gaullist French participants of the conference already indicated, Van der Beugel was not particularly satisfied as to the use they had made of this opportunity – a point he also stressed in a letter to Peter Fleck: “The French case was completely hopeless and the worst thing was how much the Gaullist thinking-terror influences people like Aron, Fontaine, Baumgartner, not to mention the former-premiers *who were present, but did not speak.*”⁵⁴

The official report of the conference⁵⁵, which was afterwards distributed among the participants, and which Van der Beugel also circulated within his own social network, deliberately paid a great deal of attention to the exposé of Jacques Baumel because the secretariat considered it very valuable that “for the first time a clear, complete overview had been given of the Atlantic politics of General de Gaulle.”⁵⁶ Indeed, according to a report by the Ford Foundation, “several participants expressed the opinion afterwards that this was the most forthright presentation of the Gaullist point of view ever put forth in any forum.”⁵⁷ The Secretariat’s report also gave ample attention to the isolation of the Gaullists at the conference. As secretary Lamping put it: “The ‘*Baumel seul*’ motif runs as the main thread through the entire report, which clearly reflects that the propositions brought forward by de Gaulle’s spokesperson were practically unanimously rejected.”⁵⁸ As the Ford Foundation report pointed out, however, there was also some support for some of Baumel’s arguments, which might suggest that the official report may have exaggerated the *Baumel seul motif* somewhat. Nevertheless, the American undersecretary of State George Ball left the conference “convinced that the majority of Europeans did not accept de Gaulle as their true spokesman,”⁵⁹ which suggests one of the key goals of the European Secretariat had been met. At the same time, the Bilderberg Conference had succeeded in not estranging or antagonizing the French. French participants had even expressed appreciation of “the way in which, and the atmosphere in which, they had been given the full opportunity to express the French views.” When deputy Secretary-General Lamping contacted Jacques Baumel afterwards to inquire about his experience of the Bilderberg meeting the Frenchman mentioned that he would gladly be present again during a subsequent conference “*si le Prince me ferait l'honneur de m'inviter à nouveau.*” “Not a bad result”, Lamping concluded.⁶⁰

⁵³ A.T. Lamping, “Afterthoughts after Cannes”, 11 July 1963, file 21, Bilderberg (translation mine).

⁵⁴ E.H. van der Beugel to Peter Fleck, 1 May 1963, file 7, EvdB (translation mine, emphasis mine).

⁵⁵ “Cannes Conference report.”

⁵⁶ A.T. Lamping, “Rapport Conferentie Cannes”, 3 July 1963, file 21, Bilderberg (translation mine).

⁵⁷ “Grant file Bilderberg 56-341”, Reel 5473, FFA, RAC.

⁵⁸ A.T. Lamping, “Rapport Conferentie Cannes”, 3 July 1963, file 21, Bilderberg (translation mine).

⁵⁹ Gijswijt, “Uniting the West”, 276.

⁶⁰ A.T. Lamping. “Afterthoughts after Cannes”, 11 July 1963, file 21, Bilderberg, NAH (translation mine).

From the perspective of the Ford Foundation, a major private sponsor of the conferences, the Bilderberg Meeting in Cannes had provided a welcome addition to the formal diplomatic process. “For the first time since General de Gaulle’s January pronouncement, the Bilderberg meeting provided a quiet and unpublicized opportunity for leading French figures to meet with other European and American members of the Bilderberg Group for serious and frank discussions of the Atlantic situation” where “contacts were re-established, and a free exchange of opinions took place that could not have occurred in an official gathering.”⁶¹

“I think that Cannes was a great success for everybody involved. We now know what we are up against,”⁶² Van der Beugel told American Steering Committee member C.D. Jackson. “I completely agree that the recent Bilderberg was one of the best, if not absolutely the best we have ever had”, Jackson replied. “To be sure, events played into your hands, but you and the Prince took extremely skillful advantage of them. I have a strong suspicion that the ripples from Cannes will have an effect on important American-European events for many months to come. I cannot conceive that Baumel did not report *un certain froid* to his boss, and conceivably this week’s sudden cordiality may be a direct result.”⁶³

The MLF Conversion: from “patch-up” tool to instrument for Atlantic cohesion.

Despite Ernst van der Beugel’s satisfaction about the isolation of the Gaullists at the Cannes conference, he also perceived considerable room for improvement – in particular with regard to the American role and attitude. In Cannes, the Americans had appeared to be “off balance” and failed to put forward any alternative policy that could move Atlantic cooperation forward after the Brussels breakdown of January 1963. Consequently, while preparing the 1964 conference, which was to be held in Williamsburg Virginia, Van der Beugel focused his efforts on trying to make sure that the Americans would show more strength and initiative in the hope that some constructive movement in otherwise stagnant transatlantic relations would be attained. While he had initially been rather skeptical about the American plans for a multilateral atomic force, in the run-up to the Williamsburg conference Van der Beugel came to embrace the MLF as one of the most promising means to this end.

It appears that Ernst van der Beugel changed his mind about the MLF after a visit to the United States in the fall of 1963. After he spent four weeks at Harvard, where he was invited by Henry Kissinger to do research for his dissertation and to give some lectures, Van der Beugel exchanged Cambridge for Washington where he met with several key members of the American foreign policy establishment including National Security Advisor MacGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to the President Arthur Schlesinger Jr., former Secretaries of State Christian

⁶¹ “Request for Grant Action, General program of the Bilderberg Conference Group, Supplement No. 3”, April 17, 1968, Ford Foundation Grant Files, Bilderberg 56-341, Reel 5464, FFA, RAC.

⁶² E.H. van der Beugel to C.D. Jackson, 3 April 1963, box 109, C.D. Jackson Papers, EPL.

⁶³ C.D. Jackson to E.H. van der Beugel, 10 April 1963, box 109, C.D. Jackson Papers, EPL.

Herter and Dean Acheson and Vice Chairman of the Atlantic Council Theodore Achilles.⁶⁴ At the State Department Van der Beugel met with Deputy Assistant Secretary for Atlantic Affairs Robert Schaetzel, Director of Atlantic Political and Economic Affairs Deane R. Hinton as well as with the Director of Policy Planning Walt Whitman Rostow and Henry Owen at the Policy Planning Council to discuss European-American relations and the upcoming Bilderberg Meeting about which they were “extremely well informed” according to Van der Beugel.⁶⁵ George Ball – who together with Schaetzel and Owen belonged to a group of the most avid promoters of the MLF who due to their “quasi-religious devotion”⁶⁶ to this policy were also known as ‘the theologians’ – had arranged the meetings at the State Department where his colleagues were eager to convert influential Europeans to their cause. They were convinced that European opinion on the proposal would to a large extent determine the American administration’s attitude towards the plan.⁶⁷ In March 1963 George Ball and Robert Bowie had already communicated to Max Kohnstamm that it would help if European support for the MLF would be voiced, because they did not want the MLF to be looked at as a Kennedy scheme. They regarded the Bilderberg Meetings as an important channel through which this could be accomplished.⁶⁸

The MLF campaign at the State department dovetailed nicely with Van der Beugel’s search for an American policy initiative that could create a new constructive dynamic in transatlantic relations. Van der Beugel would never really be thrilled about the MLF’s military-strategic virtues,⁶⁹ but he came to see great merit in its role as a political tool to cement a stronger transatlantic relationship, especially since he came to believe – like George Ball – that it could serve as one of the most concrete means to demonstrate opposition to Charles de Gaulle.⁷⁰ After all, the realization of a multilateral nuclear force in NATO would thwart the possibility that de Gaulle could create a French hegemony in Europe based on his *force de frappe*. “You convinced me about the multilateral force”, Van der Beugel wrote to Henry Owen after their meeting at the State department. “I immediately went to work on this point and I hope and expect that a positive attitude will be taken [at the upcoming Bilderberg

⁶⁴ Former U.S. Secretary of State Christian Herter served as a Trade Representative for both John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. He was an avid Atlanticist who was active in private organizations devoted to transatlantic relations such as the Atlantic Council and the Atlantic Institute.

⁶⁵ E.H. van der Beugel to G. W. Ball, 21 November 1963, box 96, folder 8, George W. Ball Papers, PUL; G.W. Ball to E.H. van der Beugel, 27 October 1963, file 7, EvdB, NAH.

⁶⁶ Andrew Priest, “George W. Ball, the Multilateral Force and the Transatlantic Alliance,” in *Atlantic, Euratlantic, or Europe-America? The Atlantic Community and Europe 2*, ed. G. Scott-Smith and V. Aubourg (Paris: Soleb 2011) 172-191.

⁶⁷ Gijswijt, “Uniting the West”, 279.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 297, footnote 160.

⁶⁹ E.H. van der Beugel to Ivo Samkalden, 4 June 1964, file 7, EvdB. “Whether the MLF is strategically or militarily the best instrument is, in this context, irrelevant”.

⁷⁰ E.H. van der Beugel to H.A. Kissinger, 16 January 1964, file 7, EvdB: “The way to demonstrate that we are opponents of de Gaulle’s policy is available in NATO and in eventually joining the multilateral force and is certainly not in joining a political set up which is his greatest desire.”; EvdB to I. Samkalden, 3 March 1964, file 7, EvdB: “De enige vruchtbare weg om te laten zien dat wij het niet met de Gaulle eens zijn, vooral begaan moet worden, door op concrete issues de wijzen, dat wij de Franse conceptie niet delen. Wij hebben in de NATO en daarbuiten gelegenheid genoeg om dat te doen. Het lid worden van de multilaterale kernmacht is één van de voorbeelden.”

Conference].”⁷¹ To this end, Owen and his colleagues at the State department had also done suggestions for possible participants for the Bilderberg Conference which Van der Beugel considered “extremely valuable.”⁷²

Ernst van der Beugel was not the only one who went to work on the MLF in preparation for the 1964 Bilderberg conference. Once the final guest list for the Bilderberg Meeting had been composed, the State department’s Office of the Special Assistant for the MLF contacted key American participants in March 1964 to provide them with information kits containing “general background information on the latest thinking about the aims, purposes, and possible form of the MLF” as it had emerged at the State Department.⁷³ Since they could only distribute unclassified material, the State department also arranged personal briefings on the MLF through which the department could better prepare American Bilderberg participants with regards to “such factors as attitudes of the key political elements and personalities in the various countries involved, general tactical considerations, and projected schedules for further steps.”⁷⁴

Transatlantic family quarrels: the lingering rivalry of Europeanists vs. Atlanticists

Shortly after Van der Beugel returned home in November 1963, President Kennedy was assassinated. Kennedy’s European policy, including the concept of an equal Atlantic partnership between the United States and an integrated Europe, also known as the ‘dumbbell’ idea, had been greatly influenced by the ideas of Jean Monnet. Central to this was the influential position of Monnet’s close friend and apprentice George Ball – “one of the strongest and most self-consciously ‘European’ personalities ever to set foot in Foggy Bottom” – who, as Undersecretary of State under both Kennedy and Johnson, dominated the State Department’s European policy.⁷⁵ While Van der Beugel and Ball were on good terms with each other and agreed on many things – including the political value of the MLF and the need to oppose Gaullism – their priorities with regard to the process of European integration and the development of an Atlantic Community were different. In fact, the struggle about the structure of the Atlantic relationship was not just a rivalry between third-force-Gaullists and those who recognized and welcomed the United States as a European power and desired to maintain close-transatlantic ties. There also still existed a clear rivalry *among* those who favored an Atlantic-oriented Europe, especially with regards to the role and shape of European integration in the broader Atlantic framework and the strategy that should be

⁷¹ E.H. van der Beugel to Henry D. Owen, 25 November 1963, file 7, EvdB.

⁷² Ibid.; E.H. van der Beugel to George W. Ball, 21 November 1963, box 96, folder 96, George W. Ball Papers, PUL.

⁷³ Gerard C. Smith to Arthur H. Dean, 5 March 1964, box 76, file 2A, Arthur H. Dean Papers, CUL.

⁷⁴ Gerard C. Smith to Arthur H. Dean, March 5, 1964, box 76, file 2A “De Bilderberg Group/General”, Arthur H. Dean Papers, CUL. These personal briefings were arranged for Dean Acheson, Arthur Dean, Senator William Fulbright (Dem.), Representative Chet Holifield (Dem.), C.D. Jackson, Senator Henry Jackson (Dem.), Senator Jacob Javits (Rep.), John McCloy and Shepard Stone. See: Gijswijt, “Uniting the West”, 280.

⁷⁵ Kenneth Weisbrode, *The Atlantic Century: Four Generations of Extraordinary Diplomats who Forged America’s Vital Alliance With Europe* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2009) 157.

pursued with regard to Gaullist France. In essence, the debates between Europeanists and Atlanticists that first came to the fore in the 1950s had never really been resolved and even gained a new sense of urgency with the arrival of Charles de Gaulle on the transatlantic diplomatic scene. While Europeanists like Monnet, Kohnstamm and Ball shared the desire for an Atlantic oriented Europe with the Atlanticists, they were more open to collaboration with Charles de Gaulle in their attempts to move European integration forward in the direction of a European political union. As Jan van der Harst explains:

Monnet made the analysis that de Gaulle's ideas could help Europe advance toward a federation by passing through some kind of 'European confederation.' This might be needed as the interim stage of evolution toward the new Europe, since no adequate framework existed in which the Six could jointly tackle political questions. It might also convince the European citizens that unification was not solely geared toward economic prosperity but also had a political dimension. Monnet envisioned two methods to be at work simultaneously: the integration method and another method for political, educational, and defense questions. He saw great potential in letting these two evolve together.⁷⁶

In contrast, Atlanticists like Ernst van der Beugel – who were afraid that any European political union with France and without the United Kingdom would eventually lead to the development of a third force continental Europe under French hegemony – perceived this as a grave danger to the Atlantic Community. From Van der Beugel's perspective, de Gaulle's talk of a "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" was nothing more than a civilized way of saying "Yankees go home." If put into practice, the result would be a power vacuum in Europe with only one power capable of filling it, namely the Soviet Union.⁷⁷ In 1967 Van der Beugel expressed his fears in the following words:

Those Gaullist objectives must eventually (and maybe sooner rather than later) lead to the neutralization of Europe, because the antagonism towards the Anglo-Saxon World grows bigger step by step. (...) In terms of power, this schism between the continent and the Anglo-Saxon world means the creation of a power vacuum in Europe. That vacuum can only and shall be filled by the Soviet Union and for this no military aggression is necessary. In that case, our children will live at best in Finland and in the worst scenario in Bulgaria. It is 1936.⁷⁸

While Monnet and his fellow Europeanists did not desire to sever Europe's transatlantic ties, Van der Beugel believed that by giving absolute priority to a swift realization of European

⁷⁶ Jan van der Harst, "Dutch and U.S. Assessments of European Political integration", in *Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations*, ed. Hans Krabbendam, Cornelis A. van Minnen and Giles Scott-Smith (Amsterdam: Boom, 2009) 648-649.

⁷⁷ E.H. van der Beugel, "Introduction Prof. E.H. van der Beugel at the Atlantic Symposium at Greenwich", October 3, 1967, box "Lezingen E.H. van der Beugel", AHB.

⁷⁸ E.H. van der Beugel. "Stuk voor Karel Polak, Kerstmist 1967", box "Lezingen E.H. van der Beugel", AHB.

integration they were willing to take too many risks by giving in to the French just to make sure the European project would keep moving.⁷⁹ Ernst van der Beugel, who regarded any concessions to de Gaulle as appeasement, believed that it was better to pause European political and military integration for the time being. Stagnation in the political-military field would not hurt the process of economic and monetary integration in Europe, he believed, while advancement would mean progress into an undesirable direction that would likely be detrimental to the Atlantic alliance to which he gave absolute priority. Fundamentally, it was the old discussion about ends and means all over again: was European integration to be regarded as an end in itself or was it mainly supposed to be a means to strengthen the Atlantic Community?

During the 1960s the struggle between Atlanticists and Europeanists took place on many different fronts; within informal foreign policy establishments as well as inside the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, among staffers of the U.S. State Department and between different government departments, but also in national and international political arenas, as well as in public debates through speeches and newspapers articles. Ernst van der Beugel was active on all these fronts where he became one of the key representatives of the realist Atlanticist school of thought while he simultaneously tried to harmonize and mediate the differences between the different groups, for example through the Bilderberg meetings, in an attempt to make sure this struggle between rivaling visions would not erode Atlantic unity. He also tried to use his access to the foreign policy establishments in Europe and the United States to convince its members of his Atlanticist perspective and priorities.

When Henry Kissinger asked Van der Beugel for a European perspective on the new Johnson Administration in January 1964, Van der Beugel vented his frustrations about the lingering influence of Monnet's school of thought at the State department, informing Kissinger that he was "most critical about the attitude of the American administration towards European unity." He especially resented the American attitude towards resurfacing discussions concerning a potential continental political arrangement between the six and the pressure the American Administration ("which is only and exclusively George Ball") put on European countries to give in to French demands in this context. "Why the hell should we have a new political set up when it is crystal clear that the six are in basic disagreement on foreign and military policy?"⁸⁰, Van der Beugel questioned. He considered it "outrageous" to enter any European political arrangement without the British. This was exactly what de Gaulle wanted so he could "formalize his ideas with the five on his bandwagon", Van der Beugel claimed. "Monnet and Ball think that a political set up would give the five the possibility to line up against De Gaulle's policy. This is a crazy idea which only could come up in the heads of those who have messed up already so many European things."⁸¹ Once again, Van der

⁷⁹ EvdB/Kersten Oral History, 193.

⁸⁰ E.H. van der Beugel to H.A. Kissinger, 16 January 1964, file 7, EvdB.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Beugel found himself in the ironic position of being '*plus américain que les Américains.*' As he put it:

The confusion of ends and means in Washington is again complete and for us it is a rather bitter thing to oppose De Gaulle because of the fact that his policy is basically anti-American and then see us under American pressure to do what De Gaulle so much desires. It would be the task and the duty of American foreign policy to put us under pressure not to go into a new political adventure; what we see, however, is the opposite. It becomes increasingly difficult to defend what we consider as an American interest against American policy itself.⁸²

American Leadership: a *Cri de Coeur*

While he complained about American pressure on European countries to move European integration forward, Van der Beugel believed the Americans should assert stronger leadership in favor of the Atlantic alliance and he used each and every opportunity he got to encourage this. Even in his letters to American officials expressing sympathy after the death of President Kennedy, Van der Beugel saw an opportunity to stress the issue of American leadership. In a letter to Henry Owen, Van der Beugel wrote that:

Never before in history people on this side of the ocean have had a similar experience. They simply feel that they have lost 'their' President. This is definitely not a feeling confined to a few internationally minded men but what is so touching about it is that this is the feeling of the average citizen. Our American friends might find some consolation in the fact that by instinct people in the Western World recognize that the man in the White house is their leader.⁸³

While the Europeans recognized American leadership according to Van der Beugel, he considered the Americans themselves too timid in asserting it. At the Bilderberg conference in Cannes Van der Beugel "could not escape the impression that the U.S. attitude was hesitant, vague and apologetic."⁸⁴ Besides, both George Ball and Paul Nitze had been "weak in their presentation."⁸⁵ Van der Beugel considered this lack of American leadership in the alliance as "an extremely frightening phenomenon, because if ever leadership were required, now would be the moment."⁸⁶ This had to be different at the next conference, which would be hosted by the Americans in the old colonial town of Williamsburg, Virginia. "Sixty rather important Europeans (at least they think that they are important) cross the Ocean to be in Williamsburg", Van der Beugel warned American Steering Committee member C.D. Jackson.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ E.H. van der Beugel to Henry Owen, 25 November 1963, file 7, EvdB.

⁸⁴ E.H. van der Beugel to C.D. Jackson, 2 March, 1964, file 7, EvdB.

⁸⁵ E.H. van der Beugel to H.A. Kissinger, 4 April 1963, box 109, C.D. Jackson papers, EPL.

⁸⁶ E.H. van der Beugel to G.P. Fleck, 1 May, 1963, file 7, EvdB: "Mijn totale indruk is echter somber. De Amerikanen waren 'off balance' en hebben na de 14^e januari geen werkelijke politiek. Dat is een uiterst angstig verschijnsel, want als er ooit leiderschap gevraagd wordt, is het nu."

“They will meet a top U.S. delegation and even more than at a meeting in Europe the conference will be colored by the attitude of the American group.”⁸⁷

In March 1964, just weeks before the Bilderberg conference in Williamsburg, Van der Beugel sent a letter to C.D. Jackson concerning the desired attitude of the Americans at the upcoming conference. This unusually passionate epistle, which Ernst van der Beugel himself described as a *cri de coeur*, was one long plea for strong American leadership. Its opening remarks also give an interesting perspective on how Van der Beugel perceived his own role, motivation and aims in transatlantic affairs – not as a Dutchman, but as a transnational actor in pursuit of an Atlantic Community under American leadership:

I do not write to you as Secretary-General [of Bilderberg], even less as a Dutchman. I write because the only issue in the field of foreign relations, in which I am totally and emotionally involved is the issue of United States – European relations. I feel myself committed to do everything I can (although I know that I cannot do very much) to foster and defend the closest possible relations with, and friendship for the United States. I know that I have the reputation of being sometimes ‘*plus américain que les Américains*’ but I very much love that country of yours and I consider the world a livable place only if we recognize your undisputed leadership.⁸⁸

This undisputed leadership had not only been lacking in Cannes. During his most recent visit to Washington van der Beugel had also “experienced a lack of self-confidence” among the Americans which had “frightened” him. Many of Van der Beugel’s European friends who shared his views of the United States and who had crossed the Atlantic since shared this experience. “The highest people in Washington have an attitude which is as sympathetic from the purely personal and human point of view as it is ineffective and dangerous from the political angle. It is the kind of atmosphere in which they ask us: ‘Do you really think we made so many mistakes? What is wrong with our policy? Tell us what we should do.’” Van der Beugel stressed that this kind of attitude was to be avoided in Williamsburg. “It is much less harmful when Europeans disagree with the American point of view, than when they go away with the feeling that there is no self-confidence on your side and a vagueness and uncertainty which was too much apparent at Cannes and presently in Washington,” he argued.⁸⁹

Reverberations of Williamsburg

During the Bilderberg Meeting in Williamsburg the American delegation did indeed show “great strength and cohesion”⁹⁰ as Van der Beugel had hoped and encouraged. The same could be said about the five non-French members of the Common Market. After the

⁸⁷ E.H. van der Beugel to C.D. Jackson, 2 March 1964, file 7, EvdB.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ E.H. van der Beugel to Henry Owen, 2 April 1964, file 7, EvdB.

conference Van der Beugel informed the Dutch ambassador in Rome that “It had become clear without any doubt that the problems which existed did not exist between Europe and the United States, but between the French and the rest.”⁹¹ The Gaullists had again done their “utmost to be uncompromising on every single point,”⁹² and Van der Beugel considered it heart-warming that after the French intervention, the Germans, the Belgians, the Dutch and the Italians had all distanced themselves from the “pernicious ideas of the Gaullists.”⁹³ The fact that all of this happened “in the presence of the top of the American Congress and the Administration was enough to make the trip to Williamsburg completely worth it,” according to Van der Beugel, who believed “that the congressional participants were convinced beyond any doubt about the positive attitude of the overwhelming majority of the Europeans towards the United States and NATO.”⁹⁴

The reverberations of the Bilderberg Meeting in Williamsburg also left their traces in formal diplomacy. Shortly after the conference, messages started to appear in the formal diplomatic correspondence from the American embassies in Brussels and The Hague listing options for action to be taken in response to “disquieting” ideas concerning the future of NATO voiced by one of the Gaullist participants of the Bilderberg conference. One of the diplomatic dispatches mentions that the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Paul-Henri Spaak and the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Luns were discussing the desirability of proposing at the North Atlantic Council “that basic review of NATO be undertaken to develop recommendation to strengthen it in the years ahead.”⁹⁵ Luns and Spaak both recognized that such a proposal might result in a major clash with the French but the alternative was to let the situation continue to drift with the French gradually eroding NATO away.⁹⁶ As a second response to counter the ideas voiced during the Bilderberg meeting Luns believed it was important to make very clear to the America’s, both North and South that de Gaulle “does not speak for Europe”. To emphasize this Luns “hoped to insert a reference in the Queen’s forthcoming speech in Mexico saying that not one voice speaks for Europe”⁹⁷ – an effort in which the Bilderberg meetings in Cannes and Williamsburg had played an expedient role.

MLF: the Battle Continues

Despite the efforts by the State Department the MLF “did not do too badly, but not well enough”⁹⁸ in Williamsburg according to Van der Beugel. In the spring of 1964, the State

⁹¹ E.H. van der Beugel to H.F.L.K. van Vredenburg, 24 April 1964, file 7, EvdB (translation mine).

⁹² E.H. van der Beugel to Henry Owen, 2 April 1964, file 7, EvdB.

⁹³ E.H. van der Beugel to H.F.L.K. van Vredenburg, 24 April 1964, file 7, EvdB (translation mine).

⁹⁴ E.H. van der Beugel to Henry Owen, 2 April 1964, file 7, EvdB.

⁹⁵ Telegram from U.S. Embassy Brussels, 27 March 1964, Department of State Alpha Numerical File 1964–1966, reel 5, RSC.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Telegram from U.S. Embassy The Hague, Co 2559, 3 April 1964, Department of State Alpha Numerical File 1964–1966, reel 5, RSC.

⁹⁸ E.H. van der Beugel to Henry Owen, 2 April 1964, file 7, EvdB.

Department's MLF campaign was revitalized by a renewed commitment to the MLF by President Johnson. During discussions with his policy advisors – including George Ball, Walt Rostow and Henry Owen – concerning the MLF in April 1964, the president had declared that “if possible”, an agreement on the MLF should “be reached by the end of the year.”⁹⁹ With this new timetable in mind, the advocates of the MLF in the State Department stepped up their campaign to push the project ahead. They increased their determination to win souls in Congress, tried to foster favorable press coverage by organizing briefings for domestic and foreign media, and notified their European allies of America's strength of purpose concerning the project.¹⁰⁰ During a meeting with his NATO colleagues in the Netherlands in May, Secretary of State Dean Rusk declared that the American Administration regarded the MLF “as meeting real political and military needs, and we intend to go ahead.”¹⁰¹

Meanwhile, Ernst van der Beugel also continued to promote the MLF outside of Bilderberg, in particular in the Netherlands, where the Dutch government was still in the process of determining its definitive stance on the multilateral force.¹⁰² A 1964 diplomatic cable from the American embassy in The Hague mentions that the “leading” Dutch columnist G.B.J. Hiltermann, in discussing “the extremists’ struggle around MLF”, had pointed out that there existed no emotional Atlantic extremism comparable to the emotional national French extremism, but that instead there were strict formalists into which category doctrinaire Dutchmen fell. The cable subsequently quoted Hiltermann, saying that “in very moderate terms, Van der Beugel had made himself their spokesman.”¹⁰³

Ernst van der Beugel also took part in the discussions concerning the MLF in the Dutch Labor Party, which was also trying to determine its position on the transatlantic nuclear challenge.¹⁰⁴ Since the moment the Kennedy administration had proposed the MLF in the NATO Council in 1963, the PvdA had taken a rather negative stance towards the multilateral force. In early 1964, however, advocates of the proposal started to stir themselves, partly motivated by the fact that Jean Monnet and his Action Committee had embraced the MLF in February 1964, thus making the project appealing to both Europeanists and Atlanticists alike. The result was a party wide consultation in November 1964. While the pro- and con-MLF camps were not able to reach a consensus during this meeting, the pro-MLF group had gained quite some strength in the course of 1964 – a development that reflected a broader national trend in the Netherlands.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, partly as a result of the mounting Gaullist

⁹⁹ Qtd. In Reyn, “Atlantis Lost”, 476.

¹⁰⁰ See: Ibid., 478-479.

¹⁰¹ Qtd. In Reyn, “Atlantis Lost”, p 479.

¹⁰² Duco Hellema, *Nederland in de wereld: de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland* (Houten: Spectrum, 2010), 230-231.

¹⁰³ “European Unity and Atlantic Cooperation”, US Embassy The Hague, 4 December 1964, RG59, Records of the US Department of State, reel 5, RSC.

¹⁰⁴ See: E.H. van der Beugel to Ivo Samkalden, 4 June, 1964, file 7, EvdB, NAH.

¹⁰⁵ Frank Zuijdam, *Tussen wens en werkelijkheid: Het debat over vrede en veiligheid binnen de PvdA in de periode 1958-1977* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2001), 113,116, 121.

opposition to the initiative, a reverse trend revealed itself in other European countries as well as in the United States.¹⁰⁶

While promoting the MLF in the Netherlands – behind the scenes as well as in the public debate surrounding this issue – Van der Beugel kept in close touch with Owen and Schaetzel at the State Department who were “most interested” in hearing from him about the developments in The Hague.¹⁰⁷ After British Prime Minister Harold Wilson called the MLF a “divisive force in Europe”¹⁰⁸ in his November 23 speech to parliament, Schaetzel contacted Van der Beugel to encourage him to convince Luns during one of their regular Sunday breakfasts to issue “a forthright statement of Dutch intentions” in favor of the MLF arguing that “given what appears to have been the retrogressive position established by Wilson it may be all the more necessary for constructive minded Dutch and Italians to rally to the cause.”¹⁰⁹ Van der Beugel, who replied from London, in turn informed Schaetzel about the atmosphere in England, advising the Americans to keep the conversation with the English going since he found the British “more positive than might seem from the Prime Minister’s speech.” It would just be very important “not to compromise the time limit,” he argued. Furthermore, Van der Beugel informed Schaetzel that no clear public statement was to be expected from the Dutch since such a statement would not be likely to lead to any positive result before the negotiations with the British. Instead, Van der Beugel suggested that the Dutch could play a constructive role by quietly talking to the Germans and the British behind the scenes. He also warned Schaetzel and Owen to be cautious about his own role in these affairs, saying that “the fact that I see my Dutch colleagues so frequently must be kept, as you will understand, as privately as possible because an eventual influence on them always diminishes when people know about our very frequent contacts.”¹¹⁰

European Political Union revisited: The Erhard Plan.

During his visit to the State Department in November 1964 Van der Beugel had started to notice a change in Washington in regard to its European policy: while there were still “remnants of the old policy”, his contacts at the State Department now seemed to fall more in line with some of his own ideas. After talks with George Ball, Bill Tyler, Bob Schaetzel and Henry Owen, he wrote a very upbeat “strictly confidential” memorandum, which he distributed within his network, among others to the Dutch ambassador in London, Herman van Roijen. “Slowly the State Department begins to realize that the cohesion of the Atlantic

¹⁰⁶ Ine Megens, “Ambitions and Ambivalence: Initiatives for a European Nuclear Force, 1957-67”, in *Atlantic, Euratlantic, or Europe-America? The Atlantic Community and Europe*, ed. Giles Scott-Smith and Valérie Aubourg (Paris: Soleb 2011), 33; Reyn, “Atlantis Lost”, 488-497.

¹⁰⁷ J. Robert Schaetzel to E.H. van der Beugel, July 7, 1964, file 7, EvdB.

¹⁰⁸ “Telegram from the Under Secretary of State (Ball) to the Department of State”, FRUS 1964-1968, Volume XIII, Western Europe Region, document 54”, accessed December 5, 2016, <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v13/d54>.

¹⁰⁹ J. Robert Schaetzel to E.H. van der Beugel, 25 November 1964, file 35, EvdB.

¹¹⁰ E.H. van der Beugel to J. Robert Schaetzel, 2 December 1964, file 35, EvdB.

world and the interests of the United States are not by definition served in all circumstances by European unification now,"¹¹¹ he asserted. More specifically, he observed that the idea that the transatlantic relationship could "exclusively be based on a relation between the United States and a unified Europe" was starting to change. At the same time, Van der Beugel sensed "a new realization for the first time that [the creation of a European Political Union] could be highly dangerous."¹¹² The Americans now even showed great appreciation for the attitude of the Dutch government:

Our American friends now realize that previous pressures on the Dutch to go along with everything which has the appearance of European unification was a wrong policy. I explained to them how difficult it was from time to time for those on the continent who gave priority to the Atlantic concept and to close relations with the United States to see that in fighting this battle they were not supported by the diplomacy of the United States and, on the contrary, were left lonely in their efforts.¹¹³

Van der Beugel was keen to spread this message to his friends in the Netherlands, where the Dutch government was determining its position concerning plans of West-German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard to revamp talks between the six EEC countries concerning the creation of a European Political Union along intergovernmental lines. During the subsequent months Van der Beugel frequently voiced his opposition against this plan in public, pushing instead for stronger political and military cooperation within the Atlantic alliance, thus turning himself into a driving force behind the Dutch Atlanticist opposition against the plan Erhard.

The fact that Van der Beugel came to personify the Atlanticist opposition against a European Political Union within the Dutch policy debate is also reflected in official documents of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To illustrate, in a November 1964 memorandum for Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Luns, meant as a first attempt to determine the Dutch position with regard to the political aspects of the Plan Erhard, the question was posed whether the Dutch should focus on finding compromises or, whether, on behalf of the Atlantic relationship the Netherlands should pursue a stagnation policy for the time being. In this assessment, the government memorandum explicitly referred to the "stagnation policy" option as the "Van der Beugel proposition."¹¹⁴

Meanwhile, the American embassy in The Hague maintained in close touch with Van der Beugel and kept Washington informed of his activities. After Van der Beugel had published an article in *Le Monde Diplomatique* in November 1964 in which he explained the motivations

¹¹¹ Ambassador J.H. Van Roijen, now stationed in London, informed Ernst van der Beugel in reply to his memorandum that the Dutch minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Luns had noticed a similar change in George Ball's views. See: J.H. van Roijen to E.H. van der Beugel, 25 November, 1965, file 45, J.H. van Roijen Papers, NAH.

¹¹² E.H. van der Beugel to J.H. van Roijen, 19 November 1964; memorandum, november 3, 1964, file 45, J.H. van Roijen Papers, NAH.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ D.M. Ringnalda, "Standpuntbepaling van BZ tegenover het politieke deel van het plan-Erhard), 24 November 1964, Accessed December 5, 2016, <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/watermarker/pdf/S01351>.

behind Dutch opposition to a political organization of the Six, the American embassy cabled a translation of his article to the State Department, saying that “Van der Beugel does in fact present the logic of the Dutch position although Foreign Minister Luns has said that the Dutch would not hold out alone for British accession or significant supra-nationality in the event that proposals such as those from Bonn, Rome and Brussels were to win support from all others in the Six including France.” The American diplomat responsible for the cable did point out, however, that “Van der Beugel in private conversation goes somewhat further than the views expressed in his article.”¹¹⁵

Despite the efforts on behalf of the MLF by the State Department’s theologians and to Van der Beugel’s great disappointment, President Johnson decided to shelve the multilateral force in December 1964. Van der Beugel’s friends at the State Department had been effectively side-tracked. With the MLF “relegated to the transatlantic boulevard of broken dreams”¹¹⁶ and the Germans pushing for a rehabilitation of talks on a European political union, the optimism Van der Beugel had expressed in his Washington memorandum rapidly vaporized. “The situation in Europe is even more depressing than ever because of the lack of a strong American initiative which the MLF provided but which was taken away by the President”, he wrote to Kissinger. “The Germans are rushing into the arms of de Gaulle and the friends of the U.S. in Europe who give priority to the Atlantic approach feel baffled and isolated.”¹¹⁷ Even Kissinger, who had manifested himself as a fierce opponent to the MLF, seemed a little startled by its sudden demise. “I agree with your last paragraph on the situation in Europe”, he told Van der Beugel: “I had always opposed the MLF because I had thought it put too much strain on the German political fabric for a dubious objective. But having gone this far, we should not have dropped matters so completely.”¹¹⁸

Van der Beugel’s worries augmented after Ludwig Erhard met with Charles de Gaulle at Rambouillet in January 1965, where de Gaulle expressed a willingness to re-open discussions about a European political union. With an even more concrete prospect of such talks on the horizon, Van der Beugel continued to voice his concerns. The Netherlands should reject even the invitation of an institutionalized consultation about such a political union, he insisted. By doing so the Dutch would not only be able to punch substantially above their weight, but be able to make a decisive difference like they had done during the negotiations about the Fouchet Plan.¹¹⁹ At the same time, Van der Beugel kept voicing the precondition of British participation to any European set-up in the Netherlands, as well as in Britain. “We in the Netherlands need Great Britain” he declared in a speech in London in February 1965.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ “European Unity and Atlantic Cooperation”, US Embassy The Hague, 4 December 1964, RG59, Records of the US Department of State, reel 5, RSC. “Foreign Minister Luns has said that the Dutch would not hold out alone for British accession or significant supra-nationality in the event that proposals such as those from Bonn, Rome and Brussels were to win support from all others in the Six including France”.

¹¹⁶ Reyn, “Atlantis Lost”, 463.

¹¹⁷ E.H. van der Beugel to H.A. Kissinger, 14 January 1965, HAK.

¹¹⁸ H.A. Kissinger to E.H. van der Beugel, 19 January 1965, HAK.

¹¹⁹ E.H. van der Beugel, “Na de Conferentie in Rambouillet: Bezorgdheid om Europa”, *Het Parool*, 3 February 1965.

¹²⁰ E.H. van der Beugel, “De politieke eenheid in Europa heden ten dage”, box “Lezingen E.H. van der Beugel”, AHB.

While the Atlanticist school of thought was still dominant at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the position of minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Luns was eroding during the course of the 1960s. Especially after 1963, foreign policy became more and more a matter of discussion within the Dutch cabinet and European policy in particular was increasingly approached as cabinet policy.¹²¹ According to Albert Kersten, the latter development was partly the result of the growing importance of European decision-making for the Dutch national policy, but it was also connected to the policies that Luns had pursued. While his actions in reply to the French veto of Great Britain were widely supported in the Netherlands, his opposition against a European political union had been less popular.¹²² In addition, the Dutch parliament, which tended to be more inclined towards the Monnet school of thought on European integration than the more Atlanticist Ministry of Foreign Affairs, increasingly demanded to have a say in the formulation of Dutch foreign policy – a situation that worried Ernst van der Beugel as well as some of his Atlanticist friends (not to mention Luns himself). While never wavering in his defense of NATO as the cornerstone of Dutch foreign policy, Luns did concede to drop the pre-condition of English participation, also known as the *prealable anglais*, during discussions in the Second Chamber in the fall of 1964 – a step back from the ideal course of action as envisioned by Ernst van der Beugel.¹²³

In order to fortify Luns' anti-Gaullist position in parliament, Ernst van der Beugel and some like-minded friends - including Jérôme Heldring, Theo Joekes, Willem Michiels van Kessenich, Jaap Kymmell and Berend Jan Udink – decided to compose an open letter in support of Luns' Atlanticist policies on the occasion of his 12,5 year anniversary as minister of Foreign Affairs.¹²⁴ The plan was in fact orchestrated in consultation with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which had indicated that it would “welcome” such a campaign.¹²⁵ Once the letter had been drafted Van der Beugel called upon his social network to get prominent individuals to sign the letter.¹²⁶ The result was a list with 38 signatures of prominent

¹²¹ Albert Kersten, *Luns: Een politieke biografie* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2010) 329,334.

¹²² Kersten, Luns, 332.

¹²³ Luns repeated this in the Dutch parliament in February 1965, saying that: “Indien de vijf andere landen het overleg van de Ministers van Buitenlandse Zaken over politieke samenwerking wensen te hervatten, zal de Regering dit gesprek niet uit de weg gaan. Op deelneming van Engeland zal zij in deze bespreking aandringen, maar zij zal het niet van te voren als het zogenaamde Engelse prealabel stellen.” ‘Handelingen Tweede Kamer 1964-1965, 2 februari 1965’, accessed December 5, 2016, <http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=sgd%3Ampg21%3A19641965%3A0000776>

¹²⁴ S. Haasnoot and H. Pach. “Veertig jaar geleden: Berend-Jan Udink over de weigering van De Gaulle om Engeland toe te laten tot de EEG,” *Historisch Nieuwsblad*, October, 2002, accessed December 5, 2016, <http://www.historischnieuwsblad.nl/nl/artikel/6024/veertig-jaar-geleden-berend-jan-udink-over-de-weigering-van-de-gaulle-om-engeland-toe-te-laten-tot-de-eeg.html>. Theo Joekes was a Dutch journalist and politician. Between 1963 and 1989 he was a member of the Second Chamber of the Dutch parliament for the liberal VVD party. Willem Michiels van Kessenich was the mayor of Maastricht and president of the Dutch division of Clarence Streit's “Atlantic Union” movement. Berend Jan Udink worked for the Dutch chamber of Commerce in Rotterdam before moving into politics as a member of the Christian Historical Union (CHU). Between 1967 and 1971 he served as the Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation and between 1971 and 1973 he served as Minister of Housing and Spatial Planning in addition to which he was appointed as Minister of Transport and Public works between 1972 and 1973.

¹²⁵ E.H. van der Beugel to A.W.L. Tjarda van Starkenborch Stachouwer, 22 January 1965, file 45, EvdB. “Het is mij bekend dat B.Z. een zodanige actie zou verwelkomen.”

¹²⁶ Jérôme Heldring, interview with the author, 1 December 2010. According to Jérôme Heldring “Ernst had a network that he could approach without any difficulty, maybe some did not even know what they signed up for”.

Dutchmen with very mixed political and professional backgrounds, including statesmen, union leaders, professors and justices, bankers and captains of industry, mayors and civil servants – all of whom acted in a “purely personal capacity.”¹²⁷ This emphasis on the private capacity of the signatories reveals the same tension as is at play at the Bilderberg meetings: while formally acting in an informal capacity these individuals are chosen to participate exactly because of the positions they hold in society and it was obviously exactly the status of their formal positions in society that contributed weight to the letter.

The presentation of the letter to minister Luns – which Van der Beugel described as a “very cheerful affair” – was crossed by the fall of the Marijnen administration on the very same day.¹²⁸ To make sure that the fall of the Dutch cabinet did not steal away the thunder of the 38, the publication of the letter was cunningly postponed until a few days later. Ernst van der Beugel personally delivered the open letter – under embargo – to the different newspaper offices with the request to give it ample attention.¹²⁹ In the end, the letter was not only published in numerous newspapers in the Netherlands, but also captured the attention of the media in France, Germany and England. The publication of the letter was soon followed by a flurry of editorials and opinion pieces discussing its contents. It was also discussed in the German Bundestag as well as in the U.S. House of Representatives, and while the French government did not formally respond to the letter, French press agency AFP reported that the letter had been received “coldly” in government circles.¹³⁰ Minister Luns responded with a public statement expressing his gratitude for the “valuable support” for his policies offered by these eminent Dutchmen. Indeed, as multiple commentators were keen to point out, the views expressed in the letter were so much in line with Luns’ own views that he could very well have written the letter himself.¹³¹

A few weeks after the publication of the letter, de Gaulle rejected Erhard’s plan to organize a conference for Foreign Ministers in Venice to discuss the potential re-launch of a European political union in May 1965.¹³² According to the chief diplomatic correspondent of the French newspaper *France Soir*, Maurice Delarue, the French rejection of this plan was a direct result of the open letter by the 38 prominent Dutchmen. Since the Dutch Atlanticist “manifesto” had been publicly approved by minister Luns the French government was of the

¹²⁷ “Open brief aan Zijne Excellentie de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken”, 2 March 1965. See: Scrapbook “Open Brief aan Luns, Maart 1965”, AHB. The letter was signed, among others by: Jhr, dr. Fr. A.M. Alting von Geusau, Dr. W. Drees, Mr. C.L.W. de Gaay Fortman, Prof. dr. P. Geyl, Dr. L. de Jong, H.J. de Koster, Prof. Dr. J. Kymmell, MR. W. baron Michiels van Kessenich, Prof. Mr. C.H.F. Polak, Drs. J.W. de Pous, Prof, dr. J.E. de Quay, Dr. P. Rijkens, IR. C. Staf, Mr. M.P.L. Steenberghe, Prof. Dr. J. Tinbergen, Jhr, Mr. Tjarda van Starckenborch Stachouwer, Drs. B.J. Udink, Mr. G.E. van Walsum, Prof dr. J. Zijlstra.

¹²⁸ EvdB/Kersten Oral history, p.173

¹²⁹ J. van den Berg, *De anatomie van Nederland* (Amsterdam: de Bezige Bij, 1967), 201.

¹³⁰ “Open Brief aan Luns in Westduitse cabinet”, *De Waarheid*, 3 March, 1965; “Extension of Remarks of Hon. Paul Findley of Illinois in the House of Representatives, Tuesday, March 9, 1965, Congressional Record Vol. 111, no. 11.

¹³¹ See: Scrapbook “Open Brief aan Luns, Maart 1965”, AHB.

¹³² “Brief van 38 onverteerbaar voor De Gaulle”, *De Waarheid*, 31 maart, 1965; Jean-Marie Palayret, “De Gaulle Challenges the Community: France, the Empty Chair Crisis and the Luxembourg Compromise” in *Visions, Votes and Vetoes: The Empty Chair Crisis and the Luxembourg Compromise Forty Years On*, ed. Palayret, Wallace & Winand (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2006), 48.

opinion that a meeting under these circumstances would be “useless,”¹³³ according to Delarue. Officials in The Hague responded that if these assertions were true, Paris was just using the letter as an excuse to pass the responsibility of its own unconstructive role to The Hague. Meanwhile, Erhard’s attempts at revamping talks on political union were met with little enthusiasm in Paris and soon faded into the background.

Instead, 1965 would be the year of the empty-chair crisis: a six-month French boycott of decision-making in Brussels bred by disagreements about the Common Agricultural Policy, which were eventually resolved in January 1966 by means of the Luxembourg Compromise. It was also the year in which Charles de Gaulle got re-elected, officially for another 7 years. In March 1966 de Gaulle withdrew France from the military integration in NATO. All in all, this was a rather frustrating period for Atlanticists and Europeanists alike. At the 1965 Bilderberg meeting, which took place at Villa d’Este near lake Como in Italy just a few months before the empty chair crises started, Ernst van der Beugel had delivered a paper on the “State of the Alliance” in which he analyzed the breakdown of the initial post-war consensus on the transatlantic relationship into three schools of thought – the Gaullists, the (Monnet-inspired) Europeanists and the Atlanticists, after which he personally pleaded for an Atlanticist offensive by deepening and developing “military, economic and political integration, co-operation and consultation in the Alliance” while “limiting efforts in Europe to the economic field.”¹³⁴ He was still hopeful that maybe the MLF could still be revived in some form for this purpose. His Atlanticist plea, however, found little support among the Bilderberg participants. It did find its way to the American Secretary of State Dean Rusk, however, though probably not as Van der Beugel might have hoped. “There are many contradictory elements underlying the concept of European unity and the Atlantic partnership”, American ambassador to Germany George McGhee wrote to Rusk after the Bilderberg conference at Villa d’Este. “If we are to succeed in both, I believe we must not let one get ahead of another. Compromises must be affected all along the way. An uncompromising Atlanticist attitude which leaps over Europe altogether, such as that Van der Beugel proposed at the Bilderberg Meeting in Como last spring and which was turned down unanimously by the Europeans present, could I believe only end in our failure on both counts.”¹³⁵ McGhee was obviously not a supporter of Van der Beugel’s “uncompromising Atlanticist attitude” at Villa d’Este. While Van der Beugel’s ideas for an Atlanticist offensive did not receive much support, McGhee’s assertion that his ideas were *unanimously* rejected by the Europeans present at the Bilderberg conference seems too strong and is not reflected in the conference report of the meeting. Instead, this might be an exaggeration by the Ambassador who himself was a supporter of the Monnet-inspired European school of thought, which maintained that a united Europe should serve as

¹³³ “Volgens France Soir: “Brief van 38” oorzaak van weigerachtige houding Parijs”, *Het Parool*, 30 March 1965.

¹³⁴ “Bilderberg Meetings: Villa D’Este Conference 2-4 April 1965”, box 34, Personal Papers of Edwin Martin, KPL.

¹³⁵ “Letter from Ambassador to Germany (McGhee) to Secretary of State Rusk”, February 7, 1966, FRUS 1964-1968, Volume XIII, Western Europe Region, Document 121.” Accessed December 5, 2016, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v13/d129>.

a prerequisite for an equal partnership between Europe and the United States.¹³⁶ Even so, the Bilderberg participants at Villa d'Este did come to "the conclusion that little could be done as long as de Gaulle remained in power."¹³⁷

Ernst van der Beugel's Bilderberg analysis of the three schools of thought on transatlantic relations unexpectedly received a much wider audience just weeks later when columnist James Reston printed it – "against all rules" according to Prince Bernhard – as his own brainchild in the *New York Times*.¹³⁸ Van der Beugel, however, was preoccupied with bigger problems. The MLF, the key instrument to breathe new life into the Atlantic Community, was dead and would not be revived as Van der Beugel had hoped. From now on, the emphasis would be on maintaining the transatlantic relations that had been forged during the first postwar decade while weathering "the Gaullist driven storms" of the 1960s.¹³⁹

Conclusion

From the perspective of New Diplomatic History, Ernst van der Beugel remains a relevant subject of study even after he left the Dutch government because, as this chapter has demonstrated, he remained an integral part of the transatlantic diplomatic process. This chapter has attempted to answer the question what this role entailed specifically in the context of the perceived Gaullist threat to Atlantic unity by focusing on the diplomatic process and Van der Beugel's goals and *modus operandi* and how his activities related to formal diplomacy.

Ernst van der Beugel manifested himself on the diplomatic playing field as a transnational actor representing a realist stream of Atlanticism pursuing the closest possible transatlantic relations under strong American leadership based on the idea that the security of Western Europe totally depended on the U.S. military guarantee supported by its nuclear umbrella. While Charles de Gaulle posed a direct threat to this idea, Van der Beugel also regarded the Europeanists who followed Jean Monnet's school of thought as an indirect but still dangerous threat to Atlantic unity because they were willing to give in to Charles de Gaulle too easily from Van der Beugel's perspective. During the period described in this chapter the Monnet school of thought was still dominant within the U.S. State Department. Van der Beugel and the Europeanists found common ground, however, on the issue of the multilateral force, allowing them to join forces in the diplomatic arena.

In the absence of a formal transatlantic political structure beyond NATO, Ernst van der Beugel used the Bilderberg Meetings as an important vehicle in his attempts to manage,

¹³⁶ "Bilderberg Meetings: Villa D'Este Conference 2-4 April 1965", box 34, Personal Papers of Edwin Martin, KPL.

¹³⁷ Gijsswijt, "Uniting the West", 287.

¹³⁸ See: Prince Bernhard's contribution to "Book on Ernst", box 27, Folder 1, Shepard Stone Papers, RSCL; James Reston, "Challenge to Alliance: A View from Europe's Attitudes on the Future of NATO, *New York Times*, 12 April, 1965.

¹³⁹ Kenneth Weisbrode, "The State Department's Bureau of European Affairs in the 1970s", in *Atlantic, Euratlantic or Europe-America? Vol.2* Eds. Giles Scott-Smith and Valérie Aubourg (Paris: Soleb, 2011), 194.

mediate and strengthen the transatlantic relationship. After Charles de Gaulle's famous press-conference created a crisis in transatlantic relations he used the Cannes conference to relieve transatlantic tension by offering a forum where problems could be analyzed, frustrations vented and positions clarified in a way that was regarded as 'impossible' in a formal setting. By doing so, the Bilderberg Meetings were used to keep the channels of communication wide open in order to counter transatlantic estrangement both on a personal and on an intellectual level. In the process, the meetings filled a void that formal diplomacy was unable to fill.

Fearing that de Gaulle's fierce language against the U.S. might estrange the Americans from Europe and inspire Congress to retreat into isolationism, Van der Beugel more specifically used the Cannes conference to isolate the French by facilitating the creation of an unofficial front against the idea of a united Europe as a third force in order to demonstrate to the American foreign policy elite and Congressional representatives that de Gaulle did not speak for Europe. Instead of focusing his attention mostly on convincing the American public of this – as Jérôme Heldring had suggested – Van der Beugel helped to create an environment in which this message could effectively be brought across to the U.S. decision-making establishment directly. At the same time, he made sure to create an atmosphere in which the Bilderberg Meetings would not estrange or antagonize the French, but which allowed them to remain engaged in the transatlantic conversation.

These meetings were taken very seriously by representatives of the governments of participating countries, as illustrated not just by the high-ranking government officials that participated, but also, for example, by the French government's attempt to meddle in the proceedings of the Cannes conference. The insights that the Cannes meeting provided into the thinking of the Gaullists with regards to Europe in turn provoked Dutch diplomats to take formal action to distance them from the French policies in public, e.g. by suggesting to insert elements in the Queen's speech to be delivered on the American continent. State Department officials in turn regarded the Bilderberg Meetings as an important channel to foster elite support for policies like the MLF. Having been convinced of the value of the MLF as a common transatlantic project that could strengthen the Atlantic relationship while opposing de Gaulle, Van der Beugel happily cooperated with the facilitation of these efforts. Thus, these conferences reverberated in formal diplomacy and left their traces in official diplomatic correspondence demonstrating that the formal diplomatic establishment perceived these unofficial activities as valuable elements of the diplomatic process. In that sense, it is surprising that diplomatic historians have not demonstrated a similar interest in the unofficial realm of diplomacy.

Ernst van der Beugel did not only work through Bilderberg, although his role in the organization gave him a kind of unofficial diplomatic status. He personally maintained close contact with and had direct access to formal decision-making establishments on both sides of the Atlantic. Within these foreign policy establishments, his presence on the diplomatic playing field was not just recognized, but validated through close cooperation on issues of mutual interest. He played an active role in exchanging information on the atmosphere,

attitude and thinking with regards to specific international policy issues in different localities. He regularly informed individuals in his transatlantic network about the sentiments regarding specific policies in the United Kingdom, in the United States or on the European continent – a key element of the diplomatic practice. Sometimes he took the initiative himself, while at other times he was approached by government officials for consultation, thus indicating that his observations and contributions were valued and taken seriously by his *interlocuteurs*. He also served as a direct channel of communication between official government representatives, for example between U.S. State department officials and Dutch Foreign Minister Luns. Clearly, the private realm of transatlantic diplomacy, including the Bilderberg meetings, as well as Van der Beugel's individual unofficial activities did not function in isolation from formal diplomacy, but was neatly woven into the web of formal diplomatic structures; they fed and complimented each other.

Meanwhile, in the Netherlands Van der Beugel also actively tried to influence Dutch politics as a private citizen. He did so from behind the scenes, for example in his attempt to influence the policies of the Dutch Labor Party with regards to the MLF, but also in public like when he mobilized Dutch influentials into a pressure group by means of an open letter published in numerous newspapers in an attempt to fortify the Atlanticist position of Foreign Minister Luns vis-à-vis the Dutch parliament where Monnet's ideas found more support – an act that eventually also reverberated in formal diplomacy.

By 1966 new dangers started to manifest themselves on the Western horizon, which Van der Beugel regarded as even more acute threats to the Atlantic Community than the Gaullist challenge. While the years following the 1963 Brussels breakdown had demonstrated that there was a consensus among the great majority of Bilderberg participants about the fundamental value of transatlantic relations that had proven strong enough to resist de Gaulle's deviation from this consensus to "weather the Gaullist driven storms of the mid-1960s"¹⁴⁰, Van der Beugel started to ring the alarm in the Bilderberg Steering Committee in August 1966 stating that the basic assumptions of "practically every participant in the Bilderberg conferences" – like "the need for European integration", "the need for a maximum cohesion in the Atlantic world" and the "need for a strong defensive posture towards the Eastern Bloc" – were no longer shared by disturbingly large parts of the populations in the West. "I consider the Gaullist deviation as much less dangerous than the complete ignorance of and indifference to our basic assumptions in the minds and hearts of a substantial part of the population in our part of the world," he warned. Consequently, the following chapter will focus on Van der Beugel's private activities in response to this new challenge in the light of the changing transatlantic landscape during the second half of the 1960's and the early 1970s.

¹⁴⁰ Weisbrode, "The State Department's Bureau of European Affairs in the 1970s", 194.

