

“Transatlantic Security Issues from the Cold War to the 21st Century”

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PANEL 2: COUNTRY PERSPECTIVES: AN EVOLUTION

“To make the blocs dispensable, over time.”

Elements of Transcending NATO in Willy Brandt’s Political Thinking.

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While Willy Brandt changed the face of Europe with his famous *Ostpolitik*, he always kept a certain mystery about his long-term plans. In 1962 he admitted frankly that he “reflected daily” on how to tie long-term planning with concrete politics, but later on he preferred to keep his thoughts secret. Especially after Brandt became the West German Chancellor in 1969, his political opponents were deeply suspicious about his attitude towards NATO, and the Western allies feared that *Ostpolitik* would lead to the neutralisation of Germany.

This article will argue that Brandt was, especially during the 1960s, open to many ideas and concepts, including the possibility of gradually dissolving NATO and the Warsaw Pact. A tentative explanation will be offered to the question, if Brandt still had sympathies for such “heretical” thoughts in his years as Chancellor.