

# Planning

1. Arguments in favor of withdrawal
2. Arguments against withdrawal
3. Explaining inertia
4. Political practicalities of withdrawal



# Intro: unfulfilled expectations

- Expectations for withdrawal based on:
  - 20 years of inertia
  - Democratic presidency in the US
  - US President who is personally interested
  - Changing US nuclear policy (NPR,...)
  - Supported by Europe
  - German government declaration (2009)
  - Continued pressure in Belgium
  - NATO 5 Initiative (2010): G, B, NL, Lux, and Norway
  - Prospect of NATO Strategic Concept review (2010)



## I. Arguments in favor of withdrawal

1. Fits into the nuclear disarmament logic
2. No military justification
3. Security risks
4. Maintenance costs



# 1. Disarmament logic

- Gradual lower levels of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons in general
- Symbolically vis-à-vis NNWS
- NPT art 1 and 2
- NPT Review Conf. 2000: '13 steps'
- NPT RC 2010: WMD free zone in Middle East
- US is only NWS having NW stationed abroad
- Low-hanging fruit for Obama administration
- Logical next disarmament step for NATO



## 2. No military justification

- Questionable value of extended nuclear deterrence (in general)
- No threat against Europe that justifies (threat of) use of NW
- USSR and W'Pact imploded in 1989/1991 (!)
- Delivery vehicles (fighter aircraft): short radius
- NATO can still rely on strategic NW (cfr Korea, Japan)
- US military agrees with withdrawal



US EUCOM 'no longer recognizes the political imperative of US nuclear weapons within the Alliance'

Quoted by US SOD Report (Dec 2008), p.59



These weapons 'are absolutely senseless today'

*German Foreign Minister Walter Steinmeier, June 2009*

These weapons 'are a relic of the Cold War',

*German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, 2010*



'the critics of the US nuclear presence in Europe have a point when they state that the current strategic rationale for nuclear bombs on European soil is at best doubtful',

*Karl-Heinz Kamp (NATO Defense College, September 2010)*





## 3. Security risks

- US Air Force Blue Ribbon Panel review (2008)
- 'inviting acquisition targets for terrorists groups' (US 'gang of four', 2008)
- Nizar Trabelsi (2001) and Kleine Brogel
- Peace activists in Kleine Brogel (2010)



Kleine Brogel



## 4. Maintenance costs

- 200 mn \$ per air base (per year)
- 'there is no obvious need for these systems, and eliminating the nuclear role would free resources that could be used to fund strategic strike programs of higher priority' (US Defense Science Board report, 2004)
- Replacement of Tornado's and F-16's



## II. Arguments against withdrawal

1. "NATO solidarity"
2. "Extended deterrence as nonproliferation"
3. "Against Iran"
4. "Together with Russia"



## 1. "NATO solidarity"

'The weapons are the foundation of that solidarity. Take them away and what have we left?',

*a NATO diplomat (October 2009)*



## Counterarguments

- Even during the Cold War, not all member states participated
- Solidarity can be shown differently: economic, social, financial, non-nuclear military,...
- Defense cuts requires specialisation, also nuclear



## 2. “Extended deterrence as nonproliferation”

“Thanks to US tactical nuclear weapons, Germany and Turkey never went nuclear”



## Counterarguments

'Any German government that sought to effect a change in the country's nuclear status would risk public protest ranging all the way up to civil-war style conditions compared to which the events surrounding the shifting of Castor [civilian nuclear spent fuel] containers would probably appear trivial',

*Harald Müller, 2000*





### 3. “Against Iran”

“We, Europeans, need to keep US tacnukes against a nuclear Iran”



## Counterarguments

- Threat does not (yet) exist
- Even if Iran goes nuclear, it is for defensive purposes (cfr NATO)
- Legitimizing existing nukes for not yet existing nuclear threats in the future is turning the world upside down, and a recipe for proliferation



## 4. “Only together with Russia”

- NATO has already much lower levels of tactical NW than Russia
- US and Russia should reduce them in a balanced way



# Counterarguments

- Unequal numbers say nothing about quality of the weapons, other categories of nuclear weapons, geographical differences,...
- Russia has no tacnukes anymore in other states (in contrast to US); first, withdraw them to the US, and then start negotiating
- Unequal numbers will require additional concessions by US/NATO (missile defense, strategic NW in reserve, conventional weapons)



### III. Explaining inertia: a divided NATO

- A few strong opponents (France, Eastern Europe)
- Only one strong proponent (Westerwelle in Germany)
- A lack of support by Belgium, NL, Italy, and Turkey for Germany: no priority, and bureaucratic opposition
- 'multilateralism' of Obama, not willing to take the lead
- NATO bureaucracy
- Fear for a societal debate



# Societal support in Belgium

- Resolutions in Belgian Parliament (2005, 2010)
- Resolutions in Flemish Parliament
- 'gang of four' op-ed (February 2010)
- Mayors for Peace
- 70% is in favor of withdrawal (poll, 2007)
- Protest actions in Kleine Brogel, including members of Parliament (of ruling parties), and a Flemish minister



## IV. Political practicalities: scenario's

- On the initiative by the US (like in Greece, 2001; UK; Ramstein in Germany;...)
- By consensus inside NATO in the short-term (or at least announced as such) in a reciprocal way with Russia, and with compensations for France (Eurobomb ?), for East Europeans (non-nuclear reassurance)
- After formal negotiations with Russia (in medium-term)
- Here to stay forever...

