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A RAND NOTE

French NATO Policy: The Next Five Years

Gregory Flynn

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France, having long proclaimed the need to change the European status quo, regards the potential for change in the structure of European relationships with more anxiety than do most of its allies. However, French security assumptions have not remained static. French policy has been adjusting for some time, but this movement is only partially related to the changes set loose by Soviet President Gorbachev, and can be understood only in the broader context of the security perspectives that have guided French thinking since the end of World War II. This study traces the roots of Charles de Gaulle's policies and describes the nearly 15-year-long transition away from purist Gaullism toward a new compromise between independence and integration. The author describes the adjustments taken in response, including several important steps to improve the interaction between the French military and NATO, and ways that French diplomacy of the early 1980s began to emphasize common NATO positions. The author then examines the emerging policy environment and its effects on the basic assumptions underpinning French policy. He concludes that in the future, France will be easier to work with as an ally, but will continue to seek autonomy in the East-West dialogue.

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PREFACE

This is one of a series of seven RAND Notes written as part of the project on Theater Nuclear Deterrence after the INF Treaty, sponsored by the United States Air Force, Europe (USAFE). The work was undertaken in the National Security Strategies Program within Project AIR FORCE. Since the issues of maintaining NATO deterrence are as political as they are military, it was decided to analyze the potential alternative short-run NATO policies of major member nations. These Notes were written independently; they were then discussed at a meeting that examined the implications of each national policy for the others. The resulting synthesis will be set forth in a future report. The Notes themselves, although refined as a result of both the meeting and the passage of time, are essentially independent; each one makes alternative assumptions about the other NATO partners rather than predicating its analysis on specifics from the other Notes.

This study analyzes the evolution of French security policy over the past 40 years as well as the most likely directions policy will take. Primary emphasis is on the politics of policy and the changes in the basic assumptions guiding French choices. References to force posture and doctrinal developments are made to illustrate the broader political issues being dealt with.

SUMMARY

France, having long proclaimed the need to change the European status quo, today often seems to be the most status quo oriented of all West European states, and at a time when the status quo may no longer be an option. France regards the potential for change in the structure of European relationships with more anxiety than do most of its allies. However, French security assumptions have not remained static, and it is a mistake to believe that France is not adapting to the evolving European security environment.

French policy has been in a period of adjustment for some time, but this movement is only partially related to the forces of change set loose by President Gorbachev. Indeed, critical elements in the evolution of French policy must be dated from the mid-1970s. The full import of this evolution, which continues today, can be understood only in the broader context of the security perspectives that have guided French thinking throughout the postwar period.

This study traces the roots of de Gaulle's policies and describes how **France has for nearly a decade and a half been in a transitionary phase away from purist Gaullism toward a new compromise between independence and integration**. This movement was set in motion by a changing context that undermined certain key assumptions on which de Gaulle's policies had been based. The three determinant new perceptions were: that Germany had become less firmly attached to the West, that the Soviet threat was increasing, and that American engagement in Europe was truly waning. The study describes the adjustments taken in response, including several important steps to improve the interface between the French military and NATO, and how French diplomacy of the early 1980s began to emphasize common Alliance positions. While residual Gaullism in domestic politics still created natural limits to the movement, those constraints had substantially lessened with time. Nonetheless, by the late 1980s, France was still having difficulty reconciling her strategic doctrine with her desire to bind Germany to the West and the United States to Europe.

The study then examines the emerging policy environment and how this is affecting the basic assumptions underpinning French policy. Three contextual factors are considered: the Gorbachev effect, fiscal constraints, and the evolution of domestic political consensus. Although the domestic political environment remains permissive,

contrary to many predictions, fiscal constraints are going to force very difficult tradeoffs on the ambitious French modernization programs. Most dramatic have been the projected strategic consequences of perestroika: France, like everyone else, was caught off guard by the dramatic East European events of the fall of 1989 and thereafter. Those events, particularly the rapid reunification of Germany, changed many basic assumptions.

Nonetheless, **the basic shift of French policy predated the current phase of change in the Soviet Union by a decade; and it was predicated upon, among other things, quite a different kind of Soviet Union** than that now promised by Gorbachev. His new thinking and spate of diplomatic initiatives, however, have not reversed the new directions in French thinking about security in Europe. On the contrary, they have reinforced the basic thrust of the new French perspective insofar as they have increased worries about future German policy choices while heightening the possibilities for at least partial U.S. disengagement. Gorbachev has also increased French belief in possibilities for using the greater interaction between East and West in Europe to overcome the bloc mentality on the continent. This has revived France's interest in its own Ospolitik, both in developing a higher profile in Eastern Europe and in refurbishing the Franco-Soviet relationship.

In response to the new internal and external environment, a new framework for French security policy is emerging that is neither Gaullist nor integrationist in its essence, but rather expressed in new European terms. Indeed, the European banner will continue to provide the primary vehicle for adaptation to the evolving context and for innovation in French policy. **Mitterrand's vision of Europe** is not as narrow as those promoting postwar West European integration and the emergence of a European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance. He **sees the integration of Western Europe as a means of eventually providing an identity separate from the blocs that have dominated Europe since the war,** and hence as an acceptable magnet to help overcome the division of Europe. This is reinforced by the need to tie a unified Germany firmly into Europe. Yet unlike de Gaulle, who *sought* a Europe between the superpowers, Mitterrand's objective is not as much escaping from the constraints of a superpower dominated Europe as it is riding the crest of and attempting to control history. Mitterrand is also less

concerned with protecting the prerogatives of the nation state in "l'Europe des Patries";[1] indeed, he considers the ceding of critical powers to the European Commission to be the only way to move Europe forward, which is indispensable if Western Europe is to meet the challenge of change in the East, and Europe to meet the challenge of a very powerful Germany.

Over the next few years, French policy is less likely to be based on a newly defined doctrine than on the requirements of balancing different cross pressures that have to be kept compatible. For the foreseeable future, French initiatives will have greater political than military importance. In response to financial constraints on the defense budget and evolving geostrategic concerns, priority will remain with nuclear forces, which will stand in contrast to the proliferation of symbols linking France with the security of its European allies. **France will be easier to work with as an ally, but it will nonetheless continue to seek an autonomous role in the East-West dialogue,** not only for domestic, political, or "grandeur"[2] reasons, but for reasons of European geopolitics in the age of change.

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[1]DeGaulle's formulation: "Europe of nation states."

[2]Also de Gaulle; best translated as prestige.

CONTENTS

I. GAULLISM AND ITS ROOTS

Current and future French policy cannot be understood without understanding the basic assumptions that underpinned Charles de Gaulle's policies. Charles de Gaulle, in turn, cannot be understood without understanding how France perceived the new order it confronted in postwar Europe.

The security framework that emerged in the Cold War was not one that corresponded to French preferences. Nonetheless, France somewhat grudgingly accepted the realities of the Cold War and sought to adjust. The main adjustment was to the emergence of the Soviet Union as the primary threat to French security.[1]

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the primary challenge for French security policy was to find a way to deal with the Soviet threat while ensuring that Germany could never become a threat again. The dilemmas became acute after the outbreak of the Korean war, when it became clear that West Germany would have to be rearmed to strengthen Western defenses. France's solution was to bind the Federal Republic as tightly to the West as possible within a set of institutions that would contain the growth of West German power. After failing to ratify the treaty creating the European Defense Community in 1954, France accepted West Germany's integration into NATO as a tolerable means of harnessing new German military capabilities. In addition, building on the initial success of the European Coal and Steel Community, the institutions of the European Economic Community (EEC) would help channel German economic energies and provide the Federal Republic with a Western vocation. The Franco-German Treaty of 1963, providing for regular bilateral consultations, was to symbolize how inextricable the destinies of the two states had become.

While the Western Alliance provided the basic framework for meeting France's security needs, France was never entirely comfortable with the power relationships that prevailed in the world of the Cold War. The reduction of France's status in the international system to that of a medium power and the constraints of strict solidarity with allies produced a sharp ambivalence toward the arrangements that provided French

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[1]For greater detail on French security thinking during the early period, see Grosser, 1982.

security. The result was the search for ways to express an independent identity. The most concrete manifestation was the development of France's own nuclear arsenal. While continuing to resist the Soviet challenge through NATO, the *force de frappe* provided the symbol for the profile France sought, as well as the additional increments of security that dependence on others could never yield.

When de Gaulle returned to power in 1958, the basic dilemmas associated with providing France with security had been resolved. The key decisions of alliance and on developing the *force de frappe* had already been taken. But France was still at war with itself, and the realities of being dependent had been made painfully clear during the Suez crisis in 1956. For both domestic and foreign policy reasons, de Gaulle felt it necessary to assert French independence more forcefully, a course that would earn him both scorn and admiration.

De Gaulle's policies were based on the assumption that the structures that had been erected at the height of the Cold War provided essential French security needs. The guarantee of basic security provided the flexibility to pursue other policy objectives, as long as it did not undermine the security framework. This is what produced the dualistic approach to East-West relations that characterized the Gaullist period and in many ways remains valid today: firmness toward the Soviet Union and solidarity with the United States in times of acute East-West crises (e.g., Berlin and Cuba) and dialogue with the Soviet Union and enlargement of France's diplomatic margin of maneuver with the United States through a policy of calculated differentiation in periods of relaxed tensions.[2]

Despite de Gaulle's rhetoric, a functioning Atlantic Alliance was a *sine qua non* for the policies he pursued, and he apparently believed that the Alliance did not require special attention to remain robust for the immediate future. But because he also believed in the transitory nature of regimes and international structures, he concluded that the Alliance would not indefinitely remain viable or necessary. Only states endure, not regimes or institutions. He was convinced that the basic East-West division of Europe could ultimately be overcome and that French policy could contribute to this. A more appropriate role for France could be created in a future European system.[3]

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[2]See Moisi and Flynn, forthcoming.

[3]For an excellent discussion of de Gaulle's world view, see Cerny, 1980.

These beliefs were based on specific assumptions about the three critical actors that have determined France's perception of its basic security needs throughout the postwar period: the Soviet Union, the United States, and West Germany. For de Gaulle, by the mid-1960s the Soviet Union was no longer the same kind of direct military threat that it had become after the end of World War II and was at the height of the Cold War. Moreover, there was a belief that France and the Soviet Union, the two great European continental powers, shared a strategic interest in preventing any resurgence of German power in the center of Europe. The United States, all rhetoric about its newly acquired vulnerability notwithstanding, was assumed to be sufficiently engaged in Western Europe and its nuclear umbrella still viable, if slightly weakened. West Germany was considered firmly anchored in the West, and existing Western institutional arrangements were believed adequate to satisfy German security needs (NATO) and to provide a surrogate fatherland.[4] NATO would provide the necessary military counterweight to Soviet power and the political framework for German ambition in all foreseeable circumstances.

The importance of the assumptions about the United States should not be underestimated, precisely because of the accompanying rhetoric. The development of French nuclear weapons clearly did embody, as part of its long term rationale, a belief that nuclear weapons could be used only in defense of one's own national territory and that American engagement in Europe would inevitably weaken with time. But this was all at a high level of theory and abstraction. In the short term, not only was French policy not a response to a perceived weakening of American commitment to Europe, French strategy was viable only in a context of continued American commitment to Europe. The credibility of the *force de frappe* was enhanced by the existence of a link to the American deterrent; the doctrine of proportional deterrence really makes sense only in a world where it is an add-on.

In the 1960s, the assumptions made by de Gaulle about each of the three actors brought him to the conclusion that French security requirements no longer required integration in the NATO military structure and that he was free to pursue what might be called a policy of security plus. It was a rare period in which France could have its cake and eat it too. France lost nothing in security (at least in the short term) by the path he

[4]The notion was that the process of Western European integration would provide the Federal Republic with a constructive outlet for energies that might otherwise be more actively directed at overcoming the division of Germany.

chose, and it was able to gain: above all in terms of restored national pride and prestige, and in being able to lift security issues out of domestic politics in the name of independence.

The period of high Gaullism was one where image and reality were never close. The systems did not exist to match the claims. But it did not matter, and indeed the image created by the rhetoric of independence and the *force de frappe* together made a national reality, and eventually a reality that reached beyond as well. Ironically, however, just as image and reality of French capabilities began to converge, the context began to shift.

II. SHIFTING CONTEXT AND CHANGING ASSUMPTIONS

GEOPOLITICAL TRENDS

During the 1970s and early 1980s, the strategic environment in Europe began to change in important ways, prompting a reconsideration of Gaullist assumptions about all three of the key actors that determine how France views its security requirements.[1]

Thinking about Germany was the first to be affected. The most important factor conditioning new perceptions was brought about by the new German Ostpolitik in the early 1970s and the FRG's conclusion of the Moscow Treaty with the Soviet Union. With Germany accepting the territorial status quo in Eastern Europe, Bonn acquired a new quality of relationship with Moscow. The Federal Republic now possessed its own channel to the East for dealing with the consequences of the postwar settlement, which created the potential for West Germany being less firmly anchored to its Western moorings. For France, this is precisely the specter that grew in the late 1970s and early 1980s as the Federal Republic wrestled with its declining confidence in NATO's force posture and the American guarantee, combined with domestic political convulsions surrounding the INF modernization decision.[2]

There was also reassessment of the Soviet Union as a politico-military threat to French security interests. Here there was an internal and an external dimension to the evolution. The internal is generally referred to as the Gulag effect: a reconsideration among the intellectuals, triggered by the publication of *The Gulag Archipelago*, that began to focus on the true nature of Soviet society. The result was a much less tolerant domestic filter for Soviet behavior. Moreover, when France elected François Mitterrand in 1981, it gained a President who had deep-seated anti-communist convictions (as well as an incentive to demonstrate these in his foreign policy).

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[1]Compare Grant, 1985, pp. 411–426.

[2]A primary political/military impulse for the double track decision came from the German government's concern with the combined implications of parity and the impending SALT II treaty (which was to exclude the SS-20 and Backfire Bomber from restrictions) for the viability of flexible response and extended deterrence. The same government, however, confronted growing domestic support for using arms control as a tool to reinvigorate detente, as well as increased allergy to nuclear weapons. The French were quick to conclude that the politics of defense in Germany would never be the same.

The external dimension was conditioned by two factors. First, the new Soviet-German relationship that emerged from Ostpolitik gave Moscow a new ability to influence the tone and direction of German policies. As a result, France became a less important partner for the Soviet Union. Moscow could pursue European strategic objectives more easily by dealing directly with West Germany, which diminished the importance of the overarching strategic interest shared by France and the Soviet Union. By the late 1970s, these new Eurostrategic conditions converged with a growth of Soviet military power and the shifting East-West balance of forces, the emergence of new generations of Soviet nuclear weapons and NATO's difficulty in responding, and the more aggressive use of Soviet military power, especially in Afghanistan.

During the early and mid-1980s, U.S. policy provoked French concern about American commitment in Europe. While the harder-line Reagan policies toward the Soviet Union coincided with France's own predisposition, the Strategic Defense Initiative was seen as indicative of growing insularity. Moreover, serious pursuit of strategic defense by both superpowers could undermine the credibility of French nuclear forces, as well as destroy public support for nuclear deterrence. Further, the United States reiterated the need to enhance NATO's conventional capabilities to raise the nuclear threshold, which it was feared could erode what credibility remained of extended deterrence and thus open Europe up to conventional war. The Reykjavik summit sent a shiver down the spine of French (and most European) cities because the United States negotiated without consultation over the heads of Europeans on matters of vital interest to Europe, and the French simply did not believe in the value of major nuclear reductions in Europe. Finally, there were the U.S. budget deficit and growing pressures in Congress to reduce overseas commitments and enhance burden sharing. For the French, the United States had become in reality, not just in theory, a less reliable and predictable factor in the European security equation.

Thus France began to see a potential unraveling of postwar geostrategic stability in Europe. The Soviets were becoming more menacing, German confidence in American protection was declining, German temptations toward pacifism and neutralism in exchange for amelioration of Germany's division were seen as growing, and NATO's ability to keep nuclear deterrence robust was sharply reduced, despite its ultimate success in deploying the Pershing II and Cruise Missiles.

POLICY ADJUSTMENTS

The first major reforms to move French policy away from purist Gaullism were undertaken by Giscard. At the level of assumptions, Giscard represented those who had always had a different perspective on building Europe and the role Europe would have to play in both defining and protecting French national interests over time. Along with Helmut Schmidt, he brought into being the European Monetary System. In military policy, Giscard, through the idea of the enlarged sanctuary, attempted to broaden the definition of French security interests, one that included France's immediate neighbors.[3]

The most important of Giscard's military reforms was his reorganization of the French army. The French army's previous internal structure inherited from de Gaulle and Pompidou made any European or allied role problematic at best. In 1975, large divisions were transformed into smaller maneuver divisions to make them capable of fighting alongside France's allies. Correspondingly greater attention was given to the conventional equipment portion of the defense budget, which reached a high point in the late 1970s.[4] Arrangements were made between the French and American governments "to assure that war reinforcements and supplies arriving from the United States could have access to French seaports, airports, pipelines, railways, and highways, rather than be confined to more vulnerable lines of communication in West Germany."[5]

Both the enhanced collaboration with the allies and the greater European orientation were carried forward under Mitterrand. His concern with the shifting context was never more dramatically demonstrated than in his unprecedented intervention before the Bundestag in January 1983, when he urged German deployment of the Pershing II and Cruise Missiles. Under his presidency, the French government has undertaken several force posture adjustments to further improve the interface between French and NATO forces, or to symbolize closer solidarity with France's allies.

First, in 1981, there was a further reorganization of French army divisions. It had been determined that the divisions created in 1975 were in fact too light for maximum compatibility with the allied divisions they were to be capable of fighting alongside. As a result, French divisions were strengthened from just under 8000 men to roughly 9000 men. Then, over the next few years,

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[3]For an elaboration of the concept of the enlarged sanctuary, see Mery, 1976, pp.11–33.

[4]See Yost, 1984–1985.

[5]Ullman, 1989, p. 23.

> French and NATO planners worked out arrangements whereby if Paris judged war to be near, French ground forces would take up positions in central Germany and fall directly under NATO commanders there. Operational coordination of tactical air forces and NATO air forces in Central Europe became considerably tighter. Selected French airfields were earmarked and surveyed to serve as potential dispersion bases for NATO's airborne early-warning system.[6]

Second, France had long faced a doctrinal conundrum that involved the range of the Pluton missiles and the way these were integrated into the operation of the French First Army.[7] The fact that the Pluton would be deployed into the combat zone as the First Army was moved forward meant that it would have to fulfill its principally political mission of "*ultime avertissement*"[8] from a position that was incompatible with the central control by the French President. This cast considerable doubt on whether the army would indeed be available to fulfill its role as a NATO reserve. With the decision to move forward with the increased range Hades ground-launched missile (Mitterrand now refers to a range of just under 500 km), however, the French chose a weapon that could remain well away from the battlefield, and whose command structure could be separated from that of the First Army, rendering the role of both more credible. The extended range also would enable the French tactical nuclear warning shot to reach beyond West Germany.

Third, high level consultations between the Chief of Staff of the French Armed Forces and SACEUR on nuclear war plans were intensified and became more specific. While stopping short of formally committing French forces to NATO, target lists have been exchanged and French plans have apparently been adapted to take into account NATO's priority on restraint and limiting collateral damage in the early phases of nuclear use.[9]

The fourth and highly visible manifestation of French commitment to security in the forward areas was the creation of the *Force d'action rapide* (FAR). This five division force, particularly its air mobile and light armored divisions, was expressly

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[6]Ibid.

[7]See Grant, 1985, pp. 415, 418.

[8]Final warning.

[9]Ullman, 1989, pp. 24–25.

designed for rapid force projection into forward battle areas.[10] The force has been criticized for its lack of infrastructure and the incompatibility of its communications links with those of NATO, which clearly render it less effective than it could be. But it is potentially capable of credible military action in a major conflict between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.[11]

The most recent innovation in force posture involves the constitution of a Franco-German brigade. Although it is due to reach full strength in 1990, it will have to overcome numerous obstacles if it is to be operationally important. Substantial problems stem from differing French and German operational concepts, and from equipment incompatibility that currently requires parallel infrastructures. The unit falls outside NATO's integrated military command, and there are questions about how French nuclear weapons can protect the French troops without implicitly extending protection to their German colleagues.[12] Even more than the FAR, therefore, the Franco-German brigade is primarily a symbol of French commitment to German and allied security rather than a major change in French contribution to Western military strength.

At the level of policy process, there have been many indications of greater French concern with West European security and a desire to cooperate more intimately in the consultation process among allies. Throughout the 1980s, concrete steps have been taken to facilitate the development of a European consensus on defense and security issues. Bilaterally, in 1982 the French and Germans created a joint Committee for Security and Defense, which was upgraded in early 1988 to the status of a Joint Defense Council. Since 1985, Foreign and Defense Ministers have met at the thrice-annually Franco-German summits under the provisions of the 1963 Elysée Treaty. There have also been unilateral official French statements, such as that by Chirac in his December 1987 speech to the Institut des Hautes Études de Défense Nationale, when he asserted that no one should doubt that in case of an attack on Germany, the engagement of France would be immediate and without reserve.

At the multilateral level, the French have become more active in the North Atlantic Council and its dependent committees. It is not that they participate in more

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[10]The FAR was designed and configured not only for force projection in Europe, but to strengthen France's intervention capabilities in the Third World, especially Africa, as well.

[11]See Clarke, 1988, pp. 82–84.

[12]For a more complete discussion, see Clarke, 1988, pp. 78–81.

NATO activities, but that they are simply more present.[13] Probably most important, they have played an instrumental role in reviving the Western European Union (WEU) as a forum for consultation among the European allies on security issues. It is the only forum in which Foreign and Defense Ministers of the members meet simultaneously, an innovation that many consider important. There are also consultations at the level of Political Directors of Foreign Ministries, with related staffs, to discuss and coordinate issues related to European security. The French government was instrumental in getting the WEU to adopt a security charter that embodies the basic principles of nuclear deterrence, defense of member nations' borders, and the need for U.S. military presence in Europe.

The range of military and political initiatives moving France away from purist Gaullism and toward greater collaboration with its allies has thus been impressive under Mitterrand. Moreover, there is no longer the same anti-NATO flavor of efforts to a create greater European profile in defense. But a net assessment must still conclude that much of the movement has remained at the level of symbols.

Despite the successive reorganizations of the French army to enhance compatibility with NATO forces and the greater attention to the forward battle, there is no indication of any substantial shift in French military doctrine to emphasize conventional operations or a shift in the portion of the defense budget devoted to conventional forces and their equipment. Indeed, the contrary is the case, given the progressive cuts in the size of the army over the past decade and stretching out of conventional arms modernization programs. Nuclear deterrence remains the heart of French defense policy and nuclear forces the core of France's military posture.

This is not to underestimate the value of either the concrete adjustments in the conventional posture or the symbols in a period of strategic change in Europe. It is an open question, however, whether and how the symbols will be translated into further concrete steps that link France's destiny more directly with those of her European allies. By the late eighties, France was still straddling the dilemma of how to reconcile her basic strategic doctrine with the desire to bind Germany more tightly to the West and to keep the United States engaged in the defense of Europe.

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[13]See Berger, 1988b, pp. 38–40.

III. EMERGING POLICY CONTEXT

Future French security policy will be determined by the interaction of three basic contextual factors: the effect of Mikhail Gorbachev and reform in the Soviet Union on the geopolitical trend lines in Europe; the emergence of fiscal constraints on French defense options; and how both affect the viability of domestic political consensus on defense.

THE GORBACHEV EFFECT

The effect of Mikhail Gorbachev on French thinking about European security has been complex, even contradictory. Initially, French assumptions about Gorbachev and his reforms were more cautious than elsewhere in Europe. The French saw no basic change in Soviet strategic objectives in Europe, despite "new thinking." In general, Gorbachev was seen as needing a tranquil European and international environment in order to give himself the best chance for success at home. He also needed the financial support he hoped would come with reduced East-West tensions. His policies could well ultimately reduce the Soviet military threat to the West, but the proof of the pudding would have to be in the eating.

The French, along with everyone else, were caught off guard by the revolutionary events of 1989. While the future of the Soviet Union still remains in question, it is now clear that the nature of the Soviet threat has been profoundly changed. The new situation is quite different from what provoked the shifts in European French policy away from purist Gaullism. Indeed, French assumptions about the direct Soviet military threat have begun to move closer to those of de Gaulle than to the assumptions of recent years. The perception of a declining Soviet military threat, however, has not had the same effect on French security thinking in the 1990s as it did in the 1960s. The rest of the world is not the same as it was under de Gaulle. Germany is a less constrained actor on the European stage, and the United States feels less capable of sustaining its levels of global engagement.

The most important Gorbachev effect for France has been his influence on the basic trend lines of German and American policy, both of which are of substantial

concern to the French. By opening up the prospects of German unity and more normal interaction in the center of Europe, Gorbachev reinforced French concern about a Germany eager to extend its influence into East-Central Europe at the expense of its Western integration. And by moving toward reducing the level of military confrontation in the center of Europe, he reinforced French concern about the future of U.S. engagement in Europe.

If Gorbachev fails and the Soviet Union reverts to a more hostile form of coexistence, this could, of course, move French assumptions back toward a more predictable, comfortable world, with a more menacing Soviet adversary also reducing German drift and American disengagement. In the more likely case, at least in the next few years, of continued Soviet experimentation and promise of change, the French will have to contemplate a world in which Europe remains in a phase of some geostrategic flux.

This is a world, however, that already poses challenges for France much more dramatic than those that promoted the evolution of French policy from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s. The postwar order in Europe has collapsed, and a new order must be built. The task is no longer simply how to maintain Western institutions while overcoming the legacy of Yalta, but how to build the institutional framework for the new Europe and how to remold French consensus to these new conditions.

The dilemma is how to adapt without undermining the foundations that for the foreseeable future will remain indispensable to security. It is a world in which neither the Gaullist nor the NATO-integrationist solutions provide an answer. The search now is for a new framework that will continue to incorporate elements of both independence and alignment, but will address the far more challenging environment of a new Europe, which is beginning to emerge.

FISCAL CONSTRAINTS

The alternatives available to France in pursuing its security interests over the coming period are going to be considerably more constrained than they have been in the past because of a growing defense resource problem. In large part this is the result of three factors: a prolonged period of low economic growth rates and sluggish world economy, which together have produced austerity conditions in all government spending; the fact that the cost of sophisticated high technology weapons is rising even faster than

the rate of inflation; and the structure and missions of the French armed forces. It has become increasingly difficult to maintain a credible nuclear posture, a credible conventional commitment to European defense, and adequate interventionary forces to project power into areas of French influence in the Third World.

In the mid-1980s, France was spending roughly 3.9 percent of gross domestic product on defense, considerably up from its low point of 2.95 percent when Giscard became President in 1974. Giscard was committed to increasing spending to 4 percent, a point never reached. Although spending declined somewhat in the late 1980s, the real problem is that static spending would not have been enough to maintain projected programs and force levels.

The initial signs of the current problem had become visible in the 1983 Military Program law.[1] Spending was constrained, but virtually all major modernization programs were maintained, most of which were inherited from procurement decisions taken by Giscard, but whose funding had been delayed. Funding for new weapons was front-loaded, assuring that many costly systems would be maturing at precisely the same moment in the early and mid-1990s. The operational budget of the armed forces took the direct hit, with manpower being cut by 20,000 men over the five-year life of the law.

After the 1986 elections and the arrival of Chirac at the Matignon, a new military program law was developed. All modernization programs were to be continued, and enough money was to be allocated to implement these, although it has been argued that the figures cited in the law would not have been nearly sufficient to meet spending requirements in the out years of 1991–1992.[2] No further personnel cuts were mandated. The law was voted by an overwhelming majority of the *Assemblée Nationale*, including the Socialists.

Following the elections in May and June 1988, a limited review of the law was conducted by the Socialist government as it prepared the 1989 Budget for presentation in the fall. In that budget, Defense Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement foreshadowed some of the difficulties that still lay ahead: additional, if limited, cuts were made in the armed forces, bringing the total reduction since 1981 to roughly 26,000 (315,000 to 289,000); the S-4 missile was put on hold to offset development cost overruns on the new generation of ballistic missile submarines; the number of new generation tanks to be

[1]See Howorth, 1986, pp. 77–80.

[2]Conversations in the French Ministry of Defense.

procured was cut by as much as 50 percent because of massive cost overruns; the number of new generation attack helicopters (jointly developed with the Germans) was reduced by roughly 50 percent, also because of massive cost overruns; and several other programs were stretched.[3] While the tradeoffs (except for the cuts in personnel) were kept within the same categories of systems, it was already clear that more substantial cuts would be necessary in the next budgetary cycle if more money did not become available, which no one considered likely. It was impossible to sustain existing French program commitments across the board on the same budget.

The problem came to a head during the spring of 1989, when the government conducted a full review of the Military Program Law (a mid-term review had been planned from the outset, with the idea that spending projections would be adjusted according to need). There was considerable tension between Prime Minister Michel Rocard and Defense Minister Chevènement over the final amounts to be allocated to the procurement budgets for the years 1990–1993, to the point that Mitterrand finally had to arbitrate. When the revised projections were finally presented in early June 1989, the budgetary restrictions were justified in terms of an international climate that had become more permissive, and the fact that "defense policy can only be durably credible if it respects economic equilibria."[4] Nonetheless, the impact was considerable.

Rocard had been a partisan of making fundamental choices and cancelling specific modernization programs; he was obliged to allocate more than he wished to procurement. Chevènement was asked to maintain all major modernization programs, but he was not given the money he considered necessary to meet that objective. In the end, the nuclear arsenal escaped almost unharmed (a slight delay in the first of the new generation submarines and a reduction from 33 to 28 of the annual number of Mirage 2000s to be purchased during the life of this law, although the S-4 missile remained on hold), but other programs judged to be less important are to be stretched and in some cases the numbers to be procured reduced considerably.[5] Although cancellation of the new generation Rafale fighter aircraft alone could relieve much of the pressure on the procurement budget, the plane will suffer only a slight delay; it has become a symbol of both the government's commitment to maintain French technological capacity and its

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[3]See "L'armée de terre devra reduire ses commandes de chars et d'hélicoptères," *Le Monde*, 1 November 1988.

[4]See "Les grandes lignes," *Le Monde*, 9 June 1989.

[5]For details, see Isnard, 1989.

need to take into account the "industrial, economic, and social stakes, giving French defense industry the means to maintain its competitiveness."[6] The nuclear powered aircraft carrier has been delayed by two years until 1996, but that is the one substantial system that remains the object of speculation about possible outright cancellation in the future.

The 1989 review does not resolve the basic defense resource problem confronting French policymakers, and thus the issue will be revisited over the next few years. For the moment, France refuses to abandon any of the three basic missions assigned its armed forces: the strategic nuclear, the European conventional, and the intervention forces. Moreover, it continues to pursue these capabilities largely through national armaments programs. On the other hand, a convergence of armaments programs in the mid-1990s will require more resources than are currently being projected if the programs are to be maintained.

This need not pose a problem any greater than in the past; programs can be stretched once again to avoid cancellation. Indeed, people have forgotten how many times the programs currently being debated have already been stretched. However, delays and cuts in equipment will eventually impinge upon the capacity of the French armed forces to perform their missions. Some already voice concern that the army has basically been stretched to its limits if it is to fulfill the European mission it has been given (assuming that mission is to act as a reserve force for the central region until American reinforcements can arrive). The numbers of troops are a concern, but it is above all materiel and sustainability that are the cause for deepest concern: specifically training, readiness, and stockpiles. Only a few places could bear cuts and not risk undermining future capacity to perform current missions (reserves, the nuclear carriers, possibly some aircraft).[7]

The changes underway in Europe, however, may help the French to square this circle. The French conventional mission on the continent could well be defined in the emerging context in a way that would reduce the need for source commitments and make stretching further or cancelling some systems more acceptable. This would also reduce

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[6]"Les grandes lignes," *Le Monde*, 9 June 1989.

[7]It is legitimate to look at the situation as a glass half full. Over the past several decades, the French army would always have had difficulty fulfilling its NATO missions, and current modernization programs, even if reduced or further stretched, can only continue to improve the situation.

the potential of financial constraints to become a significant factor in domestic political debate over French defense policy. At the same time, the larger issues raised by the transformation of the European order may well pose the greatest test yet for the future of political consensus on French security policy.

THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

In the protest environment in Europe of the late 1970s and early 1980s, France was often regarded as a model of political consensus in the areas of foreign and defense policy. More recently, however, there have been some indications that the famed French consensus may not be as solid as was thought. Indeed, differences have appeared among contending political groupings over the appropriate configuration of the French nuclear deterrent, and over the financial constraints just discussed. The question, of course, is whether these are important enough to make the basics of French defense policy once again descend upon the realm of domestic politics.

Consensus around the *force de frappe* and independence was not automatic in France. During de Gaulle's tenure, his policies were politically controversial. But he enjoyed an electoral system that guaranteed him a parliamentary majority and a constitution that gave him sweeping powers. Nonetheless, the primary symbols of Gaullist foreign and defense policy became the benchmarks for all parties to establish the legitimacy of their claims to govern. When Mitterrand reorganized the Socialists and the party began its long climb to power, one of his early moves was to forge his nuclear credentials by reversing much of Socialist doctrine on defense. The Communist party, too, eventually rallied to nuclear deterrence (although they have since virtually deserted it once again). Defense policy was thus extracted from daily domestic political strife, but the new doctrinal norms became highly political in the sense that any deviation from purism would be a sanctionable offense. At least that was the fiction that everyone upheld.

When Giscard introduced his reforms in the mid-1970s, he created substantial controversy, precisely because it was seen as a deviation from Gaullist principles. There were really two lessons of the period for understanding the evolution of political consensus on defense in France. First, Giscard's reforms confronted some of the paradoxes of Gaullist doctrine head on. He created a debate on principles, not interests. There was not yet a sufficient perception of a changing international context to permit deviation from purism. At the same time, and this is the second lesson, all the

controversy really had no effect on the important dimensions of the reforms, given the power of the executive in this domain.

By the early 1980s, the main political parties more generally accepted changing international conditions and the need to adapt policy. At the same time, Mitterrand has been smart enough to avoid presenting his various initiatives in terms of a need for modifying doctrine. He has simply taken action and called it necessary. The most important changes in both conventional and nuclear policy were also closely guarded; much of what transpired was suspected, but it became public only in 1989.

The most important political evolution has taken place within the Gaullist party, the changing international context coinciding with the declining power of the Gaullist barons. In the past, conservative governments have often attempted to cultivate good relations with the Soviet Union not only as a consequence of basic Gaullist belief in the special relationship between Paris and Moscow, but also in the hope that Moscow would use its influence on the Communist party to prevent the left from coming to power. Since the arrival of the Socialists in government in 1981, the parties of the right have concentrated heavily on the persistence of the Soviet threat and have taken a much harder stance than in earlier periods. The Gaullists particularly have continued this line, even after Gaulist Prime Minister Chirac's forced "cohabitation" with Mitterrand, in an attempt to use defense as an issue to challenge the President and his party.

The Gaullists also have evolved in their approach to the ingredients of national security policy. In particular, the *Rassamblement pour la République* (RPR) under Chirac has ceased to be the guardian of the nuclear holy scriptures. Indeed, during the period of cohabitation (1986-1988), it was the Gaullists who began to change the language used when talking about tactical nuclear weapons, expressing the French need for a capacity to avoid the all or nothing choice. It was also Chirac who became most forthcoming about the French commitment to forward defense, previously Gaullist anathema, and about the desirability of coordinating French and American strategy.

The Socialists, too, have evolved. When Mitterrand came to power in 1981, it was the first time that the Gaullist Republic had a chief executive with a markedly anti-Gaullist past. Moreover, as leader of a government that included Communists, he was placed in a delicate situation with regard to policy toward the Soviet Union. Many expected this coalition would attempt to position France as an intermediary between East and West, but the reality was actually quite different. Having brought the Communists

into his government, Mitterrand was all the more inclined in his first years in office to take a hard line toward the Soviet Union to show French voters and his Western allies that he was not a prisoner of the Communist party. Mitterrand's return to a more flexible approach to relations with the Soviet Union began about the same time that the Socialist-Communist coalition was approaching its end. Although it would be hard to draw a solid link between the two events, the latter condition made the former politically easier.

The more differentiated policy since the mid-1980s has permitted some of the contending strains of thought within the Socialist party to reemerge. Some party members continue to support a rather hard-nosed approach to the Soviets and the ambitious plans to modernize the French defense posture. But there has also been a current of thinking that places much greater emphasis on "existential" deterrence[8] and on disarmament, even at a time when official French policy is openly suspicious of European arms control. Mitterrand, himself, has become more of a purist on nuclear issues, for example, renaming the *arme tactique nucléaire* to be the *arme préstratégique* to emphasize the unbreakable link between all nuclear weapons. Indeed, the Socialist party has found it uncomfortable trying to reconcile its skepticism about the Soviet Union, the exigencies of being a governing party, and its desire not to become isolated among the socialist parties of Western Europe.

These differences are real, but their potential to promote a breakdown in basic French consensus should not be overestimated. The debates over the French defense budget illustrate less the emergence of profound political cleavages than they do how difficult it is to use this as an issue in political debate. Chirac has attempted to advance the right through attacks on Mitterrand for being weak on defense. But in reality his case has lacked political plausibility. Mitterrand has kept French defense priorities on nuclear forces, he has taken France into the new negotiations on Conventional Forces in Europe, he has set stiff conditions for French participation in any future nuclear talks, and he has attempted to keep France's positions from becoming too distinct from those of its European partners. Given that he has not shifted French doctrine or the basic rhetoric of independence, it is very difficult to make a strong case that he has sacrificed French position or interests. And it is difficult to mobilize support for more defense spending in

[8]The common French way to denote the belief that deterrence in the nuclear age flows from the existence of the nuclear arsenal more than from the specific configuration of the arsenal.

the current European environment, even in France. There is no real nascent left/right split in France on defense, largely because the terrain is not fertile.[9]

The structure of political institutions in the Fifth Republic prevents the kinds of differences that are voiced publicly from being amplified or having a major influence on policy. Decisionmaking is highly centralized, and even the contending views that surfaced in the current government on the appropriate French approach to such controversial Alliance issues as short-range nuclear forces are largely irrelevant. In France, the power of the presidency in the domain of national defense is so great that he may essentially determine policy.

Moreover, there has been a general reduction of the polarization in French political life, a narrowing of the gap between left and right. There is no longer an obvious deep internal social division of the kind that dominated France from between the wars through the early postwar decades. An internal loosening up has accompanied, and permitted, the loosening of France's external posture.

As the result of this evolution of political opinion, the basic domestic political constraints on French defense policy are really only at the level of the commitment to nuclear deterrence, the *force de frappe*, and nonintegration in NATO military commands. Below this level, adjustments in the name of changing conditions and maintaining the viability of the French posture may create political noise but will create little political fallout.

At the same time, it is going to be increasingly difficult even for an astute politician like Mitterrand to adapt French policy to emerging conditions in Europe without calling into question the basic tenets of independence. There are already signs that Chirac and the Gaullists may be tempted to make a political issue out of the sacrifice of French sovereignty entailed in moving the European Community toward Economic and Monetary Union, and then on toward Political Union. While there have not yet been any moves by Mitterrand in the area of defense policy itself that can be construed to violate these basic constraints, many observers believe it will be necessary for France to move closer to its allies once again in the military field to avoid having Germany seek to emulate France's special military status in NATO. To do this without being liable to the charge of reintegration in NATO will require a major feat of statesmanship by Mitterrand. French political consensus may well be subjected to acute strains in the period ahead.

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[9]For a more skeptical assessment, see Hassner, 1988, pp. 71–82.

IV. FUTURE POLICY DIRECTIONS

In response to the evolving geostrategic conditions in Europe, French policy will have as a primary objective to prevent undesirable shifts in the basic power relationships among the key actors in the European security equation. In particular, France will want to make sure that major movement in the East-West relationship does not alter the balance of power between France and the Federal Republic or, more correctly, remove the conditions currently making that balance irrelevant. It must be borne in mind that the Soviet Union was able to become the primary threat to French security only because Germany was divided after the war and each half integrated into the Alliance of one of the superpowers. Even if the form would be different today than in the past, France does not want to exchange the Soviet threat for the reappearance of Germany at the center of her geostrategic preoccupations. Above all, she wants to avoid a situation in which Germany once again becomes a strategic rival in Europe, but in which the Soviet challenge remains, perhaps even strengthened.

Mitterrand and those close to him look at the current European situation in terms of three interactive dynamics: change in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, German national aspirations, and Western European integration. The assessment is that the first two can be managed successfully only if the third predominates—hence, the French priority not only on 1992 and the unification of the internal European market, but on accelerating economic and monetary union (EMU), on the birth of a social charter for the members of the European Community, and on making progress toward political union. The institutions of the Community are, and will be for some time to come, the primary focus for French diplomatic energies.

The European banner will continue to provide the primary vehicle for adaptation to the evolving context and for innovation in French policy. Mitterrand's vision of Europe is not as narrow as those promoting postwar West European integration and the emergence of a European pillar for the Atlantic Alliance. He sees the integration of Western Europe as a means of eventually providing an identity separate from the blocs that dominated Europe since the war, and hence as an acceptable magnet to help overcome the division of Europe. Yet unlike de Gaulle, who sought a Europe between the superpowers, Mitterrand's objective is not as much escaping from the constraints of a

superpower dominated Europe as it is to ride the crest of history and attempt to control it. Mitterrand is also less concerned with protecting the prerogatives of the nation state in *Europe des Patries*; indeed he considers the ceding of critical powers to the European Commission to be the only way to move Europe forward, which is indispensable if Western Europe is to meet the challenge of change in the East.

The efforts to give Europe bold new dimensions through the integrated market of 1992 and EMU should give Germany an overwhelming stake in its Western integration, hence limit temptations toward visions of *Mitteleuropa*. The least destabilizing way to deal with a changing East-West relationship in Europe is to use the new European Community as a powerful magnet for gradually affiliating the states of Eastern Europe and helping them once again become more European than Eastern. A more unified Europe is seen as the only viable way for European states to recreate a globally competitive technological base. Finally, Europe is the one context in which France stands to be able to maintain its position with regard to the Federal Republic, in which specific elements of power of the two countries do not have to be weighed directly against one another.

French concern with accelerating progress on strengthening Western European institutions was amply illustrated during 1989 and early 1990. Like most of the allies, France was preoccupied in early 1989 with the problems of short range nuclear weapons in the lead-up to the NATO summit at the end of May. France's desire to find a viable compromise, however, was only in part motivated by her assessment of the merits of the contending allied positions. Indeed, her primary interest was in seeing the issue removed from the agenda, at least temporarily, so that attention could be directed to the more critical issues being prepared for the EC summit in July. France and the FRG were clearly pushing Margaret Thatcher to sign on to plans for making European economic unity a reality, and the divisive atmosphere surrounding the Short Range Nuclear Force debate was not conducive to their efforts.

Then, having taken over as President of the European Council in July, Mitterrand began to push his agenda of getting a December EC summit to lay precise plans for proceeding toward Economic and Monetary Union, above all getting a commitment for the first phase Intergovernmental Conference. As events in Germany unfolded throughout the fall, he responded by attempting to accelerate the timetable for this Conference, pressuring Helmut Kohl for a July 1990 date. In the end a compromise was

reached on a date in December 1990, after the scheduled national elections in the Federal Republic.

During the Winter, the precipitous movement toward German reunification led Mitterrand once again to attempt to bring forward the Conference to the summer, so that European unity would keep pace with German unity. Kohl again balked for reasons of domestic politics, but by late March suggested that the answer was to accelerate moves toward Political Union among members of the EC. This in turn led to the joint Kohl-Mitterrand proposal of mid-April that a second intergovernmental conference to prepare Political Union should be held simultaneously with that working on EMU in December 1990.

Mitterrand's general vision is thus clear, in the sense that Europe must be the primary vehicle for structuring future security arrangements on the continent. It is based on a belief that current arrangements must be adapted because they otherwise will not endure. It is, however, a pragmatic vision in the sense that there is no specific master plan. Basically, the approach is to take small steps and measure their effect, in the hope of creating an ineluctable process that will resolve the big dilemmas involving the sacrifice of sovereignty. The final outcome remains undefined, except that it provides for strengthening the bonds among the 12 current members of the European Community and overcoming the basic barriers between East and West but without upsetting geostrategic stability on the continent. It also presumes a continued American involvement in Europe, albeit within a substantially modified NATO that has been adapted to emerging conditions.

Although this basically multilateral approach to the future of European and French security will dominate the general French vision, it will nonetheless continue to be accompanied by two strands of policy more closely associated with Gaullism. There will be a more activist French Ostpolitik, the beginnings of which have been in evidence since the summer of 1988.[1] Initially, a primary motivation was to use the opportunities presented by glasnost, perestroika, and new thinking to accelerate the breakdown of the barriers between East and West in Europe, particularly by building strong bridges to Eastern Europe. There was also the desire to strengthen the Paris-Moscow leg of the Bonn-Paris-Moscow triangle.

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[1]See Hassner, 1989, pp. 108–116.

While there have been reports that the renewal of French Ostpolitik has been coordinated carefully with Bonn, one must not underestimate the competitive elements operating in the development of French policy.[2] Not to be active at a time when Eastern Europe is opening up to the West would be to leave the terrain open to the Germans. It is not only a question of renouncing potential markets. Central Europe is a historical sphere of German influence, and there is no French interest in seeing this power position reestablished, even if the conditions are considerably different than they were in World War II. Thus, the increased pull of Europe, the long term vehicle for controlling and ordering relations among the European states, must be accompanied by traditional bilateral diplomacy to avoid the emergence of a destabilizing dominance by Germany in the region.

Finally, nuclear weapons will become more, not less, important to French policy and security perspectives. In a Europe of declining American presence and growing German influence, both the military relevance and political value of French nuclear forces increase. The French believe that nuclear weapons are responsible for the absence of war in Europe since 1945, and they do not believe that there is a substitute, even if the East-West military confrontation is diminished. Indeed they are preoccupied by the idea that Europe might become denuclearized. If the Soviet threat declines, however, the military relevance may recede somewhat while the importance of the *force de frappe* as a political symbol will actually be enhanced. It will remain the factor that continues to distinguish France from Germany, and will keep France in the same club with only the Soviet Union and Britain, unless and until some cooperative security arrangements within the framework of European Integration can be worked out. But that remains very much a long term proposition, if ever.

These basic policy directions will determine the specific responses to the choices that will have to be made in the French force posture, as well as the positions adopted in arms control negotiations and types of initiatives that will be taken in the relationship between France and NATO, or in the bilateral relations between France and individual allies.

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[2]See Bresson and Rosenzweig, 1988.

NUCLEAR FORCES

The French are basing their defense planning on the assumption that a basic threat to the West from the Soviet Union will remain for the foreseeable future, and that nuclear deterrence continues to be indispensable for Western European security. In response to the evolution of events in the East, however, Mitterrand has articulated the notion of sufficiency as the basic criterion that will guide the development of the French force posture. Although sufficiency generally implies the minimum necessary, the French definition of the minimum nuclear forces necessary involves the completion of all modernization programs currently underway.

The heart of French strategic forces will remain their submarine fleet (*sousmarins nucléaires lanceurs d'engins* (SNLE)), which will retain highest resource priority. The French currently have six SNLE, the most recent launched in 1985 with the M-4 multiple warhead missile. All but one of these vessels, the one scheduled for retirement in 1991, are to be retrofitted with the new missile. They have committed themselves to a new generation of submarine, the first of which, *le Triomphant*, is due for deployment in 1996. The new class submarines will be fitted with a MIRVed missile, the M-5, which is currently scheduled to become available in the year 2002. An interim M-45 will fill the gap until the new system is ready.[3]

There have been substantial cost overruns on the new submarine and a delay of three years on the M-5. These have caused the new generation intermediate range ballistic missile, the S-4, to be put on hold at this point, although Mitterrand has formally maintained his commitment to develop it. In the early 1980s, Mitterrand froze development of the S-X, the mobile IRBM Giscard had chosen as the follow-on to the S-3 currently deployed on the Plateau d'Albion. There continues to be speculation that the S-4 may ultimately be canceled.

When these programs are completed, the French will possess a strategic nuclear force with at least 300 warheads on station at all times, which can be assumed to coincide with the definition of strategic sufficiency. But the definition remains implicit. There are, however, no plans to build additional submarines; the option of increasing the number of warheads on the M-5 reportedly exists, although it is not currently planned.

The heart of the modernized French tactical nuclear posture (*armes nucléaires préstratégiques*) will be the Hades, a ground launched missile with a range of 480 km

[3]See Guisnel, 1988.

whose deployment will begin in 1992. The current Pluton arsenal comprises 42 missiles in five artillery regiments. The Hades will be deployed in three newly created regiments with a total of 90 missiles.[4] Not only is the number being doubled, the range is being tripled, its mobility enhanced, and its accuracy improved; and it will be able to carry neutron weapons. While these have not yet been tested, Mitterrand has said on many occasions that France possesses the capacity to deploy neutron weapons if it chooses to do so. In addition, some of the S-3 missiles on the Plateau d'Albion will be modified (so they can be fired individually instead of in battery) and kept in service to provide additional flexibility to the land-based prestrategic nuclear arsenal.

These systems will be complemented by a modernized airborne component of the *force de frappe*, although the role of the airborne forces is being diminished in favor of the land based systems. The current five squadron, 75 plane force of Mirage IIIEs and Jaguars is scheduled to be replaced by three squadrons of Mirage 2000N and two squadrons of Mirage 2000N'. The aircraft are identical and all will be fitted with an air-to-surface missile (ASMP), although the 2000N' will be dual capable. Each is also scheduled to receive a new longer range ASMP (reportedly 300 km) to allow it to fire from a safe distance and to attack deeper targets of supporting echelons. These systems have not yet been developed and cannot be ready before the year 2000. The navy will retrofit only one of their carriers, the Foch, to handle the Super-Étendard, which will carry the same ASMP. The carrier Clemenceau will continue to handle only the Super-Étendard carrying gravity bombs (AN-52).[5]

None of these nuclear programs except the S-4 has been substantially affected in the budgetary decisions made in 1989. Basically, Mitterrand, like his predecessors, is committed to guaranteeing that France has a modern panoply of nuclear arms.

Ambiguities in French doctrine—particularly when France would actually use its nuclear arsenal—will remain, despite the greater coordination with NATO in recent years. There is no incentive for France to describe more precisely under what conditions it would cross the nuclear threshold or to be more explicit on the role of tactical nuclear weapons. It is believed that to do so would weaken their deterrent value, and it is one of the few remaining areas that could provoke a breakdown in domestic consensus. It is clear, however, that the new tactical nuclear arsenal will be considerably more

[4]See Isnard, 1988b.

[5]See Isnard, 1988b.

diversified, flexible, survivable, and capable of a larger range of military missions, thus presenting the French President with greater choice in executing his "*ultime avertissement.*" When combined with French presence in the forward battle, these new systems are assumed to heighten Soviet uncertainty.

CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL

France has an interest in seeing progress on the European arms control front, stemming from a belief that reducing military confrontation on the continent will not only increase security but, more important, will consolidate the evolution in the relationship among the European states and the breakdown of blocs on the continent. The positions France defended in the preparation for the Negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) in Vienna, the first time France has participated in an East-West arms control forum, symbolized French commitment to promoting the goal of breaking up the blocs. Hence the insistence on a non-bloc-to-bloc format, and counting rules that are global rather than East vs. West. Hence also the proposals (regional quotas and quotas of non-national forces in a country) attacking the key factor guaranteeing a continuation of blocs: Soviet conventional preponderance in Eastern Europe. These proposals have a security content but were primarily political in their motivation.

In a narrower sense, the French enumerated two specific goals for the talks, which began in March 1989: to eliminate the ability of the Soviet Union to launch a surprise attack and to ensure that troop cuts could be verified. In the development of the Western opening proposal, the French sought to limit any offer of Western reductions. When the Germans attempted to introduce the idea of cutting deeper than 95 percent, the French blocked it categorically. Among the reasons seems to be a French desire to avoid reductions of their own on French territory. The French were certainly not thrilled with President Bush's initiative at the May 1989 NATO summit because they are convinced that the inclusion of aircraft in CFE will open the way for the Soviets ultimately to gain control over France's nuclear-capable aircraft. Indeed, the French have long suspected that one of the prime Soviet objectives in CFE is to find a way finally to draw French and British nuclear forces into an arms control regime.

Among the most interesting of Mitterrand's statements on CFE was in his speech before the United Nations in September 1988. He said he believed the talks had only two years to achieve a substantial breakthrough and to forestall the introduction of more

advanced weapons into the European theater.[6] Most observers link this to reports that the French might be willing to forgo deployment of the Hades, and the delay coincided with a final go-ahead for their deployment.[7] Mitterrand has consistently denied any linkage between conventional and nuclear considerations by time and again emphasizing the unbreakable link between tactical and strategic nuclear weapons, but he has nonetheless sought to soften the rhetoric of the French approach to nuclear arms control.

Mitterrand's three conditions for French participation in nuclear arms negotiations are well known: the reduction of superpower arsenals to a level comparable to those of the French forces; the cessation of all competition in strategic defense, anti-satellite warfare, and anti-submarine warfare; and the correction of conventional force disequilibria.[8] But in the fall of 1988, Mitterrand went further, both by asserting that he wanted France "to be associated intellectually, psychologically, and morally with efforts at disarmament," and by juxtaposing the fact that French forces would be guided by a concept of "strict sufficiency," to the overarmament of the superpowers.[9] This was his strongest signal that France may not forever be absent from the nuclear negotiating table.

But the conditions will have to be met. The new tone is meant to convey that the French are not just setting unreasonable conditions, but want to encourage the emergence of a new geostrategic context. It is in this light that one should read the Elysée statements about the Hades and enhanced radiation weapons (ERW): "It would be paradoxical to proceed with building a neutron bomb in a context of disarmament."[10] The purpose of not yet moving forward with the manufacture of the ERW is explicitly to encourage Soviet moderation. The idea of reconsidering such nuclear programs as the Hades if the Soviet threat shrinks dramatically—that is, if fundamentally new conditions emerge—is totally consistent with Mitterrand's overall philosophy about French participation in nuclear disarmament. What is new is the explicit reference to tactical nuclear systems and the implicit delinking of their consideration from overall strategic nuclear balance questions.

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[6]Fitchett, 1988c.

[7]Fitchett, 1988a and b.

[8]Speech before the Institut des Hautes Études de Défense Nationale on 11 October 1988, *Le Monde*, 23 October 1988.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

The idea of unilaterally renouncing the Hades or other nuclear systems, under the right conditions, is also consistent with the position Mitterrand took beginning in February 1988 on NATO's tactical nuclear modernization. He publicly argued that there was no urgency for the short range nuclear force (SNF) modernization, a position that seems to run contrary to his proclaimed concern about denuclearization in Europe and his opposition to consideration of a third zero or inclusion of nuclear systems in the Vienna talks. Bonn apparently convinced Mitterrand that forcing the modernization issue would bring down the Kohl government, a government he clearly wants to continue in power during the current diplomatic phase. The basic notion of NATO testing the Soviet Union—with the threat of SNF modernization being held in reserve if movement on CFE is not forthcoming—was not, however, consistent with the approach Mitterrand was taking with his own Hades. But in this case, as in all others, Mitterrand holds his cards closely, and precise French policies with regard to non-French nuclear weapons cannot be known.

For France itself, Hades continues on track, with full funding. The French want to avoid any notion of a bargaining chip and are capable of doing so. Even under emerging conditions, the French definition of a substantial reduction in the Soviet threat is likely to be so dramatic that almost no START or CFE agreement would satisfy their conditions for participating in nuclear arms control negotiations, at least not for the foreseeable future. If France engages in reductions of its nuclear arsenal, this will in all probability be unilateral, with the Hades still being the most likely candidate. It is increasingly difficult to reconcile French desires to use a Franco-German axis to accelerate European integration with the maintenance of the Hades. At the same time, the French have positioned themselves to be able to justify proceeding with the Hades deployment. It should not be overlooked that the Hades acquires a certain political value in the world of geostrategic flux described earlier.

RELATIONS WITH NATO

France's formal military relationship with NATO is governed by a series of technical agreements negotiated after the French withdrawal from the military command in 1967. There is no automaticity to the substance of the agreements, but the levels of interaction between the French armed forces and NATO commands are clearly extensive. France has observer status in the Military Committee and has liaison officers with SHAPE, SACLANT, AFCENT, and CENTAG.

France's special status in NATO has once again come under criticism since the acceleration of movement toward German unity in early 1990. The worry is that Germany might seek a similar status at some point for domestic political reasons, or to respond to Soviet concerns. If France were to remove this special status, many believe it could strengthen the West's position on NATO membership for a united Germany.

In part for reasons of its own domestic politics described earlier, and in part for reasons of conviction about the emerging European order, there is no chance that France will decide simply to reintegrate within existing NATO military structures. There is a generally positive French predisposition to becoming more active in a NATO modified to emerging conditions, but the modifications will have to be substantial. The French understand that their position does create undesirable options for a reunited Germany, but Mitterrand's answer has been to push for a greater assertion of a European security identity within the framework of the European Community. This is not incompatible with NATO, but it would imply a NATO with a much more prominent European face within it. This is the type of adaptation, however, that would probably allow the French to collaborate more closely in the Alliance.

Barring this evolution, it is in the nature of the technical agreements between France and NATO that the real key to French-NATO collaboration in wartime can be reduced primarily to the capacity of French forces to fight alongside their NATO allies. The primary objective of the 1975 and 1981 restructuring of the French army was to enhance this interface. Since the late 1970s, several technical agreements have also been concluded that further enhance the interface. Nonetheless, substantial potential barriers to joint operations remain between France and her NATO allies.

Enhanced interoperability and harmonization of operational concepts would clearly be desirable from the NATO perspective, and many of these could yet be resolved through technical agreements or future modifications of French doctrine. It can be argued, however, that the most important dimension of the future French relationship with NATO from the NATO perspective concerns less whether additional agreements can be negotiated on these technical issues and more whether the French army is kept strong and modern. Most important will be whether the trend toward cutting into the army and reducing its sustainability continues into the future, as the fiscal crunch on the French defense budget worsens, rather than as the result of a reduction of the Soviet threat.

Sufficiency is clearly a concept the French plan to apply to their conventional forces as well. Some observers worry that recent moves could foreshadow a major drawdown of French conventional forces, and the only question is whether that will occur within the context of CFE or outside it.

The army is considering a major revision of its barracking arrangements, reportedly to find a more rational disposition of forces to correct for its current wide dispersal throughout the country. The new plan supposedly will create concentrations that will ultimately be more efficient and, in the long term, less costly.[11] Minister of Defense Chevènement has also announced a major restructuring of the army, Plan Armées 2000. Under this plan, the precise dimensions of which are still unfolding, the First Army will be reduced from three to two corps. Most of the units will be divided between the two corps to make them "more complete and more capable of acting in either of the two main strategic directions, East or North-East, in case of a European crisis."[12] This will reportedly involve a reduction of 7000 troops but is being done primarily to bring into greater harmony the size and missions of the corps.

It is still too early to tell what the precise effect of these decisions will be either on military capability, or on compatibility with NATO's forces. The French clearly are rationalizing a force structure that had grown hollow because of reductions in manpower over the past decade The question is whether there is some bottom line that coincides with a definition of conventional force sufficiency, or whether this could provide a context for recommencing the process of thinning out all over again. In any case, the plans were drawn up before the revolutions of 1989 and without the expectation of such radical changes in the East-West environment.

The French have made the case in the context of CFE that they do not want to envisage more dramatic reduction scenarios involving French forces because these would already be reaching minimum levels for foreseeable requirements if an agreement were reached along the lines of the NATO proposal in Vienna. But the effect of the emerging East-West climate combined with a continuing fiscal crunch is likely to be considerable. Army morale has already been affected by the 8 percent reductions made

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[11]See Jacques Isnard, "L'armée de terre dans les turbulences," *Le Monde*, 29 September 1988.

[12]"A Metz, l'état-major du 1er corps d'armée sera dissous," *Le Monde*, 22 June 1989.

during the 1980s, but it is clear that conventional forces do not have Mitterrand's highest priority.

FRANCO-GERMAN COOPERATION

Franco-German cooperation has been a subject of great interest and speculation as the numbers of meetings and exchanges between the two countries has proliferated during the 1980s. The French objective has clearly been to reinforce the image that German and French security are intimately linked, thereby binding Germany more closely to its Western European destiny. These bilateral efforts, while symbolically important, should not be misconstrued in the larger picture of French policy. The new Europe is the primary tool for controlling German drift. And the primary military relationship between France and Germany still runs through NATO. Thus although bilateral military consultations and maneuvers will continue to develop over the next few years, they will be more important politically than militarily.

One of the basic obstacles to increased Franco-German military cooperation during the coming period will be the fact that France is concentrating on its nuclear posture while Germany is increasingly interested in reducing the role of nuclear weapons in Europe. The ratification of the protocol creating the Joint Defense Council was in fact held up because of problems over finding an acceptable reference to the necessity of nuclear deterrence. The Germans barely disguise their displeasure about the French modernization plans for the Hades, and despite the extended range and its separation from the French First Army, this is likely to remain a bone of contention. The fact that the Hades will in all likelihood carry a neutron warhead will heighten its negative effect on German opinion. German concern was not reduced by the French offer in 1986 to consult with them on the use of French nuclear weapons, within the limits imposed by the rapidity with which these decisions are reached, and considering that nuclear authority cannot be shared.[13] Nor was it by French emphasis that these systems cannot be used to conduct limited nuclear war.

The primary area where progress in Franco-German cooperation may well still increase is in collaborative procurement, although the prospects will be heavily dependent on the evolving East-West environment and whether the efforts to accelerate

[13]See text of Mitterrand declaration of 28 February 1988, published in *Le Monde*, 2–3 March 1988.

West European integration are successful. The record has thus far not been spectacular, with the dramatic failures of the tank and fighter aircraft projects. But the joint helicopter has been a real success, as have several smaller projects.[14]

Mitterrand seems to place collaborative European arms production at the center of the possibilities for a new European defense effort, but he also seems to have a multilateral vision. He refers to Franco-German successes but in general talks disparagingly about progress in arms collaboration. He seems to believe that little of importance can be accomplished before 1992–1993, which he apparently hopes will help break down barriers that currently have prevented progress.[15] And even then, attitudes toward future Western European defense collaboration will be contingent on the evolution of relations between the two halves of Europe that occurs in the interim.

Franco-German bilateral cooperation will continue in the defense area. But expectations about its importance should not be exaggerated. The most important collaboration between the two countries over the next few years will be in the elaboration and execution of the European idea, which is first and foremost political, and in its translation into a pan-European concept that provides a framework for dealing with change in the East.

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[14]See Berger, 1988b, pp. 50–54.

[15]*Allocution Prononcée par Monsieur François Mitterrand, Président de la République Française sur la Défense de la France*, Paris, 1988.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The movements currently taking shape throughout Europe are bringing about the most fundamental change in the European order since the late 1940s. Gorbachev's programs and proposals and the effects they have been allowed to precipitate in Eastern Europe have dramatically altered the character of relations between the two halves of Europe. The basic European context is clearly evolving, and with it the assumptions France must make about her strategic requirements.

Gaullism was based on solid security structures and a belief that French policy would help break down the stalemated East-West relationship. When the structures began to weaken and the stalemate appeared to harden, French policy moved back toward reinforcing Western institutions and relationships. Today, the prospect of overcoming the stalemate has become a reality, but this can no longer be viewed against the comfort of stable Western security relationships. It is to this new combination of conditions that French policy is now responding, with all of the contradictory impulses born of ambivalence.

More than any other West European country, France is fundamentally ambivalent about change in the European order. On the one hand, there is a desire to encourage movement that ameliorates the basic relationship between the two halves of Europe. On the other, there is a strong desire to consolidate Western and especially European institutions in order to control unwanted shifts in power relationships among key actors. France's security policy and her relationship with her allies will be an attempt to reconcile these objectives.

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