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Eurocommunism in American Foreign Policy during the 1970s*

The foreign policy of various nations is often criticized for its lack of consistency, logic, and continuity. This is especially true of the USA, and there the criticism is more justified than in many other cases. This is largely due to the fact that the American foreign policy process is especially complicated.

During the last decade, in particular, we have time and again been made aware of divergent opinions and sometimes even of open conflicts between, for example, the State Department, represented by the Secretary of State, and the White House, often represented by the President's adviser on questions of national security. It has sometimes been possible to discern a third situation, in which the President has not shared the opinion of either the Secretary of State or the National Security Adviser. Additional complications have arisen when, for example, the Secretary of Defense or the American ambassador to the United Nations have expressed their own personal views.

However, it is not merely this distressing multiplicity of opinions that has created problems with regard to logic and consistency. There is a very serious structural weakness in the American system, a weakness that becomes apparent when a new President enters office. When this involves a change of political parties, all of the White House staff as well as the heads of the departments of state and defense and the chairman of the National Security Council have to resign their posts. The more important ambassadorial posts often change hands too.

It is not surprising that this leads to problems of maintaining continuity in foreign affairs. And we have not yet taken into consideration the complications that can result from the actions of the Congress, which has been increasingly active and power conscious since the beginning of the 1970s, or the marked tendency towards short-term "crisis management."

The difficulty — I am tempted to say impossibility — of an American President achieving something constructive in the field of domestic politics is obvious. The conflicts of interest between various regions and groups are almost un-

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bridgeable, and the means of slowing down and obstructing are much more effective than the forces of change. This compels most Presidents to attempt to secure their place in history in the area of foreign affairs. As a result, the opponent in a presidential campaign attacks existing policy, and a newly-installed Administration criticizes the preceding and attempts to establish a profile of its own.

The fact remains, however, that it can be difficult to determine what is substance and what is merely packaging: when is it a question of a genuine change in policy and when are we dealing with mere rhetorical decoration? I shall attempt here to shed some light on this problem of continuity and consistency in American foreign policy by examining the attitudes to Eurocommunism that prevailed during the Ford and Carter Administrations.

The term "Eurocommunism" is of recent date. The expression would appear to have been used for the first time by the Yugoslavian journalist Frane Barbieri in an article in *Il Giornale Nuovo* in June 1975. The term quickly became popular, however, and after some initial hesitation those for whom it was primarily intended also began to use it — the Italian Communist leader Enrico Berlinguer as early as January 1976 and Georges Marchais about a year later.¹

What the term "Eurocommunism" meant, on the other hand, was not exactly clear, and as a matter of fact a series of in some ways rather different definitions were suggested. Obviously there were considerable differences between the Communist parties of Italy and France, and if one were going to speak of Eurocommunism in both cases, it would be necessary to find some sort of common denominator. I have neither the opportunity nor a reason for discussing this in greater detail here.² In this context I shall use the term to designate the Western European form of Communism which was advocated during the latter half of the 1970s — and to some extent still is — by the Communist parties of Italy and Spain in particular, but also, at times, by the Communist parties of France and other countries. It encompassed a set of attitudes and policies the most important of which involved 1) the claim to autonomy and independence of Moscow and the right of every Communist party to find its own road to Socialism, 2) the acceptance of pluralistic parliamentary democracy and its fundamental rules, and 3) changes in the so-called democratic centralism of the parties. The latter were not particularly widespread and need not concern us here.

The Italian Communist Party (PCI) was beyond doubt the most important of the Eurocommunist parties. During the elections of the 1960s it was supported by about one-quarter of the electorate. This figure increased in the 1970s, and in the June elections of 1976 the PCI got over 12.5 million votes or 34.4% of all the votes cast.

Berlinguer introduced his celebrated formula for the "historic compromise" as early as 1973. On the basis of, among other things, the events that had taken place in Chile, he had come to the conclusion that the Left was not, and would

not in the foreseeable future be, in a position to assume power and govern Italy alone. The alternative was a "historic compromise," that is an agreement to compromise with the Christian Democrats, the other major party, which had dominated the political life of Italy during the postwar years.

Following the election of 1976, Giulio Andreotti formed a Christian Democratic minority government based on, among other things, Communist abstention from voting in parliament. The period that followed has been characterized as the period of "no non-confidence." A Communist became Speaker of the Chamber, and the PCI also acquired the chairmanships of several important parliamentary committees. A crisis arose in December 1977, when the PCI, under pressure from the Left, asked to be represented in the cabinet. This long government crisis was resolved in March 1978 through the granting of even more influence to the PCI, though not in the form of representation in the government. That it was only a matter of time before this would happen was, however, considered certain in many quarters.³

The powerful Communist advance in Italy, with the talk about the "historic compromise" and imminent Communist participation in the government, was regarded, from the point of view of the Western alliance, as a fundamental political upheaval. This impression was further strengthened by the fact that the French Communist Party (PCF) had in 1972 formed an alliance with the Socialist Party and put its signature to the so-called "common program." An election victory for the French Left could therefore mean Communists in the government. During the 1960s the Communist share of the vote was just over 20%, and in 1973 it was 21.4%.⁴

During the 1960s the Mediterranean had been something of a *mare nostrum* for NATO. This situation underwent a basic change in the 1970s. In 1974 Greece withdrew from NATO, and as a result of the decision by the American Congress to impose an arms embargo, the Turkish government closed all American bases and military installations in Turkey. This of course meant a weakening of NATO's southern flank. Political instability in the area, combined with the Communist advance and what might follow in its wake, seemed to be leading to a serious change in the geopolitical balance.

This was viewed by many American observers as a real and serious threat. They were not impressed by the fact that the PCI early in the 1970s altered the completely negative attitude it had previously had with regard to Italian membership in NATO. This appeared at first to have been the result of the efforts to bring about the "historic compromise". But Berlinguer went so far as to imply that NATO could shield Italy in its way to Socialism, that is to say be a guarantee against Soviet invasion of the Prague 1968 type. But the theme that the Italian Communist leadership — as well as, for example, the Spanish Communist leader Santiago Carillo — repeatedly put forth was that NATO, and Italian membership in this alliance, must be accepted so long as the Eastern and Western European blocs existed. What one hoped for was the dissolution

of *both* alliances at some point in the future. The PCI is evidently more pro-NATO than the PCF, the French Communist Party, which in its anti-Americanism and its insistence on French independence of NATO appears to be an heir to De Gaulle. Actually, it was only out of consideration for the "common program," the attempt to cooperate with the Socialists, that Marchais softened his demand for a unilateral total French withdrawal from NATO.

The dramatic gains enjoyed by the Italian Communist Party in the local and regional elections in June 1975 caused alarm in many American quarters. Hearings were held by the International Relations Committee in the beginning of November. The committee chairman, Lester Wolff, asked Henry Kissinger, who was Secretary of State at the time, what measures the USA could take as a result of the Italian shift to the Left. Kissinger's reply is interesting because it outlines the point of view that he, with slight variations, would repeat many times after that:

"... Basically the United States cannot determine the domestic structure of Italy ... the future of Italy is not an American foreign-policy problem. Having said this, however, the United States hopes very much that the Christian Democratic Party will revitalize itself ... to prevent the entry into government of the Communist Party of Italy, since the impact on NATO ... would be very severe."⁵

Even though Kissinger gave assurances that the American Government had no intentions whatsoever of getting involved in Italy's domestic affairs, it is perfectly clear that there was some involvement, at least up to the final period of the Ford Administration. The extent of this involvement is difficult to determine, but it took the form of, among other things, repeated statements about the negative effects on Italy's ties with the West that could result from Communist participation in the Italian government.

One can summarize the American point of view during the Nixon-Kissinger era by saying that no distinction was made between Eurocommunism and orthodox Communism. Time and again Kissinger, Gerald Ford, Vice-President Nelson Rockefeller and other decisionmakers expressed their deep mistrust in Eurocommunist talk of independence from Moscow. They held the opinion that European governments in which Communists participated would adopt a course of action that lay close to that of the non-aligned countries. In May 1976 Kissinger visited Stockholm, where he stated that if Communist governments were formed in Western Europe, the USA would hardly be able to retain much interest in defending Europe. This statement, like a number of others, including a resolution in the House of Representatives, was obviously intended to influence Italian voters prior to the impending elections.

In June 1977 a conference about Italy was held in Washington. The sponsors were the *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research* and the *Hoover Institute on War, Revolution and Peace*. One of the speakers was

Henry Kissinger, who dealt with the subject “Communist Parties in Western Europe: Challenge to the West.”⁶ The thoughts he presented were essentially those that he had previously expressed. A Communist government in a NATO country would have “fundamental consequences for the structure of the post-war world” and result in a complete change in the USA’s alliances. The attempts to present the Western European Communists as little more than Social Democrats, with claims to national independence, and as advocates of political pluralism, were, in Kissinger’s opinion, merely tactical manoeuvres. It was not democratic pluralism but rather democratic centralism that was the mainstay of the Communist parties in the West. He also repeated the thesis that the stationing of American troops in Europe in order to defend one Communist government against another would be impossible.

Kissinger discusses here — even though he is not entirely clear — a Communist assumption of power in a NATO country. More likely, of course, was the possibility of Communist participation in a government, for example, following an “historic compromise” in Italy. But on this point, too, Kissinger explicitly stated his position.

In his scenario the result of a possible Communist entry into the Italian or French government must be fundamental changes in NATO’s leadership, decision-making processes, and communications. An alliance whose basic task was to protect the West against the Soviet Union and its satellites and allies, could not permit governments with Communist members to participate in vital military decisions or in discussions in which important military secrets are discussed. Kissinger saw in the long run a danger that the Western alliance would be transformed into nothing more than an American-West German alliance, with decisive consequences for the balance of power in Europe. Another one of Kissinger’s arguments, one that was also used by Gerald Ford, was that American opinion would not accept the involvement of American soldiers in the defense of one Communist government against another. We have already touched upon his refusal to make any distinction between Eurocommunism and orthodox Communism.

Thus, the point of view of the Ford Administration in 1976 was a clear stand against Communist participation in a government in a NATO country. At a NATO meeting in December 1975 Kissinger had even suggested that Communist participation in the Italian government could initiate a process that could result in the isolation of the USA and the dissolution of the Western alliance. Comments of this sort were repeated many times by the Secretary of State and other representatives of the Ford Administration during the first half of 1976. As we have already pointed out, one of the aims was to convince Italian voters of the risks of voting for the Communists in the June elections of that year. Another goal was to stimulate efforts on the part of the USA and its allies to provide, through OECD, economic aid to Italy in order to calm social unrest there.

Kissinger's concern over Leftist gains in Western Europe was reminiscent of Brezhnev's reaction to liberalization tendencies in Eastern Europe, in both cases as a result of Eurocommunist advances. Commentators even coined the expression the "Brezhfeldt Doctrine." They were alluding to the so-called Sonnenfeldt Doctrine from December 1975. Its name derived from a statement by Helmut Sonnenfeldt, a State Department expert on Eastern Europe. The gist of the statement was that Eastern Europe must be regarded as a natural Soviet Russian sphere of interest and that revolutionary tendencies there threatened stability and peace. Sonnenfeldt also implied that demands for pluralism in Eastern Europe could as a result legitimize Communist infiltration in Western Europe, with an insistence on Communist participation in NATO governments in Italy and elsewhere.

Like Kissinger, Sonnenfeldt was born in Germany. From 1974 to 1977 he was the Secretary of State's "senior adviser" on relations between the USA and Europe as well as East-West relations. Prior to that he had worked for the National Security Council. He was one of Kissinger's closest associates, and the views he expressed hardly differed from his superior's. The so-called Sonnenfeldt Doctrine attracted a great deal of attention when it was first made public, and was sharply attacked by the then Governor of California Ronald Reagan, who already had his sights set on the White House. One reason was that Sonnenfeldt's statement was given a stronger wording in news reports. At the heart of it, however, was the conviction that a realistic view of the problem of world peace involved an insight into the importance of the balance of power, of the necessity for stability, and that this must be based on *quid pro quo*.⁷

When Kissinger's position grew weaker, multilateral pressure replaced unilateral American pressure. The most well-known case took place the week following the Italian elections of June 1976, in which the Communists made considerable gains. The Christian Democrats under Giulio Andreotti now had only a slight edge over the Communists. At the same time as a government was being formed in Rome, a summit was held in Puerto Rico between representatives of the governments of England, France, West Germany and the United States, and it was decided there that if the Communists were included in the Italian government, the country would be refused the international credit it was in such desperate need of. When this decision became known, as a result of an indiscretion on the part of Helmut Schmidt, there was, not surprisingly, an extremely negative reaction in Italy, even among many Christian Democrats.

The Carter Administration and the men connected with it were critical of Kissinger's foreign policy in several respects. The most widely-publicized bit of criticism was the one to the effect that the question of American-Soviet relations had become too dominant, to the detriment of relations with Western European allies as well as Japan. But the criticism was also aimed at Kissinger's handling of the problem of Eurocommunism.

Thus, in April 1976 George Ball, former Assistant Secretary of State and one

of the aspirants for the post as Carter's Secretary of State, assailed a statement that Kissinger had made in an interview in *Il Tempo*. In Ball's opinion, Kissinger's statement constituted an unjustifiable case of interference in Italy's domestic politics. Ball asserted that the USA must act in a manner that would not jeopardize future relations with an Italian government that included Communists. Ball felt that such a government was inevitable. This would of course hardly be to NATO's liking, but it did not involve insurmountable difficulties.

Ball was a member of the so-called Trilateral Commission. So was Carter as well as his political advisers Zbigniew Brzezinski and Paul Warnke. These men also claimed that Kissinger's apocalyptic prophecies regarding the consequences for NATO of Communist participation in an Italian government were not very well founded and, what is more, defeated their own purpose. They thought that the USA should treat the PCI as though it were independent of Moscow and refrain from doing anything that would act as an obstacle to future cooperation. Cyrus Vance, who was to become Carter's Secretary of State and who was also a member of the Trilateral Commission, advocated the same view. Vance emphasized the importance of bringing about a dialog with the PCI as soon as possible. And, in fact, not long after Carter's inauguration he began unofficial talks with both the Italian and the French Communist parties, which constituted an important tactical change of course vis-à-vis the politics of the Ford Administration.

This does not mean, however, that the new men in the White House viewed Communist gains in Western Europe with no alarm. In an article in the *Washington Post* in May 1976 George Ball recommended two courses of action for the USA with regard to the Italian problem. Firstly, instead of Kissinger's threats and warnings, one should exert economic pressure, preferably the carrot instead of the stick, in order to try to influence the Italian voters. Secondly, the USA should maintain a low profile and as far as possible let Italy's neighbors and the EEC point out the dangers of Communist participation in government.⁸

Zbigniew Brzezinski's attitude is especially interesting in view of his position as Carter's special adviser on questions of security. Brzezinski emphasized that the PCI had explicitly accepted Italian membership in NATO in anticipation of the dissolution of both the Eastern and Western military blocs. Thus, Communist participation in the Italian government constituted no threat to NATO, nor would it be a threat to private trade and enterprise. Generally speaking, Brzezinski adopted the same line of reasoning as George Ball, who characterized the policy the USA ought to follow as "subtle, flexible, and realistic."

Carter himself made several statements to the effect that the PCI's independent, West-oriented attitude must be supported. Then and later on he advocated a course of action that came to be referred to as "non-indifferent non-interference." The goal of the Carter Administration was to unite "intra-bloc stability" with reduced tension between the blocs. This was in fact the same

policy that had been pursued under Nixon and Ford. And closer scrutiny reveals that the difference between the two Administrations lay, at least to some extent, on the rhetorical level, and was partly the result of an incoming Administration's need to have another profile than its predecessor. There was, however, a certain difference that was genuine. It dealt with the ways of viewing the requirements for stability and also the conditions for the functioning of the Western alliance. For Kissinger and the Ford Administration, NATO governments free of Communist participation were a *conditio sine qua non*, not only for NATO's effectiveness but even for its survival and, consequently, the balance of power in Europe. The Carter Administration, on the other hand, was at first of the opinion that intra-bloc stability could be maintained by integrating the Eurocommunists into the pluralistic Western democratic system, that is by treating them as acceptable partners in NATO governments.

Everyone was not equally optimistic, however, and not surprisingly fears were expressed, especially in military circles, where it was insisted upon that an Italian government with Communist members would have to be excluded from NATO's strategic planning sessions. These demands became more vociferous during the early spring of 1978. Opinion polls conducted prior to the impending French elections pointed towards significant Communist gains, at the same time as the political situation in Italy seemed to become increasingly shaky. At this point the attitude of the Carter Administration to Eurocommunism changed.

In January 1978, on the advice of Brzezinski, President Carter let the Department of State issue a statement which can be interpreted as a return to the position that Kissinger and the preceding Administration had maintained. This in spite of the fact that the statement was prefaced by a declaration to the effect that the attitude of the Administration towards the Western European Communist parties had not changed. It was pointed out, however, that "recent developments in Italy have increased the level of our concern." The key words in the statement have to do with the attitude of the Administration with regard to Communist participation in the governing of Western European countries: "Our position is clear: We do *not* favor such participation and would like to see Communist influence in any Western country reduced."⁹

In the USA the reaction to this statement was largely positive. In some cases the statement was worded more sharply. Thus, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* wrote that Communist participation in an Italian government was clearly unacceptable: "The United States and other NATO countries cannot have as a partner a government that will be a pipeline of military secrets to Moscow."¹⁰ The predominant attitude in the press was a refusal to make a distinction between Eurocommunists and traditional, orthodox Communists, a lack of confidence in their declarations of independence from Moscow and their acceptance of democratic pluralism. There was an equal amount of scepticism with regard to their willingness to reform their centralized party structure. The arguments were, as one can see, the same that Kissinger had made himself a spokesman for.¹¹

There were also critical voices raised against the Administrations's statement, however, and they followed roughly the same line of reasoning that the Carter Administration had advocated in its earlier criticism of Kissinger and Ford. Typical of this attitude was the *Milwaukee Journal*, which in an editorial found the State Department move tactless, the timing bad, and the effect probably the opposite of the one intended. American involvement would, if anything, damage the parties that had the support of the USA. In addition, one ran the risk of seriously jeopardizing the cooperation with the Eurocommunists that might become necessary in the future. The article ended on the following note: "An openly antagonistic US is unlikely to win Communist Party cooperation on a host of important American-Western European policies. The correct approach for the US is *not* to interfere. We may not like what we see, but it is best to bite our lip and let the Western Europeans themselves work out the problem."¹²

That Carter had followed Brzezinski's advice to issue the statement had to do with the situation that had arisen following the fall of the Italian government on 16 January. Another contributing factor, one already mentioned, was the impending elections in France. Carter visited France in February, and he used the opportunity to take additional action regarding the American view on Eurocommunism. At a meeting with Socialist leader Mitterand, Carter promised support for NATO allies who fought against Eurocommunist advances. This was taken as yet another sign that the American President had now adopted the same point of view as his predecessor. Carter and his advisers denied, of course, that any change in attitude had occurred, but their statements and actions at the time clearly show that the problem was now being viewed in a strategic and geopolitical context, as a question of vital importance for bloc politics and the balance of power and not primarily as a matter of importance for Italian or French domestic affairs.

It has already been mentioned that the government crisis in Italy was solved at the beginning of March. The Christian Democrats entered into an agreement with the PCI, whereby the PCI became a formal member of the majority bloc without becoming represented in the cabinet. In American quarters it was noted with satisfaction that Andreotti had succeeded in keeping the Communists out of the government. Nonetheless the agreement was regarded as a victory for the PCI, and many viewed it as the first step towards the unavoidable Communist participation in the government.

Even if one was forced to record a Eurocommunist success in Italy, it was with a great deal of relief — and some surprise — that one was able to note that the expected Leftist success in the French elections did not materialize and that what happened, instead, was a clear and surprisingly easy victory for the Center-Right coalition. "The election means the specter of Eurocommunism is not so threatening as it was just a few months ago," noted the *Wisconsin State Journal*, giving voice to a reaction that was widespread.¹³ Everyone was not

equally convinced, however, that the danger was over. The *Dallas Morning Post* maintained that "the West should beware," and the rejoicing was often mixed with caution.¹⁴

With its lack of flexibility and its rather rigid, Stalinist party structure the PFC, the Communist Party of France, had been rather isolated in the political life of France during the Cold War. A certain revitalization could be noted during the 1960s, but it was not until they joined the Socialists in the "common program" that the French Communists were offered new prospects. Their share of the vote remained rather stable, however, around 20–21% (1968: 20%; 1973: 21.4%; 1978: 20.6%). There were tensions between the PCF and the Socialist Party, and efforts to revitalize the "common program" broke down in the fall of 1977. The PCF's Eurocommunist image had been necessary for the coalition with the Socialists and was to some extent based on tactical considerations. It was felt, however, that the effect had been to weaken the Party's identity. The PCF broke off relations with the Socialists prior to the 1978 elections, and one of the reasons was that they feared that they would end up at a disadvantage against them. The result was not merely the above-mentioned decisive defeat for the Left but also a sharp conflict between the Communist Party and the Socialists. The latter regarded the action of the PCF as the cause of defeat. At the same time, the Socialists received, for the first time since 1936, a greater percentage of the vote than the Communists.

Following the 1978 election, Marchais retreated considerably from his, somewhat tactically-motivated Eurocommunist positions, particularly in the area of international problems. PCF's attitude to NATO, the EEC and the efforts to achieve European integration, for example, led to talk of "Gaullo-Communism" rather than Eurocommunism.¹⁵

As has already been pointed out, the turn of events in France calmed the worst fears in America of Eurocommunist gains. Therefore, when the Italians went to the polls in June 1979, the event was given a great deal less coverage than either the 1976 election in Italy or the 1978 election in France.

The results of the Italian elections were a major setback for the PCI. They fell from 34.4% (1976) to 30.4 percent of the vote and lost 26 seats. It should be noted, however, that the Communist losses did not correspond to increases for the Christian Democrats, who dropped from 38.8 to 38.4 percent of the vote. So when American observers spoke of "a crushing defeat" for the Communists, it was an exaggeration. What had happened was that they had lost some of their very large gains from 1976, but they still finished up with 3% more of the vote than they had gotten in 1972. An analysis also shows that they had considerable support among young voters. But in American quarters the results of the elections in France in 1978 and in Italy in 1979 were seen as proof of the fact that Eurocommunism no longer constituted a real threat.¹⁶ This was also confirmed at the 23rd Congress of the French Communist Party, where it became clear that the break between the Communist Party and the Socialists was

complete. Further confirmation was provided by the deep antagonisms between the French Communist Party and the Communist parties of Italy and Spain, which retained their Eurocommunist points of view.

The lack of unity among the Western European Communist parties was clearly revealed both when it came to events in Poland and to the Soviet Russian invasion of Afghanistan. In January 1980 Berlinguer stated in *L'Unita*, the official organ of the Italian Communist Party, that the Russian invasion of Afghanistan was "an open violation of the principles of national independence and sovereignty," and at a meeting of the European Parliament in Strasbourg he submitted a resolution condemning the Russian action. Marchais, on the other hand, defended the Soviet involvement as justified, and referred to the Soviet invasion army as "peaceful forces against the threat of imperialism." With regards to the events in Poland in July–September 1980, the PCI supported the strikers from the start. In France, on the other hand, Georges Marchais repeated Moscow's warnings against the "subversive and anti-Socialist elements in Poland," even though he expressed himself with a great deal more restraint than, for example, the Communist parties of East Germany and Czechoslovakia. The difference in attitude between the PCI and the PCF was, however, perfectly clear.

During the latter half of the Carter Administration there were three main viewpoints in the USA with regard to Eurocommunism. According to the first, Eurocommunism was dead or dying. This view was held by such commentators as George Will and William Pfaff.¹⁷ Pfaff claimed that the failure of Eurocommunism was the result of an inherent contradiction, i.e. "that philosophy based on revolution can bring about change through peaceful means."¹⁸ George Ball, who held roughly the same view, thought that the weakness of Eurocommunism originated in the constant and irreconcilable conflict between militant revolutionaries and the more moderate mass of Communists in Western Europe.

Another point of view was that held by Henry Kissinger, who enjoyed a considerable reputation as a foreign policy expert and commentator even after he had left the post of Secretary of State.¹⁹ Kissinger advocated the same ideas that he had previously, though he presented them in a more subdued fashion, and similar thoughts were also voiced by Helmut Sonnenfeldt.²⁰ The latter had just left the State Department and, like so many others, become affiliated with an academic institution, in this case the School of International Studies at Johns Hopkins. In July 1978 he was called to appear as a witness at hearings held by the House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East.²¹ In his opening speech Sonnenfeldt made a comment of interest in this context, both with regard to Kissinger's and his own views on international problems in general and on those that had to do with the USA and Eurocommunism in particular:

"We are all faced with tradeoffs. If we are realists, we will recognize that if we progress

in one area we may well be creating for ourselves new problems in other areas. I think politicians, but also academics and others who speak about public affairs, ought to be called upon to state the costs of what they propose and what the tradeoffs are.”

Sonnenfeldt, like Kissinger, maintained that Communist participation in an Italian government would create a very serious problem for NATO. He was unwilling to go as far as one of the committee members, who suggested that if the Communists were to establish a foothold in the government as a result of the “historic compromise,” they would never voluntarily agree to leave it in a democratic manner. As far as Sonnenfeldt was concerned, the Communists would not be compelled to use violence. Their participation in the government would bring with it such deep and lasting changes in the political system that a government coalition of which they were not a part would be unlikely in the foreseeable future. His conclusion was, as it had been previously, that it was highly desirable to exclude the Communists from Western governments.

The assessment of Kissinger and Sonnenfeldt was supported by a number of experts on international relations. Thus, in a study entitled *Eurocommunism and the Atlantic Alliance* James Dougherty and Diane Pfaltzgraff asserted that Communist participation in NATO governments would result in fundamental and irrevocable changes in Western Europe, which NATO, “as an integrated and comprehensive military alliance,” would not be able to survive.²² The same opinion was offered by, for example, Roy Godson and Stephen Haseler, who thought that Communist entry into NATO governments would lead to a double split in the alliance, on the one hand between its northern and southern members, on the other between Europe and the USA. The result would be a destabilization of the entire international system and a threat to peace.²³

The third point of view was the one that most closely corresponded to the Carter Administration’s line of reasoning. Following the elections of 1978 and 1979, when the danger that the Communists would achieve election gains and become members of governments had passed, the Carter Administration returned to the position it had held prior to January 1978. In the above-mentioned hearings in July 1978 the Administration was supported by such experts as Suzanne Berger, Joseph LaPalombara, and Stanley Hoffman. Berger underscored the danger that the USA, with its constant warnings about the Left, would lose influence and put obstacles in the way of future agreements. LaPalombara provided support by maintaining that “our policies must also come to terms with the probability that the voters in Europe will not create scenarios that conform to our wishes,” a warning that George Ball had sounded as early as 1976.²⁴

The lack of clarity and consistency which in many respects characterized the foreign policy of the Carter Administration also made itself felt when it came to the problems posed by Eurocommunism. It is difficult to find any clear and definite course of action, partly because the problem became less urgent and

was forced into the background by the drama surrounding the hostages in Iran and the crises in the Middle East.

Eurocommunism was to a considerable extent a product of détente, the relaxation of tension between the two blocs. In both the East and the West, however, it came to be regarded as a threat to the stability required for détente, and thereby to peace. Optimists in the West saw the possibility of a convergence between East and West should the ideas of Eurocommunism gain a footing in the East and bring about both liberalization and increased independence of Moscow. The pessimists in Moscow viewed the same possibility as a threat. The danger of a spread of these ideas was effectively met through repressive actions in Poland, and clear signs of Eurocommunist infection in Eastern Europe are scarcely to be found. Rumanian national Communism, with its independence of Moscow, as demonstrated by its participation in the Olympic Games, has nothing to do with Eurocommunism, since it is combined with one of the most repressive systems in Eastern Europe. Nevertheless there are probably good reasons to believe that if Eurocommunism can still be said to pose a problem, it is a problem for the East and not for the West.

NOTES

1. Jean-François Revel, "The Myths of Eurocommunism", in *Foreign Affairs*, 1978:2, p 295.
2. There is a vast literature on Eurocommunism. Cf for example Vernon V. Aspaturian / Jiri Valenta/ David P. Burke (eds), *Eurocommunism between East and West* (Bloomington, Ind. 1980); Manuel Azcárate, "What is Eurocommunism?", in G.R. Urban (ed), *Eurocommunism: Its Roots and Future in Italy and Elsewhere* (London 1978); David Scott Bell, *Eurocommunism*. Fabian Research Series 342 (London 1979); C. Boggs/D. Plotke (eds), *The Politics of Eurocommunism* (London 1980); Bernard E. Brown (ed), *Eurocommunism and Eurosocialism. The Left Confronts Modernity* (New York 1979); Santiago Carillo, *Eurocommunism and the State* (London 1978); Alfons Dalma, *Euro-Kommunismus* (Osnabrück 1977); James E. Dougherty/Diane Pfaltzgraff, *Eurocommunism and the Atlantic Alliance*. Special Report, Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis (Cambridge, Mass. 1977); Douglas Eden/F.E. Short, *Political Change in Europe: The Left and the Atlantic Alliance* (Oxford 1981); Paulo Filo della Torre/Edward Mortimer/Jonathan Story (eds), *Eurocommunism: Myth or Reality?* Penguin Books (Bungay, Suffolk 1979); Roy Godson/Stephen Haseler (eds), 'Eurocommunism': *Implications for East and West* (London 1978); W.E. Griffith (ed), *The European Left: Italy, France and Spain* (London 1980); Arthur Hirsh, *The French Left: A History and Overview* (Montréal 1982); Enver Hoxha, *Eurocommunism is Anticommunism* (Tirana 1980); Annie Kriegel, *Un autre communisme?* (Paris 1977); Peter Lange/Maurizio Vannicelli (eds), *The Communist Parties of Italy, France and Spain: Postwar Change and Continuity* (Cambridge, Mass. 1981); Wolfgang Leonhard, *Eurokommunismus: Herausforderung für Ost und West* (München 1978); Dieter S. Lutz (ed), *Eurokommunismus und NATO. Zukunftsprobleme europäischer Sicherheit* (Bonn 1979); Howard Machin (ed), *National Communism in Western Europe: A Third Way for Socialism?* (London 1983); Ernest Mandel, *From Stalinism to Eurocommunism* (New York 1978); Austin Ranney/Giovanni Sartori (eds), *Eurocommunism: The Italian Case* (Washington, D.C. 1978); Helmut Richter/Günter Trautmann (eds), *Eurokommunismus — Ein dritter Weg für Europa?* (Hamburg 1979); George Schwab, *Eurocommunism: The Ideological and Political-Theoretical Foundations* (London 1981); Rudolf L. Tökés (ed), *Eurocommunism and Détente* (Oxford 1979), and G.R. Urban (ed), *Communist Reformation: Nationalism, Internationalism and Change in the World Communist Movement* (London 1979).
3. On the PCI, see for example Griffith (1980); Ranney/Sartori (1978); Urban (1978); Machin (1983); Tökés (1979); Giorgio Bacca, *Storia della Repubblica Italiana, dalla caduta del fascismo a oggi* (Milano 1982), Ugo La Malfa, "Communism and Democracy in Italy"; *Foreign Affairs* 1978:3, p 476; Hansjacob Stehle, "The Italian Experiment and the Communists", *The World Today*, 33, 1977, p7.
4. On the PCF, see for example Griffith (1980); Kriegel (1977); Hirsh (1982); Machin (1983); Lange/Vanicelle (1981).
5. *Hearings before the Committee on International Relations*, (Foreign Affairs), House of Representatives; 94th Congress, 1st Sess., Nov. 1975.
6. The Contributions to the conference published by Ranney/Sartori (1978).

7. A somewhat crude version of the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine was presented by for example Roy E. Licklider in an article "Soviet Control of Eastern Europe: Morality versus American National Interest", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 91, Number 4, Winter 1976—77. See also Piers Ploughman's rebuttal in the same issue, "Advancing American Interests Through Soviet Control: A Modest Proposal".
8. The *Washington Post*, May 30, 1976.
9. The statement is published in Ranney/Sartori, *op.cit.* (1978), p 1.
10. The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, January 18, 1978.
11. Cf for example The *Cincinnati Enquirer*, January 17; The *Detroit News*, January 18; The *Daily News*, New York, January 16, 1978; The *Los Angeles Times*, March 2, 1978, The *Wall Street Journal*, January 19, 1978; The *New York Times*, January 18, 1978 and others. Cf also *Hearings before the Subcommittee for Europe and the Middle East of the Committee on International Relations* (Foreign Affairs), House of Representatives, 95th Congress, 2nd Sess., January 31, 1978; *Reviews of Recent Developments in Europe*.
12. The *Milwaukee Journal*, January 18, 1978. Critical of the statement was also for example the *Seattle Times* (March 10), calling it "a tactical mistake".
13. The *Wisconsin State Journal*, January 18, 1978. Also for example, The *Times-Picayune*, The *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, The *Washington Post*, and others.
14. The *Dallas Morning Star*, March 16, 1978. Also the *Washington Post*, *Pittsburgh Press*, *Lincoln Star*, *Baltimore Sun*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and many others.
15. Cf note 3. Also for example Pierre Hassner, "Eurocommunism and Western Europe", in *The Atlantic Community*, Fall 1978, Vol. 16:3; Jolyon Howorth, "The French Communist Party: return to the ghetto?", in *The World Today*, April 1980.
16. Roy Godson, "American Opinions and Perceptions of Political Change in Europe", in *Eden/Short* (1981), p 143.
17. George Will in the *Washington Post*, June 14, 1979, p 19.
18. William Pfaff in the *Los Angeles Times*, May 20, 1979, p 2.
19. Cf Peter Lange/Maurizio Vannicelli, "Carter in the Italian Maze", in *Foreign Policy*, 33, Winter 1978—79.
20. Helmut Sonnenfeldt, "Russia, America and Détente", in *Foreign Affairs*, 1978:2, p 275.
21. *Hearings before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the Committee on International Relations* (Foreign Affairs), House of Representatives, 95th Congress, 2nd Sess. July 12; 17; August 3, 1978. *Western Europe in 1978: Political Trends and U.S. Policy*. Cf also *United States-Soviet Relations, 1978, Hearings, ibid.*, Aug. 9; 19; September 26, 1978.
22. Dougherty/Pfaltzgraff, p 62 ff.
23. Godson/Haseler, p 36.
24. Cf note 19.